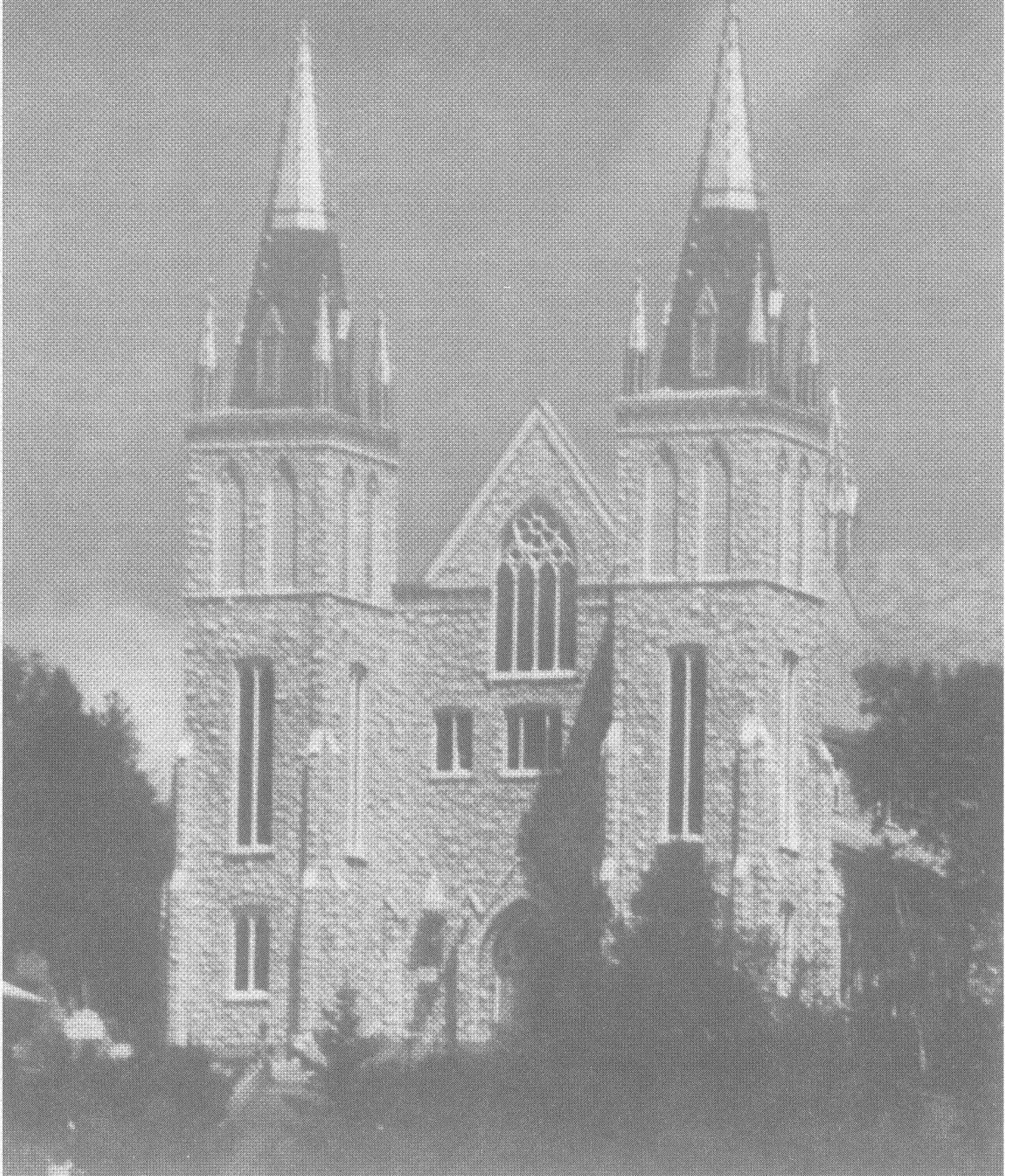


Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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Our Korean Connection

The General Synod of The Reformed Churches in The Netherlands Groningen-Zuid 1978, instructed the Deputies for Correspondence to consult with the Deputies of the Canadian Reformed Churches in order to prepare a Reformed International Synod. With a view to this Reformed International Synod our Canadian Churches are requested to take a positive decision as soon as possible with respect to ecclesiastical correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea. The other points of the Dutch instruction to the deputies, quoted in our previous Editorial, deal with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and our new *Book of Praise*. Our Dutch sister churches want to seek contact themselves with the OPC and they desire to receive information from our side not only about our "ecclesiastical contact" but also about the work of our committees for the revised edition of our *Book of Praise*. Although these points are interesting and not unimportant, I promised to deal with the issues that circle around the proposed Reformed International Synod.

The first issue is our Korean connection; the second is the structure and significance of a Reformed International Synod as such. The Synod of Groningen 1978 decided

ook met het oog op deze Gereformeerde Internationale Synode de Canadese zusterkerken te verzoeken zo spoedig mogelijk een positieve beslissing te nemen inzake het aangaan van kerkelijke correspondentie met de Presbyterian Church in Korea.

This time the request that our Canadian Reformed Churches take a positive decision with respect to ecclesiastical correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea is placed within the framework of the preparation of this Reformed International Synod.

Apart from that new framework it strikes me that The Reformed Churches in The Netherlands have time and again urged their corresponding churches to follow suit in the contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea. It was reported to the previous Synod (1975) that "Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika" were urged to establish contact with the Koreans. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia were requested to send information about their efforts in this respect. The Korean Churches were repeatedly urged to answer the Australian letters and to seek contact with The Canadian Reformed Churches, Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika and with The Reformed Church of Japan. The correspondence between Australia and Korea has in the meantime been established. The Free Reformed Churches in South-Africa sought contact but met with the difficulty of the Koreans' maintaining fraternal relations with the "Doppers" (Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika). And

what about our own Churches? Well, the Acts of Groningen 1978 show that the first question in the discussion about the communion with the Canadian Reformed Churches was, Why do the Canadian Reformed Churches have as yet no ecclesiastical correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea?

De rapporteur wijst erop, dat de Canadian Reformed Churches ten aanzien van onze zusterkerken in Korea tot een zelfstandige keus willen komen, de Canadese Kerken hebben de zaak nog in onderzoek Ds. M. van Beveren geeft nog enige toelichting. Ook hij benadrukt, dat de kerken in Canada tot een zelfstandig oordeel willen komen ten aanzien van de Presbyterian Church in Korea. De kerken in Canada willen nauwkeurig weten, wat men veranderde in de Westminster Confessie en in de kerkorde. De briefwisseling is langzaam op gang gekomen.

The reporter, the Rev. H.J. de Vries, answered that the Canadian Reformed Churches want to come to an independent decision and are still investigating the matter. Our delegate, the Rev. M. van Beveren, underlined this and remarked that the churches in Canada want to know exactly what the Koreans changed in the Westminster Confession and in their Church Order. The exchange of letters took quite a while.

The Rev. van Beveren rightly stressed the aspects of confession and church polity. I was thankful when I read his remarks; they were to the point and indicated exactly what our Churches always emphasized. Our deputies reported to the Synod of Coaldale 1977 that they had no objections to the changes made by the Korean Churches in the Westminster Confession, but that they had still not been provided with the changes made in the Form of Government. They reported rather extensively, also to show how "correspondence" with Korea, even if warranted in principle, would be quite difficult in practice. The language barrier plays an important role, of course, and the fact that there have been serious international difficulties in the Korean Churches had delayed the correspondence considerably. Our Synod 1977 decided to refrain at the present time from entering into correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea. This did not imply that local or regional Committees should not financially support worthy causes within the Presbyterian Church in Korea. Our Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad was charged to try to intensify the contact.

This is the state of affairs at the moment. Our Churches still did not make a decision about ecclesiastical correspondence with Korea. Not only with a view to the repeated Dutch request to enter into this correspondence but also with

regard to our own obligation to come to a decision, I would like to make some remarks about our "Korean connection." The reader will understand that these are completely personal; they are only meant as a contribution to the discussion and your opinion is worth as much as mine. The benevolent reader will also understand that my remarks do not aim to hinder the work of local or regional Committees for financial support of our Korean brothers and sisters. I think especially of the labour of mercy for orphanages in that once war-ridden and still threatened country. I do not for a moment foster the wish that a Korean boy or girl be deprived of a loaf of bread because of my remarks. Let us keep the issue distinct; in discussion is only the ecclesiastical correspondence.

In my opinion there are several reasons for our next synod not to enter into full fellowship with the Presbyterian Church in Korea. We ought to consider whether, instead of such correspondence, we should not create a less comprehensive "ecclesiastical contact," similar to the contact we now have with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, but in a more permanent manner.

The first reason is the first rule of correspondence: "To take mutual heed that the corresponding Churches do not deviate from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government and discipline." Are we able to do so? If not, we had better not enter into correspondence, for then we will weaken the whole concept. It may sound repetitious but it is worthwhile to state that especially in ecclesiastical connections, we should live up to our words. Does it make sense to establish full correspondence, if not even one member of our Canadian Reformed Churches can read or understand the Korean language?

To elaborate on the point that it is almost impossible to take heed that the Presbyterian Church in Korea does not deviate from the Reformed Confession, I relate some Dutch experiences. The report of deputies mentions that there are only a few persons in the Presbyterian Church in Korea who master English sufficiently to write a letter in this language. In February 1977 the Dutch deputies received a copy of the revised Korean church order. "Tot nu toe zijn we er niet in geslaagd deze in het Engels te doen vertalen." The Synod of Groningen-Zuid now charged the deputies

- e. diligent te blijven met betrekking tot de eventuele wijziging in de Confessie;
- f. verdere pogingen in het werk te stellen de gewijzigde kerkorde (in het Koreaans gesteld) in het Engels te doen vertalen.

They have to remain diligent with respect to changes, if any, in the Confession and to try to have the revised Korean Church Order translated into English. Does it not show that after a decade of full ecclesiastical correspondence our Dutch sister Churches are still insufficiently informed about what we have always regarded as the most important aspects of correspondence with Churches abroad? As far as our Korean brothers are concerned, I read in the report of the Dutch deputies to Groningen-Zuid a reference to "de menselijke zwakheid om eerder over financiën te corresponderen dan over geestelijke zaken." Human weakness makes one more eager to write letters about financial matters than spiritual concerns.

Another argument is that our Canadian Reformed Churches should follow their own course in relation to Presbyterian Churches and first make a final decision with respect to the definite fellowship, if any, with the English speaking Orthodox Presbyterian Church. We have embarked upon

discussions with them of the Westminster standards and Presbyterian Church polity and should come to conclusions, before we establish correspondence with other Presbyterian Churches.

This brings us to the fact that in Korea there are different groups of Presbyterian Churches. Do we have to make a choice? The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has official fraternal relations with the Hap-Dong Church, although missionaries of the OPC also lecture at the Busan Seminary, while our Dutch sister Churches established correspondence with the Koryu-Pa. You can read in the Acts of our Synod Coaldale 1977 that in the opinion of all those members of the Koryu-Pa, Hap-Dong, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, with whom the Rev. D. de Jong spoke during his journey to Korea in October 1977, there are no doctrinal differences between the Koryu-Pa and the Hap-Dong. Nevertheless, the Koryu-Pa seceded from the Hap-Dong, while in the meantime also in the Koryu-Pa a schism resulted in a secession of another group of eighty churches and three presbyteries. In April 1976 they established another seminary in Seoul. The scant information that the Dutch deputies had received gave them the impression that this schism did not come about because of divergencies in confession and church order.

Apart from this new development it is a rather intricate situation. One wonders whether the Canadian Reformed Churches are called to enter into it, to offer full ecclesiastical correspondence with the Koryu-Pa and to exclude the Hap-Dong. Committee 3 of Groningen-Zuid spoke of the reticence of our churches with respect to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and gave as one reason the fact that the OPC has "ruimere correspondentierelatie met de met ons corresponderende Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-Pa) maar engere correspondentie met de grotere Presbyteriaanse Koreaanse kerk, de Hap Dong, waarvan de Koryu-Pa zich heeft afgescheiden." So the stronger relation of the OPC to the Hap-Dong would have been a reason for our caution with respect to the Orthodox Presbyterians. I must state that I do not know of any substantiation of this opinion in official documents of our Churches. Could it not even be the other way around? Namely, that we have been somewhat cautious with respect to the Koryu-Pa, because the OPC had maintained the contact with the Hap-Dong? I highly value the opinion of some Orthodox Presbyterian missionaries who for decades have lived in Korea, know the language and the background of the diverse Korean Presbyterian denominations. Although in a generous manner the Orthodox Presbyterians did not exclude the Koryu-Pa from the family circle of their quarreling Korean spiritual relatives — they continue to instruct them how to build up the life of Christ's Church in a Scriptural way — they obviously did not regard the secession of the Koryu-Pa necessary. If we have to enter into full ecclesiastical fellowship with a group of Presbyterian churches in Korea, should we not ask for official advice also from the OPC? At least their approach in helping Korean Churches with personnel rather than with direct monetary gifts appeals to me and could be an example to us.

For the time being, I see no sufficient reasons for our following Synod (Smithville 1980) to establish ecclesiastical correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-Pa). But what then about the proposed Reformed International Synod? This is a connected, but separate topic, and it deserves special attention in a following issue.

J. FABER



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

Twelfth Pentecostal World Conference will be held in Vancouver, B.C., October 2-7, 1979.

Speakers will be heard from four continents. From the "Third World," Rev. Samuel Odunaika of Yada, Nigeria. Representing India, Dr. John Thamuckul of Bangalore. The Reverend Javier Vasquez of Santiago, Chile, who is said to have the world's largest membership of any local church, a reputed 80,000 faithful. Pastor Bertil Olingdahl of Vaastra Frolunda, Sweden, will be present.

North Americans will be represented by Reverend Dennis Bennett, rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Seattle, a world-recognized leader in the "neo-charismatic" renewal. The usual leaders and clergy associated with the Pentecostal World Conference will also participate.

A first at this World Conference will be an "International Pentecostal Women's Meeting," Thursday afternoon, October 4, 1979, from 2-4 p.m.

The Conference will be held in the Pacific Coliseum and the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. More than 10,000 delegates from 80 countries are expected. (Thrust)

How do you translate "fasting"?

The Bible Society of South Africa is currently engaged in Bible translation in 20 languages with 26 translators working full time. Translations are done by people working in their own mother tongue. Even when local people are the translators there is diffi-

culty in communicating the meaning of many Scripture passages. In the Venda language there are over 30 different words to express various ways of walking. In the Bushman language they found there is no word for fasting. The dialogue went like this:

Translations Consultant: "No! the word for 'fasting' — that is to go without eating?"

Bushman: "Do you mean where there is no food to eat?"

Translations Consultant: "No, I mean when a person chooses not to eat."

Bushman: "Do you mean when he is sick and unable to eat?"

Translations Consultant: "No. . . ."

Bushman: "Why would anyone not want to accept God's gift by eating what God provides?"

This conversation went on for an hour and a half as they tried to find a word in the Bushman language meaning that one chooses not to eat as part of one's prayer. (Thrust)

The Associated Press reported last month (Rocky Mountain News, April 27): "Dr. Christian Barnard, the South African surgeon who pioneered heart transplant operations, said Thursday the time has come for doctors to practise 'active euthanasia' to put hopeless and suffering patients out of misery."

"Merely withdrawing modern life-support systems and halting heroic efforts to save the dying is not sufficient in some cases, the noted physician said in a panel discussion at the National Town Meeting in Washington." "Referring to the legalization of abortion in the United States, Barnard countered that 'you've agreed to destroy a life, the quality of which you don't even know. Yet you say you can't act to destroy a life, the quality of which you know has disappeared.'" (CN)

TORONTO (RNS)

Malcolm Muggeridge, noted social commentator and journalist, told religious press leaders here that the medium of television is leading viewers to confuse the image with reality, and is shaping the consensus without most people being aware of it.

Asked about his views on the rise of "Christian television," Mr. Muggeridge said he did not feel "hopeful" or "sanguine" about this development, because he perceived such enterprises are trying to use the same format as secular programming. Jesus "was least of all a superstar," he said, adding that "humility is not compatible with stardom." (CN)

The new synod of the (synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland has been constituted. Two of the members of the moderamen were also members of the moderamen of the previous synod. A woman-elder was chosen to be the assessor. She is Mrs. W.E. Elkerbout. She is "the second elder to be chosen as a member of the moderamen. During the election a strong suggestion came from the floor to elect a woman. (ND)

TEHRAN (RTR)

The Iranian religious leader, the ayatollah Khomeiny, declared that the most important endeavour is to introduce the laws of the Islam throughout the whole world. He declared in a televised speech to the younger generation in Pakistan that the poor in the whole world are to rise and that ultimately the victory can be obtained only when everywhere the Islam has been established. "The Islam has come to bring the people into the light after having freed them from darkness. We hope that all the poor in the world will join hands and that Iran will serve as an example for all poor countries in the world." (ND)

PROVERBS 3:1-4

My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare will they give you. Let not loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them about your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favour and good repute in the sight of God and man.

The Pastoral Care of the Youth of the Church

Here follows a speech that was given at the Office-Bearers' Conference in Ontario on March 24 of this year. Here and there some changes have been made.

I. INTRODUCTION

I. 1. What I offer you here in this speech is not a thorough study. You could call it a number of remarks on this topic as an introduction to the discussion. Right from the moment when the chairman suggested this topic I felt someone else who is more competent should introduce this topic. On the other hand, it intrigued me, too. For, in our Churches we also have to do with youth who live in these modern times and are confronted with our modern world, and who need pastoral care.

In the second place, I would like to say that the necessity to think about the pastoral care of our youth, confronted me even more with the need for this part of the pastoral work in the congregation. And, perhaps, the result of the discussion can be that we all become more convinced yet that more should be done also for the youth in the covenant, who are, and are called to be, the future Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. 2. It may be good that I first give you a very short outline of what I plan to say. First of all, we have to know what we are talking about. Therefore I shall start with saying a few things about the terms, the words, in the title. In the second place, I should like to say something about the situation in which we and also our youth live. You could name it the analytical part: analyzing our time and situation. And, in the last part, we have to try to come to the care: what could and should be done.

II. THE WORDS IN THE TITLE

II. 1. Let me begin with the last word. It is the word Church. We think and talk about the youth of the Church of Jesus Christ. We confess that the Lord Jesus Christ gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself a Church, chosen to everlasting life, and that we are living members of that Church, Heidelberg Catechism, Question and Answer 54. We also say that the members of the Church are the people of

the covenant. We do not say that the members of the Church are perfect, in the sense of "without sin." But true Christians confess their sins and hate them, and flee from them, and fight against them, for they serve and work together with Christ in His Church — gathering and preserving and defending work, being regenerated by the Holy Spirit. What we confess about the Church is true not only for adult members, but also for the youth of the Church. We confess and believe that they, too, are sanctified in Christ. God has separated them also from the world and set them apart for Himself. Nevertheless, we also confess and believe that they are by nature, just like the adult members, conceived and born in sin, so that they are incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil, unless they are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

This being conceived and born in sin makes them vulnerable as members of Christ's Church. Not only is there the temptation which comes from their own sinful heart; there is also the fact that they live in this world. And we must not forget that our Lord says of the world: "Woe to the world for temptations to sin" (Matthew 18:7). Neither shall we forget that the devil is behind this world. And, because the Church on earth is always a Church in this world, we cannot leave this world out of the picture when we speak about the youth of the Church. It is a fact that the world has an influence which is much greater than we often are aware of, not only on the youth of the Church, but on the older members as well. Christ's Church is a Church under attack by its three enemies: the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature.

II. 2. Then there is the word "youth." My World Book Dictionary gives, among other meanings of this word, the following definition: it is "a young man between boyhood and adulthood." And as the next meaning we read: "any young person or persons." Holding on to these two meanings we restrict "youth" to those young people of the Church, who (with a big word) are called "adolescents." It is the youth between childhood and

adulthood. In this period the transition is made from being children to being adults. It is a very significant period in the life of a person. Adults, in general, have a certain pattern of life; they also have a certain view of life. They have more or less established themselves in life. They have chosen a certain occupation in society. In short, for the most, adults are settled or have settled themselves in life and in society; also in the Church. But all this settling has to grow in the period of adolescence. During that period young people are being formed. And they form their own ideas, their own views, and their own ways of life. It is generally in this period that decisions are made for the rest of life, which includes eternity. Usually during this period their own decision regarding faith is made. When we see this, we see the great importance of this period in the life of a person.



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ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION

P.O. Box 54,
Fergus, Ontario, Canada N1M 2W7

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Faber

Managing Editor: W.W.J. VanOene

Co-Editors: J. Geertsema, Cl. Stam,
D. VanderBoom.

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Besides, when we love the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ and want to cooperate with Him for the preservation of His Church through the generations, and when we are aware of the fact that from the youth of today have to come the leaders in the Church of tomorrow (as fathers and mothers, as well as ministers and elders and deacons), then we see that importance of the youth even more.

II. 3. In the third place there is the word "care." The same dictionary says of this word that it means "serious or grave mental attention; heed; caution; regard." And in the second place we read: "watchful keeping; charge." More meanings are given. But the two mentioned here are enough for our topic. "Care" includes watchfulness, loving attention, concern, which results in active help, in deeds of guidance and support.

If we want to know what "care" really is, we must go to the Bible and see how this book of God's self-revelation speaks about the LORD in His active interest in His people; His loving, steadfast, faithful attention; His constant leading and guiding of His people; His helping; His redeeming activity in Christ Jesus; His disciplining and His sanctifying work.

II. 4. In the fourth and last place there is the word "pastoral." This word is derived from the word "pastor," which means "shepherd." The great Shepherd of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ. But Christ has given to His congregation pastors under Himself: earthly pastors. These pastors on earth are the elders, including the special elders, the ministers. The apostle Peter calls the elders "shepherds," and names himself as one of them. So, when we speak about pastoral care, we mean the care by the shepherds of the flock: the elders. And again I say: both the teaching-and-preaching elders as well as the ruling elders. This pastoral care must be given in teaching, in preaching, in visiting, in disciplining. So far the terms.

III. THE NEED FOR THE PASTORAL CARE

III. 1. Sometimes people speak about a generation gap. The older and the younger generation do not understand each other. They live in two different worlds. This, I think, has something to do with the fact that adolescents go through that period of transition: they are no longer little chil-

ren. They are also not mature adults yet either. They are growing toward that maturity of adulthood, but they are still so dependent. This makes Dr. Clyde M. Narramore say: "Adolescence is universally recognized as a period of turmoil."² In this period, in which their own life views and patterns are formed, youth often are critical. For they do not want to accept the ideas and life patterns of the older generation just like that, as automatically being the right views and patterns. They want answers to their questions: Why is this good and why is that bad? In this growth toward independence or maturity their criticism can easily be out of proportion.

This shows that they are not yet mature. They criticize the older generation and the established order, because they see so many faults and deficiencies there. However, they often forget to be critical also with respect to themselves, and to see their own shortcomings and sins.

Dr. James T. Adams writes in an article on "Adolescent": "Most adolescents become deeply involved with their *peer group* — that is, their circle of friends and acquaintances. These teen-agers look to their peer group rather than to their parents for approval, and they may change their behaviour to win that approval."³ We may conclude that the criticism of youth often is group criticism.

However, this criticism also often has to do with the fact that "A teen-ager looks through the eyes of an idealist," says Dr. Narramore. And he adds: "The teen-ager views the world with optimism . . . Utopia seems practical to youth."⁴ This joyful optimism, when the hard realities of life, with their hurt, their disappointments, their evident vanity or transitoriness, have not yet hit youth, is recommended as something good in the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 11:9-12:1: "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes . . . Remove vexation from your mind and put away pain from your body; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity" (= are passing away soon). And: "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come." However, youth have to keep in mind that "For all these things God will bring you into judgment." God will judge how they have enjoyed their youth. They can and must enjoy their youth as children of

God, their Creator. In that way, they may rejoice in their young, creative, idealistic life.

Dr. Narramore points out that this idealism should be used. He writes that "A teen-ager is someone who responds to a challenge. His imagination is captured by the man or woman who throws out a challenge." He says that youth have often realized their dreams later in their adult life. Young men and girls who were struck by the challenge of missionary work under hard circumstances, have become missionaries themselves.⁵

III. 2. However, now you could say that in our times we are faced with so much apathy among our youth. Many seem to be indifferent, lacking idealism. In this connection I should like to point to what Dr. W.J. Ouweneel writes in his book, *Jeugd in een stervende Eeuw* (Youth in a Dying Age). After he has said that the generation gap between the older and younger generations is shown in the downgrading view which the older generation has with regard to modern youth with their great interest in sex, drugs, eastern mysticism, and hard rock music, he points to the fact that there is so much misunderstanding, or rather, a lack of understanding, with the older generation. They do not see that "millions of young people are in the process of perishing as victims of the destructive modern thinking and as victims of the abominable situation that the average 20th century Christian has nothing to say to them anymore."

Dr. Ouweneel continues: "The decently-living older generation should consider that they are also for a large part responsible for the wicked ways in which the younger generation goes. For the reaction of these youth is especially also a reaction against what they call the bourgeoisie. This is the class of people who lead a decent, normal, average kind of life. Those are the people who do not care about the new philosophies, the threat of our modern consumption society, the dangerous tendencies in modern arts, the ideals of the underground movement. They are the decent citizens who care only about their own little problems: their house, their bigger car, their status and reputation ("What will the neighbors say?"), their career (promotion, pay increase), their friends, their second house, their boat, their colour T.V. They are not real "Christian" anymore . . . (But) in fact they have taken over the new way of life which was dictated

by the Enlightenment. Only, they have not drawn the consequences from it, like the modern youth is doing today."⁶

I should like to say a little more about this book of Dr. Ouweneel's. It deals with the same subject as the book of Dr. F.A. Schaeffer, *How should we then live*, and the book of Os Guinness, a student of Dr. Schaeffer's, *The Dust of Death*.⁷ They all try to show how the modern youth culture is the consequence of the philosophies of modern humanism that started in the Renaissance of the 15th century, was then strengthened in the philosophical movement of the Enlightenment of the 18th century, and has led to the despair of modern philosophies like existentialism.

Dr. Ouweneel's purpose with his book is to show that modern youth is in this situation of despair as a consequence of the evolutionistic world view. He points out that this belief in evolution is not based on facts, but on the humanistic philosophy of previous centuries. The consequences were that not only was it denied that a man can have certain trustworthy knowledge of the spiritual world, the things of God, but it even came so far, per consequence, that the very existence of such a spiritual world was denied. God was declared dead. And the bad thing is that this is not only stated in atheistic philosophies, but in a certain way also in modernistic, liberalistic "God is dead" theology. The author also points to the fact that, though modernistic theology still wants to hold on to the belief that there is a God, and that there is a Jesus Christ, this faith does not work with rational, logical thinking, but that it is seen as the irrational jump of a faith which goes against all rational thinking, and is in fact the desperate jump of a blind, actually unfounded, hope which is all that is left.

As for the rest, this modernistic theology has done away with faith in the infallibility and trustworthiness of the Scriptures, because it has principally taken over the evolutionistic views of the world. That is why this irrational modernistic theology no longer has a rational answer for young people, nor for anyone. For with the evolutionistic belief, man is, in fact, only matter; man is an animal; life no longer has any real meaning and goal. And there no longer are any absolute truths and laws.

It is in reaction to this empty evolutionistic belief that the modern youth are giving themselves over so

much to sex and drugs and the deafening rock music, as well as to all kinds of eastern mysticism. Sex, drugs, music, and the eastern religions are all used to get a mystic experience of contact with the other world that goes beyond our physical and visible world. Dr. Ouweneel also points to the sad fact that in this search for meaning and a goal in life, in this situation of despair, in which meaning and purpose has been taken away by humanistic evolutionistic world views, both outside and within a modernistic Christianity, that in this seeking for contact with the other, the spiritual world in mystic experiences through sex and drugs and transcendental meditation and yoga, and so on — real contact with the spiritual world is experienced. But, then, not with the true God, but with the world of the demons, the evil spirits.⁸

III. 3. If we want to come to a conclusion on this point of the world in which also our young people live, we can say: we live in a world of despair. This despair is the consequence of a humanistic philosophy that has no place for God and the knowledge of God, but builds on the philosophical ideas of evolutionism. This evolutionism turns man into a highly developed animal; it further deprives him from meaning and goal in life; it also takes away from him absolute truth and absolute divine norms. Man himself becomes the norm.

And let us not forget that this nihilistic view has its influence very easily also on our youth, or on a part of it. How many of our teen-agers like the song "Dust in the Wind" (We and our dreams are like dust in the wind). Many young people like the words. They like the tune. And is this not the reality of life? Dust? How many of our youth feel the same in a world that is threatened by destruction by bombs and/or pollution and/or greed? We are dust in the wind. And that is true! Unless we believe in Jesus Christ, in Whom our life is not in vain, but eternal, while belonging to our Saviour and being lived for Him. And it is that faith that is so strongly attacked by the devil, the world, and our own sinful heart.

III. 4. It is good that we also pay attention here to the situation in our own Churches. For when we speak about the pastoral care of the youth of the Church, this concerns *our* pastoral care of *our* youth in the first place. And we have to ask ourselves the question: How is it with us? Is that word of Dr.

Ouweneel's, quoted above, about the so-called decently-living people who mainly care for their own good, earthly life, also applicable with respect to us? I ask this question, because Mr. W. Meijer, in his booklet *Vanavond Huisbezoek* (Tonight Home Visitation) points to the same thing when he speaks about the attention which elders of the Church are to give to the youth on their visits at the homes. He writes: "The confusion of the younger generation becomes much greater yet when they notice that the older generation is not frightened at all in the new situation, that they "do not know the answers anymore either" [as the consequence of the liberalistic and evolutionistic philosophies and theologies, J.G.], but peacefully seek their place in this materialistic world with its appearance of happiness — an appearance which young people sense much sooner."⁹

We are immigrant congregations. And we can say that under the blessing of the Lord much has been built up. Most of us live in good houses and have a well-paying job. We have built up a well-functioning Church life, with its Reformed minor and major assemblies. We have our Theological College and two Mission fields. We have Reformed elementary schools, and are adding Reformed high schools. And let us be very thankful for these gifts, and make good use of them.

But this getting settled as Reformed immigrants, most of whom had to start from scratch, meant a life of working very hard. And in order to maintain what we have we must continue to work hard. It all costs a lot of money.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the money for Church and school, many of us do not have to suffer financially. Many can, at the same time, maintain a fairly high standard of living. We can afford trips to countries abroad, to the Old country, to Florida. We can afford to have a boat or a cottage up north, or both. And so I can continue. And this affluence in which we share must lead to the question: Are we also becoming more and more materialistic in our lifestyle? In an article in *Clarion* the Rev. G. Van Dooren wrote, not so long ago,¹⁰ that the money for our Reformed schools was not so much of a problem, but much more the interest, love, and attention we give to this Reformed cause.

In this connection another question can be asked: Did we, during all the years in Canada in which we had

to work so hard, give enough attention to study? And do we do it now? Did we lead our young people, and do we lead our youth, in this way of study through the reading of good articles and books, through our example and through our discussing together with them what we read? Did we arouse, and do we arouse, their interest? Or is it so that our youth almost always hears us speaking about money and work and business, and so little about a good sermon, a good article, a good book, and the joy of studying in the things of the LORD?

Before I conclude this second part, it is good to ask some other questions. In how far do we slowly take over the revolutionary worldly ways of thinking and acting? Dr. Narramore points to the confusing women's liberation movement, with the so-called working mothers. He points to the society that changes so much through modern science and technology.¹¹ Alvin Toffler has devoted a whole book to that total change our world is going through.¹² His remedy is that we must rule that change before it is too late, before that change rules us.

In how far do we also change under the influence of modern views? How much time do we spend on getting entertained by radio and television? In how far do we take over an individualistic look and way of life, inspired by the humanistic human rights philosophy?

I will conclude this second part, it has not really been worked out enough. More things could have been mentioned. But may this suffice as introduction to a discussion, and a further considering on these things.

IV. THE CONTENTS OF THE PASTORAL CARE

IV. 1. When we now come to our positive part, I should like to start with a quotation from a booklet written by Prof. Dr. J. Douma of The Netherlands, *Natuurrecht — Een Betrouwbare Gids?* Maintaining and briefly discussing the ten commandments as rules for life, he writes with respect to the fifth commandment: "But as the state does not have the right to take the children away from the parents (Plato), so the children themselves do not have the right either to cut that tie. Individualistic theories which make of the child an entity in itself are just as rejectable as theories in which the state receives absolute powers. God has put parents and their children together into a com-

munion of life . . . The undermining of the family means that the whole society is weakened. For the very thing which is attacked in the family, is also broken down in other relations of life; it is authority." He further says that, without authority, human society is impossible. "There is no freedom without laws and (thus) without authority."¹³

In this connection I would also like to point to a booklet of H.R. Müller-Schwefe, *De Wereld Heeft Geen Vader*. He sees the cause of the destruction of our western society in the fact that paternal authority has been abolished in marriage, in the family, and also in school and state and church. And he stresses as a solution for the many problems that we get the father back in the church, the state, the school, and, not least of all, in the family. But he also points to the fact that this is only possible when we go back to the Bible, and to God our Creator and Redeemer in Christ; and when we see that fatherhood again as an *office* and calling which is given to us from God. Fatherhood is a God-given office. He says: "Only when there are fathers again, who really fulfil their office, can the family again be sound. . . . Father may not be completely absorbed in his work in public life, but must make himself known also within the circle of the family as a real father . . . Children need to experience that Father is really a father, and how strong he is . . . Fathers have to learn again that their leisure time is not the movie theatre and the sports field [and the T.V., J.G.], but, in the first place, belongs to the children. Father must introduce his child to life." And a little further he says: "There is also the relation of the child with the heavenly Father. First, to the child, his earthly father is the embodiment of fatherly authority and power. The image which the child forms for himself of the father on earth, is transferred upon the Father in heaven." And when later the child discovers that his earthly father is not almighty and sinless, it must have the Father in heaven under Whose authority it places itself.¹⁴

IV. 2. In my opinion, we have here an element for the pastoral care by office-bearers in the Church, which is of the greatest importance in more than one way. The pastoral care of the youth has to be directed, first of all, toward a good — that is, a biblically-functioning — Christian family and family life. Hereby Christ Jesus must be preached and believed as the Redeemer also of this earthly life in its many relations; not

least of all of the family relation and of family life. In Colossians 3 the apostle Paul speaks about Christ as the Redeemer of those human relations: He restores those relations in such a way that there is harmony again through faith in Him: the love for Him and so for each other rules the lives of the believers. This restoration means that Christ brings back the original order of creation in paradise: man is again the head of his wife and of the family; children obey their parents, acknowledging their authority; while the parents lead the children and educate them in the fear — that is also in the service — of the Lord in all aspects of life.

In preaching and teaching, and also at home visitation, the pastors who care for the youth must stress the Christian family, in which both parents and children acknowledge the *authority* which the father and the mother have from God. The *office* of father and of mother must be seen and accepted as a responsible and accountable task given by God in Christ, first of all by the parent. He/she has to see that he/she represents God in his/her office of father/mother. This representing God in the family to the children means that in his fatherhood (or also in her motherhood) the Christian father/mother has to show Who the heavenly Father is. The parent has to love, to guide, to educate, to discipline, to forgive, and so on. As it is not hard to be a child of the heavenly Father, but a joy, so it must not be hard to be a child of that earthly father/mother. However, the father has to maintain his authority as a task and calling, an office, given to him by God. He may not neglect or throw it out of the door by becoming a mere playmate of the child.

What is also of great importance here is that father and mother in their office of parents, representing the heavenly Father for their children, give them a good example, as Christ not only taught His disciples, but also practised what He preached. And did Christ not say that in His work He followed the example of His Father in heaven? Also Paul in his office of apostle of Christ tells Timothy and whole congregations, his spiritual children, to follow his example. Being a good example of godliness is part of that office of father and mother. When youth see that (their and other) parents talk godly but act ungodly, the possibility is great that they will turn away from that insincerity, and, with it, from the Church and

from Christ. Let me illustrate with a few examples.

We do not like it that young people want to have everything that is nice to have, and that they live only for themselves; but do parents put restrictions on what they want and buy for themselves in luxuries and comfort? What are the priorities for the parents? Are they all those many things in God's Kingdom? Is that the Church, and what belongs to it? Can parents say "no" to certain things for Christ's sake, and therefore also with gladness and joy?

We do not like and are opposed to modern, unlimited sex — premarital, extramarital, and homosexual. For it is all against the Word of the LORD. But do we as parents live together in Christian harmony? And do we, in the struggle of faith sometimes, show the beauty of a truly Christian marriage in which husband and wife may show the relation between Christ and His Church? And do we as parents talk and lead our youth here with the Bible as our Guide?

We hate the use of drugs. We warn our youth against these products of decadency that ruin the lives of so many. We warn against addiction to alcohol as well. But are we ourselves willing to quit smoking? Are not many people addicted to that little stick with nicotine? And how many of the parents, in our days of affluence, are *regularly* drinking one or more beers, one or more whiskeys, or some other kind of liquor? Are parents willing to restrict themselves and say "no" for the sake of the youth of Christ's Church?

We know from the Bible and from our Confession how important regular instruction in the Word of God is for a godly, Christian life. Therefore, we have received from God our worship services. And we fight against the desecration of the Lord's Day. But what do we do ourselves? Are we taking holidays so easily, in such a way that on one or two or more Sundays we do not attend worship services, or go to other denominations for our pleasure, and because it is so convenient? Are we going to church faithfully? Can we say "no" to convenience and pleasure for the sake of the upbuilding of the Church of the Lord, especially also for the upbuilding of our youth? Can we say "no," while we easily could afford to say "yes"? Does Dr. Ouweneel, quoted above, and making a statement about modern materialistic Christianity, not have a good point also with respect to us? Pastoral care for the youth of the Church means that the

parents are urged to examine themselves in these matters, for the sake of the Church, and so for the sake of the youth, the Church of tomorrow.

What holds true of the father in the family also holds true of the office-bearer in the church, the pastor (minister and elder). In the Church they must maintain that they have an office from the Lord. In that office they have to represent and display the heavenly Father (we can also say: the Lord Jesus Christ) in their loving, guiding disciplining care.

Let us elaborate a little on what it means to represent and display God in our office. First of all, as pastors we must show love, true Christian love, which becomes evident in attention, interest, and thus in good care for our youth. For God searches and is acquainted with his children in all their ways, Psalm 139.

In this loving care we have to learn to listen to the adolescents. Dr. Narramore formulates two rules in this respect. He writes: "Counselors realize there is a problem to be solved; not a sermon to be preached." And "A counselor should avoid giving too much advice until he has drawn a teen-ager out sufficiently to understand the problem and its setting."¹⁵

In Hebrews 2 and 4 we read that the Lord Jesus Christ, being the merciful and faithful high priest, can help those who are tempted, since He Himself has been tempted in all things like we are. Christ came down in our misery and stood beside the sinners, although He did not sin with them; and He did not condemn them, but pulled them out of their sins.

In order now not to condemn but understand and stand beside our young people, especially also those who have problems, it is good (and I would say necessary) that the pastor studies and acquaints himself with what is going on in our world, as much as he can. Of course, insight in life must be built up in the first place from God's Word. But this we can complement with study material from Christian authors, also books as mentioned here from Schaeffer, Guinness, Ouweneel. Read them critically, though. They are not correct in all their statements. Hereby the reading of a book or books about the art of counseling is good as well. Dr. Narramore points that out, too.

But what this author does not mention is that idea of the office which the office-bearer has from God. And I

add here: this fact that office-bearers, like parents, have an office must mean that they must be aware that pastors, like parents, also have to speak with the authority of God, with the prophetic authority: "Thus says the LORD." Our wishing to understand and stand beside the young people, instead of proudly placing ourselves above them, must not take away that prophetic, authoritative speaking. The will of God must be the highest authority in our life under which we all have to and are willing to bow — old and young, parent and child, pastor and sheep.

In this connection I would like to point to another very important aspect of the pastoral care. It is the element of instruction. Dr. Narramore writes that teen-agers want to know. They want to find out. Although we sometimes may have the impression that this is not true with respect to the knowledge of the Bible, the Catechism, and the like, it is a matter of fact that the Bible puts great emphasis on instruction of the youth of the covenant. I only need refer to the book of Proverbs. Moreover, is not the whole Bible one book filled with God's covenantal, fatherly instruction about Himself and Who He is toward us, and about us and our world and who and what we are (supposed to be), and through Christ's blood and Holy Spirit may again be for Him?

IV. 4. I am aware that more could be said than only these remarks. I am also aware of the fact that there is much that counts not only for the youth but is applicable to all. And further, I am aware that we can think and speak and be active, but that with all our activities we are unable to convert even one sinner into a believer. Making somebody believe only God can do. His divine power is necessary for that miracle of grace. Nevertheless, let us hold fast the promise of the gospel, which we confess also in the Canons of Dort, Chapter III/IV, Article 17, "Grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our duty, the more clearly this favour of God, working in us, usually manifests itself, and the more directly His work is advanced; to whom alone all the glory, both for the means and for their saving fruit and efficacy, is forever due."

J. GEERTSEMA

FOOTNOTES

2. Dr. Clyde M. Narramore, Ed.D., *The Psychology of Counseling*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 12th printing Nov. 1968, page 107.

Continued on next page.

Report

of the Membership Meeting of the Canadian Reformed Rest Home Inc. held March 23, 1979, at 8:00 p.m. in the basement of John Calvin School in Smithville, Ontario.

The meeting is called to order by our chairman, br. L. Knegt. He asks the membership to sing Psalm 84:1, and then reads from Holy Scripture Romans, chapter 12, after which he leads in opening prayer.

Some business concerning name change of the corporation, which dates back as far as 1977, is brought before the membership and approved.

Next the minutes of the last membership meeting are read and approved. Our treasurer explains a report concerning the financial position of the society.

Our chairman then reads the auditor's report for the year 1978 which informs us that the books are in good order. Auditors for the year 1979 are appointed.

THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE YOUTH OF THE CHURCH — Cont'd.

3. Dr. James T. Adams, in an article on "Adolescent" in *World Book, Year Book 1979*, page 550.
4. Dr. Narramore, *op.cit.*, page 136.
5. Dr. Narramore, *op.cit.*, page 138.
6. Dr. W.J. Ouweneel, *Jeugd in een stervende Eeuw*, Buyten en Schipperheijn, Amsterdam, 1977, page 88ff.
7. Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1976; and Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death*, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1973.
8. Dr. Ouweneel, *op.cit.*, page 94.
9. W. Meyer, *Vanavond Huisbezoek*, De Vuurbaak, Groningen, page 109ff.
10. *Clarion*, Canadian Reformed Magazine, Vol. 28, No. 2, page 29ff.
11. Dr. Narramore, *op.cit.*, page 148ff.
12. Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock*, Random House Inc., New York.
13. Dr. J. Douma, *Natuurrecht — Een Betrouwbare Gids?*, No. XXI of the "Kamper Bijdragen," De Vuurbaak, Groningen, page 86.
14. Dr. H.R. Müller-Schwefe, *De Wereld Heeft Geen Vader*, translated from German, T. Wever, Franeker, page 73ff. For a Scriptural approach of the problem of the authority-crisis I refer here also to B. Holwerda, *De Crisis van het Gezag*, published by the Dutch League of Young Men Societies.
15. Dr. Narramore, *op.cit.*, page 151.

Next our chairman speaks some words concerning the activities of the board, and some of the problems that the society faces. He also speaks some words concerning the purpose and duties of our standing committees.

After this our agenda calls for the election of two board members. The results of the vote show br. Cl. Hopman elected, and our chairman, br. L. Knegt, re-elected.

We break for coffee.

After intermission two members of our building committee show us some slides giving the membership an idea as to the possible layout of a unit in a rest home, along with some slides of a neighbouring rest home. After viewing these slides and realizing how cozy one of these units can be, with plenty of space inside, one's own patio and even one's own garden, any fears one may have about being "cooped up" in a rest home, vanish.

The slides lead us to our question period.

One problem that we face (and this also comes out in our question period) is how do we get more older members to attend our annual meetings and show their interest. Our membership meetings seem to attract more middle-aged people than retired brothers and sisters. A suggestion is made to make more use of our Dutch language at our meetings. Another suggestion is made to visit our elderly brothers and sisters during one of their social gatherings, or to combine a congregational meeting with an informative rest home meeting. The chairman promises that the board will look into some of these suggestions. After these and other points have been discussed at length, the chairman closes the discussion period, he requests that the membership sing Psalm 84:6, after which brother P. Oosterhoff leads in thanksgiving prayer.

A FEW REMARKS

It seems that many of our older people are reluctant to face the fact that owning, or rather, maintaining, their own home becomes more and more difficult as the years increase and as (in most cases) strength decreases. However, when it becomes inevitable that they are in need of more rest, and when it becomes a must that they sell their home, it is not until then that they realize that there is no Canadian Reformed Home where they can live with their brothers and sisters and enjoy the communion of

saints. Of course, in a few of these cases the family can and should first help out, but there are also instances where this is neither possible nor advisable. The result quite often is to move into a home which is not really their choice.

Another point which is often overlooked by our older people is that the cost of living in a rest home would be lower than living in one's own home. This is very often not realized because the interest one would be collecting if one sold his home, is not calculated also, and maintenance cost on one's own home is often forgotten about. Much more could be said about a Canadian Reformed Home and the need for such a home, and much work is yet to be done. However, let us not forget that without the blessing of our Heavenly Father all our labours are in vain. Let us, therefore, prayerfully work together at this project, for it is not as some people may think: a Canadian Reformed luxury — but rather a caring for one another as brothers and sisters. It should also be noted that our aim is not only a rest home, but a rest home with a certain amount of care should the need arise.

For the Board,
H.A. BARTELS

Church News

Accepted to Smithville, Ontario:
REV. CL. STAM
of Burlington West, Ontario.

* * *

ATTENTION PLEASE

All visitors to Ottawa take note:

We have changed our place of worship. As of June 24, 1979, our new address is:

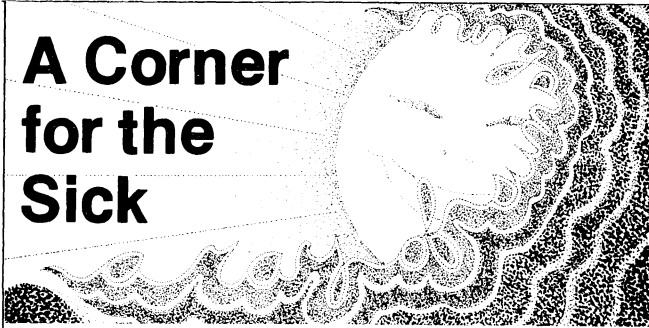
Merivale United Church
Merivale Road,
Ottawa, (South of Baseline)

Our services start at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.

For information call:

W. Schepers — 825-2403
A. DeLeeuw — 722-4193
C. Torenvliet — 832-2004

A Corner for the Sick



Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.

I Corinthians 13:12b

There are many things in life which we do not understand, especially when it concerns the way in which the Lord has guided our ways! Did we choose everything to happen the way it did? Did we plan to go in the direction in which our lives have been guided?

We often must confess that all things happened according to our desires, but not because of our wisdom and foresight. We may notice, be it only in part, that a very wise and loving Fatherhand has guided our lives this far, and that He ordained things to happen, so that even our unspoken desires have been granted. We may daily experience His goodness and mercy, and we may experience His everlasting love in the safety we may enjoy when He spreads His protecting wings over us.

This should stimulate us to praise our Lord, the King of Creation. It will bring us to the gate of heaven, but still it is for us only knowing in part, for something even better is awaiting us. When Christ returns we may fully understand, as we ourselves have been fully understood. At present, our loved ones or closest friends do not always understand us. What a comforting thought to know there is One Who understands us so completely, and not only understands us, but also makes all things which happen subservient to our salvation (Lord's Day 1). He maketh no mistake!

Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. What a glorious future to look forward to!

Praise to the Lord, Who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Hymn 52:2, Book of Praise

I would like to share the following poem with you, dear readers!

The Weaver

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me,
I cannot choose the colours
He worketh steadily.

Oft times He weaveth sorrow,
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I, the underside.

Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN



From Janine Smid's mother, we received the following note; "Janine would like to thank everyone who sent cards, letters, and hand drawn pictures to her. She really enjoyed receiving all her very own mail and she has pasted all the cards in a scrapbook. Thanks also for the cards which she still receives every month. Thank you everyone!"

Please, remember the June birthdays mentioned the previous time.

Send your requests to:

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

news medley

Much wisdom can be gained from the various bulletins which appear in the midst of the Churches. However, not all wisdom is fit to be praised openly and that puts severe limitations on someone who is going to pass on to a wider circle that which originally was destined for a limited group of readers. Likewise we find things which are not-so-wise, and we similarly refrain from publicizing many of those not-so-wise remarks or commentaries. That, too, puts severe limitations on a "news medleyer." Sometimes, however, we find pieces of information which have to be made known and which we could learn only (too late) from the local bulletins. Among those items are wedding anniversaries and other bits of personal information.

The Burlington West bulletin tells us that brother and sister L. Ronda celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary "some time ago," and we offer our congratulations as yet. I do not know how long that "a while ago" is, but we wish to show that we are not forgetting to mention that fact.

Another fortieth wedding anniversary was celebrated by brother and sister G. Dam of Surrey, British Columbia. They started their life in Canada in Barrhead, but have been living in the New Westminster/Surrey area for many years. Every time when I meet brother Dam he tells me, "Keep up the good work!" I do that right now when I offer our heartfelt congratulations on this occasion and wish you both the Lord's blessing upon your further pathway. May our God add more years to the ones you have already received.

Was it five years ago when we met brother and sister B. Smouter of Toronto? That was in Bird's Hill Park near Winnipeg, wasn't it? I think I recall that a short while after that I discovered that they were married for forty years. That is now forty-five years already; it was so on May 30th. It does not need any further proof that we rejoice with you as well, and that we commend you further into the faithful care of our God.

To remain for a while in the personal sphere: The Rev. VanBeveren was prevented from doing his work for some time because of a pinched nerve. That was the more a handicap because Mrs. VanBeveren, too, had to be hospitalized. At the moment of this writing she is still in the hospital, but there seems to be progress. And as for our brother, he was expected to resume his work.

Since you will learn that from the official Church News, I actually would not have had to mention that the Rev. Cl. Stam is going to leave Ontario North to go to Ontario South, to serve the Church at Smithville. Meanwhile, the Rev. C. VanDam also left this region, to go and serve the New Westminster Church. See how fast things and situations can change! I found the new address of the VanDam family in the Brampton bulletin: 9210 - 132A Street, Surrey, B.C., V3V 7E1. Such for possible correspondents.

We are happy that we may expect three students to complete the work for their degree this summer, so that at least a few of the vacancies can be filled in this manner. It will be quite something when the convocation is held in the West. Judging by the program which was published in our previous issue, the Committee appointed for the purpose

has drawn up an interesting schedule. Many brothers and sisters in the West will make use of this opportunity, I'm convinced.

A more or less "personal" thing is also that some of our smaller sisters are continuing to grow, and that is a reason for gratitude. Ottawa is happy that a family is moving down there (or should we say, "moving up there?"); Barrhead reports some growth, and the Guelph Church also sees its number increase steadily. Those are most encouraging signs, and we hope that the trend will continue. Our larger Churches do not need more members; it is in the smaller Churches that the need for increased support (and not only financial support!) is felt steadily.

Not only changes in membership take place; changes of meeting-place are also happening or are planned. Chilliwack's Consistory report informs us, "Letter from the East Chilliwack Mennonite Brethren with a counter-offer on their property and buildings. After a lively discussion an offer is made up and will be submitted to them. The offer will expire on May 22, 1979." I have not yet heard what the result of this latest bargaining is. It would be nice if Chilliwack could come into the possession of a Church building of their own. A Church building is not only a place where the Congregation worships; it is also a social center, at least, it should be that. Having a meeting place of your own binds the people together.

Carman is still pondering what sort of Church building to erect. I have the impression that they are not very eager to put up a building with a basement, seeing the experiences during the latest flooding by the Red River. I agree: to have everything on ground-floor level is the nicest; but it is considerably more expensive, and: you need a large property if you wish to have meeting rooms etc. all on the same level. I am eager to learn what has been decided.

Langley, too, is still talking about the erection of a Church building, and more definite plans have not yet been revealed. We shall have to have some patience.

The Langley Consistory decided to increase the number of elders from six to seven, "in order to reach an even situation in future years with respect to terms of office and to ease the workload of the clerk-to-be."

The Cloverdale Consistory received a report from "the 'sub-committee of the annex' regarding some preliminary discussions held with some members of the Board of the School Society. It appears that the Board is quite willing to participate in the utilization of such a building. This 'Annex' matter will be discussed with the congregation on a meeting called for Friday, May 5th." Again we must say that we have not yet heard what the result of that meeting was; but then, it is always nice that we can look forward to more news in the future. The pickings are slim enough nowadays as is.

We mentioned Carman above, in connection with building plans. I also mentioned the flood of which we saw some pictures a few issues back. A little boy was born on the eve of the flood. "Many expected the name 'Moses' would come in somewhere, but the parents had the wisdom not to tag him too closely to the flood waters. In our age it is quite something though, to have your baby in the hospital and to go home the same day."

We are in the western part of Canada anyway with our thoughts right now, and therefore I mention in one breath that the ministers from the Western regions planned to have a get-together or a study conference, at which the

“Rev. D. DeJong is to introduce the topic ‘Revision Church Order’; Rev. M. VanderWel ‘Relationship Elders and Deacons (Council vs Consistory)’; Rev. C. Van Spronsen ‘Strategy Home Mission’; Rev. J.D. Wielenga ‘The Church and the Communion of Saints.’” As everyone can see: the brothers do not plan to have a few lazy days together, but are intent upon studying together. The topics, too, are very relevant to our present-day situation. I am convinced that we all shall benefit from that conference, even though I do not cherish any hope that *Clarion* will see the immediate fruits of this “encounter.” Or will it?

The last item from the West comes from Neerlandia: “The Dutch worship services are again discussed, and it is decided to drop one Dutch service. The first reading service will be in Dutch every month beginning in June.”

Herewith we take leave of the West and hasten to Burlington.

During the last month or so political meetings were held in not a few places. More than once what was organized by our political study groups was an “all-candidate meeting.” We do not know whether those meetings have brought us anything new, nor whether they changed the mind of any of the Church members that went to listen and to learn. Generally speaking, I think, our people knew right from the start whom they were going to vote for on election day. I have also noticed that quite a few among our membership would have voted for Mr. Trudeau if he had been Conservative, because they are convinced that he is the better “leader,” but that they voted for the Conservative candidate for personal reasons and definitely not because they thought that Mr. Clark was or is such a great politician and leader with the qualities for such a position. The large

majority of our people came with their minds made up, I think. And one could, in those circumstances, ask whether those all-candidate meetings made any sense at all. The benefit, I think, is more with the candidates than with the people who came to listen to them and to ask questions. The Burlington bulletin speaks in that line.

More than 300 people filled the gymnasium to listen to the candidates and panelists. The politicians did not tell us anything new, but instead we hope they learned something from us. They learned that there is a church community in Burlington which is very much concerned with the welfare of this country and with the way it should be governed. We hope the politicians now have some idea of our Reformed viewpoint on these matters. We are sure that they will not forget the name “Association for Reformed Political Action,” both for the views which we expressed and for the size of audience which we attracted. It will certainly help in future discussions with our elected officials.

That is something we should be aware of: the very fact that we had these meetings and that we tried to express what we believe concerning the manner in which our country is to be governed and in which its affairs are to be run will mean something to those who have been elected. At one meeting, which I attended, our objections against the position and power of the labour unions were brought to the fore and made clear to the candidates.

And this has to be the end of our medley for this time. Happy to have met you again, I sign off.

vO

The Year of the Child ²

Let us just for a few moments consider some of the more recent headline grabbers. After having been subjected to a continuous stream of vocal demands for rights for various groups, such as, the black population, Indians and other native people, rights for sex deviates, and the liberation of women, we have now arrived at the year of the child. Earlier I already quoted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and in what way our Government is contributing. On the surface it appears to be a noble and worthwhile endeavour. We recognize that child abuse the world over is a frightful reality. Between 2000 and 4000 children are dying each year in the United States alone from circumstances associated with physical abuse and neglect. However, what civil libertarians are proposing and have successfully brought before the courts is that parents do not have the *first* right to bring up their children

the way they find best, regardless if child abuse is present, imagined, or not there at all. This is not just talk or scare tactics; just listen to some very real examples:

— According to Robert Gordon, General Secretary of the Manitoba Teachers Society, “Parents do not have absolute authority in all matters concerning the welfare of their children Parents have the responsibility to ensure that their children are given every opportunity to develop themselves, their unique talents and interests, in the manner most appropriate for them, but that, in carrying out this responsibility, parents must rely on and have confidence in the services and assistance available from the professionals in education.” This reminds me somewhat of a publication by N.U.C.S., *Authority behind the classroom door*, challenging similar opinions held by the AACS.

— A new fad in education in Ontario is called “values education.” It is meant to help school children make up their minds about moral choices which they will face during their life. It tries to avoid any kind of indoctrination which is thought improper in a pluralistic society, trying instead to have young people form their own moral convictions with the teacher as kind of a friendly guide. It specifically teaches children to question the values taught by parents.

— A Swedish woman academic, Prof. Ulla Jacobsens, is proposing that children should have the right to “divorce” their parents. According to her: “Parents should never force their child to take part in demonstrations, to join in religious communion; they should never inflict physical punishment or spy on them, read private notes, diaries, and mail.”

— The Ontario Teachers Federation has hired a gentleman by the name of Laurier LaPierre to lead a commission, studying the education of the young child. Mr. LaPierre supports the totalitarian philosophy that (to quote him) “The Ontario child is not a family child;

he is an institutional child. It is not the school that is an extension of the home, but the home that is an extension of the school." He called the decision to let Alberta Mennonites educate their own children the most fascist decision ever handed down by a Canadian court. Is this the man our Ontario educators are turning to for advise?

— In this year of the child, the courts are awarding custody of children to lesbians. The irony of it all.

— The B.C. Federation of Labour and others are campaigning for the unionization of women workers and for twenty-four-hours-a-day, preschool child care. Their aim is to increase the powers of unions and to advocate the power of the state over preschool children. Again it is obvious that the aim is to get the children away from the parents at an early age.

— Another fad in education is "parenting courses." They are actively promoted by Planned Parenthood, that infamous promotor of abortion and of sex education without morality. This is another area where our tax dollars are used to destroy the God-given family unit.

— A recent news story informs us about a minister in Upper New York state who had his daughter returned to parental custody. She had been removed by state officials last year after a spanking. The officials will monitor the home to see that the conditions established for her return are kept. One of the conditions is that she cannot continue her education in the Christian day school. What is happening to the rights of *parents*, or to freedom of religion?

— It is suggested that children should select lawyers, and be allowed to sue their parents.

God-given parental rights are being eroded. More than one educator has gone on record to proclaim that the state has prior right over parents to the control of their children. The current, very commendable concern about child abuse is being used as a front to further this concept. So is the mad drive for so-called children's rights — not a children's rights issue at all, but a confrontation between state and parental rights. There are currently numerous cases in the courts regarding parental control versus state control over children. Our rights and freedoms are threatened. C.S. Lewis warned about this in these words: "Where benevolent planning, armed with political and economic power, becomes wicked is when it tramples on people's rights for

the sake of their own good."

We can go on for a long time yet, citing numerous other examples, but I am sure that I have made my point very clear. It is time that we wake up, that we speak out. Every Christian has an individual task here, but also collectively, perhaps through the newly-formed political action groups, or Home mission and Public Relations committees. Definitely as parents and educators we have a task to instruct our children how to fight and withstand these satanic attacks. To warn again and again about the dangers of the public school system, both elementary and secondary. We have all heard the arguments, such as, "We have gone through the public schools and so have my parents and everything has turned out alright." We can only say that that has been by the grace of God and in spite of ourselves. Where Reformed education is available and we do not send our children, can we then still with a clear conscience pray, "Lead us not into temptation"? And "us" includes our children. We must, however, also sound a strong warning. Do not be lulled to sleep with a false security that the teachers in the Christian school or the minister in the Catechism class will do the instructing for us. No, they will assist us, but the prime responsibility lies with the parents, in this Christian family we talked about earlier, where the father and the mother talk to their children.

Communication is an "in" word these days. And, indeed, this also applies in our families. However, it should never take the form of a forum or discussion group. W. Meijer, in his book, *Ons kind leeft morgen*, compares this kind of communication to a round table conference. And a round table eliminates the possibility of a place of leadership and authority. There is no head of the table. This is not the type of communication the Lord expects in our families. We find this clearly expressed in Deuteronomy 6:4-7 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." These words are primarily directed at parents. In Proverbs 6:20-23 we find the same command-

ment but here more directed to children. "My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart always; tie them about your neck. When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you."

God demands of us that we talk about the matters of His kingdom, discuss the things that happened at school or at work, and speak about daily temptations and struggles. Also take time out for the things we are talking about now. Also prayer in the family, where the father carries the needs of his family before the Lord, should be included in this area of communications. There is a lot of truth in the old saying: "A family that prays together, stays together."

Many more things can be said about Christian family life. There are areas such as family worship, the reading together of God's Word, singing and music in the family. However, the main purpose of this article was to restate the importance of the family unit, which has been called the most fundamental human community, established and instituted by God Himself. And when we hear and read of all the ways in which the devil is trying to break it down, let us not be discouraged or adopt a defeatist attitude. Rather, let us listen to what Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians in chapter 6:10-20: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. *Therefore take the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand!*"

G.J. NORDEMAN

Note of the Editor: This was an introduction during the general membership meeting of Guido de Bres High School in Hamilton on May 11, 1979. We left it, as much as possible, in its original state.

FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of *Clarion* was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on June 9, 1979.

press review

ONCE AGAIN: THE COVENANT

At the end of my first reply to Prof. Hoeksema's answer to what I wrote in *Clarion* in November of last year, I promised that I would come back on what Prof. Hoeksema calls misrepresentations. He writes in the January 15, 1979, issue of the *Standard Bearer*:

Finally, it is a gross misrepresentation to suggest as Geertsema does that the implication of our presentation of the covenant is that God says to some children in baptism (i.e., to the reprobate children): "To you I give nothing. For you your baptism is a fake baptism, an empty form." I assure the brother that he can find nothing of the kind in our Protestant Reformed writings on this subject. This presentation is his, not ours. And it is an illigitimate conclusion on his part from our view. I also insist, however, that any view which teaches that baptism seals a general, conditional promise to all that are baptized is contrary to Scripture and the creeds and is just as guilty of holding forth to believing parents a vain hope as is the view of presupposed regeneration.

Prof. Hoeksema adds the promise that he was going to devote a separate article to the subject of his conception of a historic sphere of the covenant. This he did in the issue of February 1, 1979, of the *Standard Bearer*. And the reason for this separate article is that I had written that I did not believe in such a "historic(al) sphere of the covenant," and could not find it in Scripture. In that following article Prof. Hoeksema first repeats that the Protestant Reformed people do not teach that the baptism of the reprobate children is fake and an empty form. It is never that, he says. And he continues:

Neither, however, does baptism say anything individualistic, such as Geertsema suggests, to and concerning a given infant when it is baptized, "I make My covenant with you in Christ." One simply does not find such language in our Baptism Form. If you try to imply the beautiful language of our Baptism Form to every individual child that is baptized, you not only run completely stuck and run into insoluble problems, but you also will end by making God a liar. The latter, of course, no one wants to do. But to avoid this you have to read the Baptism Form with some kind of mental reservation or some kind of mental parenthetical insertion. The

Kuyperians have to insert a "presupposition." The Heynsians and the Liberated have to insert the idea that the promise is only an objective bequest to all, which is dependent upon the fulfillment of a condition. The difficulty for both is that the Baptism Form speaks of *facts, realities*. Take, for example, that beautiful prayer of thanksgiving after baptism: "Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise Thee, that Thou hast forgiven us, and our children, all our sins, through the blood of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, and received us through Thy Holy Spirit as members of Thine only begotten Son, and adopted us to be Thy children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by Holy baptism. . . ." Notice the strong and factual language. But the moment you try to understand that "us and our children" in such a way that it includes *all* children born of believing parents and *all* children that are baptized, these words will choke in your throat because you know that they are not true. You are compelled to insert something, such as "presupposedly" or "conditionally." But as soon as you make the insertion, all reason for thanksgiving is gone. What this remark comes down to as far as my difference with the Rev. Geertsema is concerned is this: Let him explain the Thanksgiving in our Baptism Form *in such a way that it includes reprobate children*. I very boldly say in advance: he cannot do so! And yet he wants to have God say in baptism to *every* baptized child, "I make My covenant with you in Christ."

But let us return to that question of a historical sphere of the covenant.

First of all, let me point out that this historical sphere of the covenant is not *limited* to the reprobate in the church. Also the elect children, the children of the promise, the seed, are born and grow up in that same historical sphere of the covenant. But there is this difference: the elect children, the seed, are *in* the covenant, while the reprobate are not. The reprobate children are born and grow up in the *sphere* of the covenant; but the promise, "I will be your God," is not for them. Instead, all that they experience in that historical sphere of the covenant functions, and that, too, according to God's purpose, for their hardening and condemnation. The elect children are both in the sphere of the covenant and in the covenant; and all that they experience in that sphere of the covenant functions as a means of grace for their conversion and their salvation.

I would like to make a remark here. At the beginning of this article I quoted from Prof. Hoeksema that, according to him, I grossly misrepresented him in saying that according to the Protestant Reformed view baptism of the reprobate children is fake and an empty form. What is that: an empty form? It is a form without contents. The baptism of the reprobate in the Protestant Reformed view I called such a form without contents, and therefore fake. But was this really such a gross misrepresentation? What did I quote from Prof. Hoeksema? I shall repeat it: "The reprobate children are born and grow up in the *sphere* of the covenant; but **THE PROMISE, 'I WILL BE YOUR GOD,' IS NOT FOR THEM.**" Capitals and emphasis are added here. What is the promise of the covenant, that contains complete and everlasting salvation? That promise is: "I am the LORD your God." What do sacraments do? They signify and seal the *promise* of the Gospel — this promise: "I am the LORD your God." And if now, according to Prof. Hoeksema, precisely this promise, "I am the LORD your God," is *not* for the reprobate, *what* is, then, signified and sealed to them? The answer is: **NOTHING!** Am I then, allowed to draw the conclusion that in the case of the baptism of reprobates, according to the Protestant Reformed view, such a baptism is an empty form and a fake baptism? Or is neither the Heidelberg Catechism nor the Belgic Confession true when they confess that the sacraments "seal unto us His promises," (Belgic Confession, Article 33)?

With the view that the promise of the covenant is only sealed to the elect and not to the reprobate, there is only one conclusion possible, whatever way you turn things. And that conclusion is: the baptism of the non-elect, who do not have the promise, is an empty baptism. There is only one way to avoid such an empty baptism. That is: baptize only the elect. But, then, there is a new difficulty: who are those elect? We are here at the same point as with the "Kuyperians" with their idea that in baptism regeneration as a fact is sealed (presumptive regeneration). The consequence there would be: baptize only those who are regenerated, which is the same as the elect. That means: baptize only those of whom you can believe that they *are* regenerated (elected), because they show faith. Baptize only truly believing adults. And join the Baptists.

It may seem as if I am "kidding." But I am not. If it is true that baptism seals the promise of the gospel to believers and their elected seed, and if it is true that this promise cannot be regarded as a promise for all the children, the consequence should only be: do not seal anything to those reprobate.

Now I also have to tell the readers of *Clarion* what Prof. Hoeksema writes in the *Standard Bearer* of February 15, 1979. It is again against what Prof. J. Faber and I wrote about the covenant in *Clarion*. This time he writes about the covenant wrath, and in that connection about the well-meant offer of grace, that, according to some (thus writes Prof. Hoeksema), goes to all in the preaching of the gospel. He then continues:

Now let it be remarked, in the first place, over against this view that also in the seals of the covenant there is nothing common. There is neither in baptism nor in holy communion a general offer of grace. It is simply not true that God in holy baptism promises and seals something to all who are baptized. No more than this is the case with His Word, with the gospel of salvation, no more is it true with respect to the seals of God's covenant. In holy baptism the Lord God, in final analysis, seals something to no one else than to those who believe.

So, "in final analysis," in baptism *something* is sealed "to those *who believe*." That is what Dr. A. Kuyper also said. And he meant with that "something" the regeneration, not the promise, but the "*thing*" regeneration itself. And again I say: see the consequence: If "in final analysis" "something" is sealed to those only who believe, then, please, baptize only believers, that is grown-ups. For an infant of a few days old cannot believe as yet.

* * *

But let us continue with what Prof. Hoeksema writes in order to find out what is sealed in baptism in his view. He says:

For it is the *righteousness which is of faith* which is sealed and confirmed both in baptism and in the Lord's supper. The Lord does not lie — not even when the reprobate and ungodly receive the seal of the covenant! When the Lord affixes His seal upon this truth that He reckons faith for righteousness, then it is surely plain that such a seal is *particular* in its content and that no unbeliever can ever appeal to it.

Prof. Hoeksema refers here to Romans 4:11, "He (Abraham) received circum-

cision as a sign or seal of the righteousness which he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised." In verse 21 we read further about that faith of Abraham, namely, that he was convinced that God was able to do what He had promised. Then verse 22 says: "That is why his faith was 'reckoned to him as righteousness.' But the words, 'it was reckoned to him,' were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in Him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord . . ." (verses 23,24).

Now I will not go into the exegesis of these texts. I only want to point to that sentence: ". . . the Lord affixes His seal upon this truth that He reckons faith for righteousness." Does this mean that, according to Prof. Hoeksema, baptism seals the general biblical statement, "God reckons faith for righteousness"? And that to every one who is baptized? And is that in this line: "John So-and-So, your baptism into the Name of Father, Son, and Spirit is a seal that to every one who believes his faith is reckoned as righteousness"?

I ask this, because, as far as I can see, this would be in line with what we read in the Declaration of Principles of 1951, where it says; sub 1, D, 2 I translate from the Dutch): "That the promise of the Gospel . . . is . . . an oath of God that He infallibly will lead all the elect to salvation and everlasting glory through faith." This is also a general statement, a general biblical truth. But does this now mean that God says in one's baptism: "John So-and-So, I declare to you who are now baptized, with an oath, that I will lead all the elect infallibly to eternal salvation"? But why, I ask, is it then so very personal in baptism: "John So-and-So, I baptize YOU in to the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"? Is that very personal character, "you," not in conflict with assuming here the sealing of a general (biblical) statement? If we want to maintain that personal character of baptism, and of the place of the individual members in the covenant of God with His people together with the (Protestant Reformed) view that the promise goes only to, and is only for, the elect, and that baptism is God's "seal upon this truth that He reckons faith for righteousness," then only those who are elected, and of whom you may assume that they are elected because they show themselves believers received

the gift of faith as we assume. So: baptize only grown-ups who confess their faith.

However, we have no difficulties with maintaining that personal character, when we see the covenant of God made with the believers and *all* their children, and that God seals the promises of the Gospel to them all, and that with the promise comes the obligation of faith, and that the promises are realized in the way of faith. And Prof. Hoeksema knows quite well that we wholeheartedly believe that this faith is not our own doing, but is God's free sovereign gift to those whom He has elected.

Again I say that the problem of baptism sealing a general truth arises because a whole doctrinal system is built on election (and reprobation) while we do not know at all who belongs to the elect. And again I should like to refer to Deuteronomy 29:29: The concealed things are for the LORD our God (and concealed to us are the names of the elect in the Book of Life), but the revealed things (the promises and the obligation of the covenant) are for us and our children to believe and to do them in that faith.

Let me return to the article about the historical sphere of the covenant. Prof. Hoeksema writes:

In the second place, it is very evident from the paragraphs quoted above that the real objection of the Rev. Geertsema is not to the idea of a historical sphere of the covenant, nor even to the idea of a historical sphere for the reprobate in the church. No, the real objection is to the fact that we do not include the reprobate in the covenant.

I have objections to the view of a covenant with only the elect. I also object to creating a historical sphere of the covenant *beside* the covenant itself: the one is in both, the other is in only one. That is not a Scriptural given; that is a dogmatic construction. Further on in his article Prof. Hoeksema tries to base this idea of a historical sphere of the covenant *beside* the covenant itself on Scripture, but he is not right in his exegesis. He writes:

But, remember, secondly, that there is a clear distinction between the "seed" and the generations in which that seed is brought forth and grows up. Scripture itself makes this distinction. I will not now refer to Romans 9, which has much, very much, to say on this subject. I will limit myself to one very simple passage, Genesis 17:7, where God says to Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee *and thy seed after thee in their generations* for an everlasting covenant

... " Notice already from this text by itself that there is a distinction made between *seed* and *generations*. Those generations include all the fleshly children of Abraham in the line of Isaac, all the physical descendants of Abraham in the line of the covenant in the old dispensation. The "seed" is something different, however. We must not make the mistake of identifying the "seed" with the physical descendants of Abraham. And we have Scripture itself to teach us this. For in Galatians 3:7-9 we read: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

Let me tell you that Genesis 17:7 does not tell us what Prof. Hoeksema says it does. It does not speak of seed *within* the generations. It is, as the RSV translates: "seed throughout their generations." The reader may excuse my using a little Hebrew here, but it is necessary. For "in their generations" (KJV), or "throughout their generations" (RSV), the Hebrew text uses the term *ledorotham*. *le* is the prefix. *doroth* means: generations. *am* is a suffix with the meaning: their. Now we find the very same *ledorotham* in verses 9 and 12, where the LORD commands Abraham to keep the covenant, "you and your seed in/throughout their generations," and that covenant is its sign, circumcision: "every male in/throughout your generations (*ledorothechem*; *-ecem* = your). We find the same *ledorothechem* or *ledorotham* in Exodus 12:14, 17, 42. We read there about the institution of the Passover feast and the command of God that Israel has to observe this feast "throughout your generations, as an ordinance forever" (an *everlasting statute*). The same we find again in Exodus 16:32, 33, where the LORD tells Moses that Israel has to keep an omer of manna *ledorothechem*, in/throughout their generations. In Leviticus we again find the same. God gives His ordinances regarding the offerings, and time and again we read: "It shall be a perpetual (everlasting) statute *ledorothechem*, in/throughout your generations," see Leviticus 3:17, 7:36, 10:9, and so on. In all these texts the meaning of that *ledorothechem* or *ledorotham* is not: *within* the generations, but throughout the generations, every generation again. And therefore we must read Genesis 17:7 in the same way: God will be the God of Abraham as well as

of Abraham's seed, every generation again. "Seed" and "generation" are identical. They are the same.

That we have to interpret "seed in/throughout their generations" in this way is also clear from another fact. What Prof. Hoeksema says: "seed (= the elect) *within* the generations," would have been expressed in a different way, namely, with *bedorotham*. This prefix *be-* (and not *le*) is used in Genesis 6:9 and 7:1, where we read about Noah that he "was a righteous man, blameless *in* (= within) his generation"; and "I (= the LORD) have seen that you are righteous before Me *in* (= within) this generation." Our conclusion must be: with *be-* it is *within*, which Prof. Hoeksema gives as the meaning for *le-*. But with *le-* the meaning is *not within*, but *throughout*. Genesis 17:7 does not say what Prof. Hoeksema tells us. And thus this text

is not at all a proof that the covenant is established with the elect among the physical descendants of Abraham who live only in the sphere of the covenant. On the contrary, all the male physical descendants, throughout all the generations, have to be circumcised and receive the sign of the covenant; and with it the LORD shows that they *all* have a place in His covenant with Abraham and his (physical) seed. "Seed" and "generations" are identical, indeed. This is no proof at all of a historical sphere of the covenant *beside* the covenant proper.

This is enough for this time. In a future issue I hope to deal with the texts from Galatians, and also speak about the Baptism Form, and the matter of the condition in the covenant, and with that I hope to conclude my answer to Prof. Hoeksema.

J. GEERTSEMA

PSALM 100

1. Let all creation hail the Lord,

1. Let all creation hail the Lord,
And serve our God with glad accord.
Come, show yourselves before His face
With merry tunes of joyful praise.
2. Know that the Lord is God alone;
He made us, and we are His own;
We are His people and His sheep;
His pastures green provide our keep.
3. Go through His gates with thankful song;
Join in His courts the cheering throng;
Meet in His house to bless His Name,
With gratitude His deeds proclaim.
4. The Lord is good; His praise increase!
His steadfast love will never cease;
His faithfulness, His covenant grace
All generations will embrace!

JOHANNES DEVIET

Suggested tune: Dutch Psalter - Psalm 100

Committee on the Church Book.

Elders and the Youth of the Church¹

The following article was translated from the Dutch magazine Dienst, September/October, 1978. Translated by U. Krikke, London, Ontario.

1. WHO

The pastoral care of the youth is the concern of . . . ? Yes, whose concern is it? I believe that the answer in most cases will be: the pastor's. Perhaps we even feel that a specialized pastor, a youth-pastor or a student-pastor, should do this work.

The idea to pass the care of the youth of the Church on to the "common" elder does *not* live among us. If it is (also) the task of the elders, then a special, preferably young, elder would have to be appointed — a man, who as youth-elder, has no other task than the care of the young members of the church. It should be someone who has distinguished himself in this field by his talents and who also had a proper education for this difficult task. Maybe it is exactly because of the great difficulty and the troubles of this task that we, "common" elders, quite quickly pass this task on to the specialist, the youth-pastor and the youth-elder.

The figure of youth-elder and student-pastor is well-known in other churches. If the Reformed churches do not know of such offices we might very well ask ourselves by whom and how this pastoral care for the youth is exercised among us.

2. NECESSITY

There is nobody among us who will doubt that the church-youth of today calls for special care. We do not have to take into account only the complaints of the young people themselves. In various churches there have been inquiries and surveys, and the complaints are many. We should not say too quickly: Among us it is not like that. The opposite appeared from some minor inquiries made by students of the G.S.A. in the realm of the yearly social analysis. Such inquiries among our own young people are concluded with the lament: We did not know that it was like that! We certainly had not expected that!

I think that we should be careful not to see the youth of today as being

worse or more sinful than the young people of the past. The youth of the church of our days surely is different — sometimes we are even glad to say that they are different — from the youth of 25, 50, or 100 years ago. But pronouncements such as: today they are worse, more sinful, more careless or more worldly than in those days rest on an optimistic, wrongly-drawn image of the olden days.

I do not hesitate to say that our youth today is a more threatened youth than in those days. Before the Second World War the Christian lifestyle was also that of the average citizen. Atheists were rare. Christian norms were normal, going to church was common, and things such as divorces were uncommon. *That* was still considered a shame. Today things have been turned around completely. To be a Christian, to live as a Christian, to keep the Biblical norms — all that has become ridiculous. Science and art, books and newspapers, radio and T.V., and our whole environment relentlessly impress upon us that to be a Christian is old-fashioned, ridiculous, stupid, or infantile. To live in a manner not allowed in the past is loudly recommended and even shown by example.

To keep standing in that menace does not only call for spiritual armour but also for being experienced in the use of the weapons. The parental upbringing can be of great importance in this, as well as the aid, support, and comfort offered by the special office. And this applies also to the elders, and definitely not in the last place.

3. INTENSIFICATION

When we reflect upon this menace, it is hard to pinpoint which areas are threatened the most. But, if we want to do something with our weapons besides flailing the air, then we will have to consider the places where the danger is the greatest. Where have our arch enemies, the world, the devil, and our own flesh breached the wall in our days?

I realize that my own view of that menace plays a large part in the following summation. Perhaps these do not strike you in the same manner, and maybe you consider other dangers

much more serious. So be it. But nobody among us is allowed to neglect to help the young people with the problems he thinks he sees. I want to mention the following:

3.1. *The failure of the upbringing in the family circle.*

In many Reformed families the question should be asked: "What does the upbringing in the family still entail?" Is that upbringing perhaps left totally to the school, the church, the catechism classes, the society? What are the parents doing towards the upbringing of their children, and how are they showing the youth how they can be Christians today? Do children learn to experience the richness of parental authority, and do they learn to obey? Or are these matters exchanged for such foolishness as anti-authoritarian education or for the opinion that you cannot deny anything to 13 or 14-year-old children? Do many children receive so much free time, which they themselves are given the responsibility to fill, that, in effect, the parents neglect the children? What are the parents doing with respect to teaching them to pray and read the Bible? How do they teach their children to use all the wealth which we possess today? What is the subject of their daily conversation? Is it eating and drinking, cars, holidays, week-end trips, sports and games, T.V. programs, news? To put it very strongly: The children do not even learn manners in some families, let alone that they would be taught anything about the fear of the Lord.

3.2. *Addiction and escape*

Many older people believe that young people live in a fantastic time. They have everything their hearts desire. They may study, if they so desire. They have much leisure time and much freedom. They have money. What else do they want? Many young people, however, experience today's society totally differently. Their slogans for the society of today are: futureless, desperate, constricting, threatening. They feel totally powerless and forsaken. I suspect that the youth see, much better than the older generation does, that our wealth is totally rotten, and that the problems of today are of such a magnitude that they overwhelm all of us. The inclination to escape does not pass by the Reformed youth. They, too, wander somewhere in India or go to work in the kibutz in Israel. In our own country they can find a haven in Zen-Budd-

hism, Yoga, and Transcendental Meditation, or in a Pentecostal, hazily-spiritualized Christianity that has denounced the world. Others seek the atmosphere of the dimly-lit "cave," of ear-shattering and mind-numbing music, and also of booze and drugs. While they are escaping the servility of their regular jobs, of harmonious family circles, and of everything which carries with it regular responsibilities, they fall into the hands of slave-drivers like alcohol and heroin.

We should not think that our children are not susceptible to all this. The experiences of the G.V.A.D. are different, sorry to say. The percentage of addicts and excessive drinkers in Reformed circles is *the same as* the country's percentage. Lots of young people drink beer as if it were water. On the Theological College Day there is at least one cafe in Kampen which is filled to overflowing with boys and girls who will not see the inside of a church that day, but who, without further ado, *get sloshed* (to quote one of them!) and who come to Kampen with that intention! Drunkenness among the young people is becoming more and more frequent. It is considered quite common that parties are arranged where alcohol is the social lubricant. Barhopping is quite common in many places. Thousands of Reformed young people, as well as their parents, are addicted to smoking.

3.3. Sex

A survey was held among the young people of the "churches outside the federation" about sexual life. Some stunning facts came to the fore. Surveys have also been held among our own young people about sexual relations. The outcome has not been published for various reasons. I will still mention the findings of a very recent survey. Half of the young people (Reformed) in a certain city condone premarital sex and a quarter of them actually engage in it. This finding does not stand by itself. It goes hand in hand with "easy" opinions about staying together overnight, living together, toleration of alternative sexual practices, etc. Engaging in sex is a gratification of the senses which you do not have to deny yourself.

3.4. Entertainment and sensation

Whoever has the opportunity to observe a group of Reformed young people who may choose how to behave will notice that, in many instances, Hilversum III (a radio station

that plays the top ten; translator's note) has been switched on, full blast. He will also notice that they know the top thirty and that they sing right along. They know these songs, not only because they hear them on radio and T.V., but because they have the records themselves. Many young people have also mastered the body motions that go along with these songs. The Olympic games, championship soccer, Tour de France, soccer competitions — these are all followed intently. Radio and T.V. broadcasts about all kinds of sporting events are listened to and looked at, also on Sunday. Parents set a bad example in many families. They, too, know hardly anything else to discuss than matters of enjoyment and entertainment. Having parties, night after night, and hanging around somewhere, going out having holidays, that is *it!* Working and studying are a necessary evil.

3.5. Doubt and unbelief

Under section 2 we already spoke about the attacks on our faith and on that of our children. In many cases these attacks were not repelled. Victory is not attained, but defeat is suffered. A part of our young people (2 or 3%?) is atheist. They do not believe in anything. A much larger section (10 or 20%) lives in constant doubt; doubts that take various forms. Am I a child of God? Is the Bible true? Is the Church truly the place where I can find salvation? Am I converted? Is there not as much truth in other religions as there is in Christianity? What does faith really mean to me? These and many more questions go begging for an answer. Doubt is not conquered. It is understandable that young people who are plagued with such questions are not motivated for the Church, for societies, and even less for Reformed organizations, and that they quite often even loathe these. A survey among a number of Reformed young people who were going to vote for the first time, or who voted for the first time, showed that 40% did not vote for the G.P.V. (the Reformed political party of our Dutch sister Churches; translator's note). They were furthermore of the opinion that in the future even less young people would vote G.P.V. One section did not vote at all: "I don't know anything about politics"; "I do not want to be involved in politics." Some voted C.D.A.: "In politics power is everything, and then you have to choose the lesser evil: what signifi-

cance does one person have in parliament or in the house." A few others voted D'66: "At least they do something for the environment, and I find that more important than the Lord's Day observance." Others voted P.P.R.: "The atomic weapons have to be abolished." Some voted V.V.D.: "At least they oppose a social welfare state," etc. Whoever has his eyes open for the warfare which Satan and his heir wages to deprive old and young of their faith is amazed, every day again, that so many young covenant children still keep the faith.

3.6. No panic

Whoever reads the preceding as a register of the sins of the young people of today did not understand the meaning of sections 3.1 - 3.5. By the same token, it would be possible to give a summary of the good and joyful attitudes of young church members. To give one example: hundreds of young people are active today in the work of evangelism, while it was only a short time ago that evangelization was seen as primarily the task of the older ones. Again: we wrote this in order to have open eyes for what goes on today, so we know where to help and how to admonish.

4. THE YOUTH ELDER

It is understandable that many churches are of the opinion that one or more youth-elders have to be exempted from all other work in order to take pastoral care of the youth. First, we will see what task is entrusted to the youth-elder. We quote from *Church and the younger ones* by Drs. G. Heytink and Rev. H. Hogenhuis. On page 102 we read:

- a. The youth-elder has especially a *pastoral task*. In cooperation with the pastor and the section-elder the pastoral care of the older youth is entrusted to him. He directs his attention especially towards the young people who live on their own, as well as towards the younger ones who still live at home. He seeks contact among young people's gatherings; for instance, via the societies.
- b. His attention to the older youth gives his work a clear direction. If these tasks are divided between more youth-elders, then other avenues are opened. In this respect we may think about the religious education of the young child, of younger teenagers, and about contact with adolescents.
- c. In his capacity as elder he is a member of the consistory and has a voice in policy-making. He tries to put himself in the younger ones' place when matters are

Continued on next page.

Canada's Immigration Act and the Returning Resident Permit

Returning Canadian citizens have the right to enter and remain in Canada, as soon as they satisfy the examining officer that they are citizens. They are not affected by re-entry rules in Canada's new Immigration Act. But, if you are a permanent resident (that is, a landed immigrant who has not become a Canadian citizen), and you are travelling, or plan to travel abroad, there are important changes in the law that may affect your return to Canada.

This new law became effective April 10, 1978. As of that date, if you return to Canada following an extended absence, it is up to you to re-establish the permanent nature of your status in Canada before you can be re-admitted.

This means that permanent residents who have been outside the country for 183 days or more during any 12-month period, without confirming their permanent status in Canada, will be considered to have abandoned it and will be in danger of losing their right to re-enter and remain in Canada.

Permanent status may be retained if returning residents can satisfy immigration officers at the port of entry that they have no plans of making a home elsewhere, and that they have sound

ELDERS AND YOUTH OF THE CHURCH — Continued.

tabled. What is their concern about a certain matter? He also has to see to it that the pastoral care of the youth in the wider sense receives due attention within the consistory.

d. When we think about this pastoral care of the youth in the wider sense we think primarily about *church services* and *catechism instruction*. He will take pains to make sure that children and adolescents are taken into account in the church service. His attention is also directed towards the functioning of catechism instruction. In this connection we can mention his contact with young people's activities on behalf of the consistory, and he may be involved at the board level as an advisor.

e. The youth-elder is given the opportunity to take note of the developments pertaining to youth and young people's pastoral care and to be equipped for his task; for example, by making literature available and giving him the opportunity to attend conferences.

J.A. KNEPPER

To Be Continued.

reasons for extended absences from the country. The best way to prove your intention of continuing residency in Canada is to have a valid Returning Resident Permit, obtained before or during your absence from Canada.

WHAT A RETURNING RESIDENT PERMIT DOES

It formally invites you as a travelling resident who intends to maintain permanent status in Canada. Permits will remain valid for the period of time stated on the form, usually not exceeding 12 months, but in certain cases extending up to 24 months.

HOW AND WHEN TO GET A PERMIT

Returning Resident Permits can be obtained by applying, verbally or in writing, to any Canada Immigration Centre before you leave Canada. Or, if you are already abroad, you can apply at the nearest Canadian government office.

ENTERING CANADA WITHOUT A PERMIT

For most residents who travel abroad on vacation, to visit relatives, or for other short-term purposes, the permit is not necessary. Examining officers will be able to determine that they are in fact tourists, returning business people, or other travellers coming back to Canada to take up their permanent residence.

However, people who have been abroad for extended periods, who do not possess a Returning Resident Permit and cannot satisfy immigration officers that their absence from Canada was a temporary one, may be refused admission to Canada.

WHAT THEN?

Those refused admission by the examining officer at the port of entry will have their cases reviewed by a senior immigration officer. If the examining officer's decision is upheld, cases may then be referred to a special inquiry presided over by an independent adjudicator. If the original decision is still upheld, the persons seeking entry will be asked to leave the country. In certain cases, adjudicators may allow such persons to enter Canada as visitors for short periods of time.

OTHER DOCUMENTS MAY HELP

Everyone entering Canada, including those with a Returning Resident Permit, is subject to an interview by an examining officer at the port of entry. In the absence of a Returning Resident Permit, the officer will consider other documents such as school certificates for studies abroad, or medical certificates for hospitalization or extended treatment abroad, as evidence that absences from Canada were intended to be temporary.

However, a valid Returning Resident Permit is your best proof that you did not intend to abandon your residence in Canada, and can save you possible delays and outright refusal when you seek re-entry.

Anyone refused entry who wishes to regain permanent resident status in Canada will be required to re-apply for immigration post abroad.

For further information about Returning Resident Permits, please contact your local Canada Immigration Centre, or the nearest Canadian government office abroad.

OUR COVER

The Martyr Shrine built for those Jesuit priests who were put to death by the Indians, while trying to bring the Gospel to them (Midland, Ontario). (Photo courtesy Leo Lodder.)

A
Book
is
a
Lasting
(Beautiful)
Gift

our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Summer's here! Let's go outside!
 What are we going to do?
 Let's play "In the Pond" or "Poison."
 Or why not have a Tunnel Race?
 Here's how you play them.

To play "In the Pond" players stand in a line facing "It." "It" calls directions. When "he" follows his own directions, everyone must do the same. If "he" says one thing and does another, the players must do what "he" says, not follow his action. When "it" calls, "In the Pond!" everyone jumps forward one jump. If "he" calls "On the bank!" everyone jumps backward one jump. "It" may try to trick them by jumping the wrong way. If "It" repeats a direction, players must stay still. Players who make a mistake drop out of the game. Last player becomes "It."

"Poison" can get to be a very exciting game. Here's how to play it. Everybody stands or sits in a circle, with "It" in the center, blindfolded. When "It" says "Go" the players quickly pass a ball (or beanbag, potato or other small object) around the circle. At any time "It" may blow a whistle or clap his hands. The player holding the object, or the last to have touched it is "poisoned" and must leave the circle or sit with "It." The game continues until all the players but one have been eliminated.

Pass the object along very quickly. If it is dropped, the last person to touch it must pick it up.

The "Tunnel Race" is really a relay. The teams stand in files, each player with his legs apart. At "Go" the last player in each file begins to crawl through the "tunnel" made by the legs of the others. As soon as he passes through the next player follows him, and so on. The first team in which the first player is back in place at the head of his team, wins the game. The best two out of three games wins.

Be a good sport! And have lots of fun playing these games when you "get together" with other children.

THINGS TO DO

Lots of Busy Beavers will be going on holidays and spending time travelling in the car.

What's your favourite game to play in the car?

Let's see how many games we can think of!

Tell us how to play your favourites. What a great time we'll have travelling!

Send your letters to:

Aunt Betty
 Box 54,
 Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7

QUIZ TIME

CODE

Riddle and Answer

K	6
I	1
M	10
D	3
R	7
W	4
P	2
S	5
T	8

A	11
C	9
Y	12
O	16
N	15
E	13
H	14
U	17

$\overline{4} \ \overline{14} \ \overline{11} \ \overline{8}$
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 $\overline{9} \ \overline{11} \ \overline{15} \ \overline{15} \ \overline{16} \ \overline{8}$
 $\overline{16} \ \overline{2} \ \overline{13} \ \overline{15}$
 $\overline{3} \ \overline{16} \ \overline{16} \ \overline{7} \ \overline{5} \ ?$

$\overline{3} \ \overline{16} \ \overline{15} \ \overline{6} \ \overline{13} \ \overline{12} \ \overline{5}$

$\overline{8} \ \overline{17} \ \overline{7} \ \overline{6} \ \overline{13} \ \overline{12} \ \overline{5}$

$\overline{10} \ \overline{16} \ \overline{15} \ \overline{6} \ \overline{13} \ \overline{12} \ \overline{5}$

$\overline{2} \ \overline{1} \ \overline{11} \ \overline{15} \ \overline{16} \ \overline{6} \ \overline{13} \ \overline{12} \ \overline{5}$

Did you enjoy the puzzle? Good!

Have you sent in YOUR money for our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT? Meant to, but forgot? Send it now with your game to play in the car! Do it today, all right?

by Busy Beaver *Sheila Van Sydenborgh*



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Heather and Lynda Van Middelkoop*. We are happy to have you two join us, and we hope you'll really enjoy being Busy Beavers and joining in all our activities. Thanks for the riddles, girls. Will you write again soon and tell us about yourselves?

What did you do on your Variety Night, *Sheila Van Sydenborgh*? I'm curious to hear! Thanks for your very interesting puzzle, Sheila, and the riddles, and most of all, your contribution for the BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT.

Hello, *Jacqueline Riemersma*. It was nice to hear from you again. I see you've been busy too, looking for riddles to entertain us! Thank you. Write again soon, Jacqueline.

How are you doing *Marnix Sikkema*? Are you completely recovered and going to school again? Thanks for an outside puzzle! That will keep us going for awhile!

TO SAN FRANCISCO!

by Busy Beaver *Jolette Moeliker*

Once upon a time there were three little girls. Their names were Jane, Els, and Margie. They were really happy when the summer holidays came, for Dad had promised that

they would be allowed to go to San Francisco with him and Mommy. They would go the first Monday in the month of July. As soon as they came home from school they started packing. They were in a rush, for after three days it would be Monday. Jane, Els, and Margie each packed their toys they wanted to take along. All of them took their play cameras to take "pictures." At supper Daddy said,

"I still have a surprise! Did I tell you already how we are going? No? Well, we are going by boat! Won't that be fun?"

"Yippi-yoo-hoo," they all cried.

But all of a sudden Margie looked sad.

"But I always get sea-sick, Daddy!"

"That is all fixed up, dear," Daddy answered her. "You and Mommy are going by plane. And Margie, Jane, and Els, I'm not finished yet! Your best friend may come, too!"

The result: "Ann, Carol, Ingrid, Yol, . . ."

"STOP!" Daddy cried. "You have to pick one person that you all like very much. Who will it be?"

"Daisy," said Els and Jane.

"No, Sandra," said Margie.

"Yes, Sandra" said Els and Jane, too. "She's so lonely.

May we take Sandra Wilson?" they asked Daddy.

"Yes, if all of you agree. I'll phone right now. What is her number, Els?"

"I don't know, Daddy."

"Do you know Jane? Margie?"

"Ummm, 778-9270."

"Thanks."

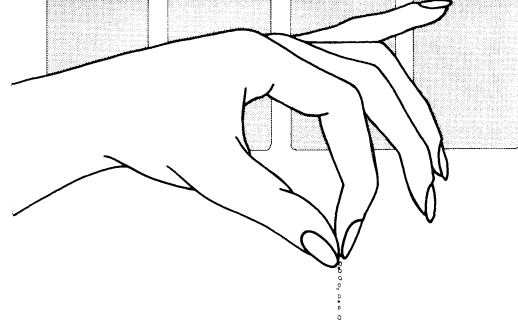
Trr, trr, trr, trr. . . .

(More next time!)

Bye for now, Busy Beavers,

Love from,
Aunt Betty

A PINCH OF SALT



A reader sent me a recipe for a pie crust that she says is easy and nutritious. I believe her — she's my sister.

No-roll Whole Wheat Pie Crust

1 cup whole wheat flour
6 tbsp. softened butter or margarine
1/8 tsp. salt
2 tbsp. brown sugar

Mix till it resembles crumbs. Press into pie plate.
Bake at 350°F. for 5 minutes. Omit sugar if you like.

When you make a crumb crust, does it turn out mostly crumbs? Well, here's what I discovered: add an egg; it will hold together.

Crumb Crust

1 1/4 cup graham wafer or cornflake crumbs
2-4 tbsp. sugar
1/4 cup margarine
1 egg

Melt margarine over low heat. Add crumbs and sugar. Then add egg.

Bake at 350°F for 10 minutes.

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FOR: BIRTHDAYS — ENGAGEMENT — WEDDING
— ANNIVERSARIES — CONFESSION OF FAITH, etc.

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 - Daylight
 - Talks with Gabriel
 - Abraham Kuyper, Biography
 - The Coming of the Kingdom
 - Before Many Witnesses
 - Lasting Food
 - Inheritance Preserved
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