



Clarion

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Article 16 in Revision

This time I would like to take my readers on a field trip into the country of our Belgic Confession and do some research. I hope that you will not become tired of it and I do not take it ill of anyone who cannot follow me. I for one think it is worth our while to take this excursion.

You have understood that I am still occupied with Report 33 for Synod 1979 of the Christian Reformed Church. It stated that in adopting the text 1561 of the Belgic Confession "we come clear of some things that rightly embarrass us; and we have a more adequate statement than the revised text on a number of issues that have rightly concerned, and still do concern, the Reformed community." According to the Committee the theological nuances of the de Brès version are, in general, preferable to those in the later revisions. Important changes occurred between the time of de Brès, who died in the 1560s, and the Synod of Dort in 1618-19. The Report brings these changes under the denominator of "emerging scholasticism." Between brackets, the word "scholasticism" is derived from the mediaeval term *scholasticus*, which means a teacher or pupil of a certain school. The teachers of the schools founded by Charlemagne were called *scholastici* and their knowledge scholastics. The theologians of the Middle Ages sought a compromise between Holy Scripture and Greek philosophy, especially the philosophy of Aristotle. Now it can not be denied that already in the century that followed the Reformation also in Protestantism the lure of this synthetic thought of scholasticism was felt. Instead of building up a totally Reformed, that is, Scriptural life and world view, the Protestant Universities and scholars often simply recurred to the thought pattern of the Middle Ages. The human reason was again put on a pedestal and also Protestant scholasticism was not on its guard against old and new rationalism. Report 33 speaks in this context about the re-introduction of Aristotelian rationalism and deductive logic on the soil of an originally more fertile, biblically-open Reformational thinking.

But the main point at the moment is that the Report sees this development towards Protestant scholasticism already in the transition from the original Belgic Confession to what it calls the later Revision. As our readers probably remember, the later Revision is the Confession of Faith as it is now valid in the Reformed Churches. It makes the question intriguing: do our ministers, elders, and deacons subscribe to a Confession that is tainted by scholasticism? Should we be embarrassed by what we now possess and profess?

The issue is especially urgent with respect to certain articles of our Belgic Confession. The first specific issue that Report 33 deals with is the Doctrine of Decrees: Election and Reprobation. Let us first place beside each other the beginning of Article 16 in the new translation of the 1561 version and in the present text.

TEXT OF 1561 (Translation Report 33)

We believe that when all Adam's descendants had thus fallen into perdition and ruin because of the transgression of the first man, God showed himself to be as he is — merciful and just. He is merciful in removing and saving from this perdition those whom he, in his eternal and unchangeable counsel, has elected and chosen, by his pure goodness, in Jesus Christ our Lord, without any consideration of their good works. In leaving the others in their ruin and fall, into which they had stumbled, he shows himself, in so doing, a compassionate and merciful God toward those whom he saves, to whom he did not owe a thing.

If the readers have the same reaction as I had, when they compare these two versions, then they will not notice any basic difference. But what is the conclusion of Report 33? Well, let us listen.

In de Brès' Confession God showed himself to be as he is — merciful and just In the Psalter Hymnal text the words *merciful* and *just* are put in bold print, emphasizing the importance of those essential attributes of God in their symmetrical relationship. Election and reprobation are now seen in virtual symmetry

Observe that the "iustes" ("just" or "good," in reference to "works") is now changed in the Revision to "juste" (in reference to God), and a semicolon is now inserted to provide balance or symmetry with *miseri cordieux*, "merciful." The sentence now reads — quite different from de Brès — that God is "merciful and just: *merciful* . . . ; *just*, in leaving others Observe also, that this last

PRESENT TEXT

We believe that, all the posterity of Adam being thus fallen into perdition and ruin, by the sin of our first parents, God then did manifest Himself such as He is; that is to say, merciful and just: *merciful*, since He delivers and preserves from this perdition all whom He in His eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness has elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works; *just*, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves.

thought is taken up in de Brès' Confession (though some words are different) in the context of God's total mercy and not yet in the context of his being a "just judge."

It is completely clear that Report 33 sees in the present text a major surgery on de Brès in Article 16: The revisionists dissected his sentences and put them together in different contexts, and they completely eliminated the second half of his article. I will not deal with this last point now. It is true that our present Article 16 is shorter than de Brès' original. Generally speaking, the revision of 1566 was a shortening and although I do not always admire the revision by our brothers in the Antwerp synod of 1566, I can understand that they sometimes felt that de Brès' Confession was too wordy or too personal in its expressions. Also the shortening of Article 16 can simply be explained from the desire to write succinct sentences in a confession of the Church and to prevent repetition or a too-personal style.

Be that as it may, the point at stake now is whether the revisionists changed the mood of Article 16 by presenting the symmetry of God's mercy and justice as twin attributes which must be realized or actualized in history. Whoever is no stranger in Jerusalem knows that the whole picture that Report 33 gives is connected with the discussion about the Reformed doctrine of God's election and reprobation. Think of the gravamen by Dr. H.R. Boer against Article 6 and 15 of the first head of doctrine in the Canons of Dort. The air is full of accusations against "decretal theology," that is, against the Reformed confession of an eternal divine decree of election and reprobation.

Within this context I see Report 33 as an attack on the present text of the Belgic Confession. It shows that those who have objections against the first chapter of Dort cannot help proceeding also against the Confession of Faith. In this respect there is no news under the sun.

According to Report 33 the background of divine judgment in de Brès is especially man's actual sinning or "stumbling" in history. The background of judgment in the Revision, however, is God's essential being — His twin attributes of justice and mercy, combined with immutability. "The Revision moves toward a more symmetrical theology of election and reprobation . . . Perhaps if the revisionists had not tampered with de Brès at this point we could have been spared some unprofitable discussion on divine decrees, election and reprobation, for the next three and one-half centuries, down to the present time."

Now we question: Is this true? Or do we meet here with another myth, comparable to the unhistoric fiction of a controversy between de Brès and Calvin, that we dealt with in a previous issue? I think that this is the case, alas.

First of all, the method of Report 33 to eliminate the differences between the revisions is wrong. The Committee often speaks about "the Revision," as if there had been only one revision of our Belgic Confession. "The Revision eliminated all the original material of de Brès on God as just judge . . . De Brès wrote before the supra- and infralapsarian debates and their rather debilitating effects from the years preceding the Synod of Dort until the present century." But I answer that the main revision of Article 16 was not undertaken by the Synod of Dort 1618-19; it was done already by the Synod of Antwerp in 1566 in accordance with a Synod decision of a year before. Can one really suppose that in the few years from 1561 till 1566 (still during de Brès' own lifetime) there has been a transition from purely Biblical, Reformational thinking to an emerging Protestant scholasticism? Not only did de Brès write before the supra- and infra-

lapsarian debates, but also the main revision of Article 16 of our Confession took place when those debates had not really started.

My following remark is that I doubt whether Report 33 gives a good translation of de Brès' original and whether the Committee has taken into consideration the possibility of a printing error in the first edition of our Confession. Here I must introduce a few lines of French, but in a *Canadian Reformed Magazine* this should certainly be allowed.

TEXT OF 1561
(Translation Report 33)

Dieu s'est démontré tel
qu'il est:
assavoir misericordieux et
juste.
Misericordieux,
en retirant et sauuant . . .
sans aucun esgard de leurs
oeuvres
iuste(s):
en laissant les autres en leur
ruine . . . ,
en ce faisaient il se demontre
Dieu pitoyable et
misericordieux
vers ceux qu'il sauue,
ausquels il n'estoit rien
redeuable:
comme aussi il se declare
estre
iuste iuge en demonstrent
sa seuerité tres-iuste
sur les autres.

MY TRANSLATION

God showed himself to be as
he is —
merciful and just.
He is *merciful*
in removing and saving . . .
without any consideration of
their works.
He is *just*
in leaving the others in their
ruin . . .
In so doing he shows himself
*a compassionate and
merciful God*
toward those whom he saves,
to whom he did not owe a
thing.
And likewise he declares
himself
to be a *just judge* in
demonstrating his
completely just severity
toward the others.

To me it is evident that in the original text of 1561 the "s" of "iustes" simply is a printing error. Everyone who imagines the conditions around the "underground" printing press that published the first edition of our Belgic Confession, can only be amazed that not more printing errors and typographical mistakes in punctuation marks have been made. My opinion that "iustes" is a printing error for "iuste" is based on two arguments. First, de Brès never speaks about "good works" as "oeuvres iustes," but always about "des *bonnes* oeuvres." The original text of Article 24 shows this clearly. Second, in the translation, given by Report 33, the words "en de faisant" (in so doing) do not receive their proper place.

Our brothers in the Synod of Antwerp 1565 decided that at each and every meeting of synod henceforth the Confession was to be read in its entirety, also in order to give opportunity for changes and improvement. They knew their French and it is understandable that when in the Synod of the following year they read their Confession, they immediately noticed the printing error in "iustes." They restored the Confession according to de Brès' original intention.

The whole story of Report 33 about a shift in dogmatic mood, namely, in the direction of a strict symmetry between election and reprobation, is nonsense. If you want to speak of a symmetry between God's attributes of mercy and justice, you will find it even more in the original, broader de Brès version of 1561 than in the revision of 1566. In the past the revision of Article 16 was often explained by a reference to political motives. With a view to the Lutheran princes in

Germany with whom the Prince of Orange wanted to come to an alliance, the typically Reformed article about divine election should have been toned down. Even C. Vonk in *De Voorzeide Leer* III A, p. 412, sees something in this explanation. Although I for one believe that the shortening of Article 16 in 1566 was a stylistic matter, it is remarkable that nobody ever in the revision of Article 16 discovered a trend to “emerging scholasticism” and a shift from Calvin to Beza, or some development of this kind. This is an invention by the

Committee Report 33.

Could it be that dogmatic presuppositions and prejudice played a role in their translation and explanation? The Christian Reformed Church would do well to study these issues thoroughly before it, on the grounds of this Report, would exchange the present text of our Belgic Confession for the product of this Committee.

J. FABER

press review

THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH

In our previous Press Review we quoted from the first article in a series in *De Reformatie*, written by Professor L. Doekes. We continue with the following article as it appeared in the next issue of this magazine, dated June 9 of this year. Comment is given on an article from Rev. H.J. van der Kwast, a minister of the Netherlands Reformed Churches (previously known as the Reformed Churches outside-the-federation). He gave his article the title: “Churches-outside-the-Federation: Where to?” Prof. Doekes quotes from that article, in which also this question is asked: What is the Church? Rev. van der Kwast wrote:

“The Christian congregation is not a group of Christians who try to experience [beleven] a union [verbondenheid] in Christ in a small circle.” She is not a place where active people are inspired to more activities; a place where piety is practiced, or something like that. “We do not believe in a number of churches, in groups of Christians, but we believe in one, holy, catholic Christian church.”

Prof. Doekes points to the fact that we do not believe *in* the Church. We believe *in* God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe a holy, catholic Church. Further, he agrees with what is said. But he asks: How does Rev. van der Kwast further deal with that confession about that one catholic Church? We read:

The article concerned makes a distinction between this church, “the church of our confession, the chosen congregation, which the Son of God gathers,” and our churches, all kind of churches. In the church of Christ we are united with all the saints, with the goal to go out to meet the Bridegroom. Therefore the question how the churches function in the whole of the body of Christ is important.

I hope that the reader understands what is meant. Rev. van der Kwast states the problem in this way: there is the body of Christ. This is the chosen congregation, the elect, all the saints, all the true believers. Within that church, that body of Christ, the many different denominations function. And now the question is: *How* do the different denominations function within the body of Christ? Prof. Doekes does not criticize this way of speaking about the Church as the body of Christ right here, but comes back to it in the following article. But I would like to ask a few questions here. Can we say things in this way: that denominations function within the body of Christ? Are whole denominations forming the parts of which the body of Christ is composed? Can we say that the body of Christ is His chosen congregation, which means that all the elect are the members of the body of Christ; and can we, at the same time, say that denominations function in and so are constituting parts of the body of Christ?

But let us continue with what Prof. Doekes writes about that question as it is stated above in the quotation.

How do we find the answer to this very important question?

Prof. Doekes then says — and this is a very important remark:

That depends on which stand point we choose as the dominating starting point for our thinking about the church. Of course, we have to watch out also with the continuation of our thinking about the church that we are not ensnared in unjustified, incorrect reasoning and conclusions. *But it is the choice (whether a correct or an incorrect one) of our starting point which immediately determines the direction of our thinking and the forming of our opinion* [Italics mine, J.G.].

Prof. Doekes then points out that the starting point for Rev. van der Kwast is not: How does the Lord want us to act with respect to church membership? What are the norms to which we are bound by Christ’s Word for gathering His congregation with Him? He says that it is striking that

Rev. H.J. van der Kwast, just like others, chooses his standpoint [and starting-point] in what he calls “*reality*”: The church-gathering work of Christ consists in this, that He gathers unto Himself those who are His to cleanse and sanctify them and to equip them, out of mere grace. Now we are faced with the fact that “this gathering is done wherever hearts are won for Christ and the gospel through the working of the Word and of the Spirit.” If we see around us “that in other churches the Spirit works powers of salvation through a preaching that is faithful to the Scriptures, then we are confronted with the brokenness of the life of the church, which cannot be reasoned away.

In this way Rev. van der Kwast maintains, according to what he himself says, the main point of the Open Letter, which was published some years ago and in which it was stated that Christ’s church is not gathered exclusively in the way of the Liberation. For it is a fact that the Liberation was an act of certain people who in a certain situation had to make a choice. “That choice, if made consciously, was a choice of the faith that let itself be guided by the Scriptures, which are the staff of the Lord of the church.”

But we are not faced less with the fact that others, “also guided by the faith, came to a different choice.” The consequence was that the ways of the believers separated. “Therefore, it is not true that the Lord Jesus Christ, since 1944/45, gathers His church in our country exclusively at the address of the liberated churches,” according to Rev. van der Kwast. If one maintains the thought that the church is being gathered at one address, one places himself *outside the reality*, even though there is the full recognition that there are believers outside the liberated Reformed Churches. Maintaining this thought is called an error by this minister, with which the Reformed churches place themselves outside the reality of faith [*ge-loofswerkelijkheid*].

Prof. Doekes does not agree with taking the reality as starting-point as is done here. He says that Christ has placed His Church in the reality of this earthly life, indeed. He points to what Christ spoke to the apostles in John 17:15 and 18, that the disciples and therefore the Church are not of this world, but in the world; that she is sent into the world. The author then continues:

Time and again the thing is that we believe the truth of His Word as this is directed toward the reality of our life in this world. But that means also that *we accept His Word as it rules over that reality with divine authority* [Italics mine, J.G.].

In my opinion, that is the point: the reality as such is not normative for us. Normative is what the Word of God commands us. I have quoted here before, and will do it again, what the LORD spoke through Moses: "The secret things belong to the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." To the secret things also belongs: who is elected. Prof. K. Schilder said (and I quote here from lectures on the Belgic Confession, which were printed by students without Prof. Schilder being responsible for them), that "the church is not the total number of all the elect, but a GATHERING of the believers." And a little further (II, p. 58): "Prof. Grosheide speaks in his commentary on I Cor. 12 of the church at Corinth, which is *sooma tou Christou* (body of Christ), and thus not an invisible total of elect is the body of Christ. For a body is visible. In this world God has never yet called together a gathering of merely elect. He does call together those who direct their conduct and walk of life according to His Word and the Confession, but among them can be hypocrites."

But let me continue with what Prof. Doekes writes further, after having stated that the Word of God dominates, and must dominate the reality of life. He writes:

That Word opens our eyes, so that we see life in its reality; it illuminates our mind, so that we notice the work of God and the doings of men in the happenings of the day, also in the restless progress of the history of the church.

Prof. Doekes then speaks about the reality of life in which the believers, time and again, are confronted with a choice. It is "the choice to follow Jesus Christ and to remain united with Him and with His church." And then:

Regarding that choice, Rev. van der Kwast says: we are faced with the fact that the ways of believers separate. The one, e.g., chose consciously in favour of the Liberation: that was a choice of (the) faith which let itself be guided by the Scriptures. But the other, just as well guided by (the) faith, came to a different choice. So that is the reality of faith: the ways of the believers separate.

This fact [that the ways of believers separate,] is denied by nobody. It is the sad reality, alas. But (so we ask) how can the fact of that division ever be used as motive for the conclusion that Christ's church is being gathered in all kinds of denominations and via different ways?

A strange jump in reasoning is made here. The starting-point is the fact, visible for everyone, that all kinds of people who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ do not sit together at His Supper table, and do not faithfully assemble together every week to celebrate the day of His resurrection. Does this true fact give us a ground for the assertion that Christ apparently is gathering and preserving His church via diverging ways?

What is important here is — and that makes things much clearer — that Prof. Doekes brings into the picture the element of the church-preserving activity of Christ. We believe that the Son of God *gathers, defends, and preserves* His Church. The problem was: How do the different denominations function within the body, the church, of the Lord Jesus Christ? What about those denominations that make decision after decision which are in conflict with the Word of the Lord, and that are maintaining a way of disobedience? Do such disobedient denominations have and perform a function in the *gathering and defending and preserving* work of Christ? Or are they leading the sheep astray, away from the Lord, thus scattering them? The question asked here is the question answered. Disobedient churches cannot be said to gather and preserve and defend with Christ.

Now I do not deny that Christ can have His believers in disobedient and deviating denominations and in false churches. I also do not deny that Christ knows how to preserve those believers in such denominations. But when He gathers, defends, and preserves *believers* in such a disobedient denomination, must we, then, say that Christ gathers and preserves His Church in such a denomination? Or must we say that Christ preserves believers *in spite of* what such a denomination is doing? I have also no objection to saying that these believers belong to the church.

But I would like to come back to what the Rev. van der Kwast wrote as

Prof. Doekes tells us, and what I quoted above: that it is not right to say that since 1944/45 Christ gathers His Church in The Netherlands at the address of the Liberated churches, and that those who hold this thought maintain an error with which they place themselves outside the reality. Now Prof. Doekes writes that it is not right to take the reality of diverging choices with respect to church membership as starting point for our thinking about the church gathering work of our Lord Jesus Christ. As said above: our starting point should be the obedience to the norms, the laws of Christ for us, for gathering, defending, and preserving His Church with Him. Behind that speaking of a certain address is this desire to obey those laws and to maintain what the Confession says in full accordance with God's Word about the Church in Articles 28 and 29, about the

Continued on next page.

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marks of the true and of the false church, and about the calling for all to join the body of the true church. With those who followed the Liberation from deviation in doctrine and church polity, there was the joy and the certainty to be, in the way of obedience, the continuation of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. They started around 1560, went through the struggles with Arminianism around 1618, continued in the churches of the Secession in 1834 and of the Doleantie in 1886, which united in 1892, and, after half a century, continued in the churches of the Liberation in 1944. With maintaining the norm we come farther than with taking our starting-point in "reality," or rather in *our view* of that reality. *How and where* does Christ *want* us to gather and defend and preserve His Church with Him? And then the answer is *not*: in unity and in communion with, and in the midst of, a denomination which deviates from the truth and hardens in that sin of disobedience. The answer is: Christ wants us to gather with Him so (Article 29, Belgic Confession) and there (Article 28, Belgic Confession) where the obedience to His Word for the church is found. That is the point.

But let us return to what Prof. Doekes writes further. It may be good to read the last paragraph again, as quoted above. After this he says:

As ground for this reasoning and conclusion here plainly is indicated: the choice of a believer. But are we allowed simply to qualify this choice of a believer as the "choice of faith" [*het geloof*]? How often do believers not make a wrong choice, and do they not go a way which is not good, and leads away from the faithfulness to the Word of God?

If it would be true that the difference in the choice of faith must lead us to diverging ways of church-gathering, we shall, anyway, be confronted with strange consequences. Through (the) faith in God's Word, our fathers have refused to stay any longer in the Roman Catholic Church, even though their choice could cost them their life. But can we say now simultaneously: through (the) faith, Erasmus and many others have refused to join the Reformation? Hendrick De Cock and others saw the Dutch Reformed Church as a false Church and left her, and by doing so they took upon them the cross and the contempt of Jesus Christ. May we add to this in one breath: through (the) faith Kohlbrugge, Groen van Prinsterer, and many others have refused to join the Secession? It becomes almost monotonous, but we cannot avoid asking the same question also with regard to the Liberation. We know the example of a concerned minister, who publicly declared, some years ago, that through a special grace of God he was kept from liberating himself. So he thought that he could say: through faith I have been able to escape that temptation. But then there remains the problem: Does the true faith leave open the possibility for

two diametrically opposing choices with respect to the church of Christ? Are both choices an act of obedience to the Word of the King of the Church? Annexed to this is the question: Is the congregation gathered at one address or within divers denominations? Is Christ divided?

In the concluding remarks of his article Prof. Doekes says that he will pay more attention to this last question in a future article. He also points to the fact that Rev. van der Kwast gives a picture of the situation in the Netherlands Reformed Churches (previously: outside-the-federation): Rev. van der Kwast writes that these churches "are in a vacuum," in "the dispersion," seeking passionately for their own identity. Prof. Doekes says that here is the consequence of a choice some years ago with regard to church membership. And he thinks that it is strange to be a church that is seeking for its identity. He says:

God's Word reveals to us one Church, spread and scattered over the whole earth, but nevertheless joined and united with heart and will in one and the same Spirit, by the power of faith. It is in this that the identity of the Church is found.

The next time I hope to tell you what Prof. Doekes wrote in his next article.

J. GEERTSEMA

The Inerrancy of the Bible 2

THE LIBERAL AND NEO-ORTHODOX REACTION

Now let us examine for a moment the reactions to his book. From the liberal and neo-orthodox sides there has arisen the charge that Lindsell and those who like him support the inerrancy of the Bible are guilty of docetism. What is that? you ask. Well, docetism was a heresy that made the rounds in the first centuries of the Christian Church to the effect that Christ did not actually become truly human. He only looked like a man. Docetism robbed Christ of His humanity. Now there are theologians like the late Karl Barth and others who say that inerrancy with its stress on the divine character of the Scriptures robs them of their "humanness." Because the human factor is pushed into the background this view of Scripture is docetic.

Now such a charge might have a ring of legitimacy to it, if Lindsell and others who support him were also pushing a *mechanical* view of inspiration. Such a view completely ignores all human involvement in the Scriptures and holds that the Bible writers acted as secretaries who simply wrote down what the Spirit told them to write. But that has never been the majority view of those who support inerrancy. They have almost always stressed the *organic* view, namely, that the Spirit also uses the writers: their personality, profession, upbringing, education, position in life, etc., in writing the Scriptures. It is exactly this that accounts for the tremendous variety of style that one finds in the Bible. The style of an Amos who calls the ladies of Samaria "You cows of Bashan" is quite different from the style of a Solomon who speaks tenderly to his beloved. In

all of this variety, however, the Spirit is still the one who insures that the truth is written and not falsehood.

Still, if one wishes to be nasty and to trade insults with insults one can always counter that the liberals and the neo-orthodox are guilty of Ebionism. What's that? you ask. Ebionites were people who denied the *deity* of Christ, regarding Him as the natural son of Joseph and Mary. And this, to some extent, is what the opponents of inerrancy do, they stress the humanity of the Bible at the expense of its divinity.

THE EVANGELICAL REACTION — MIXED

Lindsell, however, has provoked not only a liberal and neo-orthodox reaction, he has also provoked one among his fellow evangelicals. We here define "evangelical" as those who affirm that salvation is obtained through the grace of God, that God is triune, that Christ is God and man, that the Holy Spirit is a Person, that the Saviour died for our sins, that He rose from the grave, that He ascended into

heaven, that He is coming again, that the Bible is inspired. Well now, among evangelicals there have been, broadly speaking, three basic reactions: those who disagree with him, those who agree with him but wish that he had never brought up the subject, and those who agree with him wholeheartedly and are grateful for his book.

THOSE IN DISAGREEMENT

The disagreement of some "evangelical" scholars with Lindsell has prompted them to author a book called *Biblical Authority*. Yet it is a book that does little to clear up the controversy. It is suspect in certain places when it deals with the views of the Church Fathers on inerrancy, particularly those of Augustine. It is evasive when one writer states, "Augustine, Calvin, Rutherford, and Bavinck, for example, all specifically deny that the Bible should be looked to as an authority in matters of science" (*Biblical Authority*, p. 44). Since when has any pro-inerrancy person ever said that the Bible was an authority on science? It deals with scientific matters, and when it does it is totally accurate, but it is not a science text-book. Clearly such assertions are but straw-men.

The book *Biblical Authority* is also in a number of places very confusing. What does this mean, "We break with the basic Reformed teaching on the sufficiency of the Bible, both when we claim it to be inerrant on the basis of minute details of chronology, geography, history, or cosmology or when we attack its authority by pointing to alleged discrepancies"? (*B.A.*, p. 168).

SEMANTICS

What also becomes clear from reading the articles of those who oppose Lindsell is that the debate often degenerates into a matter of semantics, i.e., word meanings, and confusing terminology. Whether this is purposely done or not remains a question. To give you an example, David Allan Hubbard, the present President of Fuller Theological Seminary, does not want to use the term "inerrant" in any way, and yet he writes "we stand in full fellowship with the Apostles, the Reformers, and the evangelical missionaries of the centuries. None of us denies the infallibility of the Bible" (Nicholas, p. 10). And yet he holds that inerrancy is too precise and too mathematical a term to describe adequately the way in which God's infallible revelation has come to us in a book. What then, we ask, does he mean by

"infallible"? The matter is, to say the least, confusing. One theologian has given the following illustration and it will make the point clear to you. "On numerous occasions I have queried several Biblical and theological scholars in the following manner — 'Do you maintain the inerrancy of the Bible?' — 'No.' 'Do you believe the Bible to be inspired of God?' — 'Yes.' 'Do you think God inspires error?' — 'No.' 'Is all the Bible inspired by God?' — 'Yes.' 'Is the Bible errant?' — 'No.' 'Is it inerrant?' — 'No.' (Sproul, *God's Inerrant Word*.)

LIMITED INERRANCY

In an effort to find a solution some theologians seem to lean towards a limited inerrancy viewpoint, namely, that certain parts of the Bible contain errors but other parts do not. They assert that the Bible is completely accurate when it touches on those parts that pertain to its saving message. Yet such a view is not without difficulty. One must then determine what parts contain "saving messages" and what parts do not. And should one be able to do that, what gives one the right to say that it is "inerrant" while the next non-saving part is not? In addition, what are the criteria for determining areas in which errors are immaterial? Needless to say, this solution is far from easy to understand and defend.

EXAMPLES OF ERROR?

Still, you may be wondering, what kind of errors are these people referring to? What examples of error do they cite as a basis for dismissing inerrancy? In actual fact almost each of these scholars has his own list of problem texts which are said to undermine Biblical inerrancy. Robert H. Mounce casts his vote in favour of limited inerrancy and cites the following examples of error: a) *Matthew 22:42*, "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" whereas in *Luke 20:41* it says, "How can they say that the Christ is David's son?" Mounce comments, "From a strict literal view Jesus must have said one or the other or neither." However, he forgets another alternative, namely, that our Lord could have said both of these things and then there would be no problem at all (Lindsell, p. 164).

b) *The measurements of the molten sea* as described by *II Chronicles 4:2* is another problem that bothers Mounce. He says that the numbers do not fit and that with such measurements it could not possibly be a round vessel. Now I am no mathematician, but I can refer Mounce to the articles of A. Zuidhof in

our *Clarion* which point out that the measurements are accurate.

c) Mounce's *third example* of error is presented as follows: "In *Mark 2:26* Jesus refers to David entering the house of God and eating the bread of the Presence 'when Abiathar was high priest.' But in *I Samuel 21:1ff.* it is Ahimelech, the *son* of Abiathar who was priest at that time" (Lindsell, p. 166). True, there is a difficulty here; however, several explanations are possible. Abiathar may have been acting as his father's substitute (Mounce is in error. Abiathar was the *son* of Ahimelech), or since he was to become much more famous, his name may have been used in historical anticipation, or it is possible that both father and son bore both names.

d) The last difficulty that Mounce mentions is the difference in *numbers* where Paul in *I Corinthians* reports that "23,000 fell in a single day," while the account in *Numbers 25:9* says "24,000." Yet here again the difficulty is not insurmountable. Indeed that ancient but fine exegete John Calvin points us to a good solution. It lies, he says, in the fact that at times approximate numbers are given. He states, "since about 24,000 were destroyed by the hand of the Lord, in other words, over 23,000, Moses gives the upper limit, Paul the lower, and so there is really no discrepancy."

In light of the nature of these examples cited by Dr. Mounce, we must say that his viewpoint of limited inerrancy rests on a rather poor foundation. What he terms "errors" are in reality not errors at all; they may be difficulties that need to be studied and worked out, but difficulties are no errors. All of this teaches us to be very careful when it comes to saying that something in the Bible is an error. Many learned men have lived to regret such blanket statements. Archaeology and careful Bible study have made a number look foolish.

Now it should be mentioned that, among those who are in disagreement with Lindsell, there is also Dr. Lester De Koster, editor of *The Banner*, the official magazine of the Christian Reformed Church. On numerous occasions he has gone out of his way to ridicule Lindsell's efforts. He refuses to even speak of the inerrancy of the Bible. He drives a wedge between the terms "infallible" and "inerrant." Joining De Koster in his attack on the doctrine of inerrancy are Dr. Harry

Continued on page 471.

Report on a Marvelous Tour⁶

ISRAEL: MAY 1979

Jerusalem: The Old City; Western Wall; Haram esh-Sherif; The Via Dolorosa.

THE WESTERN WALL: MINGLING WITH THE JEWS (?)

Monday morning, not long after 8 o'clock, the group is ready for the first tour of the week. This morning will be spent within the walls of the old city. It is going to be a busy schedule, and as a tourleader I was sort of concerned about it, because in the narrow streets and alleys of the city one or more members of the group could so easily become lost. It would take some doing, more than any other day, to keep the group together . . . My assistant and a helper had to make up the rear, always on the lookout. And, besides, it is not only streets and alleys, but often you have no sooner left the one church than you enter another chapel, only to find that part of the group is already out in the street again, maybe turning around a corner.

This part of the report covers one morning. There was so much to be viewed and, after all, only a part has been viewed in actual fact. And what is "viewed"? was it taken in, assimilated, "digested"?

The bus took us down the Derekh Hevron and the Hativat Yerushalayim, the circular way around the slopes of "Mount Zion" and another circular way, named "Malchisedek" (!), west of Mount Ophel (where Melchisedek's city once was), to the Dung Gate,



Wailing Wall.

known from Biblical records (Nehemiah 3:14). It is the Dung Gate that gives access to the Western Wall. To be exact, we are moving now through the Tyropoeon or Cheesemakers' Valley, separating Jerusalem's eastern and western hill; so: through a really old part of the city.

Warned well in advance against street peddlers and other obtrusive people, we enter along with many other groups from all over the world on this early Monday morning. Upon entering the section of the Western Wall, we were checked by military men for hidden weapons.

The first object of interest we are led to is an excavation site at the northern end of the section. As early as

1967, in the very year Israeli troops could lay hold of this historic site, archaeological digging was started here by an expedition headed by Prof. Binyamin Mazar of the Hebrew University. What did they find? On June 7, 1968, exactly one year after the capture of the old city, the archaeologists uncovered a Herodian street, which had led up from the Tyropoeon valley to the western entrance of the Temple. As they removed the centuries' old debris, the scholars suddenly found themselves transported back in time to the year 70 A.D. and they could recapture the scene of carnage and destruction as the Roman troops under Titus ravaged the Temple Compound in a fierce fighting with the Jewish defenders. It would take too long to mention other similar or surprising finds, not only from the New Testament but also from the Old Testament period. For one thing, Prof. Nahman Avigad, who started digging in the Jewish quarter of the old city, came across Israelite houses of the seventh century B.C.; that is from the time of Isaiah. How do they know that it was the seventh century B.C.? you wonder. Well, because of the pottery, which usually proves to be a reliable indicator of periods. The Jewish or southeastern quarter of Jerusalem was largely destroyed by the Jordanians in 1948.

At this western wall remnants of the arches of two ancient bridges that



Dung Gate.

connected the Upper City on the western hill with the Temple area on the eastern hill may still be seen. The one near the southwestern corner of the Temple area is known as Robinson's arch and the other one, farther north, is known as Wilson's Arch.

The Western Wall, *Kotel Hama'aravi* in Hebrew, frequently called the "Wailing Wall," is the only remainder of the enclosures of the second Temple, the lowest layers of the wall Herod built around his temple. Since the Six-day War, reconquered and cleared of debris, it has continued as an open-air synagogue, meeting place for Jews from all over the world.

On the second tour we saw a group of Jewesses from Irak (that's what Amos told us), discernible by their dress, performing an ecstatic religious dance. Three days a week are reserved for the celebration of *bar mitsvah*, and Monday is one of these days. I think my Canadian readers must have heard about it, having so many Jews around in this country. When a boy turns thirteen he becomes *bar mitsvah*, son of the law. The young lad has to give proof of his ability by reading the law from a Hebrew Torah scroll contained in a cylinder with crown. Since it was Monday morning our groups could witness such an event, some from close by, others more from a distance. Men and women pray at different sections of the wall in accordance with orthodox Jewish custom; viewed from the west, the women pray on the right, men on the left. So the male members of our group could mingle with the Jews, and the writer of these lines did so, joining a group of Jews from Morocco, initiating their *bar mitsvah*. Reading the well-known chapter 15 of the book of Exodus, the Song at the Red Sea, with its wonderful, forceful rhythm in Hebrew, I could not refrain from reciting with them as they read loudly those lines: "*Asjirah le Yahweh, ki ga'oh ga'ah; sus we rokevo ramah bayyam*" "*Eli we zimrot Yah wayyehi li lisju'ah*" (*I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider He has thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation*"). Is this a mingling with the Jews? But Exodus XV is part of *our* Bible! A difference was noticeable in reciting. In my innocence I said "Yahweh," whereas the Jew never pronounce that name, always saying "Adonai." I was not reprehended. Maybe it went unnoticed. As in the

synagogues, so here men are not allowed to go to the wall bareheaded. But don't worry, an attendant is there to give you a skull cap. As you walk up to the wall, you'll notice many scraps of paper pressed into the crevices, the written prayers of thousands of worshippers, for this is the place where they are closest to God.

Moslems relate to the wall in a different way. It is here that Mohammed tied his fabulous horse Alburak, when he came here to meet Allah.

HARAM ESH-SHERIF: ENCOUNTERING THE MOSLEMS

It is with Mohammed's followers that we come into contact — I can also say: are kept at a distance — next.

To the right of the women's section of the Western Wall is a gate leading into the Temple Mount. The temple mount, I say, for that is what it once was long, long ago. This was the site of the first (Solomon's) temple and the second (Zerubbabel's) temple; and, of course, of Herod's temple, which stood there till the terrible devastation in 70 A.D. However, now it is Arab structures that dominate the scene here. Is it on purpose or incidentally? Why are Arabs interested in this particular site? Well, according to tradition it was here that Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac on the rock. And Abraham is held in high esteem by the Arabs; he is considered their father and counted as one of their prophets. Further there is Mohammed's miraculous visit to the place.

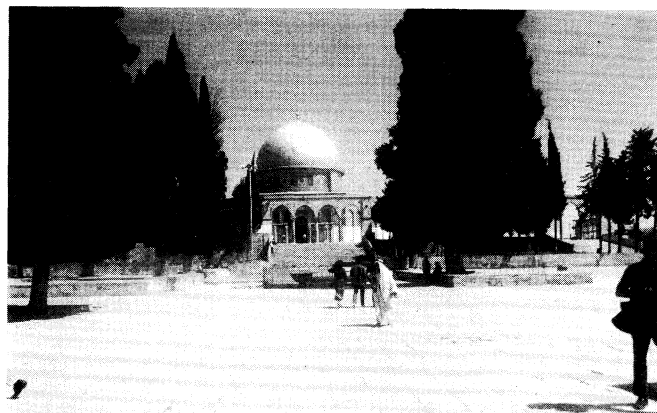
Just as down at the western wall, where Jews lay down the law, e.g., in the prescript of the skull-cap, here Moslem rules prevail. Moslems and

visitors attending their holy sites have to go barefooted, that is to say, to take off their shoes, leaving them outside the sacred building, on trust that they'll find them back. For what reason? Well, nobody less than the prophet Mohammed himself had to take off his shoes when he had his tête à tête with Allah here.

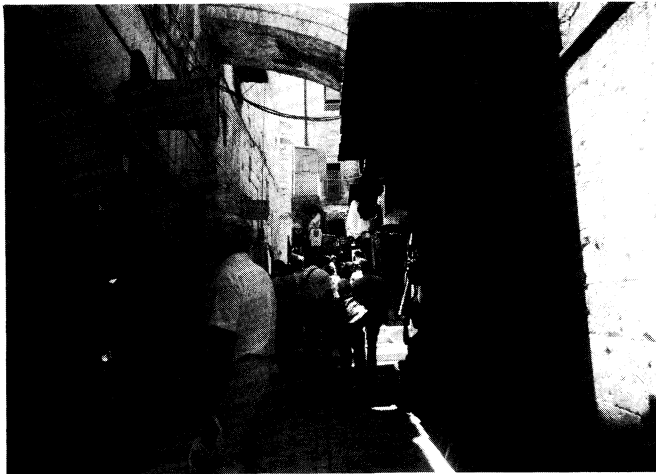
That was in El Aqsa mosque, the silver-domed shrine, built at the beginning of the eighth century by Caliph Al-Waleed. Much of what the visitor at present sees dates from the eleventh century, when the building was restored. It has a capacity of 5000 people.

King Abdullah of Jordan, grandfather of King Hussein, was assassinated at the entrance of the mosque by an Arab extremist in 1951. Another incident concerns an Australian man, follower of some cult, who was of the opinion that it was his duty to rebuild the temple. To that end he first had to destroy El Aqsa. He emptied a can of kerosene in the mosque, lit it, setting El Aqsa ablaze, causing considerable damage.

Also on the precincts of Haram esh-sherif is the Dome of the Rock with the golden (i.e., gilded) dome. The visitor has to go up the steps leading to this sanctuary, built by an other Caliph Abd el-Malik. This is exactly the place where Solomon's temple stood. The dome is named so after the sacred rock protruding from the ground, enclosed by a fence. Scholars disagree as to exactly which part of the temple was on the top of the rock. Some say: the altar of burnt offerings in the forecourt, and to endorse their statement they point to a cave underneath the rock. According to Mohammedan tradition the souls of the dead are said to meet here in prayer. I wonder: Whence this



Dome of the Rock.



A station along the Via Dolorosa.

superstition? Does the idea of "souls" go back to the blood poured out here? An association similar to the one in the vision of Revelation 6:9: the souls under the altar? Our guide Luba was of the opinion that the altar of burnt offerings must have been on this spot. I, for one, would rather endorse the view that the Holy of Holies was erected on top of this rock. Isn't it a remarkable fact that, according to I Kings 6:2, the house which Solomon built was *thirty* cubits high, whereas the inner sanctuary, the most holy place (where man is supposed to be closest to Him who lives in heaven!), was only *twenty* cubits high? A fitting solution would be to consider this most holy place as erected on top of the rock.

In spite of our objections against the Islam — which does not imply that I would like to see the Jewish temple rebuilt — it must be admitted that the Dome of the Rock is an exquisite octagonal structure. Quotations from the Koran decorate the inside and the outside of the mosque. In a small enclosure is a legendary footprint of Mohammed, left when he ascended from here to heaven. It also contains some hairs of his beard. Amos points to a man praying, while his wife is waiting outside. Women pray at the northern side; they are not allowed to pray together with their husband. Little domes or dupolas all over the place are allegedly the spots where Mohammed prayed.

Richer in experience, we are about to leave. For many of us it was the first time we entered a mosque, but instead of coming in touch with the Moslems I'd rather say that one is kept at a distance by them. As I bent forward to decipher a text on the wall of El Aqsah, a custodian approached me threatening me with his stick: Stay

away here: holy ground! Others suspected of the intention of taking pictures, were continually warned and pursued through the building, but some managed to take them from behind a pillar. Leaving, we looked back, trying to take in the whole scene in a glance. North of the Dome of the Rock is a wide square, inviting the visitor to an enjoyable walk. The tour guide takes us to the Golden Gate, with its bricked up twin arches. Jewish tradition says that the Messiah will come through this very gate and enter Jerusalem and the extremists among the Jews, those of the Me'ah She'arim, claim that only then the time is ripe to establish the Jewish state. Since the gate is walled up, we have to leave by another exit, and so we reach the Lion's Gate or St. Stephen's Gate, point of departure for the Via Dolorosa.

THE VIA DOLOROSA: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SUFFERING LORD?

As the reader sees, I have put a question mark after the heading. For what reason? Well, the tourist, I mean the believing visitor, of this part of the city may really wonder: "Am I going in the footsteps of my suffering Saviour?" For as it is today, the scene definitely does not answer our imagination, formed since childhood by what we read in the Bible. I do realize, times have changed quite a bit. Nineteen centuries cannot possibly leave the scene untouched. However, to me it was not possible to recognize the way my LORD must have gone, to call His appearance to mind in all the hustle and bustle there is on the Via Dolorosa now. Jerusalem is a lively, bustling city. The narrow streets are thronged with people going about their business. Housewives are buying provisions for

their families. Arabs from outlying areas are selling their small amount of home-grown produce by the roadside. Souvenir shops are everywhere, some selling cheap wares, others having exquisite workmanship. Shopkeepers sit in the open porch, smiling at the tourists and their purse.

The great majority of the streets are too narrow and crowded to allow the entry of motor vehicles. The streets are slanting, inclined more or less, with steps here and there. Street peddlers selling strings of beads, etc., are running after you: "Two for a dollar, two for a dollar." Porters carry enormous loads on their necks. Others use a kind of three-wheeled barrow, which, particularly when driven by youngsters, are seen hurtling down hills with their drivers sliding along them, controlling them by means of a level tire at the back just in front of their feet, serving as a brake. Arabs on donkeys, carrying heavy burdens beside their driver, ask the right of way, shouting. Be not surprised. After all it is the Moslem quarter you are in now. I hope I convey a little of the atmosphere of what is named the "Via Dolorosa." Quite contrary to what we imagine. However, was our imagination correct? Don't we idylize Bible history too often? Wasn't the Jerusalem the LORD Jesus has known a real eastern city as well, with the hustle and bustle of that time? Wasn't there turmoil as He was led to the cross?

But let us go and mingle with the crowd. To begin with, we visited Bethesda, the pool of the fifth chapter of John. We stay a while in the Church of St. Anne, built over the spot where Joachim and Anne, the parents of Mary had their home. (As the reader knows St. Anne is venerated much in the province Quebec, cf. St. Anne de Beaupré, St. Anne de la Perade, and so on). The church is used mainly for choirsinging, because of its excellent acoustics. Our first group gave a performance here, singing, among other songs, the national anthem.

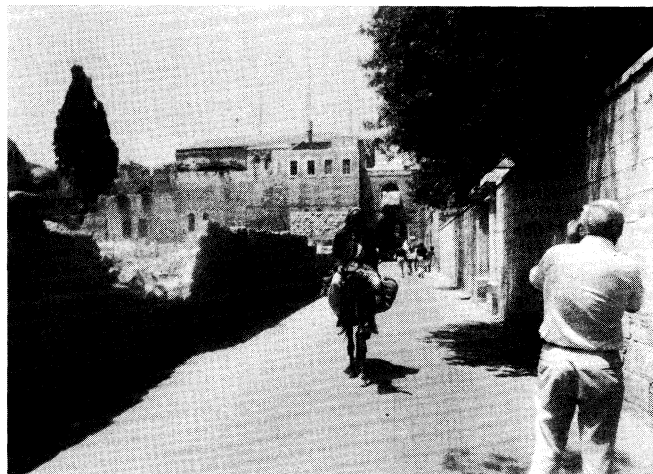
Following the street, the situation becomes really complicated now. We have come to the place where once in New Testament times, the huge fortress Antonia stood, where in all probability Pilate resided when Christ was brought before him. It rose at the northwestern corner of the temple area. The fortress no longer exists. In its place two roads cross each other: the Via Dolorosa and the Ghawanima road. Further, the site of the fortress is partly covered by the court of the

Umariyah boys' school. It was here that Pilate questioned Jesus, washed his hands of the affair, and condemned Him. This is the so-called First Station of the Cross. Across the narrow street, but formerly within the fortress, the Chapel of the Flagellation now stands, where Jesus was stripped of His clothes and scourged. At the same (northern) side of the Via Dolorosa, only crossing a side street, the group enters the Ecce Homo Convent of the Sisters of Sion. Pilate stood here and spoke the words: *Ecce Homo* ("Behold, the man") to the crowd. Interesting archaeological discoveries have been made here. Ten feet below the floor of Chapel and Convent the original Roman roadway was discovered. Some of the stones are still marked with the games the Roman soldiers used to play. Following the arrow down below the convent, you stand on Lithostrotos, historic soil. In front of this place, you notice the ancient street, with its stones grooved to prevent the horses from sliding. As the reader will understand, this is all far below the present street level. So, to go into what is the street today, you first have to go up the stairs. We were happy we could, stretching ourselves comfortably after all that bending and stooping.

On we go, turning around a sharp corner, where the Via Dolorosa coincides for a while with the Al Wad road. At the corner is the third station: Jesus falls for the first time. A Polish chapel commemorates the event. Next is the fourth station: Jesus meeting His mother Mary. Again we make a sharp turn, leaving the junction of the two roads, and, back on the Via Dolorosa, we pass the fifth station: Simon of Cyrene taking the cross from Jesus. The Via Dolorosa is going to climb steeper toward Calvary and we pass



A view along the Via Dolorosa.



An Arab on his donkey.

the sixth station, Jesus' face is wiped by the legendary Veronica. Her veil carries the imprint of His face. Arriving at the junction with the Souq Khan ez-Zeit, we leave the Moslem quarter and enter the Christian or northwestern quarter of Jerusalem. Here is station seven: Jesus' second fall. There was a city gate here 2000 years ago, and those clinging to the traditional site of Golgotha, can adduce the argument that Jesus suffered outside the gate. Here we come across station eight: Jesus speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem. Retracing our steps, we turn again right, into the Souq Khan ez-Zeit, passing the spot where Jesus fell the third time; a little beside the road is a Coptic Monastery. Hence we turn right, enter the Souq ed-Dabbagha, and stand in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The tenth to the fourteenth stations are within the church.

According to tradition (as every spot along the road is indicated by tradition!) the Church is set on the hill of Golgotha. The name is derived from the Hebrew word for skull. Why? Because 2000 years ago it resembled a

skull? Or because the skull of mankind's father Adam is said to have been buried here? The hill itself is indistinguishable today under the CHURCH. Here and there it is exposed. The empress Helena had the first church built over the ruins of a temple of Venus, erected by the Roman Emperor Hadrian, to offend the Jews and Christians. The church was destroyed by the Persians in 614, restored, suffered damage in the time of the Moslems, and was rebuilt by the crusaders. I think my readers know the tune by now (i.e., of what befell the ancient churches in Palestine).

The visitor to this church is taken aback instead of being impressed. It is not a nice church building, viewed from the outside. That is not possible, for it is a church made up of what were originally separate chapels, shrines, courts. The inside is too garish, too gaudy: all those chapels with their hanging lights, images, and pictures. It is because of all those competing faiths and creeds: Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Syrian, Coptic, Abessinian, and Roman Catholic, all scrambling for a spot in this "most holy place."

Entering through the courtyard, with the belfry at your left hand, right in front of you is the Stone of Anointing. Immediately upon entering the basilica, you see a stairway on the right which brings you up to Calvary. Here you find the chapel of the Crucifixion and stations ten and eleven of the way to the cross: Jesus stripped of His garments and nailed to the cross. Franciscans say mass here. On the other side around station twelve is a Greek Orthodox chapel: the place where the cross was erected, "richly" decorated with precious metals, statues, and suspended

Continued on page 470.

news medley

Almost everywhere in the Churches activities are going on to help the refugees. There are a few Churches which are unable to sponsor a family on their own, but who meanwhile did not remain inactive: they gathered money and are going to support other Churches that would need their help. Such activity is very gratifying. Generally speaking, the cooperation is very good. Only the odd time one can hear remarks such as, "But how do you know whether the people you help are Christians, and that you are helping brothers?" I find that a silly question, and am happy that the early Church did not reason along those lines, otherwise I still might have been a heathen. The early Christians went and visited prisoners, showed mercy to slaves, but they did not ask whether those prisoners were believers or whether those slaves had "found Christ." They simply went and showed to others some of the mercy which they themselves had received from their God and Saviour. In some instances this will have brought people to Christ; in other cases their whole work of mercy will have remained without any such fruit. Yet they did it and thus spread the light of God's mercies in our Redeemer.

The Lord does not teach us in His Word that we should show mercy only to Canadian Reformed people or to those belonging to sister-federations. The Samaritan in the parable did not ask whether the man laying there by the roadside was also a Samaritan or belonged to that hated people of the Jews. The apostle Paul did not ask whether the father of Publius on Malta was a believer; and when, later on, the rest of the sick on the island came, he did not inquire whether they were going to become Christians. No, he showed the power of the Redeemer and healed them all.

Thus we show the mercy of Christ by aiding those who have fled from home and country, leaving behind what they had and being robbed on their way of whatever meagre possessions they were able to take along. Later on, when they have learned the language sufficiently and might ask why we went into so much trouble to help people whom we did not know, whom we never saw before, we can tell them that the love of Christ urged us to do so: being so rich and having received so much, we also distribute to help others. Then, perhaps, we shall also be able to tell them of the even greater riches which we possess. For the moment, however, we shall be content with the warm handclasp by which they express their gratitude, as the Buddhist family did whom we have sponsored. We did see to it that there were a few Vietnamese New Testaments in their apartment (we could not get complete Bibles at the moment) and now we pray that the Holy Spirit may work the faith in their hearts. They have been able and are able to see our good works.

Una Sancta, the periodical in our Australian sister Churches, referring to what I wrote about blessings received by countries that receive refugees, gives a few concrete examples. I pass the following passage on to our readers.

When in the sixteenth century Spain and Portugal set about to 'Christianize' the large Jewish populations of these countries, many Jews fled to the Low Countries where they were welcomed and given refuge with the result that commerce was given a boost which can still be seen in the fact that Amsterdam is the Diamond

cutting capital of the world. In Church history we read of the work of two Jewish scholars who came to love Christ: Isaac da Costa and Capadose. The same can be said when large numbers of French Reformed fled from France to settle in the Low Countries and in the British Isles. Some of the best brains in France fled and enriched the life of the host countries. Two examples of refugees, one Christian and the other non-Christian — showing that to do good to refugees is followed by blessings from our good God.

Where shall we begin with our further news from the Churches?

Let's start in our Capital city: Ottawa. Another time I mentioned that the brotherhood there was thinking of another property which is available. A few times they were disappointed, but there is another prospect. In the bulletin we read, "An offer to purchase will be made with the usual conditions attached. A congregational meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 19, 1979, to discuss the proposal to purchase the property."

I hope from the heart that this time the desire to have a property of their own will be fulfilled. I deem it very important for a Church to have a center, which can be used not just on the Sundays, but also during the week. A Church building, I think, should be more than only a place where the brothers and sisters meet to worship the Lord. It also has the function of a social center, where the members can meet in a more informal manner and capacity. Thus the bond is strengthened, too.

Going south, we reach the Burlingtons. In both bulletins we can read about the possibilities which exist for spreading the Gospel by means of Cable TV. I take my information from the bulletin of the Ebenezer Church.

Cable TV (Channel 10)

Many different churches in Burlington have been invited to participate in free half-hour T.V. programs via Channel 10. The program is presented under the name "Amazing Grace." The churches of Burlington East and West have each received a half hour time slot. From both churches we have found an enthusiastic group who are busy preparing our first program which will be taped in mid-November and aired soon after. More details will be published as soon as they become available.

The airwaves are being used, too, for the propagation of the Gospel. In the West the broadcasting is still going on; in Burlington and Niagara Falls or St. Catharines messages are beamed into every direction. And the Churches of Fergus, Guelph, and Orangeville are having close contact with a view to expanding that work and, together, to engage a third station, closer to their own listening area. The report on the Guelph consistory meeting reads, "The Consistory wholeheartedly backs this venture and directs the Home Mission Committee to see that this type of missionary work becomes a reality."

There was another sentence in the Guelph consistory report which deserves to become more widely known. Oftentimes the office-bearers have to complain that families cancel an appointment for family visit without sufficient reason, or that it is very difficult to find a suitable time to make such a visit. In Guelph it was different this time, apparently, as we may conclude from the following line: "The Consistory is grateful to the congregation for the cooperation it has received in the arrangements of these visits." May there be many Consistories which can declare the very same thing!

We were in Burlington East with our quote concerning the television possibilities. There is one more thing to be said: As of October 1, 1979, the Ebenezer Church will again support the Toronto Church for their mission work. Our readers may recall that a few years ago the two Burlingtons expressed the desire to work together and to send out a missionary on their own. Quite a while ago the Rehoboth Church already decided that they were going to continue their support of Toronto; now also the Ebenezer Church has made such a decision. For all practical purposes, the mission work done by Toronto is thus done with the help of the Churches of Ontario North.

Reaching the prairie provinces, we stop in Winnipeg first. On October 13th the new schoolbuilding was officially opened, and it was done with the proper acknowledgments. A meeting was conducted with song and speakers. Thus the Winnipeg Congregation now has a churchbuilding of their own and a schoolbuilding of their own, both close to each other: the parking lot can be used by visitors to either building. It is hoped that the building may soon appear to be too small, although that will take some time, I presume.

From Winnipeg we go to Edmonton.

The Edmonton bulletin sometimes contains worthwhile proverbs, quoted from various sources. There are also at times strange things in that bulletin. I still do not know what a "trainy accountant" is, but that must be my lack of linguistic ability. However, it was not my intention to meditate on that. I was going to pass on to you one of those worthwhile sayings. This one reads as follows:

There have always been people who like to hear themselves talk even though they have nothing relevant to say. In relation to the above, the following are true words of wisdom to be taken to heart by all:

'Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving wordy evidence of that fact.' By: George Elliot.

Let's turn to more serious things, although what is pointed out in the above passage can be serious enough and even a big problem in some instances.

By those "more serious things" I mean the matter of splitting up the congregation into two autonomous Churches. Previously it seemed as if it were just a matter of a few weeks, but now it seems that the division will take somewhat longer to be effectuated. The Edmonton Consistory decided "not to finalize the splitting of the congregation at this time. However, it decided to call upon the whole congregation to assist in the calling of another minister and the election of additional office-bearers."

The Consistory further decided "to instruct Pastor De Bruin to decide by Nov. 7/79 as to which Ward he will serve after a new minister has been received. This minister will be called as soon as possible after Nov. 7/79. This choice of Pastor De Bruin will remain in effect when we come to a definite split. This decision will remain confidential until a future Council meeting."

It may seem to some as if the Edmonton Consistory is sort of seesawing in this matter, but we should not forget that it is a matter which cuts deeply into the whole situation of the Edmonton Church and that at times some new arguments may come to the fore of which no one thought before. Then it is better to go it easy and thus to prevent unnecessary difficulties.

Rev. De Bruin adds, among other, the following remarks: "The question, therefore, is not whether or not we are going to split, (that is already in progress) but *when* the



40th Wedding Anniversary



Berend and Helena Bremer hope to celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary, D.V., on November 9, 1979. They started their married life in Apeldoorn, The Netherlands, and in July, 1951, emigrated to Canada where they first lived in Orangeville, Ontario. In 1955 they moved to Burlington, where they settled, and Mr. Bremer successfully operated a service station for thirteen years. The Lord has blessed them with three sons, five daughters, and twenty-four grandchildren, who all live in Ontario. They are now enjoying retirement after an extended trip to visit their brothers and sisters in The Netherlands. May the Lord grant them many more years together in good health under His blessing and care.



final split will take place. Council has recognized that more time is needed in order that this split may take place in such an orderly and responsible manner that no unnecessary hard feelings may develop in the congregation."

I recall that my colleague in Schiedam, the Rev. C. Vonk, once said to me, "VanOene, a person who never changes his mind is not truly converted." That was another wise saying.

In the Calgary bulletin the Rev. D. DeJong tells the Congregation that he has enrolled as a part-time student at the University of Calgary, for Religious Studies and Philosophy. He adds, "I can notice myself that the study not only inspires me for my work among you, but also the topics dealt with find rightaway applications in sermons as well as

in other teaching, at study groups and Catechism classes.”

Coaldale, too, occupied itself with radio broadcasts or at least with the possibility to organize them. “Radio broadcast: a decision of council taken previously on this was to leave this till the budget for next year will be dealt with. Re Vacation Bible Camp: the Committee will be asked to consider this again and then as part of a total program also to consider mission work to the Indians.”

This brings us then to the Valley.

Langley’s Consistory report states, “An appeal of the Church of Neerlandia to the scheduled Regional Synod on October 30th against decisions of Classis Alberta Manitoba (which Classis Alberta Manitoba?? vO). Since an extra copy is available this will circulate among the elders.”

See, that is wrong. An appeal is to be sent to the broader assembly and not to the Churches. One appeals to the broader assembly, which is not there until it has been constituted. Then it is improper to send copies to the Churches, and the Consistories should refrain from even taking note of it.

I recall that once a convening Church for a General Synod sent us copies of appeals received for that Synod. We sent them back, without even having read them. As soon as we discovered that it was an appeal, we put it into an envelope, returned it to the convening Church, and said, “Sorry, sent to the wrong address. The address is the General Synod.”

Appeals should not be sent to the minor assemblies. The only exception I would know of in this connection is: if someone appeals a decision by his Consistory. Then, I think, it would only be proper to send the Consistory a copy of the appeal. None of the other Consistories has anything to do with the matter until the other Churches receive the Acts of the relevant major assembly. And the measure in which they then become involved depends wholly on the nature of the appeal and of the matter it dealt with. Even when they

receive the Acts and the decision on the appeal in them, they are not called upon to judge the appeal.

Another point to which we should pay close attention is our terminology when we speak of major assemblies. I found in the Valley’s *Church News* the following sentence: “The chief examiners have been appointed at a previous meeting of Classis Pacific.” It is wrong to speak of a “meeting of Classis Pacific.” We know a previous Classis Pacific; we also know a morning session or afternoon session of Classis Pacific of that and that date; we can also have a continuation of Classis Pacific of October 17, 1979, at a later date; but we cannot have a previous or later meeting of Classis Pacific.

A small matter? Sifting out the fruitfly, hardly visible? Not really: have we not experienced — at least the older ones among us — that hierarchical tendencies creep in so easily, and that for that reason we are to watch even the terms which we use? Let us *remain* Reformed, not only in our practice but also in our terminology. So much depends on it!

From the Consistory report of New Westminster I quote the following:

There is a report from Rev. R.F. Boersema including word that their visa application has been received by the authorities and he has a “Green Card” allowing him to stay until his application is processed. Rev. P.K. Meijer reports of his frustration with Brazilian red tape with respect to his visa. He has reapplied with the help of a Brazilian lawyer who specializes in such matters.

We can learn more about all this from the reports as they appeared in *Mission News*, and for that reason I’ll refrain from quoting more from those reports.

That’s then the end for this time. Wishing you strength to your work, health and joy in all your labours, I remain,

Sincerely,
vO

MARVELOUS TOUR — Continued.

lamps. Christ’s body was taken off the cross at station thirteen, marked by a little altar and the statue of the mother of sorrows (Stabat Mater). Descending (from Calvary) to the ground level of the church, one passes, among other things, the chapel of the discovery of the cross, the church of St. Helen (of the Armenians, a church within a church), then the seven arches which are remainders of the Byzantine church (again: a church within a church), and from this point, through the columns, one gets sight of the Rotunda or Anastasis, the Holy Sepulchre, the last station of the Via Dolorosa. This is the focal point of the church. It is topped by an onion shaped cupola and consists of two chambers; first the vestibule, also known as the chapel of the Angel. Here an angel is said to have sat on a stone and proclaimed the resurrection. Hence passing through an entrance lower than the one leading to the first chapel, one enters the tomb, a chamber of two

meters square, with a Greek orthodox priest paying homage or lighting candles. So the Greek orthodox have won the competition? Yes, although, let us not overlook the Egyptian Copts having “nestled up close” to the Greeks, in the apse area of the sepulchre, nor the Syrian Orthodox, who have settled in the western apse of the anastasis, that is, the church originally built over the tomb by Constantine.

The group leaves. How much does one take in in this most holy place, linked by tradition to what is the source of our salvation but in actual fact to the onlooker is a confusion? One is happy to leave this place, to breathe fresh air, to see the sky, above which we know Him to be, Whose name we mentioned so often in this report, seated in glory, withdrawn from Jerusalem, where His memory is preserved, but in what way? Withdrawn from this earth He is, to the benefit of His true believers.

H.M. OHMANN

(To be continued)

Church News

CALLED:

by the Rehoboth Church of Burlington West, Ont.:

REV. W. POUWELSE

of Bergentheim (Ov.), The Netherlands.

ACCEPTED:

the call by the Church at Winnipeg, Man.:

CANDIDATE B.J. BERENDS

of Hamilton, Ont., who declined the calls extended to him by the Churches of Brampton, Ont., Guelph, Ont., and Neerlandia, Alta.

CHANGE OF CLERK:

The new clerk for the Church at Hamilton is:

Mr. L. Knegt

P.O. Box 6421, Station “F,”
Hamilton, Ontario L9C 5S3.

INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE — Cont'd.

Boer, Dr. James Daane, and other leading theologians in the Christian Reformed Church. Now I do not mention this so that we, Canadian Reformed people, can begin gloating — not at all — but rather out of concern. The influence of the Free University of Amsterdam, and the teachings of Kuitert, Baarda, Koole, Berkouwer, are making real inroads into another church that for many decades has stood for the inerrancy of the Bible.

THOSE IN PARTIAL DISAGREEMENT

Now besides those who disagree with Lindsell there are also a few who agree with him but who regret that he brought up the issue and so disturbed the relative peace of the evangelical community. Lindsell's obvious rejoinder to them would be that the issue is too critical to hide or to ignore. Positive action is called for before the whole community is infected with these false views.

THOSE IN HEARTY AGREEMENT

Then there are also those who heartily agree with Lindsell's main thrust and are thankful that he had the courage of his convictions to put it all in print. Many of the scholars who feel this way have banded together to form *The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy* which is an organization that actively seeks to promote the inerrancy of the Word of God. Its beginnings date back to October 26-28, 1978 when a large number of people from differing backgrounds: Lutherans, Christian Reformed, Presbyterians (the O.P.C. had more representatives than any other group) and others met together in Chicago. Out of that initial meeting there also came a *Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*. It is too long to mention here but I will give you a few articles:

Article 1

We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.

We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.

Article 2

We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture. We deny that Church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

Article 6

We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration. We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article 8

We affirm that God in His work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.

We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article 12

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

The leaders in this Council of Inerrancy include Dr. Edmund P. Clowney, President of Westminster Theological Seminary, Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer, Dr. James I. Packer, a world-famous Calvinist scholar who begins to teach this fall on a permanent basis at Regent College, Vancouver, Dr. Kenneth S. Kantzer, the current editor of *Christianity Today*, and many more.

In order to promote its cause it has already begun to publish a number of books on biblical inerrancy, conferences have been held and more are scheduled. In short, this organization is proceeding to champion a cause that has long been neglected and promoted on a piece-meal basis.

THE REFORMED POSITION

Now at this point you might be asking: What exactly is *our position* in the midst of this swirling controversy? It should be one of whole-hearted support for the doctrine of inerrancy and those who promote it. The Scriptural passages that have been mentioned, especially II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20, 21; John 10:35; are quite clearly asserting that the Bible is inspired, infallible, and inerrant. The whole attitude of the Lord Jesus to the Scriptures is in exactly this line. In addition, although the confessions of the Church do not say too much on this subject, mostly because it was never an issue in those days, yet they do say enough. The Belgic Confession states in Article 5, "We receive all these

books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation and confirmation of our faith; *believing without any doubt all things contained in them.*" Article 7 states, "We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein. . . . therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever does not agree with this infallible rule."

Surely the above makes it clear where we stand in this debate. On the basis of Scripture and Confession our calling is to promote the inerrancy of the Scriptures. As such, we too, must be vigilant for the truth, and be on guard against those who would undermine our faith and rob us of our heritage. The Church can only be the "pillar and bulwark of the Truth" (I Timothy 3:15) when she stands foursquare on the truth of God's Word. Let us continue to insist that among our professors of theology, our ministers of the Word, our elders and deacons, and our members in the pew, there must be a faithful adherence to the Word of God in *all* that it teaches.

J. VISSCHER

Consulaat-Generaal Der Nederlanden CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

10 King Street E.,
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OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

BEURSKENS, Antoinette E., laatstbekende adres in Ottawa, Ontario.

DE BRUYN, L.H.J.M., geboren 11-11-1953 te Ravenstein, laatstbekende adres in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

LAGGER-DE HAAS, Catharina Frederika, geboren 17-3-1915 te Utrecht, naar Canada vertrokken op 19 juni 1979.

VAN LANGE, Jacob, geboren op 21-2-1952 te Nieuwe Pekela, naar Canada vertrokken op 30 juli 1979.

PLUG, Johannes, geboren op 20-11-1902 te Noordwijk, naar Canada vertrokken in 1923.

PLUG, Catharina Hendrika, geboren op 11-8-1906 te Noordwijk, naar Canada vertrokken in 1923.

De Consul General voor deze:
MEVR. G. SCHNITZLER

Updating the Church Order

LATE, BUT TOO LATE?

Never should we engage in "updating" the Reformed Faith as formulated in our Creeds. We may, however, yea, must be concerned with updating the Church Order.

One glance at the history of the development and growth of our Church Order tells us that in the 16th and 17th Centuries (and later again in the 19th and 20th Centuries) General Synods have been engaged in this process of updating according to the need of the Churches. Since long, we have felt that the Canadian Reformed Churches, who have already done some updating since their first General Synod, 1954, should apply this to the whole body of the Church Order.

The forthcoming Synod will have the important task of judging the work of the Committee that has presented its Draft Report to the Churches in January 1979. This Committee is now, we assume, busy incorporating whatever they deem worthwhile in the remarks, suggestions, or criticism received from the Consistories. These remarks had to be sent to the Committee by August 1st of this year. Thus what follows comes late, but hopefully not too late.

The reason why the present writer has waited is not only that he does not consider himself the man to publish his evaluation of this Draft Report, but more because he has been waiting for others to write about it for the "general public." Consistories have been studying the Report. We may assume that here and there they also shared their findings with their congregations. Yet, considering the great importance of the matter, we would quote the late Dr. K. Schilder, who advised, "haal het kerkvolk erbij!" (draw the church people into the discussion).

Thus, at this late date, here is a minor contribution which will, hopefully, incite others to join the *public* discussion.

GENERAL EVALUATION

The measure of success in updating the Church Order depends on three factors: first, the modernization of the language, and the over-all streamlining of the Church Order to re-

move "vain repetitions," etc. The Draft Report, in our opinion, is a success in this aspect.

Then, the addition of new elements which have become necessary. Here we gratefully mention Articles 2 and 51 which speak about missionaries and missions (finally . . .). One remark on Article 51, which contains the words, "cooperation in mission should observe the division in classes and regional synods." Why not take one more step, and state the "normal, ecclesiastical way": if a local church needs help in its mission work, it should go to classis, etc.? The reason for having a "shadow church federation" when it comes to mission, that primary mandate, escapes me.

In the third place, this Draft must be evaluated re: what it has *deleted* from the existing one. In the end, Articles 43, 45, 48, 57, 65, 83 are mentioned, whole articles that have been omitted. But, next to this, there are several omissions or deletions of parts of articles. At this moment we cannot give an opinion about the whole Draft, but we are convinced that first the churches, and then General Synod, should be very careful here. We might lose essential, even important elements in our wish to have a simpler, more streamlined Church Order.

PARTICULAR INTEREST

Our particular interest concentrated on some articles that are related to the mandate given to the present writer at our College. Let's first quote them, and then go into some detail.

Articles 52 and 53 of this Report are meant to replace the present Articles 67 and 68.

(Old) Art. 67:

The Churches shall observe, in addition to the Sunday, also Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. The observance of second feast-days is left in the freedom of the Churches.

(Old) Art. 68:

The Ministers everywhere shall, on Sunday, ordinarily in the afternoon service, briefly explain the sum of Christian Doctrine, comprehended in the Catechism, which at the present time is accepted in the Canadian Reformed Churches, so that as much as possible the explanation shall be annually completed, according to the division of the Catechism itself.

The Committee suggests the following replacement:

Art. 52. Worship Services:

The Consistory shall call the Congregation together for worship two times on the Day of the Lord.

The Consistory shall see to it that, as a rule, once every Sunday, the doctrine of God's Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism, is explained.

Art. 53. Remembrance:

Each year the Churches shall remember the birth, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as His outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in the manner decided upon by the Consistory.

We appreciate that the Committee starts this section on "Worship, Sacraments, and Ceremonies" with the general provision, missing in the present Church Order, that the Congregation shall be called together twice on the Lord's Day. We also applaud that the word "Sunday" is replaced by "Day of the Lord," although in the second part of Article 52 it pops up again. It can't. We should keep in mind that we live on a continent where most Bible-believing Churches avoid the use of "Sunday."

But, sorry to say, we have here more questions than praise. Before we mention several deletions or omissions which are, in our opinion, mostly losses, we point to the *headings*. The term "Worship Services" enters our Church Order. Although in a "loose" terminology we have no objections, it should be kept in mind that, according to Webster, "worship" indicates only *one aspect* of our "meeting the LORD," i.e., that we go to worship Him. The Catechism, Lord's Day 38, however, places as a "first" that we faithfully attend God's Church to learn His Word. Thus we would suggest, not only in the heading of Article 52, but also in the first part of the article itself, a definition which does justice to the "two-sided" character of Reformed Liturgy: what the LORD does — what we do.

Greater objection should be voiced against the heading of Article 53, and this brings us to

OMISSIONS

We start, then, with Article 53, the title being, "*Observance*." In its comment on this article the Committee "did not wish to mention any specific *days* . . ." The Committee may not wish to do that and thus omit the mention of "days," but the whole (old) Article 67 is concerned with *days*! It even mentions "second feast-days." If it is

only a matter of "remembering the birth, death, etc." of our Saviour, this whole article becomes superfluous after Article 52. In Article 52 provision is made for "Catechism preaching." That means: we remember all this, Lord's Days 14-20. If special "days" do not matter, the bottom falls from under this new article. And, as far as "remembering" is concerned, we do that also in the Holy Supper. Thus the title "Remembrance" says too little. The Church Order here wants to make a rule about special *days*.

Returning to Article 52, next to what was said about "worship," that covers only the first part. It says nothing about the so-very-important rule re: "Catechism Preaching." Because, in comparison with what we have in the present Article 68, quite a few "omissions" must be stated. We will number them.

1. "ordinarily in the afternoon service."

Without any argument the Committee says, "We did not consider it necessary to provide that this shall be done in the afternoon services." As Reformed people we like to think historically. There is a strong historical basis for this provision; one finds it in all editions of the 16th Century and thereafter.

Although the manner in which the Catechism is "preached" may have changed, the difference in character between the first and second service has not changed. Without repeating all that we wrote some years ago about the special character of the second service, it cannot be denied that there is a difference. In the morning service the preacher can introduce the theme of his sermon with, "Thus says the LORD." In the afternoon service he may say, "Thus we confess according to the Word of God." And this comes second. Without propagating an altogether different liturgy for the afternoon service, we should, in our opinion, preserve this provision. For practical reasons some churches may have (or still do) alternate(d) Catechism-preaching A.M./P.M., but we have the impression that most churches in recent years have returned to the original rule.

2. "Ordinarily."

The new version says, "as a rule," but to us that boils down to omitting an element in "ordinarily." Some readers may remember what Dr. Dam c.s. wrote, in the years of the Liberation, about this term, which is also used in

(old) Article 50 re: the convening of a General Synod. Dr. Dam, an expert in Latin, proved, over against the synodicals, that "ordinarily" is more than "as a rule"; it means, *according to the rule*. Far be it from us to suspect any leanings of the Committee in the wrong direction! By the same token we should take care, in a time in which in various Reformed (or "Reformed") Churches Catechism preaching is on the way out, that this provision is not weakened in any way.

3. "as much as possible annually completed."

Also these words have disappeared. The words "as much as possible" were added in 1905 because it had become clear that for various reasons it would be impossible to complete the whole Catechism series in fifty-two weeks: Supper-celebration (although Synod Dort 1578 decided that Catechism preaching should not be interrupted by that. We add: it need not be interrupted, especially not when, as we hear from "here and there" the Churches try to confine the celebration to the A.M. service); special days; absence of the minister (but then again Synod 1574 made the decision that Catechism sermons should be provided in print for such cases!).

We are, in deploring this omission, not first of all concerned about the "right" of a preacher to cut a Lord's Day into two or three pieces (see sub. 4). He may also want to combine, for example, Lord's Days 28 and 29, Lord's Days 36 and 37. But we should all be concerned that Catechism preaching be not interrupted too much. There are the vacant churches, the holidays of ministers, other absences, exchanging pulpits. The consistories should see to it, that the Catechism preaching be continued as much as possible.

This omission is not something that the churches have ever agreed upon before; we hope they never will.

4. "According to the division of the Catechism itself."

These words have also been omitted. The Committee does not want to make a "Law of Medes and Persians." Nor do we, as indicated above. For the desirable variation in preaching Catechism it may be good to have, for example, three sermons on Lord's Day 3 for a change. The need of the times also speaks a word or two here. Yet, by omitting this provision altogether, it may, in the end, take two, three, or even four years before the minister has

come from Lord's Day 1 to Lord's Day 52. And we do not think that that was ever in the mind of the synods who wrote and revised the Church Order. 1905 gave some leeway, yes, but it maintained, "as much as possible annually"! Therefore the reference to "the division of the Catechism itself" into fifty-two "Lord's Days."

5. As the reader will discover when he again compares old 67/68 with new 52/53, the Committee has attempted to smoothe and simplify a somewhat complicated sentence. This is, in itself, laudable. But the warning be repeated: let's take heed that nothing essential is lost in the process. We fear something is lost indeed, and we will try to make that clear.

Old Article 68 contains a *definition* of a "Catechism sermon" as is the popular name for the P.M. sermon. This definition is:

"briefly explaining the sum of the Christian doctrine, comprehended in the Catechism."

New Article 52 wants to replace this by a new definition;

"explaining the doctrine of God's Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism."

A comparison of the two tells that the new draft of the Church Order omits certain elements. First, that word "briefly." That most certainly does not mean that the Committee wants longer sermons, nor does it mean that old Article 68 prescribes brief sermons! There is more at stake in maintaining or deleting this word "briefly"! To find that out, we must turn our attention to what follows in the old definition. It speaks, first, of "the Christian doctrine." The new text wants to read, "the doctrine of God's Word." At first sight that seems and sounds better. Yet, one must keep in mind that Article 68 has in mind, not so much the whole contents of God's Word, but the doctrine of the Christian Church, drawn from and based upon that Word. Just as we speak, in our Forms, etc., about "the true and complete doctrine of salvation"; "our catholic and undoubted christian faith"; "the articles of the christian religion." In the context of Article 68, dealing with Catechism preaching, "the Christian doctrine" fits better than "the doctrine of God's Word," because it deals with *our* (the Church's) creed or confession.

Then, the old definition mentions what we would call two "stages." First, there is the "sum" of that "Christian

doctrine"; and then, this doctrine is, in its turn, again "comprehended" in the Catechism. We are not splitting hairs, but dealing with the proper preparation of Catechism sermons. The preacher's task is not, as in the A.M. sermon, to stick to one text, but he must teach God's people in the "sum" of our complete doctrine of salvation. "Sum" is not just "summary," as the new definition has it, but rather *sum-total*: the "complete" doctrine as we find it throughout the whole "divine library" of sixty-six books, which form One Book. This sum-total is again (that's the "second stage") "comprehended" in the Catechism. Here one could use the term "summarized." In comparison with God's Word, the beautiful Catechism is (as every preacher finds out) "poor"; it cannot possibly contain the "sum-total"; it cannot "with a pail empty the ocean." Psalm 119: "Thy Word is very wide." And still, in his endeavour to present the sum-total of the Christian doctrine, while using the Catechism as a guide and paying good attention to the beautiful wording of the Catechism, the preacher would need at least six to ten hours if he were to present the sum-total of a specific doctrine in all its details and fulness. Here the word "briefly" enters the picture: to stay within the limits of one sermon and the limits of the attention span of the congregation, he must do it "briefly," all the while doing his utmost to present a well-balanced picture of God's truth, as confessed by His Church.

The reader will have understood that we would regret the loss of these elements in the definition of 50% of the sermons which the Reformed preacher has to "produce." We favour the old definition above the new one.

One more remark: while shortening the definition by omitting the above mentioned elements, the new draft adds one word; a little one indeed, yet

one that struck us right away, i.e., the word "as": "as summarized." Here is an additional binding of the preacher which is questionable. We say nothing new when we state that the commentary on the Ten Words in Lord's Days 34-44, with all the beautiful elements they contain, tends somewhat towards a "negative" accent. Mind you, we are here speaking about "the good commandments of Thy Law"; we are in the part of gratitude. Often the wish has been expressed that the Catechism should have given more room to the "positive" accent. Take Lord's Day 41, on the seventh commandment. The preacher should not be bound by that "as" in the new draft so that the greater part of his sermon must deal with all the don'ts; he should explain the beauty of sex in Christian marriage; its positive significance for "the edification of Thy church and the propagation of the holy gospel" (Form Holy Wedlock) should be put in the centre. Then, only then, do we learn to hate all sins that spoil this great gift of God.

CONCLUSION

We will be satisfied if the remarks in this article may result in a great care by the Churches that, with all the laudable improvement offered by this Draft Report, no essential elements get lost. Our impression, after analysis of these two articles is that probably too little attention is paid to the historical background of (at least) these two articles, 67 and 68. Hopefully that is not the case with all the other articles. Hopefully, yes, because we hope that this new draft, as a whole, will meet with approval, although corrections are needed.

G. VAN DOOREN

P.S. Should not some models be provided, for example, for Subscription Formula for office-bearers, letters of call, etc.? Some uniformity in this is not a luxury.

PRESS RELEASE

Guido De Brès Board Meeting of September 9, 1979.

The meeting was chaired by br. J. Schutten. The minutes of our previous meeting were approved and the agenda was adopted. The secretary was directed to reply to a letter we received.

Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff presented the Principal's Report. Total enrollment is 259 students from 162 families. A request for immunization from polio and tetanus by the Health Department was approved. Commencement date was set at October 26. The Board approved the proposed programme. Three of our students are repeating their year.

The membership meeting of September 14, 1979 was discussed. The Board made a recommendation to the local societies to establish permanent representation to the Regional Board, in line with the school term. We further decided that we will not allow replacements at our meetings in case a delegate cannot make it.

Br. H.F. Stoffels gave us revised income projections which is lower than expected. He urged our local representatives to make sure that we find enough money to pay our bills.

The next meeting will be held, D.V., October 15, 1979.

Mr. G. DeBoer closed with prayer.

A.J. Hordyk,
Secretary



FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of *Clarion* was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on October 27, 1979.

OUR COVER

Maligne Lake, Jasper, Alberta. (Photo courtesy Alberta government.)

Proverbs 3:21-27

My son, keep sound wisdom and discretion; let them not escape from your sight, and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. Then you will walk on your way securely and your foot will not stumble. If you sit down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden panic, or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes; for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught. Do not withhold good from those whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

A Letter to My Father

Dear Dad,

The holidays are just about over, and I have a couple of days left before the lectures start, so I thought I might as well write to you about some of the thoughts that occurred to me and some of the problems I encountered this summer.

As you know, I travelled all over Canada from West to East and East to West, and I visited nearly all the churches in Canada, with the exception of some out of the way places. Consequently, I not only heard many different sermons, but also gathered different bulletins and listened to the various announcements that were made from the pulpit.

Especially the latter gave me food for thought and problems to solve. I discovered that church life is not running as smoothly everywhere as it is in our own congregation. Perhaps I should be thankful for that, but it also makes me worry and wonder. Why do these difficulties occur; how long will it be before they also occur in our smooth-sailing community; what has to be done about it; and is our smooth community really so blessed as it seems to be?

You will notice that the thoughts are rather controversial, mixed-up, and contradicting each other. They bother me, because I don't know the answers. But let me tell you about the difficulties that caused my confusion.

In some of the congregations they had trouble with young people who associated with other young people not of our own churches. This led to mixed engagements, mixed marriages, and leaving the church.

Somewhere else matters of discipline were announced. Although I am not used to this, it may be very common if one takes the whole of the Canadian Reformed community into consideration. However, the congregation was told to pray for these people, to visit

them, and to try and bring them back from their evil ways.

That's where my problems come in. Of course, in this case it was rather easy. I was only a visitor and would leave again after a few days anyway. So it did not really concern me, did it?

But I started to think about how it would be if I did not leave again and had to live in a community like that. What could I do? What would I do? Would it not be the task of the elders to admonish those people? Why then was the whole congregation told to go there? And what influence would young people especially have in these cases?

In the case of mixed marriages I found the problem even worse. At first sight it looks so easy. The Scriptures forbid mixed marriages, so don't even start it, and if one does, he or she is going astray. But then I discovered that in reality Paul says in II Corinthians 6:14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, etc." That is quite clear. But what about people from other churches? Are they "unbelievers, unrighteous, and in darkness," as Paul states it? Sure, it must be hard for a congregation to lose members that way, but are these cases "mixed marriages" as Paul mentions them?

That's all for now, Dad. Perhaps later on I can recall some more of the things I heard and saw.

Love,
Jean.

P.S. Sorry for the delay. I left the letter for a couple of days and then it was lost for a couple of weeks. But here it is, anyway.

Psalm 34:1, 2

1. Through all the scenes of life, As well in
trou-ble as in joy, The prais-es of
my God shall still My heart and tongue em-ploy.
His good-ness I'll de-clare, Till all who
are with woes op-pressed, From my ex-am-
-ple com-fort take And be with glad-ness blessed.

2. O magnify the LORD!
And bless with me his holy Name;
His faithful Word is ever sure,
His truth is still the same.
For when to Him I cried,
With heavy fears encompassed round,
He heard my voice, and in His love
I soon a refuge found.

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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.

GUERRILLA GRANTS: THE WCC DISHES UP A SECOND SERVING

In apparent defiance of the furor caused in its member churches by a 1978 grant to the Zimbabwe Patriotic Front, the World Council of Churches has done it again.

Meeting in Bosse, Switzerland, last month, the WCC Executive Committee approved a gift of \$35,000 from the Special Fund of the Program to Combat Racism to the Zimbabwe Patriotic Front.

The only concession this time around — after more than a year of heated debate on the issue, which led a few church bodies to suspend their WCC membership — was a more careful targeting of funds. The grant was designated for Supportive and Administrative costs for the guerilla group's delegation at the constitutional conference in London. (CT)

The World Council of Churches' budget deficit has reached \$2.2 million. The WCC Executive Committee, meeting in Switzerland last month, blamed soaring living costs and the decline of the dollar in relation to the Swiss franc. The committee studied re-organization and a cutback of activities in an effort to reduce the deficit. (CT)

I know a splendid way of reducing the deficit: cut back on grants to revolutionary movements and take up collections among those movements. Who knows: they might feel obligated to show their gratitude for the help designated for Supportive and Administrative costs, whereby funds could be diverted towards their murderous activities which are well-known.

A tribal grouping of 800 in Vietnam became Christians after listening to evangelistic broadcasts. A North Vietnamese church leader, cited in the *Alliance Witness*, said that the converts were all from the Nung ethnic people situated near the Chinese border. After responding to the Far East Broadcasting Company programs, the new believers asked the Christian and Missionary Alliance related Evangelical Church in Hanoi to supply a pastor, Bibles, and Hymnbooks. The hard-pressed church sent all it could spare: one Bible and one Hymnbook . . . (CT)

A NEW SUGGESTION ON CHURCH UNION

(*Grand Rapids.*) How can denominations that are basically the same in doctrine and in church government yet live apart organizationally, become united? That question has occupied the minds of leading men in four evangelical Presbyterian churches in the USA: the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPNA), and the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). With its 74,000 members the PCA is nearly twice as large as the other three churches combined. It is also the denomination whose General Assembly last June closed the door on merger talks.

Recently committees representing the four church bodies met again in Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. The delegates of the first three came with a specific mandate to discuss possible mergers with one or more of the other groups; the committee of the PCA was present to discuss areas of agreement and disagreement between the PCA and the other churches. At the meeting delegates of both the RPCES and the OPC tentatively came with the question-proposal: What would be the response of the PCA if either or both of the two small denominations, rather than suggesting formal merger, would simply ask to be received, church by church or presbytery by presbytery, by the PCA? Such a procedure, it was argued, would bypass the years of negotiations otherwise required for typical merger talks. Improbable as the proposal seemed when first suggested, the members of all four committees left the meeting seriously considering its potential. (RES NE)

(*Grand Rapids.*) In 1978 the Polit Bureau of the ruling party MPLA (Movement of the Popular Liberation of Angola) issued a decree prohibiting women and youth activities in the churches. The decree said specifically, "Women, workers and religious youth organizations are . . . prohibited." This statement came at the end of a paragraph in the same decree which also prohibited "the establishment of new churches and religious organizations leading to lack of respect and disobedience of the law and of the existing authorities of the Popular Republic of Angola . . ." Abiding by this government decree would make it very difficult for the churches in Angola to continue their customary activities. As in most countries, in Angola women fill the churches. Moreover, how can a church continue without a Sunday School and other youth activities?

A request by the churches for an official interpretation of the decree has so far not been forthcoming from the government. The churches in turn have simply ignored the decree and carried on their business as usual. "Our women and youth are very active," said Methodist Bishop Emilio de Carvalho, noting that they even participate in international meetings. He cited as examples Angola's participation in women's meetings held in Sierra Leone and Kenya recently by the All Africa Conference of Churches and the World Council of Churches. According to the Bishop, all churches were going ahead with the women and youth programs. He felt it would be impossible for the government to implement such a decree, seeing that the very life of the churches depended on women and youth. (RES NE)

PASTORS' BASE PAY SET AT \$11,200

A committee reporting to the president of the Eastern Canada Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, recommends that pastors be paid a base salary of \$11,200 in 1980.

It says a 2 percent increase over base salary for each year up to and including 15 years service should be paid.

If the recommendations are followed, pastors would also get \$2,500 car allowance, a \$200-a-year book allowance and four weeks annual vacation. (KWR)

Continued on page 478.

Smithville Welcomes Rev. and Mrs. Stam

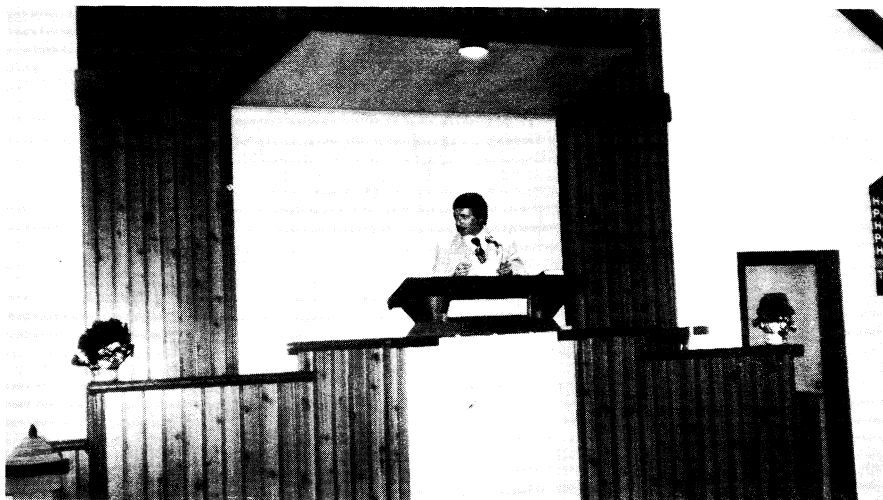
Sunday morning, September 16, was a beautifully sunny morning — just right for the thankful, festive atmosphere that pervaded the church yard. Well before the installation service was to begin the parking lot was quiet, church was "full," and even the nursery was busier than usual.

Rev. Werkman, Smithville's counselor, led this special worship service. He chose as his text II Timothy 2:15 and preached under the theme: The exhortation of Paul to Timothy to do his utmost to present himself to God as a workman who (1) is approved of God, (2) is not ashamed, (3) handles the Word of Truth rightly.

That afternoon Rev. Stam chose as text for his inaugural sermon I Corinthians 1:22-24. The theme was: the Christian Ministry is Unique.

1. The character of this ministry,
2. The rejection of this ministry,
3. The acceptance of this ministry.

Although no official delegates were present, many brothers and sisters from the surrounding congregations had come to join us for this special service, among them the parents and relatives of Rev. and Mrs. Stam. The sunny, warm weather seemed especially ordered for what seemed an unofficial "social hour" after the service. Thankfulness was everywhere apparent.



Rev. Stam on his new pulpit.

That joyful and thankful atmosphere also set the tone for the Welcome Evening held for Rev. and Mrs. Stam on Wednesday, September 19, although it must be said that it was often expressed in a light-hearted vein.

After singing, Bible reading, and prayer, the chairman of the consistory, P. Oosterhoff, in his opening remarks, expressed the joy felt at Rev. Stam's coming to Smithville, and also how this became "the talk of the Canadian Reformed Churches." He also expressed the hope that "the Lord will give you all you need to fulfill the task He put on

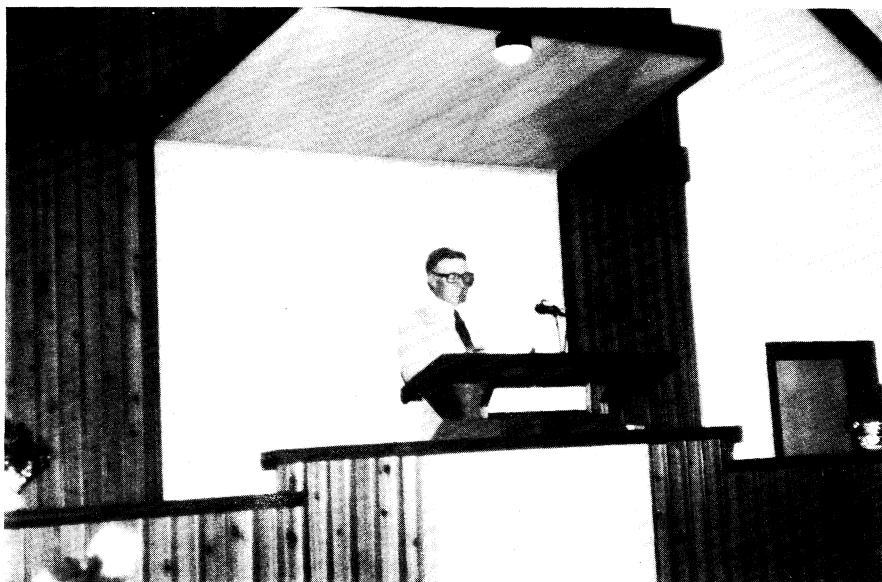
your shoulders, and that you may have good and fruitful years in Smithville." Immediately after this a solo was sung entitled "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring good tidings."

Also this evening one of the consistory members expressed words of appreciation to our emeritus minister, the Rev. H. Scholten. The consistory and congregation, he said, were thankful for all Rev. Scholten was allowed to do, and were appreciative also for what Mrs. Scholten did for Rev. Scholten and in the congregation. A previously recorded tape of a moving message from Rev. Scholten conveyed his prayer that the union between Smithville congregation and its new minister may be fruitful. He congratulated both Rev. Stam and the congregation. The fact that we may receive a new minister from God's hand makes it clear once again that "His work goes on," Rev. Scholten remarked.

John Scholten received the gifts presented to his parents, since they were unable to be present.

Several presentations were also made to Rev. and/or Mrs. Stam in various ways, too numerous and too "various" to mention.

In order to welcome Rev. and Mrs. Stam properly the different Societies and several individuals too, put together a program that resembled a Variety Night. There were solos, organ recitals, a choir recital, poems, skits,



Br. P. Oosterhoff, chairman of the consistory.



Smithville-Lincoln Choir in action.



'k Heb m'n wagen vol geladen — Ladies Society style.

and talks — all to give expression to the joy and thankfulness of the occasion. It should be mentioned here that for lack of a better stage, the pulpit on occasion was used for some highly unorthodox purposes!

On behalf of the neighbouring church of Lincoln, and also on behalf of Classis Ontario South, Rev. Werkman congratulated the congregation that in Rev. Stam the Lord gave us our own pastor and teacher. He also wished Rev. and Mrs. Stam God's blessing and expressed the hope that they may be fruitful in the Lord's service. In appreciation of all Rev. Werkman did as Smithville's counselor during the vacancy, a presentation of flowers was made to Rev. and Mrs. Werkman.

In closing Rev. Stam expressed not only thanks for the welcome prepared for him and his wife, but also the hope that the good atmosphere of this evening would prevail during their stay. For this, he said, we need solid fellowship and mutual trust in the Lord. Our new minister remarked on the title of the book being published on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the Liberation, which translated is, "The Fire Keeps Burning." Let's keep the fires of love, truth, and service burning, Rev. Stam said, that God may be everything to all of us, even in these dangerous times.

Psalms 150 from the *Book of Praise* provided a fitting end for the evening. Well, it wasn't really the end, for after the close of this part of the evening, there was a social hour in the school basement.

We are thankful to our heavenly Father that after a period of vacancy the regular pastoral work in our congregation may now continue again. To God alone the glory.

INTERNATIONAL — Continued.

The Jehovah's Witnesses are building a new Canadian headquarters in the Ontario Community of Georgetown. The \$5 million structure will contain the group's printing and publishing plant, and provide living accommodation for 240 people. (CT)

The Chinese government has approved publication of the Bible in the Chinese language for the first time since the 1949 Communist revolution. Yin Zienzeng, pastor of Peking's only

Protestant church, last month announced that a government publishing house would print the revised version in the simplified Chinese characters adopted by the government in the 1950's to increase literacy. Yin said he hopes at least 100,000 copies will be printed. (CT)

It will mean quite something for the Chinese Christians. However, even if that many copies are printed, it will still be only one copy per 10,000 Chinese. Although there will be many Chinese who do not even know about the existence of God's Word, and although the hoped-for quanti-

ty will fill the immediate need of many Christians, we should realize that it is less than a drop of water on a red-hot sheet of steel.

A unit of the Australian Presbyterian Church has voted to withdraw from the World Council of Churches. The action of the Queensland General Assembly of the church was taken without dissent, citing as reason the WCC's support of revolutionary groups in Southern Africa. (CT)

vO

A Corner for the Sick



If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

Romans 14:8

In his first letter, Peter starts out with the exclamation, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Peter speaks to the exiles in the dispersion, but we, too, without having seen, may now love God, and, although we do not see Christ now, yet we believe in Him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy (I Peter 1:8). We may know that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:39), and that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

In his second letter Peter addresses himself to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and he reminds them that only by God's divine power which works all things in them are they able to escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature.

Therefore he urges them, and us, to make every effort to supplement our faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these things are ours and abound, they keep us from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This again shows us never to think we have arrived at our goal and know all we have to know.

When we believe God's promises, we may die in the full assurance of faith, and when we are still alive, we may work in this same assurance, for, whether we live or die, we belong to Christ. "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory for ever" (Romans 11:36).

From Rose Malda's mother we received a note thanking all the brothers and sisters who remembered Rose's birthday. This year again she was very happy with all the cards and showed them to everyone. Thank you for brightening Rose's day!

We have received a request to send some cheery messages to a sister in The Netherlands.

MEVR. H. SMIT

Constantynstraat 8, Vroomshoop (Ov.)
The Netherlands

Mevrouw Smit is a lonely, 76-year-old sister. Her husband died six years ago. She herself has had two strokes and has a little pump in the back of her head to keep the bloodstream going. At times she is having a hard time and sometimes becomes rebellious. They do not have children. She cannot go anywhere unless someone picks her up. This is looked after mostly by the minister, elders, and deacons.

She loves to receive mail, especially from abroad. Shall we extend some of our rays of sunshine over the ocean, brothers and sisters?

WILMA VAN DRONGELEN

31827 Forest Avenue, Clearbrook, B.C.

Wilma will be celebrating her 22nd birthday on November 3rd. She spends her days going to school or workshop and she lives at home.

I do not know about any of her hobbies or interests but I am sure she will appreciate a lot of birthday cards.

MR. C. SPEYER

St. Peter's Centre
88 Maplewood Avenue,
Hamilton, Ontario L8M 1W9

Brother Speyer suffers from the disease Multiple Sclerosis. He lives at St. Peter's Centre, where he can get the proper care in his deteriorating condition. He will be celebrating his 60th birthday, the Lord willing, on November 2nd, and would very much appreciate receiving cards from brothers and sisters in the communion of saints.

Shall we remember our brothers and sisters, so that they may be strengthened and may have some happy hours when they receive all your good wishes, brothers and sisters?

May I request you to remember all the families who have suffered bereavement? May the Lord strengthen them all in the difficult days which will follow!

What is in life and death my only aid,
My comfort when I am by troubles swayed?
I am not mine but Christ's, Who fully paid
For all my sins and saved me.
His precious blood for my offences gave He,
Freed me from all the devil's power and slavery,
For in the book of life God did engrave me,
And me His own He made.

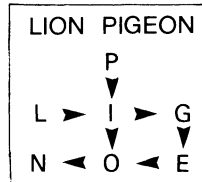
Please send your requests to:

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

Puzzle No. 55 Bible Animal Life

OUR MISTAKE: The Puzzle in the previous issue was printed incorrectly. We apologize to Mrs. S. around the first letter. Successive letters follow horizontally or vertically, not diagonally. Letters in corrected puzzle.

Words can be found in the puzzle grid in spirals, each one proceeding clockwise or counterclockwise around the first letter. Successive letters follow horizontally or vertically, not diagonally. Letters in each word do not cross each other but words do overlap as illustrated.



N E V
 N E H A P O
 G R O R D E L
 I K S A S I T T S N O X E T A S Y H E
 T C S Z E L P E G R M U R Y R E E O R O N
 E O C H E L I R D A G H A A D G R U H
 R C K A M E V A P P Y T O B R S N N I
 R E F T R O N Z E S A H M E A G O D C
 P O L I C E I L V E W E H Y S N R O
 L A U Q C A I L J A N E E K E N
 E N A P E T H A K C E G L S Y C
 T H C I L T N O H A M O I M A
 N A R R T A L E E
 A P W O S F L D R
 E H S W L P L O W H
 L E P N A L R F E L A
 T S Y A O X B M

ASS
 ANTS
 APES
 ANTELOPE
 BOAR
 BEARS
 BADGER
 BEHEMOTH
 COCK
 CAMEL
 CONEY
 CATTLE
 CHAMOIS
 CHAMELEON

COCKATRICE
 DOGS
 DONKEY
 DRAGONS
 ELEPHANT
 FOX
 FERRET
 FALLOWDEER
 GECKO
 GAZELLE
 GREYHOUND

HEN
 HARE
 HART
 HIND
 HERON
 HORSE
 HYENA
 JACKAL
 KITE
 LAMB
 LIZARD
 LEOPARD

LEVIATHAN
 MOLE
 MUREX
 MONSTER
 OSPRAY
 OSTRICH
 PELICAN
 PYGARG
 QUAIL
 ROE

RAVEN
 REPTILES
 SWAN
 SATYR
 SPARROW
 SWALLOW
 UNICORN
 VIPER
 WOLF
 WHALE
 WEASEL

S. BETHLEHEM

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,



Happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday to you!

Even the little ones can sing it. Everyone knows that gay tune!

Birthdays are such happy days.
Fun with friends, and brothers and sisters.
Maybe your Grandpa and Grandma can come, too?
Fun playing games and sharing treats.

Doesn't it make you feel a little sorry when it's all over and you have to go to bed?

You won't forget to say "Thank you" to our heavenly Father, will you?

Because our whole birthday is a present from the Lord, isn't that right?

Now let's wish all the Busy Beavers who celebrate a November birthday a very, very happy day with their family and friends. May the Lord bless and keep you all in the year ahead.

Tanya Harlaar	November 1	Leona Dam	November 15
Paul Mulder	4	Bernice Vandenbos	17
Sharon Kieneker	9	Arno Moeliker	20
Carla Griffioen	10	Lorinda Barendregt	22
Julius Wierenga	10	Glenda Bulthuis	24
Joanne Lodder	11	Charles Doekes	27
Lucy De Boer	12	Annette Van Andel	28
Bernice Van Overbeeke	14	Sylvia Foekens	30
Brian Bosch	15		



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Gerrilynn Huizinga*. We hope you'll really enjoy being a Busy Beaver and joining in all our activities. It's not hard to guess what colour your rabbit is, Gerrilynn! Will you write sometime and tell us how you look after it? Bye for now.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Karen Stam*. We are happy to have you join us. Be sure you join in all our Busy Beaver activities, Karen. Write again soon.

Hello *Phillip De Haan*. Thank you for a very nice entry in our Drawing Contest. Would you like to join the Busy Beaver Club? Just tell us something about yourself and let us know when your birthday comes. Do you remember the address from last time?

You did very well on your quiz, *Edith Hofsink*. Keep up the good work! How is your sewing project coming? Thanks

for your contribution to the Birthday Fund, Edith. Bye for now.

Thanks for your very pretty entry in the contest *Sheila Klaver*. It was nice to hear from you again. Bye for now. Write again soon.

Hello, *Diane Smith*. I really enjoyed your poem, and I think the other Busy Beavers will, too. Keep up the good work!

I see you have been very busy again, *Mary Vande Burgt*. You are a real Busy Beaver! I'm glad you had such a nice birthday, Mary. And I see you enjoyed the Convocation, too. Thanks for your nice chatty letter, Mary. It was nice "talking" to you!

Busy Beaver *Diane Smith* has a poem for you. Thanks for sharing, Diane.

The Sunny Day

It is a very sunny day,
And we can go outside and play;
But then comes night,
And we put on the light.

And this is what my mother said,
"Now you have to go to bed,
For there is another day,
Then you have more time to play."

I dreamt that giants took me to
A very big and tall zoo.
I dreamt I was an elephant
And lived in a great big tent.

Then when I woke up,
I drank some orange juice out of a cup,
I sat on a chair
And ate a pear.

Then I washed the dishes,
My brother caught some fishes.
And this is the end
Of the poem I'll send!

QUIZ TIME

Riddles

from Busy Beavers *Heather* and *Lynda Van Middelkoop*.

1. What is the difference between a lazy student and a fisherman?
2. Why can't you tell secrets on the farm?
3. What seven letters did the girl say when she saw the empty refrigerator?

Answers:
One bat has his hooks and the other hates his books.
Because the corn has ears, the potatoes have eyes, the beanstalks and horses carry tails.
O - I - C - U - R - M - T - I

Have fun doing the puzzle on the next page, Busy Beavers!

Have you sent in your picture for the Drawing Contest? Tell me; How did you do finding John Calvin's motto? Bye for now. Till next time, then, we hope.

Yours
Aunt Betty