



# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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# A Matter of Liturgy

Rev. H. Bouma, Assen, The Netherlands, wrote a plea for changing the order of liturgy regarding the place of the so-called "long prayer." Br. N. Torenvliet gave a translation in *Shield and Sword*, November 1979.

The translator writes as introductory remark, "In former times it was placed *after* the sermon, and now again voices are raised in that direction." As we will see, this "simple" picture of the history of Reformed Liturgy is all too simple, and does not do justice to this history in this respect.

We will quote Rev. Bouma's arguments for his plea to put the "*Prayer for All Needs of Christendom, to Be Used on the Sabbath AFTER the First Sermon*" (*Book of Praise*, p. 476ff.) *before* the sermon; we will evaluate these arguments, and add some more arguments to the contrary.

1. "Still I maintain that we should not go along with the point of view to place this prayer after the sermon . . ."

Not knowing what Rev. Bouma wrote before this "Still . . .," one can only say that he glosses over this issue all too easily. He does not mention that what he pleads for was introduced at the late date of Synod of Middelburg 1933! "*After*" the sermon goes back, via Calvin and the Reformation, all the way to the Early Church. This should have made writer and translator a bit more careful.

2. Continuing the sentence ("we should not go along . . ."), the first correction is to be: No, Reverend, it is not true that others "place" this prayer after the sermon: it has been there for centuries, and it still is there, not only in our *Book of Praise* (see the name of this prayer, above), but also in your new *Gereformeerde Kerkboek 1975* (Reformed Church Book), see further below.

3. Still the same sentence: "When the worship service comes to its conclusion in that way [long prayer after sermon, vD], with these special petitions and intercessions, *they* will linger, clinging to our mind much more at the end of the service."

One understands the motive: this prayer after the sermon pushes the sermon to the background, and we go home filled more with our own prayers than with God's message in the ser-

mon. I have heard such a strange argument before, and I would contradict it with Rev. Bouma's own words, which he adds to this statement: "In our prayers . . . we *throw* our anxieties upon Him." Fully agreed, we "*throw*" them to the mercy-seat, and thus — pardon the expression — we "get rid" of them. How, then, are they supposed to "linger" and to "cling to our mind" even at the cost of forgetting the sermon?

4. We fully agree with the statement: "The Word, preached and proclaimed by Him and in His Name, must reverberate powerfully in our hearts." Obstacles should be removed, like how we talk on the parking lot and at home. That's my remark! I never before heard Rev. Bouma's reasoning: "We should NOT place OUR petitions at the end . . ." thus "prevent(ing) the Word we heard from being *impeded*" (stress mine, vD). I have always thought that praying is to "lift up my soul to God," to open my heart to Him, and, in the worship service, to say "Amen" to what His servant just proclaimed to me as the Word of God. This being the case, a prayer simply *cannot* "impede" and become an obstacle to the preaching. It is an opening of the soil to receive the good seed. In addition, now as a congregation, via the minister, we put our needs in the terms of the message we just heard, and thus the "impression" of the sermon is fortified. It is the first act of "hearing and *doing*" the Word of God.

5. A further "mix-up" is provided by Rev. Bouma, when he, mentioning the covenantal character of Reformed liturgy (rightly so!), states that, first, we read "the complete statute of the Covenant" in the Ten Words. (We leave aside whether this is the *complete* statute, but) "here-after the LORD speaks to us His concrete message in the Scripture lesson; the LORD then proclaims His concrete message to us in that hour of the morning . . . His concrete message for 'today' . . ." Mind you, all this is said of the "public reading of the Scriptures," *not* of the sermon! Apart from whether it is liturgically correct to put several "elements" in between the Scripture reading and the sermon, such as the offertory, singing, and (if Rev. Bouma gets

his way) the "long prayer" . . . , two questions pop up here.

First, why this distinction between "The Ten Words," which is also Scripture reading, and the Scripture lesson which, then, is the LORD's concrete message for us here and now? The Ten Words are also for "here and now," are they not? Far from denying that Scripture reading is God's Word for us "*today*," it "becomes" this in the full sense by the preaching, proclamation, application, and appropriation of that Word. We go to church "to learn God's Word," Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 38. The Holy Spirit works faith (and thus prayer) "by the preaching of the Word," Lord's Day 25, because God "wants His Christians to be taught by the living preaching of His Word," Lord's Day 25.

Secondly, is it right to say that our "petitions and intercessions" (the "long prayer") are "a reaction to" the Scripture reading *before* that Scripture is "explained and applied" to us? Is it correct to say that then (finally) "the divine answer (to our prayers) follows in the preaching"? Thus: we pray first, and then the LORD answers?

It simply is not true that every sermon contains the answers to the prayers that we just "threw" toward the mercy seat. It *is* true that, taught by the instruction of the sermon, we receive new food for our prayers. Rev. Bouma might want to object, but what about our family worship? We read the Bible, and then, instructed by it, we pray. True, but in a God-pleasing family worship we should, as a family, first (briefly) discuss what we just read, so that everyone, also the children, understands what we read; and then we pray.

6. Although more objections could be mentioned against parts of this article, we conclude with the strange statement, "Place, however, the petitions and intercessions at the end of the sermon, *and the answer of the LORD will not be heard*" (stress mine, vD). First, no one can maintain that all the answers to all our "petitions and intercessions" are heard (i.e., receive an answer) during the hour of worship; the answers may come later, and not always the way we had expected. Secondly (I repeat), it is too much to

expect from one sermon the answers to all our petitions, etc.

We wholeheartedly agree with the concluding words of our colleague: "We should seriously reflect on the meaning of our prayers in the worship service to the end that also our prayers may effectively be to the glory of our God."

\* \* \*

This brings us to a second series of remarks on this matter (continuing the numbering).

7. Let us first take a look at our Prayer Book, *Book of Praise*, p. 475ff. The first prayer is really a combination of two different prayers, as A. Kuyper, Biesterveld, Van Rongen, and others have pointed out. The first half is a "General Confession of Sin," which should, according to these and other authors, be prayed right after the reading of the Ten Words. A. Kuyper, c.s., have advised that this prayer should be followed by a public proclamation of the forgiveness of sins. The second part is a "Prayer before the Sermon," starting with the well-known words, "Open now the mouth of Thy servant . . ." This prayer should be followed immediately by the Scripture reading and the sermon.

8. The sister churches, in whose midst Rev. Bouma is a minister, reduced<sup>1</sup> the number of prayers in their new Church Book 1975, but kept the *same order*: brief prayer before the sermon, and, p. 446ff., "Dankzegging en Voorbede" (Thanksgiving and Intercession), the so-called "long prayer." That this prayer is meant for *after* the sermon is clear from p. 453, where Synod Kampen 1975 provides an Order of Liturgy next to the one adopted by Synod Middelburg 1933. In this "new" order Kampen 1975 returned to the *old* order: long prayer *after* the sermon. Rev. Bouma, instead of trying to convince us in Canada via a translation, should voice objections against his own synod, considering that those objections are, to him, so serious.

9. The youngest publication on Liturgy in Reformed circles is that by Dr. C. Trimp, Professor in Liturgics in Kampen, who published his lectures in 1978 under the title *Forms and Prayers*.

On p. 76ff. he shows how the Reformation restored this Prayer by taking it out of the context of the Romanist Mass in which it was placed in the centre(!). The *intercessio* was brought back to its proper place in the two centres of the Reformation, Strassbourg

and Geneva. Calvin and Bucer in this respect followed the teachings of Ambrose, Tertullian, and Augustine. Also the third centre of the Reformation, where also our Catechism was born, the Palatinate, placed the "long prayer" after the preaching in its Church Order.

On p. 87ff. Dr. Trimp discusses the work of Synod Kampen 1975 and Synod Groningen 1978. Although the tradition of 1933 is kept next to the "old order," these recent Synods, as becomes clear from the Order of Liturgy they adopted, returned to the Reformers: "in this revision the prayer of thanksgivings and intercessions finds its place after the preaching."

Kampen and Hamilton draw the same line in this matter.

10. Whence, then, came this order Middelburg 1933, which (as is clear by now) went *against* the existing order as laid down in our official Church Book? That may be a long story. Dr. S.G. Huh, well-known among us, tells us in his dissertation *Presbyter in Full Rights*, 1972, how in the struggle and split between the southern and northern Presbyterians in the U.S.A. also the place of the long prayer played a role! The "conservatives" were much against placing this prayer before the sermon, because they were convinced that there was a *pietistic* motive behind that: let first the pious soul speak, and then the LORD will, hopefully, answer. One who knows about the history of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands before and after Synod Middelburg 1933, also knows (with all due respect for what he did for the churches via his students) that the author of this "new" order 1933 was Prof. Dr. T. Hoekstra, who — it cannot be denied — let himself be influenced too much by the psychology of his days: it permeated all his publications. He even divided the "kinds of texts" according to the faculties of the human soul!

I, for one, would for that reason hesitate to follow his lead.

11. The more so, when I read Biesterveld's *Reformed Church Book*, and even more when I listen to Rev. G. Van Rongen in his *Zijn Schone Dienst* (name of the summary: *Liturgy of the Covenant*). On p. 79 he writes that we have this order (long prayer after sermon) from Calvin who followed the example of the early Church. Having rejected K. Dijk's ideas on the subject (which run parallel to those of Rev. Bouma), he "seriously recommends," p. 80, that we stay in Calvin's line, as did Kampen 1975, and as I have no


doubt that "Smithville 1980" will do, when the next synod will deal with the definitive *Book of Praise*.

12. The final remark is a reference to our Confession, in Lord's Day 38, already mentioned. There, however briefly, we have the proper and truly Reformed "Order of Service" divided into four parts (they are the *main* parts or elements, linked together by other elements). Everyone knows that order. We "diligently attend the Church of God,

- to learn God's Word,
- to use the sacraments,
- to call publicly on the LORD,
- to give Christian alms."

G. VAN DOOREN

<sup>1</sup> Although Synod 1978 added some more. Dr. C. Trimp expects that, when completed, the number of prayers will be sixteen.



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# press review

## AN INVITATION DECLINED

In *Calvinist Contact* of January 18 of this year, the editor, Mr. Keith Knight, wrote an invitation to which I should like to react with a "No, thank you, I am not allowed." The invitation was written under the heading: "Internal bickering keeps the church from fulfilling her task." In this title the word "church" does not only mean the Christian Reformed Church; it also means: the different denominations together. That is evident from the article which follows. But let me tell the readers what is written. The author starts by praising unity. Seeing unity between people, e.g., a married couple, makes one feel good inside, he says. And the same is true when that unity is seen in a congregation with a certain project. And then we read:

It is that sort of oneness that must become our goal as Reformed denominations during the 1980s. If we as Christians are to truly fulfill our tasks as witnesses in this world during the new decade then we must be able to work together.

I am sorry for the author, but I disagree with his statement. And later I shall say why.

After the remark about the political and economic situation at the beginning of the 1980s we read:

The Word of God continues to convert millions in far-away places and the church seems to be growing on former heathen soil. Our Reformed denominations are committed to spreading the gospel and we give thousands of dollars to missions. But what are we doing here in Canada and the United States? What sort of meaningful church activity takes place in your congregations?

Important questions are asked here. The first statement seems to imply the question: why are millions not converted on the North American continent? Before I shall try to give an answer, I quote further:

This paper is privileged to have a healthy mixture of readers. You people out there represent about seven different denominations and you know for yourself the broad spectrum of ideas which you collectively hold. This paper has traditionally stressed interdenominational unity and she will continue to do so.

Regardless of your denominational ties, I dare say that most of our congregations are introspective; that is, they look into themselves and concentrate all of their energies on internal problem-solving. It reminds me of that children's game: Ring around the Rosie. Many of us tend to form a large circle, each member facing inward. . . .

But if we were to turn ourselves around, then we would have a congregation which looks outward. The problems we then see are not focused on individual members of our congregation but rather on the problems of the world. When we look out into the world we see the hungry and needy and lonely . . . and we respond to their needs. We forget our own little problems. Then it becomes insignificant whether or not we must recite the Apostle's Creed in unison or let the minister continue to say it for us. Then the decision of whether or not women should vote at congregational meetings is no longer a major stumbling block over which at one time we were prepared to leave our church for another denomination.

You see, those little things within the church often tend to keep us so busy that we are unable to do those big things out there.

"I must agree with the author: we are often so occupied with ourselves that we have little time and attention to help those outside. But let us not forget that the struggle inside needs lots of attention. We live in a post-Christian culture. And it is quite well possible that precisely *that* is one of the causes that millions are no longer being converted in North-America. The Bible speaks of an energy of erring, sent by God to those who reject loving the truth, which can be known (II Thessalonians 2). False teachings have led, and are leading, many astray from the truth. But let me say something more about the struggle inside.

The writer mentions two points of disagreement: women's voting rights and the manner of reciting the Apostles' Creed. He calls them minor things. Instead of looking inward we should look outward and have our attention focused on the needs of the world.

In my opinion a false contrast and dilemma is made here. One could say that women's voting rights is a minor thing, and that it is not worth fighting about. However, it is so that in those

denominations where women's voting rights is no longer a problem at all, because it was accepted long ago, a new problem is causing division now: the problem of women in office. And in those denominations where women-in-office is also no longer a problem because it is fully accepted, there the denomination as a whole is becoming or rather, has become, very liberal, and is turning — again, as a whole — toward the world and its needs in such a way that the church becomes worldly, socialistic, and neo-marxist in viewpoint and practice: the World Council of Churches supports communistic revolutionary movements.

I write these lines here (one step leading to the other) to make clear how important those so-called minor things are in church life: very much worth receiving ample attention. It can also make the reader aware that the dilemma "inward—outward" is not justified.

We can say: all those minor things are unimportant. We must see the needs of the world: the hunger, the loneliness, and other miseries. However, this sounds to me to be going in the direction of the social gospel ideas. Let us not forget that the biggest problem of the nations is that they do not know, and do not serve, the LORD according to His Word. What they need first of all is the pure preaching of the gospel. And therefore it is also the task of the churches to abide by and maintain the truth of the Word of God in their own midst. Deviating from that truth by a church, or let me say: by a denomination, causes world-conformity in the practice of life, in thinking and in speaking, in conduct and in doctrine. Then much material help (and remember the material support by the WCC to marxist movements for the "liberation" of "suppressed" nations) does not really help. I am aware of the fact that the author of the article, which I quote here, does not mean to support marxism. But let me point to the development of the last two decades as we can notice it in a church in The Netherlands which once was Reformed, and with which the Christian Reformed Church wants to continue close fraternal relationship: Marxism is very strong at the Free University in Amsterdam and so in the Synodical Reformed Churches.

It is of prime importance for a church to keep herself holy and blameless according to the Word of God, in



order to remain a light for the world. In this light not much is unimportant. Both have to be done intensively: looking outward as well as looking inward. But let us continue the article. We come closer to the invitation.

That children's game, Ring around the Rosie, could also apply to us as Reformed denominations. There we stand, a half dozen or so men, each representing a denomination. It is a relatively small circle which means: that we are standing fairly close together. We see each other face to face. We know each other and we have heard a few bad things. One may have a blemished history. Another denomination is known for his wild, liberal clothing. Someone else is a stuffed shirt. One man has worn-out shoes, indicating a weak foundation.

I shall not try to recognize any denomination in any of those descriptions: which one fits which? I am also aware of the fact that no denomination here on this earth is perfect. But that fact does not mean that we can speak lightly and superficially about a few "bad things," when basic matters are at stake, matters such as the doctrine about the Scriptures, and about election and reprobation, to mention only those two.

But let me continue to give the floor to Mr. Keith Knight.

As long as these denominations keep looking at each other, they are bound to find more and more faults.

This, without a doubt, will be true, especially when the one denomination, being warned by another, does not heed the serious warning, and continues on its deviating ways. And did not the Canadian Reformed Churches send an appeal to the Christian Reformed Church twice already? The first time was in 1962. The second appeal was written in 1977. If you see that your brother sins, must you leave him in that sin? Or is it the Christian's calling to warn him and point out his sin to him, so that he may repent and turn away from his evil ways? Not looking inward into the internal happenings within the circle of Reformed denominations, but together, arm in arm, looking outward, and leaving those "bad things" for what they are, does not look very Christian, very Scriptural, or very obedient to me. And, therefore, the following remark in the article is also completely unjustified, according to me. The author says, as if in contrast to that act of finding faults in each other:

But into that circle [of churches finding faults with each other, J.G.] steps the Lord

Jesus. He reminds them that they are not following His instructions properly. He tells them each to turn around. They gaze over fields of ripe grain — as though they were standing in the Prairies. They realize the need to reap the harvest for their Lord. They see a patch full of weeds and realize that it needs some care and nurturing. They come across a crippled cow and, together, nurse it back to health. There is much to do out there in the world and so little time left in which to do it. We cannot afford to stand around in our little circle and unlovingly criticize each other. We need to heed our Lord's instructions to go out into the world, unselfishly and unashamedly.

From the above it is clear that I doubt very much that this statement about what our Lord Jesus would do is correct. He tells us to go out into the world with the gospel and to preach it, to make the nations his disciples, and to teach them to *keep His commandments*. Certainly, we must do so unselfishly and unashamedly. But He definitely also says that we must watch each other when we are brothers, that we must warn each other when there are evil ways that deviate from the truth, from what He has commanded. And if we then must criticize one another, even so much that one of us says: since you continue on your evil straying way, and since the Lord has said that we may not participate in the evil of others, we discontinue contact with the goal of unity, is that really unloving? Or is it unloving not to criticize and leave the things as they are and do as if there is really nothing wrong? But let us continue reading the invitation for cooperation:

As we face the challenges of a new decade (and, really, they were no different from past challenges) we must extend our hands in fraternal unity. We must work together and pray together so that our mandate in this world can be fulfilled.

Unity in the Lord is a beautiful attribute. It is not idealistic. It is biblical.

With these last two sentences I agree with my whole heart. But it must be a true unity in the Lord: that is a unity in His truth, His inerrant Word, without coming with different modern interpretations. I may quote here from what Christ Jesus, our Lord, says through the pen of His servant Paul in Romans 16:17: "I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way, contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them" (NIV).

This shows that divisions and obstacles are caused by those who

deviate from the teaching of the Scripture, and not by those who point out deviations as being deviations. But let us read on:

Christ commands us to love each other. Some of us find it easier to love a starving Laotian than to love a fellow Christian.

That command of love is there. And it is love for a fellow Christian that makes you warn him that he is erring; not that makes you keep silent and do as if nothing is wrong.

We come to the closing paragraph of the invitation:

The church has a considerable amount of work to be done and it can't get done while we are bickering at the congregational meeting or over the denominational fence. Those denominational committees for contact should make every effort, as should the denominational synods, to extend a warm hand of unity to each other.

Again I must agree that there is such an enormous amount of work to be done in our countries. And therefore it is too bad that we cannot accept the invitation. I must say: "No, thank you." The Lord tells me that I may not take part in the evil of others, and that I may not do as if there is no evil. I must avoid those who cause "divisions" (NIV) or "dissensions" (RSV), who deviate from the teachings of the Scriptures. This is true in an individual way. This also holds true in a denominational way. I take this over from the author. That a different interpretation of the Scriptures becomes accepted whereby the fact of the earthquake at the resurrection of Christ can be put to doubt, is a deviation. That the Reformed, Scriptural doctrine of election and reprobation as confessed in the Canons of Dort can be attacked and denied openly and publicly, is a deviation. Does the subscription form still function?

I wish we could accept the invitation. That is why I react to it, even though it is in the negative. It grieves me to see that a denomination, which is so close, itself makes an acceptance of such an invitation impossible, because of the deviations which cause the dissension, the division. And I react to this invitation out of concern. Oh, would the Christian Reformed Church heed the appeals that were sent to her in Christian love, so that the invitation could be accepted because of oneness in faith and in church membership, along the royal highway of obedience. (See Press Review, *Clarion*, October 20, 1979, page 436/7.)

J.G.



*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.*

### UTRECHT (ANP)

The seven Netherlands bishops and two members of a religious order were scheduled to hold a special Synod in Rome from January 14 on. The Pope was to preside over it. The purpose of the Synod is to bring more unity in the pastoral care within the Roman Catholic Church in The Netherlands. The theme of the Synod is: the exercising of the pastoral work of the church in The Netherlands in the present circumstances in order that the church may more and more become evident as "communio." (ND)

### STUTTART (ANP)

The Slovak Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia has received 50,000 Bibles via the Word Federation of Bible Societies in Stuttgart. The office of the church in Bratislava confirmed that the Bibles have arrived. They represent a value of 290,500 German marks. (ND)

### SPAKENBURG-ZUID

The Consistory of the Reformed Church at Spakenburg-Zuid decided to approach the forthcoming Particular Synod of Utrecht with the question whether the salaries of local ministers may be paid from mission moneys. The question is the result of the fact that one of the local ministers at present spends about half of his time on mission work. (ND)

When I read that, I hastily consulted the Church Order as our Netherlands sister Churches adopted it in 1978. It is possible that they revised it again and that I am a little behind. However, I suppose that the same Church Order is still in force.

I looked at article 30, but it still says there

that a major assembly is allowed to deal only with those matters which are a common matter for the Churches of that area or which could not be finished in the minor assembly.

I looked at article 41, and it still says there that the chairman of a *Classis* shall ask the members of *Classis* whether their Consistory needs the judgment or help of *Classis* in any matter for the proper functioning of their local Church Life.

I looked at article 45, and there it does *not* say that a chairman of a Particular Synod shall ask the Churches whether they have any question, any request for advice. That would be impossible, for the Churches are not there, only those who were delegated by a *Classis*.

I looked at article 24, where the provision is found that the Churches, if they cooperate in the matter of foreign mission, shall observe the division into classical and synodical areas.

Nowhere did I find that mission is a matter for the broader assemblies. Nowhere did I find that a Church is forbidden to discuss a question as the present one with the cooperating Churches.

I conclude that it is a matter which could be finished in the minor assembly, i.e., the Consistory, in consultation with the cooperating Churches.

If a Church needs advice, the proper way is to go to a *Classis*.

Here a Church goes to the Particular Synod.

Strange.

Is that *Reformed* Church polity?

### NEW YORK (RNS)

Judging by the non-results, a lot of America's "top psychics," including seer Jeane Dixon, had better check on their psychic vibrations, or the glow from their crystal balls, or whatever.

The scores of their published predictions for 1979 turned out to be less than impressive.

Jeane Dixon, for example, the lady who announced in 1977 that the late Pope Paul VI would be around for four more years, predicted that in 1979 Pope John Paul II "will ease church rules," and that "many Catholics will find John Paul unorthodox in his thinking."

Psychic astrologer Frederick Davies went Ms. Dixon one better: "Pope John Paul II (in 1979) will stagger the religious world by announcing his plans for the ordination of women priests."

Chicago psychic Olof Johnson predicted that the "real" Holy Shroud (or burial cloth of Jesus) would be found in Egypt in 1979.

A sampling of other predictions for 1979 that failed to materialize:

— "Blood will be spilled as fighting breaks out between Israel and Egypt again in May. Surprisingly (CBS anchorman) Walter Cronkite will be influential in getting both sides back to the conference table, where a new peace agreement will be hammered out."

— "Mohammed Ali will win a seat in Congress."

— "President Carter will be injured in a hang-gliding accident between April 8 and 10."

— (Former) Uganda dictator Idi Amin will be assassinated March 13."

These and other predictions relating to an "alien space station," the stopping of inflation "dead in its tracks," and so on were published in editions of the *National Enquirer* and *The Star* — the supermarket staples. (CN)

\* \* \*

The government of Transkei last month declared as illegal within its borders the World Council of Churches and the South African Council of Churches. These were just two of thirty-four socially activist organizations, many of them church-related, banned by this black tribal "homeland" under its Public Security Act. Transkei was proclaimed an independent nation by South Africa in 1975, but has failed to receive recognition by any country outside southern Africa. (CT)

\* \* \*

The Churches' Council for Covenanting in England has drawn up a draft covenant for unity among five major British denominations, and expects to have a final draft ready in time for their individual summer sessions. Reportedly still at issue is the inclusion or exclusion of bishops in church structure, and recognition of women ministers. The denominations involved are the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the Churches of Christ, the United Reform Church, and the Moravian Church. Baptists, Congregationalists, and Roman Catholics withdrew from the formal unity process two years after it was begun in 1974. (CT)

vO

**OUR COVER**  
*Quebec City. (Photo courtesy Quebec Government.)*

# Report on a Marvelous Tour <sup>10</sup>

*"For Hazor formerly was the head of all those kingdoms" (Joshua 11:10)*

On our way back from the northern-most part of the country — where we find Caesarea Philippi, Dan, and Abel Beth Maacah, each at one of the source rivers of the Jordan — to Tiberias we passed a place where our bus had a stop and to which I would like to devote two articles before I come to a conclusion to this series. Two articles, for actually it is two sites, lying closely together from a geographical point of view, but far apart when considered from a historical angle. The one is an archaeological site, a tell, known from the Bible as Hazor; the other a kibbutz, and thus quite a modern establishment, bearing the name Ayyeleth Hashshahar. Being eight km. west of Lake Huleh (it is not in the Panhandle anymore) and fifteen km. north-west of the Sea of Galilee, it does not belong to that area either. The main road winding slowly downwards skirts a prominent mound. Seemingly, there is nothing special about this mound, but locked within it were the relics of a long history. This was the site of Biblical Hazor, of which is written: "For Hazor before-time was the head of all those kingdoms."

Joshua 11:10 is not the only biblical reference, but certainly the most important one. Jabin, its king, was the head of a coalition of Canaanite kings, so quite a potentate! Yet he was defeated and his city taken and burned. However, not so long afterwards — less than two centuries — another Jabin, "king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor," oppressed the people of Israel cruelly (Judges 4:2). In spite of the defeat at the hands of Joshua the city had once again risen to prominence; the title "King of Canaan" is indicative of that! At the end of Judges 4 we read that once again "GOD subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel . . . until they destroyed Jabin. . . ."

Hazor is again mentioned in the Bible in I Kings 9:15: "And this is the account of the forced labour which King Solomon levied to build. . . Hazor. . . ." II Kings 15:29 relates the end of Israelite Hazor; the city fell to the

armies of Tiglat Pileser III, the mighty Assyrian emperor who conquered northern Israel. That is the last reference in the Bible. What we learn here about Hazor is underlined by the information the history of the Ancient Near East provides us with. Its first mention is in the so-called Egyptian Execration Texts. The reader knows what is meant: Potsherds or clay figurines with the name(s) of princes or rulers written on them, which could be broken at pleasure as soon as they constituted a threat to the power of Pharaoh; the breaking working in a magical way like a curse (1800 B.C.). Also in Mesopotamia one took interest in Hazor as a city which ranks first among those in Palestine, as is obvious from the archives of ancient Mari in the time of King Hammurabi of Babylon (1700 B.C.). A century later, after Egypt had rid itself of the Hyksos (foreign invaders) (1580 B.C.), it is the Pharaohs of the New Kingdom who refer to Hazor over and over again; and in the correspondence of Amenhotep III and IV with their vassals in Syria and Palestine (1380 B.C.), preserved in the El Amarna archives — just prior to the well-known King Tut Anch Amon — it is Hazor's ruler who alone is singled out by the title of "king." While the country was ruled by numerous petty kings, of all the rulers he was referred to as the King. From what we read in the letters we learn to know him as an ambitious king, a situation reflected exactly in the Book of Joshua.

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Where was this city to be sought? On account of the Biblical data one could make a rough guess: some place in the central-eastern part of Galilee. But where exactly was the spot? The first scholar to suggest that ancient Hazor was hidden in what a century ago was called Tel el-Qedah by the Arabs, was J.L. Porter (in 1875). What first was a supposition became his conviction more and more. It was only half a century later that Mr. John Garstang, Director of Antiquities of the British Mandatory Administration of Palestine, conducted excavations here. (I've mentioned his name in connection with ancient Jericho. Garstang was very in-

terested in the period of Joshua and Judges and the date of Israel's entry into Canaan.)

The identification has been confirmed by a written document (fragment of a clay tablet) found on the site. As it lies there it must have occupied a really strategic location. What struck the scholars most of all was the form and extent of the site. It is composed of two distinct parts: a tell in the proper sense of the word and a large rectangular plateau. The tell itself is a mound in the shape of a bottle, the bottleneck to the west and the bottom to the east. Its steep slopes rise from the surrounding wadis to a height of about forty m. The total area at the top is about fifteen acres, roughly the area of Megiddo. As far as that goes the tell is hardly different from the average one. The unique feature of the site, however, is the vast rectangular enclosure north of the tell. Its measure is about one km. from north to south and 700 m. from east to west. Add to this an eastern spur of 400 by 250 m. and we come to a final figure of 200 acres for the total area of the enclosure, *making Hazor twenty times larger than Megiddo or even Jerusalem in the time of King David!* Now the reader understands why I would like to draw his attention to Hazor, "head of all those kingdoms," whose king was introduced to us in the Bible as "king of Canaan." It deserves a special article, I think.

What about the nature of this enclosure? Since a city of such dimensions was hardly imaginable in those days, Prof. Garstang who dug here in 1928 was of the opinion that it was an "encampment large enough to accommodate in an emergency 30,000 men with a corresponding number of horses and chariots." So, a fortified camp. This was the common opinion among scholars. Dr. A. van Deursen passes it on in this book *Palestina, het Land van de Bijbel* (Bosch en Keuning, Baarn), page 187. My colleagues in the ministry who had to study this book for the tentamen Biblical Geography in Kampen will certainly remember. Prof. Yigael Yadin was the first to cast doubts on the encampment theory. He could not imagine that "the stupendous ramparts and the incredible efforts that had been invested in its de-



Ruins at Hazor.

fence" had been made only for an encampment. When he started excavating here in 1955, one of his main objectives was to probe into the nature of this so-called fortified camp.

Since hardly any report of Garstang was ever published, it was impossible to ascertain where he had dug in the enclosure. A disadvantage? If so, only partly. "Had we known the exact spot of his soundings, some of the most significant discoveries of our expedition would probably have been passed by," Yadin writes. "It so happened that both Garstang in 1928 and our team in 1955 were attracted to the same areas."

Yigael Yadin, from whose book *HAZOR, the Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible* I am taking my data or quoting (I bought the book in the bookstore of Ayyelet Hashshahar. It was the last copy they had, and they reserved it for me till my return on the second tour, so the copy is of special value to me) — Yadin, I said, first tells us about the preparations for the excavations: How the funds were raised. Here he mentions the name of the generous late James A. de Rothschild and the aid from the Government of Israel, etc. We learn what the team consisted of: forty-five archaeologists, architects, pottery restorers, photographers (indispensable for the work because every object is to be photographed exactly in the place where it is unearthed! And so is the very spot, for every excavation is necessarily a destruction), draftsmen, and senior students. The digging was done by up to 220 labourers provided by the Government Labour Exchange from among newly-arrived, North-African immigrants.

As the reader understands, dig-

ging is not done at random. An area grid is prepared on the base of a photogrammetric map which in turn was based on an aerial photograph of the site. The whole area was divided into large squares of 100 by 100 m. and in the excavated areas a large square was divided into sub squares of 5 by 5 m., each marked by letters from west to east and by numbers from north to south. Each area maintained its own numbered baskets in which the finds were accumulated. The finds themselves were marked by the students with ink. Even a network of small gauge rails was set up to carry little wagons for the disposal of the earth. Because of its slow speed the railway was called "The Hazor Express." So far about the site and the preparations; now the finds.

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It is not only we, but first Prof. Yadin himself and his helpers, who had been looking forward to the finds. An archaeological dig is a very captivating enterprise, and as he shows us around the grounds in his book, we are really thrilled. Let us follow him.

He first takes us to the vast enclosure. Of course! An intriguing riddle is to be solved here! Is it a camp or a chariot parking place? In the southwest corner an area, named Area C, was singled out, and on the first day of the first season (1955) the excavations were started. A trench of 70 m. long and 5 m. wide was cut. After days and days of digging the major discovery of the season was made: remains of walls and cobble stone floors and great quantities of pottery were found — the first proof that the enclosure had not been a camp or parking place for carts, but a *fully built-up city*. In the trench

two layers could be distinguished: named 1A and 1B.

Now that it was ascertained that the enclosure contained the remains of a huge, formidable city, the second question to be answered was: When were these two top cities destroyed? In which time period had it happened? The reader may wonder whether it is even possible to find a satisfactory answer to such a question. In answer I can say: It is. And the guideline by which archaeologists go is: *pottery*. Yes, pottery, for those pans and pots, jars and juglets, be it even what is left of them, the sherds, tell their own story by their form, colour, decoration, and workmanship. It was the so-called Mycenaean pottery — the name points to Greece as the place of origin — but it was found spread all over the Near-East in the *fourteenth* and *thirteenth centuries*. How do we know? Well, because a large quantity of it was found in the short-lived city of El-Amarna, where Amenhotep IV had his residence from 1378 - 1362. This gives us a clue about the time. And the Amarna time coincides, in my opinion, with the entry of Israel into the Promised Land. That *two* layers can be distinguished may bear a relation to the fact that Hazor was destroyed *two times*, in the time of Joshua and again in the time of Barak and Deborah. In the opinion of Yadin, the argument of Garstang, who did not find any Mycenaean pottery and for that reason dated Israel's conquest roughly before 1400 B.C., is refuted herewith. I still beg to differ from Yadin. What he considers to be a destruction worked by Joshua in the late thirteenth century may very well be related to the destruction of Jabin in Judges 4:24. That the name of the king in the Amarna-time or the time of Israel's entry was Abdi-Tirshi and not Jabin is not a serious objection, for "Jabin," a name borne by more kings of Hazor, may be considered a title.

The third question to be answered was: When was Hazor established? To find the answer, Yadin and his helpers had to dig deeper, underneath the top strata, 1A and 1B. Doing so, they hit on stratum 2, representing roughly the period between 1600 and 1400 B.C., commonly called Late Bronze I. Going still deeper, stratum 3 and then stratum 4 were brought to light. These two strata represent the last two phases of the so-called Middle Bronze period, running from 1750 to about 1550 B.C. In themselves these figures do not ring a bell with most of the readers of my



article; however, when I tell them that the Middle Bronze period of the archaeologists covers almost exactly the era of the Patriarchs in the Bible, and that, in the frame of the chronology I follow in my teaching, 1753 was the year of Abraham's death, and 1568 the year of Joseph's death, the reader can orientate himself. According to the digs in Area C of Hazor's enclosure the city must have existed from the time of Abraham's death until the days of Deborah, covering a span of almost six centuries. Stratum 4, the earliest, was built on virgin soil.

The archaeologists were impressed by the town planning, particularly by the sewage systems in the houses. One of the finds was a beautiful sewage canal with an outlet made of basalt.

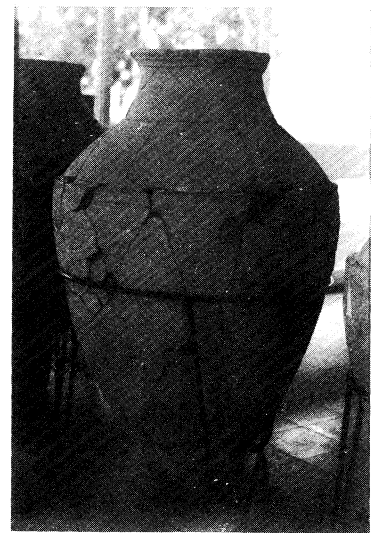
Under most of the floors many jars were found. Upon opening, one found that they contained skeletons of infants with little juglets, offering of food and milk for the dead. How to explain such a find? As child-sacrifices? Not likely, for there are too many of them. But it may indicate a high rate of infant mortality. Beside the little corpses scarabs were found, amulets in the shape of the dung-beetle, a sacred animal of the Egyptians, who thought that every morning the globe of the sun was moved upwards by an enormous beetle just as a ball of dung was pushed by the real dung beetle. Is here an association with a "belief in a resurrection from the dead," guaranteed in a magical way by the beetle sharing the powers of the rising morning sun? I think so, judging from the place. It is a sign of Egyptian influence. Among the jars was a large one bearing an inscription in cuneiform script, evidence again of the lively contact between Hazor and Mesopotamia. It is the earliest one found in Palestine.

Another important find in Area C was a headless statue, flanked on either side by a row of upright stones, *stelae*. These are the *massebes* of which you read so often in the Old Testament, for instance, in Deuteronomy 7:5: "Smash their sacred stones" (NIV). Upon deepening the dig the excavators found the head of the statue. The head must have been decapitated deliberately by a blow with a sharp instrument, very likely by an Israelite carrying out the verdict of Deuteronomy 7:5 and 12:2, 3! The statue, though it might represent a king or priest bearing the emblems of his god, turned out to be the weather god him-

self. The stelae may have been memorial stones to commemorate a dead king or priest, but one, the centre one, bore a relief depicting two hands stretched upwards to the sign of a crescent and a disc within the crescent. The question arose: What is its meaning? The question was brought closer to a solution when in an adjacent room a clay mask was found. This was in a potter's store house, and in this very place a cult standard of bronze, representing the snake goddess, was discovered. Again above her head was the crescent. Via a roundabout way, of other discoveries leading Yadin as far afield as Northern Syria and Carthage, in the way of combination and deduction, the conclusion was reached that the outstretched hands on the stelae were those of the snake goddess, named Tanit. Also the masks represent this goddess, which were sometimes attached to the face of the weather god: Baal Hamman.

This was just one of the many finds. In order not to make the story too long, I just touch on some other finds. For instance, that huge altar in another area, one long ashlar block with two depressions in it. Was it an altar? Large quantities of cattle bones around the well-dressed stone are proof of it. The altar did not stand inside the temple but outside, east of a large open square. The altar was used in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries. North and east of the square, dwellings of the cult-personnel were found, providing a good example of the plan and building of a Canaanite city, just prior to Israel's entry into the land. Not only the abodes of the living, but also those of the dead came to light: a cave where quite a few people had been buried. In the northern part of this area, they came upon a square area covered with a thick white plastered floor and surrounded by very broad walls, with short walls protruding from the centre in all directions. They could not make head or tail of it, but thanks to a discovery in Amman, Jordan, of a similarly planned building, it turned out to be a temple. This temple was built over other temples on older strata, and, digging deeper, a double temple of the previous layer (or: century) was unearthed. This temple had a ramified drainage system consisting of well-built canals covered over by slabs of stone. Searching them, the excavators felt like sewage sweeps, crawling in these drainage canals, trying to find where they led to.

Again we follow Yadin as he leads us to Area H, where again a temple was unearthed. It was an incidental discovery, due to a lady of the team, a supervisor, who liked to have it her own way, Yadin writes. Fieldstone protruding from the soil were her clues. They turned out to be orthostats, that is, stone slabs used in the lower part of the building. The "floor," hard like cement, only removable by pneumatic drills, turned out to be a roof! Under the roof was a basalt offering table. So, it was a temple. The diggers were so fortunate as to discover the entire floor of the "holy of holies" with its smashed and burned cult objects. Who had caused this destruction? Joshua? The basalt, pillar-like incense altar bore a great relief, a disc with four rays, emblem of the weather god. Near the altar a beautiful bull of wrought bronze was found, strengthening the assumption that it was the weather god. So, an idol and an altar for an idol; and the present writer uses terms like "great" and "beautiful." As the reader will understand, I mean this from an artistic point of view. The same applies to the two libation tables, with deep, well-finished depressions. We learned that the "holy of holies" was mainly used for incense burning and libation offerings. Beside the offering table two huge earthenware craters were found, and a vessel shaped like a house, perhaps for holding holy snakes; and cylinder seals, with their impressions, depicting scenes of the cult or worship in the temple; further, bronze figurines of



*Earthenware Vessel  
in Museum at Hazor.*

female deities, much stylized with emphasis on the female organs. As you see, those Canaanites were very religious and in what a way! Thanks to excavations like those here in Hazor you get a real insight into the background and the motives the LORD had when issuing the "severe" decrees regarding the pagan idols and everything linked with them.

In front of the "holy of holies" was a hall of the same width, and in front of this hall was a porch, somewhat narrower than the other parts of the building, and right in front of its entrance two basalt pillars. A peculiar thing. We have here a prototype of Solomon's temple. The only parallel up to that time was a temple discovered in Tell Tainat in northern Syria; now one was found within Israel's boundaries.

Also on this site, Area H, earlier temples were discovered under the one unearthed. The great find in this area, when excavated, was the orthostat of a lion, 1.9 m. long, 90 cm. high. The temples found were of the same type as that of the top layer, although the part named "holy of holies" is missing. Altogether, three more temples were found underneath the top layer. Once more a *bamah* was found, a rectangular platform of 3.5 by 2 m. and 30 cm. high, one of the high places the Old Testament warns against.

Let us cast a quick glance at the fortifications of the large enclosure. Its steep natural slopes were strengthened by the addition of *glacis* or supporting walls. For what purpose? Against chariots? Not likely. "Its power of penetration is only as strong as the forehead of its horse." It rather was intended against the battering ram. An unprotected slope would make it easy to undermine the walls on top. The western side of the plateau was especially protected by a large wall of beaten earth that rises to a height of about fifteen metres. Why was this lower city, or the enclosure as I called it so far, built? The only reason we can imagine must have been a large influx of people, a large scale immigration. An average tell can only accommodate 5000 people.

Always interesting are the gates. By means of aerial photographs they could be traced (An aerial photograph brings to light what remains hidden if viewed from the ground!). Within the gates three pairs of pilasters had been built. These pilasters narrowed down the actual passage. The area of the passage between the pilasters could be

used by the defenders as guard chambers or for assembling a greater number of soldiers to prevent enemy penetration.

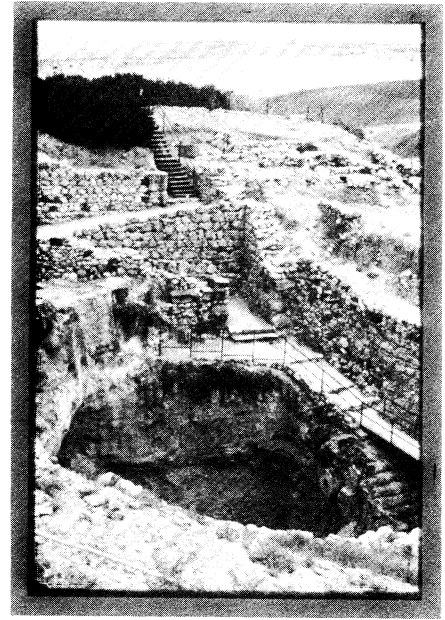
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Finally, a little about the further history of the city. Now we turn to the tell proper, the upper city with the shape of the bottle. The top stratum of the lower city was the last Canaanite occupation of Hazor. As one moves up to the tell, he finds himself leaping forward 500 years to the time of the divided monarchy, the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

As I remarked already, Solomon rebuilt Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer; he made them royal cities, apparently garrisons for his hosts of chariots. East of a pillared building a narrow trench was cut leading to the discovery of the so-called casemate wall, that is a double wall divided into rooms by right-angled partition walls. Just compare what I wrote on Megiddo. The wall crossed the centre of the mound; so Solomon built a garrison city only on a part of it.

A century later was the time of King Ahab, and to this time we are brought by a row of nine monolithic pillars discovered by Garstang. These pillars were not a part of Solomon's stables, as Garstang thought, but part of a large public building of the time of Ahab, 874 - 852 B.C. Many beautiful basalt and pottery vessels found intact suggest that the population fled in haste and did not return. The date of destruction, ascertained through the pottery, was the second half of the eighth century. This fits in with what the Bible relates about the capture and destruction of the city by the Assyrian king, Tiglath Pileser. From the time of Jeroboam II, just prior to the destruction, a time of great prosperity, the buildings belonging to wealthy merchants were found, and in one of these were two jar fragments bearing inscriptions in the old Hebrew script, the one reading LMKBRM = belonging to Makbiram. In the same house a beautiful ivory cosmetic palette was found, maybe belonging to Mrs. Makbiram. The walls of this house had been heavily damaged by an earthquake. Was it the earthquake Amos refers to at the beginning of his prophecy??

So far this time. I do hope that you have received a little idea of what is all implied in an archaeological dig, and how helpful it can be in shedding light on biblical times. Next time we hope to



Ruins at Hazor.

make a big leap forward, dealing with Ayyeleth Hashshahar, a modern kibbutz and model kibbutz, lying at Hazor's doorstep, making some remarks on a kibbutz in general.

H.M. OHMANN

(To be continued.)

## HOSEA 14:8, 9

O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress, from me comes your fruit. Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the LORD are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.

# school crossing

"School Crossing" may have been sick, but it is not dead. You may have to exercise patience while it is recuperating, but hopefully it will be on the scene for some time to come. So, keep the bulletins coming. From as far as Australia School Crossing receives the school news. Soon I hope to provide you with a profile on the Australian schools. One item which crosses over from bulletin to bulletin is *Curriculum Development*.

J.A. Roukema wrote an article under the heading, "Stages in Curriculum Development." You can find this article in the December 1979 issue of *Home and School*, bulletin of the John Calvin School in Burlington.

Mr. Roukema begins by raising some questions and continues to provide some answers. One question I will lift out.

In our school societies there seems to be a lot of confusion about teachers forever having Professional Development Days or Curriculum Activity Days. Parents are wondering just what is going on during those days and when they will reap the fruits of so-called "off-days." Surely there must be an end to these Curriculum days! Can't the teachers slap something together, and have it done and over with?

Here are some quotes from Roukema's response. Parents and teachers

together are responding to God's command to teach our children about Him and His wondrous deeds. No one will deny that this is an *awesome* task to which our heavenly Father has entrusted us. How important it becomes, then, that we have a well-thought-out and balanced plan to go by, in order to direct our children in the way they should go. That plan, that curriculum, needs a lot of thought and hard work. Our Lord and Master Teacher expects more of us than to just slap something together; His children are much too precious for that . . . . A curriculum, a learning program, should deal with the educational philosophy of the school, the general aims and objectives, course content outlines, organization of the materials, the media of instruction, and teaching strategy.

In the November issue of Guido de Brès school bulletin, also Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff wrote about the same topic, be it from a different angle.

This is part of what she wrote,

About a year and a half ago, the principals of the various Canadian Reformed Schools in Ontario decided to devote part of their Professional Development Days and CRTA Conventions to the systematic study of what constitutes a Reformed, that is, a Biblical, philosophy of education. The need for such a study is obvious. Principals and teachers have been given the task to provide their students with Reformed instruction. In order to fulfill that task, they have to know what Reformed education is all about, and it takes time and a concerted effort to answer that question, and to draw the implications for the day-to-day work in the classroom. The search for the answer — which includes the careful scrutiny of the literature available in this field, both on this continent, and in The Netherlands — should take precedence, ideally at least, over the selection of curricula, course offerings, methodology and every other aspect of education. It is therefore a matter of some urgency.

So far the morning sessions of five P.D. Days or Conventions have been devoted to this search.

Then Dr. Oosterhoff presents us with an account of what was done at those five sessions. Her account makes for worthwhile reading, but it is too long to be quoted in full. I will just lift out the topics presented.

1. A general introduction to the topic was given by one of the principals.

2. Prof. Faber offered a critique of the well-known study, *Education in the Truth*, by Dr. Norman DeJong.

3. Rev. Cl. Stam introduced the topic "Covenantal Education" (published in *Clarion*, Vol. 28, Nos. 10 and 11, May 19 and June 2, 1979).

4. Discussion of the booklet, *To Those Who Teach*, by Geraldine Steensma.

To show our readers how the principals and teachers learn through a critical approach I insert this quote on day four:

This booklet, which ignores the church, the covenant, the confessions, and the role of the parents in the schooling of their children, is representative of the horizontalistic and man-centered theories produced by so many of today's "evangelistic" authors. Although the booklet aroused much criticism and although it gave little

help, it was nevertheless felt that the discussion had been of value, because it provided the teachers with an example of the type of philosophy and practice which our schools, if they wish to remain Reformed, must avoid at all costs.

5. Rev. J. DeJong of London, Ontario, spoke on the topic "Our Cultural Mandate." Dr. Oosterhoff expressed the hope that this speech would be published in *Clarion* and/or in *CRTA Magazine*.

Believe me, our teachers work on those "off" days! Keep it up.

Next time I hope to pass on some information on enrollment examinations, report cards, and some textbooks which are being produced by authors who teach in our Canadian Reformed Schools.

J. VAN RIETSCHOTEN

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### FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of *Clarion* was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on February 2, 1980.

# news medley

It seems that we somehow got off our schedule during the year-end. Those special days and all those "festive periods" throw you off somewhat. That must be the reason why I still have not received the second issue of this year, and we are fast approaching the end of January. Thus I do not know either whether there are any couples to be congratulated with their fortieth, forty-fifth, or even fiftieth wedding anniversary. If there are any, they may be assured that we'll mention them next time.

From the Hamilton bulletin I did learn something about the Rev. W. Loopstra, who is still in the Chedoke Hospital. That bulletin contains the following passage: "Rev. Loopstra, a while ago, suffered a recurrence of sharp pain. It subsided again, but a full and lasting relief and recovery does not seem to materialize. A therapy program would be tried before resorting to an operation."

We wish our brother patience and recovery, for it is not pleasant at all when one has to spend so many weeks in bed; add to that pain and discomfort, and we can understand that oftentimes the sigh goes up to heaven, "Wilt Thou please make it a little easier."

From Hamilton to Smithville is not all that far. Let's go there first, then.

Smithville now has its "own" bulletin, as I mentioned before. The outward appearance has not changed much, except that an image of the Smithville Church building now appears on the cover.

The Rev. Stam pays attention to the forthcoming General Synod which will be hosted by Smithville. He explains to the Congregation many of the activities and preparations which are expected of Smithville. For the wives of the future delegates it might be good and reassuring to insert the following paragraphs from the Smithville bulletin. I might, meanwhile, urge the brethren to consider a few months of dieting before they take off for the meadows and orchards, the vineyards, and acid smoke of Southern Ontario.

Finally, the convening Church must make the necessary practical arrangements. We must prepare adequate meeting facilities, for both the committee meetings and the plenary sessions of Synod. We must supply, e.g., a "typing room" where reports and proposals can be multiplied for use. We must also furnish the meals for the delegates, so that they can continue physically.

To meet these challenges well, we may have to remodel the School basement and enlarge the present kitchen facilities. We would possibly have had to do this sooner or later anyway, so the time seems opportune to do it now. And we will have to offer suitable lodging for the various delegates who are far from home and will seek the help of the congregation for this. The Consistory has already appointed a "hospitality committee" to coordinate all these activities.

The "success" of a broader assembly frequently depends to a very large extent on the preparation of the convening Church. It is also promoted by a good preparation on the part of the Churches, of course. And — if I may give a piece

of advice which is the fruit of experience and which also continues in the line of official requests: whenever a Church sends something, let her send it on *letter size* paper. There is nothing more frustrating when you try to keep things orderly than when you have to cut up a document and glue the parts on other, letter size, sheets because otherwise it won't fit in your binder or folder. Uniformity of size promotes neatness. And neatness promotes one's chances of finding what he is looking for. That, in turn, promotes a speedy location of relevant passages and arguments. Thereby the whole matter can be decided and "solved" more readily and thoroughly. Bear it in mind, will you?

Another decision by Smithville's Consistory is worth to be mentioned. I'll quote the passage in full.

A proposal is tabled to have collections only for the deaconate and special purposes, and to discontinue the collections for the Church while increasing the Regular Voluntary Contributions by the appropriate amount. This proposal is adopted and will be proposed to the congregation in the Budget.

There is only one thing that I don't like there: the word "proposed" in connection with the Congregation. That a Consistory does not introduce such a measure without informing the Congregation and without discussing it with the Congregation is almost a matter-of-course. But the word "proposed" does not appear proper when used of putting a matter before the Congregation. We are to be careful regarding the terms which we use.

As for the decision itself, it does not need any elaboration that I am happy about it. Most likely some members will be screaming that it will be a failure, that the Consistory will see that the money doesn't come in, that the Consistory will be compelled to re-instate the collections for "the Church," and so on. Perhaps such sounds will come mostly from member who claim that they "put it into the collection," but it is *our* experience that it works well.

While reading through the various bulletins I noticed that it is "budget time" and the time for financial statements. It was a great joy to read in several of those bulletins that the income for the year 1979 exceeded the expenses. It is good to notice that the Lord has blessed us greatly, both in giving us what we needed and in preparing the hearts to provide what was needed. It is also good to say that openly. Oftentimes members who are negligent in contributing have to be admonished; let us, however, not forget the thousands who are faithful and make the work of committees of administration and of Consistories so much easier and more pleasant.

Another news item that gave me much pleasure is what I found in Ebenezer Burlington's bulletin. The Ebenezer Consistory received a letter from the Consistory of Burlington West. "A request was received to appoint a combined committee 'to study the possibility and feasibility of creating a third Congregation in Burlington.' The brothers . . . are appointed to meet with their committee for an exploratory discussion."

That gives us good hopes for the future. Judging by the Yearbook 1979, the two Burlington Congregations together number some thirteen hundred members. Three separate Congregations would still give them each more than four hundred members. Since the practical implications of splitting them both up and "creating" four Congregations might be prohibitive, the next best thing would be to do what is now being considered. Much success and wisdom!

And, since we are mentioning happy events and encouraging statements anyway, let us take a quick trip to Grand Rapids, there to hear:

The first meeting of our music band was held on January 5 in the school. Participation was well beyond our expectation. Many turned up with and without a music instrument. We have already fourteen instruments and there are more coming. Also the younger ones with their recorders are joining in to make a "joyful noise."

Isn't that something! I wish the brothers and sisters there much success with their undertaking in this field. The one activity in a Congregation oftentimes leads to the other, and the general level of a Congregation is raised thereby. Keep it up.

As for Ontario, the only Congregation we are to visit this time is the Lincoln Church. They, too, have a bulletin of their own now, since the cooperation with Smithville has been terminated. By the way: don't draw any conclusion as to who terminated it or for what reason(s). I cannot inform you about these things.

Lincoln's bulletin is called *Lincoln's Vineyard*, an appropriate name, I should say, since there are many vineyards there while, at the same time, it is clear that it is also a proper expression to refer to the Church. In the days of the Reformation the Church at Antwerp was known as "La Vigne," a name that was used for safety's sake — so as not to betray to the persecutors which Church was meant — but was also very proper: does not the Father prune the vines that they bear more fruit?

On the one hand, it is nice for a Congregation to have their own bulletin in which they are not limited as far as space goes, in which matters can be published which they do not wish to become general knowledge. On the other hand, I still deplore the splitting up in fields where cooperation and combination would not only be feasible but even very edifying in my opinion.

To one point from *Lincoln's Vineyard* I would wish to pay a little more attention. It is what the Rev. Werkman writes about the use of the new Hymn Section. For a good understanding: I realize that he does not pass on his own opinion but the stand taken by the Consistory. It is the same stand which I noticed also in other places. What I mean is: the decision to "use" and sing the songs from the new Hymn Section AFTER the services. "Not the ones we already have in our *Book of Praise*. There is no sense in trying them out. We already use them during the services."

I do not wish to conceal my great disappointment at such a practice. And I ask, "Why did we work so hard on the Hymn Section, and why did we see to it that the Churches could get it well before the deadline set by Synod 1977? Here is(are) a Church(es) that do not even use it."

Our present *Book of Praise*, the rhymings of both the Psalms and the Hymns, is only a *report* that is being tested by the Churches. No General Synod has ever adopted it! Now we come with an improved edition of the hymns, we have listened to criticism, we have taken out rhymings and songs which were considered less suitable or even unsuitable for Reformed worship, we have added other rhymings in accordance with the schedule sent to Synod 1977, but there are Churches that say, "We have the *Book of Praise* and will continue using it. The 'improved' section is not going to be used during the services."

It is, of course, up to each and every Church how it wishes to test our work. Can you, on the other hand, under-

## 40th Wedding Anniversary



*Brother and sister John and Thea VanderWoude (nee Oosterhoff) will celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary on February 26th, 1980, the Lord willing. They were married in the city of Groningen, The Netherlands, shortly before the Second World War, emigrated after the Flood of 1953 to Edmonton, Alberta, and have resided there ever since. They have four children, three daughters and one son. Brother VanderWoude, soon after his arrival in Canada, became self-employed as a contractor and is still working, since he is in excellent health. Sister VanderWoude is in reasonably good health, although she has in previous years been in and out of hospitals on numerous occasions. They both like travelling and usually make a trip to British Columbia and the USA and Ontario once a year. Their three daughters are all married, while their son Bill is still at home. They enjoy their sixteen grandchildren who are far and near.*

stand my great disappointment? To me it is the same as when one would buy a new car, but leave the thing outside in all kinds of weather, meanwhile using the old, drafty, leaking, creaking one that breaks down every fifteen miles, and then calling that progress.

More important than learning new *tunes* is the examination of the *contents*. And the contents are far superior to the "old" hymns which were printed in our *Book of Praise*.

There are tunes which I personally cannot admire. I think of No. 37, however old the tune may be. As far as I am concerned we replace that one. But the main point is that the Churches use and test the rhymings. As long as that is done the goal will be achieved.

We jump all the way to the Valley.

Abbotsford happily reports, "The organ will most likely be installed in the month of February." That will be a joy.

*Continued on next page.*



# PRESS RELEASE

## LOHM (League of Home Mission Committees)

Some time ago, some of the home mission committees of Southern Ontario came together to discuss the ideas that they have in common. By relating these ideas to one another, a stimulus is provided for the improvement of the work that is being done in witnessing Christ and the Gospel to those around us.

One of the first results of such meetings is that a constitution springs up. And, sure enough, that is just what happened. Actually some of the representatives from the eight churches represented have been preparing this document for some time, with discussions taking place in the local home mission committees. The object of the constitution is to provide the LOHM with a loosely-knit organization that provides a place for the sharing of ideas to the mutual benefit of all the local committees. Meetings of LOHM will be annual so that they will not hamper the valuable work of the local committees.

Perhaps this is the place to bring forward some major points in the constitution.

Mandate (Article 3) 1) aid any local committee; 2) share ideas; 3) recommend appropriate literature and stimulate its production at the local level.

Membership (Article 4) consist of consistory-sanctioned, local evangelism committees of Canadian Reformed Churches.

League Correspondents (Article 6) A "lucky number" of three people shall look after each annual meeting and local committee requests.

Committees (Article 7) These may be appointed at each annual meeting to meet a specific need.

After the constitution was unanimously passed and a hallmark was made in our history of Evangelism Committees, the delegates settled down to do some question-asking and to approach some of the problems encountered by some of the committees. In the question period the following points were discussed:

1) A letter from a steering committee on Evangelism in Australia.

2) The Voice of the Church should distribute suitable general materials on the Gospel and our church, rather than repeat the spoken word.

3) Can our LOHM take up contact with Holland to benefit from experience there? One of the locals will report.

And on the sharing of ideas, each of our well-represented locals reported on the work that their members or church have accomplished or were planning to do. Of the more important aspects these were discussed:

1) An avid talk about V.B.S. Since some of the locals have many years experience and others are just beginning, LOHM will have a workshop, D.V., next spring so that common ideas may be gained.

2) VOC, Voice of the Church, is steadily expanding its broadcast radius with the third station CJOY beginning soon. An expanded committee is planned.

Opinions, problems, praises, and beefs were aired here.

Because time was running short and some brothers and sisters had many miles to drive home a short summary of major evangelism types was made:

1) V.B.S.; 2) VOC; 3) Boat People; 4) Cable T.V.; 5) Visiting Nursing Homes.

The next LOHM meeting is planned for April 8th in Rehoboth Church, Burlington.

League Correspondent,  
HARRY ALKEMA, Secretary.

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## NEWS MEDLEY — *Continued.*

Would you know of any Church among us that is looking for an organ? I would not, otherwise I would have passed on directly what I mention here. In the previous issue (which I did not receive between starting this news medley and completing it) we could read an advertisement. I know of still another organ, a large three manual organ, which might be had for \$18,000.00. No, I don't think that anyone among us has that much cash laying around, but if a Church should be interested in it there is always a possibility of getting it somewhere. The building I know of has been sold to the Pentecostals, and they do not seem to be interested in a good organ, only in an electronic instrument-for-whining. Perhaps I am wasting my breath and ink by mentioning the availability of such a beautiful instrument, but I do mention it anyway. My toolshed is not large enough to house it.

Chilliwack is next, alphabetically that is. "We momentarily await a reply from the Mennonite Brethren as to our offer on the Church. We hope it will be favourable as their board has given us reason to believe it might be." I haven't heard the (good) news yet, and therefore will have to leave you in suspense as well.

Langley is still busy with plans for their Church building.

A sketch of the "dome" design with a conventional roof was presented and explained.

After the Committee members left the Consistory discussed the matter and decided "to adopt the recommended design; details to be worked out later." Two other motions, namely, "not to change the recommended seating capacity," and "to give the Committee the mandate to look into increasing the height of the building by two feet" were adopted.

We have nothing to be mentioned concerning Cloverdale, and thus end our journey in New Westminster. All I wish to quote from that part of the *Church News* is that a brother offers the 1978 and 1979 *Clarions* to interested members. That is a good thing, much better than giving them along with the garbage truck or with the old paper collection. There always may be other members who would like to have the past volumes. Who would not love to go through all our old news medleys, for instance, and have a few hours of entertainment? By the way: if this summer no one has claimed them as yet, I'll gladly take them. In any case: don't throw them away. The only restriction is that we have only so much room in our car. If the loot is worthwhile, we might consider renting a U-haul.

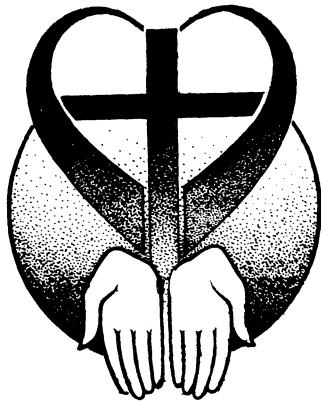
So much for now.

And so much for that.

vO

# Canadian Reformed

## World Relief Fund



### 1. ADMISSION OF REFUGEES:

At the Fall Conference of Office-Bearers in Ontario, critical remarks were made with respect to the admission policy of boat people which was followed by the government. This policy allowed only physically and mentally healthy refugees to enter Canada.

We are happy to pass on the information that there is a change of policy. This information is derived from the November 1, 1979 *Newsletter In-dochinese Refugees*. Speaking at a Conference of Operation Lifeline in October, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Immigration Minister said, "Steps have been taken to ensure that a full cross-section of people are selected from the camps." That means that the "more difficult" cases will be admitted. Again, to quote the Secretary, "We are thinking here of cases such as single parent families and families whose size and composition would make it particularly difficult for them to become self-sufficient soon after arrival." Also included are families where one member is physically handicapped. In addition, the federal government has completed arrangements with several provinces to bring unaccompanied minors to Canada for placement in Canadian homes under guardianship arrangements.

The involvement of voluntary groups in Canada, according to the Secretary, "will be central." In all these cases, the *Joint Assistance Program* is available, i.e., as the name indicates, a financial program wherein the provincial government assists a voluntary

group in the case of a family or minor that it sponsored.

We took the matter up with Rev. A. VanEek, Group Box 82D, S.S.1, Waterdown, Ontario L0R 2H0, who assisted various church groups with the applications for sponsorship of refugees. He informed us that a team commissioned by the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada visited the refugee camps and collected data concerning families which, either because of their prolonged stay in the camps or as "difficult cases," should have priority of admission. The result was that more than 200 families were selected and that their admission was secured. The government would like to see them processed as soon as possible.

So, if there are groups among us who have been waiting for the opportunity to sponsor one or more of these more difficult cases, let them take up contact with Rev. VanEek who is able to give them the desired particulars.

### 2. HUNGER RELIEF IN CAMBODIA:

Another question which was raised in the Churches is whether something could be done for the starving Cambodians. Some inquiries taught us that this possibility exists indeed. *World Vision*, a relief organization of evangelicals, is able to reach out to hunger victims and offer help in the name of Christ. Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund, P.O. Box 793, Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Y7, will gladly act as an intermediary. Our Secretary, Mrs. Annette Smeding, will take care that your gifts are passed on, and, as soon as possible, transformed into food for the Cambodian hungry.

### 3. C.R.W.R.F.'s OWN PROJECTS:

Some time ago, the fall meeting of the Executive Committee of C.R.W.R.F. with representatives of the Local Committees was held. We would have liked to see more representatives, but that did not make any difference in the mood in which we met. We are privileged to do at least some relief work in the sea of misery whereby our pres-

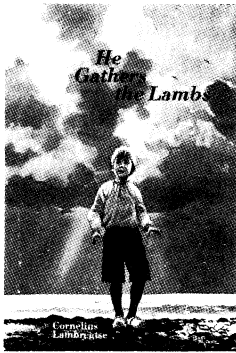
ent world is concerned. We would love to do more, and we were glad to read that the Korea Committee of the Church of Edmonton was given permission by the Consistory to contribute to the work of C.R.W.R.F.

If the income increases, we might be able to send out Canadian Reformed relief workers, or to take up more projects than the two which we now have. That could, of course, only be done if our income becomes constantly larger. The possibility of such an increase is not that far out.

It was the first time that I chaired a meeting with the representatives. It struck me that the \$11,000.00 which was contributed from January 1 to June 30, 1979 came out of 11 churches and was collected for the greater part through door collections or some collections in the church services. Nickles, dimes, and quarters collected in the minority of churches did it! It did not hurt at all, and it gave twenty children a home and provided medical relief for hundreds of patients. It does not always have to be done in a big way. There is still the power of small things, and it depends on the activity of Local Committees, of deacons and consistories. There are quite a number of churches where C.R.W.R.F. does not have representation. We would like to see some action there for the sake of all those causes which cry for help.

Thanks in the meantime for all aid which was and is being given. We trust that extra help for refugees and for the hungry in Cambodia will not be given at the expense of the contributions for the regular work of C.R.W.R.F. If you want to know more about it, Mr. Harry Alkema showed a beautiful film about the African Inland Mission and slides of our Children's Home in Kenya which was built with the gifts from C.R.W.R.F. He is more than willing to show them within reasonable distance from Burlington. Just take up contact with our Secretary. With brotherly wishes for the Lord's blessing,

On behalf of C.R.W.R.F.,  
L. SELLES, Chairman



## Interview with Lambregtse

*In the following interview-article (received from Paideia Press), author Cornelius Lambregtse gives us an account of the "how and why" of his new novel, He Gathers the Lambs. Eleven editions of the story have been printed in The Netherlands since December of 1971, and Paideia Press of St. Catharines, Ontario, has just issued the first edition in the English language. Lambregtse is manager of The Book Store, Eerdmans Publishing Company.*

### *Why did you write this book?*

To answer this question I have to tell a little bit about the story of the book itself. I think I started writing this story in 1944 when I was a teacher in Rijssen in Overijssel. That was during the war, and so I wanted to turn away from its cruel reality and write something about a time when wars did not demand all our attention.

Then, too, I had often been struck by the fact that authors who wrote about people of a pietistic bend usually did so in a derogatory and mocking manner, as though all such people were pious hypocrites steeped in sickly mysticism. Most, if not all, of such unkind criticism came from outsiders, authors who did not know such people from the inside. So I determined to write a book about such people and present them as I truly knew them. To do so I would describe a family in its daily life from the vantage point of a small boy growing up in this family. As a model I chose my own family in which I was the youngest of seven children and named the main character Fransje. Naturally I drew heavily upon my memories of my own youth.

### *Are there any events in your own life which are reflected in the story?*

While serving as an interpreter with the First Canadian Army for eight months in 1945, I decided to emigrate to America. This materialized in May, 1947. As I went through my belongings to decide what to take along and what

to dispose of, I came across those chapters again. I decided to take them along, for later maybe, when I would have a real message. Soon after my arrival I met my future wife, Kay Wielhouwer, daughter of a retired Netherlands Reformed minister. A year later we were married, and again a year later we had our first child, a son, whom we named Calvin John. Calvin John became the apple of my eye, who made me forget that I was "a stranger in a strange land." Two years later we were blessed with a girl, and our earthly happiness was complete. But when Calvin John was three years and seven months old, the Lord took him away from us and unto Himself. Only parents who have lost a child or children know what this means. Words cannot describe it. That was in 1952. In 1958 or '59 I came across those chapters again. I read them, and suddenly it dawned on me that I had the message I had been waiting for all those years.

### *Is it correct that He Gathers the Lambs was printed in De Wachter?*

Yes, I went to see the Rev. Emo Van Halsema and told him that I had part of a book and intended to finish it, and asked if he were interested in running it as a serial in *De Wachter*, of which he was the editor. He said he was, and so for the next two years or more the back page of this weekly carried an installment of *In Zijn Arm de Lammeren*, which I wrote as we went along.

Already during the writing, but especially after the last installment, several people wrote me. One dear lady wrote me halfway during the story how much she liked it, but pleaded, "Please, don't let my Fransje die!"

### *What made you decide to publish the story in book format?*

When the story was completed, many people asked me where they

could buy the book. This gave me the idea of offering the story to some Dutch publishers, but none was interested. So I put all the back pages of *De Wachter* in a folder and into a drawer.

Then, about eight years later, I came across them and started reading them again, and for the first time I read the story as if someone else had written it. By this I mean that my mind did not automatically run into the same grooves as when you reread something you have just written, so that you already know the next sentence before reading it. And then the thought struck me: This is really a good story; and too bad I could not share it with more people. So I decided I was going to publish a thousand copies myself. A good friend of mine let me use his equipment, and for the next year I spent every free evening and Saturday at his office until I had reproduction proofs of the whole book. But then plates had to be made, the book had to be printed, sewn, and bound, which would cost money; and afterwards I would have to sell the books to pay for that expense. Then it occurred to me to try once more to find a Dutch publisher, offering him these camera-ready pages. I contacted Wever in Franeker, The Netherlands, and seven weeks later I received his answer: We accept your book under the proposed terms.

### *Were you pleased with the response?*

The book came out in December, 1971. I thought that if the publisher printed maybe three thousand copies, and it would take about three years to sell them, I would be more than satisfied.

Then the miracle happened. The book simply took off, so that in 1972 five more editions had to be printed, followed by three more in the following years. And now, in 1979, Paideia Press has come out with an English translation.

### *What do you think accounts for the book's success?*

Judging by the hundreds of reviews I have received, its simplicity and honesty. The story appeals to the hearts of people of all persuasions. They can identify with the simple joy and heartrending grief of the characters. And, like the lady I mentioned before most of them have taken the child into their hearts.

*Continued on next page.*

# From the *Book of Praise* Committee

The Committee has charged me to inform our members about the progress which we are making with the revision of the Psalm Section of our *Book of Praise*.

First I should like to mention a few other points which concern our work.

We are very grateful for the letters which we have received thus far from brothers and sisters who sent us remarks about music-notation, tunes, and contents of the Hymns which are contained in the green booklet which has been sent to the Churches in as many copies as those Churches had ordered. In due time we shall consider all the remarks which have been made and which we shall receive.

However, we have no time right now to go into the remarks which we have received or to answer the letters. Each and every one can be assured that his or her communication has not disappeared but is carefully kept in the file folders, to be produced in due time and to be considered thoroughly. For the time being we do not have the opportunity to deal with those letters.

Our main concern for the moment is to get the Psalm rhymings out to the Consistories. We have come to approximately Psalm 100 with our revisions. A few Psalms belonging to the first group of 100 have still to be re-rhymed or revised. Although we are making good progress, there still remains quite some work to be done before we can have the revised rhymings shipped to the Consistories. Until we have completed that task we have no opportunity to consider the remarks sent in connection with the revised Hymn Section.

No one should, therefore, feel slighted or by-passed if no reply is received from the Committee. All can be assured that their letters will be considered for *all* they are worth.

\* \* \*

In the second place: We repeat that the present *Book of Praise* is sold out, and we do not foresee that the revised edition — on the condition that Synod 1980 will adopt such a revised edition! — will be available before the end of 1981. It will all depend on what

that Synod decides about our song-book and forms. That means that we shall have to do with what we have for almost two years. Seeing the deplorable condition of many of the *Books of Praise*, we sometimes wonder how many members will still be able to sing along a year from now.

It is for that reason that we again draw the attention to the availability of a small booklet containing only the Three Forms of Unity and costing sixty cents. If our members wish to save and spare their *Book of Praise*, they would do well when ordering those booklets for their children to use at Catechism Classes. We have one request in this connection: Could orders please be sent by *one person* so that all booklets ordered can be shipped to one address? Perhaps the clerk of the Consistory could do that. In this manner we can save some postage and shipping costs and thus there will be less chance that we have to come to the Churches again for funds to pay for our report to the Churches.

These booklets were printed some years ago because we thought that there might be a demand for them for Catechism Classes or also for distribution to strangers who wish to know

what we confess. There is still an ample supply of them and they come in very handy now that we have to hoard the still available *Book of Praise*. Orders are to be sent to the well-known address: P.O. Box 854, Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Y7.

From the same address four part music books containing harmonizations of the hymn tunes, and booklets containing the new Hymn Section can be ordered, and we request that also for these orders *one* address be given to which the entire package can be shipped.

Meanwhile we invite further criticism and remarks on the work which we have presented thus far in order that we may be able to come to Synod 1980 with a definite report which — we hope — will be the crown upon the work which was begun more than twenty-five years ago.

Anyone having anything to say about either music or rhyming, is invited to send us *four* copies, and to send them to: P.O. Box 54, Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7. With the cooperation of all, the work will be so much more pleasant and the fruit the more abundant.

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## INTERVIEW WITH LAMBREGTSE — *Continued.*

*What about the message? Do people not of this pietistic persuasion can hardly find it attractive. Was it your intention to convert them to it?*

By no means. Moreover, I am not wholly without some criticism of it myself in the book. I simply wanted to write a kind of pilgrimage of any true Christian, regardless of his or her ecclesiastical or denominational persuasion. And I thought that a young child could embody such a pilgrimage best, because it is of children such as Fransje, that Christ said: "Let the children come unto me." And those that come unto Him are received with open arms.

*Do you consider your book a literary*

*masterpiece?*

By no means. Nor did I set out to write a literary masterpiece. The bulk of it is addressed to simple immigrants and on that account it has its weaknesses. But maybe it is exactly its simplicity that spoke to so many people. I have deliberately depicted Fransje as an ordinary little boy, not a pocket size saint with whom no one could identify, for the simple reason that the Bible has chosen not many noble, not many rich, and so on, but the ordinary and commonplace. That is the message I wanted to tell to the people in Fransje circles as well as to those outside of them. And to all appearances God has wished to use this message, and so my fervent wish is that many parents and children of all ages will receive it.

# A Letter to My Daughter

Dear Jean,

So you had a run-in with your cousin. You tried to practise what I told you in my latest letter and you got nowhere. You even encountered some questions and remarks to which you did not know the answer.

First of all, my dear, don't let that discourage you. You should know by now that life is not that easy. You cannot expect favourable results right away. You probably heard the expression "God's mills grind slowly." It is not true, but it seems that way to us quite often. But don't forget that Scripture says that "God is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish."

Moreover, you yourself have quite a lot to learn yet; your (our) experience is by far not complete yet, if it ever will be in this life.

Last but not least, you should be encouraged by the fact that he wanted to talk to you about those things. Does that not show that the Lord has not let him go yet; yes, what is more, that the Lord is still working on him? Keep it up, girl; don't rush him. Wait for the opportune time that he wants to talk; he will come back.

But now for the questions that were hard to answer. Is it not strange and unlikely that among so many religions, the Christian religion is the only right one? Do the other religions not have just as much, and perhaps sometimes even more, claim to that? And what about the many divisions in the Christian religion itself?

I am sorry that I personally am not able to give you a short, straight reply to that. Perhaps you could ask a minister for that. But I think that you will not find it necessary after we have dealt with all the other questions. Where do we get the certainty that the book that we call Bible is better than all the other religious books that are, so to speak, Bibles to the other religions?

It is, of course, easy to say: "By faith," but that does not mean very much to him, because the other religions have faith in their books. So we have to delay this one too.

Since other people have stories about creation and flood also, is it not possible that the Israelites borrowed from them, refined the stories, and made up their own myths?

That would be quite possible, of course, but rather unlikely if you compare these so-called myths.

Is it not possible that Moses borrowed the law from Hammurabi, whose laws are strikingly similar to the laws of Moses?

Quite possible, quite possible, if at least Hammurabi was that early in history, which is also debatable.

Is it not possible that the prophets were just dreaming dreams and thought that they had a vision from God or that they received a word from God?

Even that would be possible; Mohammed was dreaming, so why not the Jewish prophets?

You mentioned a few more questions along the same line, but it is not necessary to repeat them all. The answers would be all alike. And you did not learn much yet, did you? Well then, I shall try to give you something in short. I am not going to write a book.

There are lots of books on the market that you can read for yourself. I even have some at home. You can have them if you have time to read all that. However, if you, or when you, compare the Bible with other books you will find some important and decisive differences. The books of all the other religions give you rules, directions, and outlines to work yourself up, to climb out of the pit, to become a saint, and to become, as it were, divine, like God. Does that remind you of what the serpent said, Genesis 3:5? The Bible also gives you rules and outlines, but these are to live a life of gratitude because God "has" lifted you out of the pit and "made" you a saint.

Any history book of any nation, English, Dutch, French, German, or what have you, sings the praises and the glory of that particular nation, just as the written tablets that have been discovered in the Middle East, describing the glory of Egyptian Pharaohs, Assyrian and Babylonian Kings. The Bible gives us the history of God's people. No glory there. Only defeat because of backsliding and turning away from the only true God. And where it seems to sing the glory and praises of Israel, for instance, in the time of David and Solomon, there is not much left of the praise and glory when you read the story of David in Ziklag, David's counting the people, David and Bathsheba, or Solomon and his thousand wives, who brought him to idolatry. No, the Bible shows only the glory of God, Who was longsuffering then also, and Who helped them out of the misery every time they cried for help. Here are two important reasons already for anybody who is really "open-minded" to vote for the Bible.

But the best is yet to come. The Bible tells the truth about me (and about you, too, for that matter). You have known me all your life, and off and on you have even thought that I was a swell guy (with the necessary interruptions, of course), but you have not really known me. I am not going to tell you all the things I have done and said and thought, but I know that the Bible is right when it shows me that I am dead in sins and trespasses, unable to do any good and inclined to all evil. And although I like and love you very much, I know that you will come to the same conclusion about yourself. No other religious book gives you such an honest and right appraisal of yourself, and therefore the conclusion is that those other religions are deceiving you, no matter how much "truth" you may find in them.

Perhaps there are still questions and remarks to which you cannot give a straight answer right away; perhaps it is not even possible to give a straight answer; perhaps you make things worse if you try, so be careful. But does it matter? Not in my opinion! And I am not going to any other religion to try and redeem myself, but I know that I am redeemed and that my Redeemer lives.

Love,  
DAD



# our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Are you enjoying lots of winter fun? Do you have lots of snow to play in? Or ice to skate on? How about a hill to go tobogganing?

Isn't it fun to get changed after school and get out there for some fun in the snow and on the ice?

Snow is great fun.

But did you know how useful snow is?

Snow is like a blanket. It keeps the soil from freezing deeply. It protects plants wonderfully. And snow keeps many animal homes snug and warm. Did you know that field mice make tunnels in the snow?


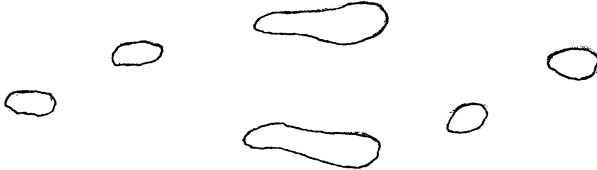


And snow is beautiful, right? What a lovely sight on a sunny morning after a snowfall. The houses look so snug with a snow-cap on their roof. The evergreens have white fur collars on. Sometimes even the weeds wear dainty snow-caps!

You have seen pictures of how beautiful each snowflake is. And each one is different!

"All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all."

\*\*\*\*\*

Beside the tracks *you* make in fresh snow, you may also find tracks that look like these:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Can you guess who made the prints?

Answers: 1. dog; 2. rabbit; 3. cat; 4. mouse.

Someone said to me once that the snow in the tracks didn't sparkle any longer. Do you think that's true?

\*\*\*\*\*

## Who Won the Poetry Contest?

That's the question you're all waiting to ask, I just know it.

Well, before I tell you, I want to say thanks to all the Busy Beavers who wrote poems to enter in the contest.

Just like other times you made it hard for me to decide who really had the best poem!

But after thinking hard about it I could only pick the poems of these Busy Beavers as the winners:

FIRST PRIZE — Darlene Lodder.

SECOND PRIZE — Michelle Van Egmond.

Congratulations to you both! Keep up the good work. I hope you'll both enjoy the prize you receive.

## BRAIN TEASERS

Busy Beaver Gwendolyn Van Esch wants to keep us on the ball. Can you solve the three brain teasers she has for us?

1. There was a boy who went swimming with his clothes on. When he got to the shore he was chilly, so he built a little fire. He used the matches he had in his pants.  
WHAT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED?

2. Who is your closest relationship of your mother's brother's brother-in-law?

3. There was an electric train going 70 kilometres per hour. It was heading south. There was a wind coming down from the north.

WHICH WAY DID THE SMOKE FROM THE TRAIN GO?

Answers: 1. His matches were as wet as he was. The match would not light; 2. Your father; 3. Nowhere; Electric trains don't make smoke.

## QUIZ TIME

Add the A's!

Three or more "a"s are needed to complete each of these Bible names.

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. BRHM _____   | 7. GLTI _____   |
| 2. SMRI _____   | 8. NNIS _____   |
| 3. BLM _____    | 9. MHNIM _____  |
| 4. ZCHRIS _____ | 10. BRNBS _____ |
| 5. BN _____     | 11. HZIH _____  |
| 6. CNN _____    | 12. RRT _____   |

(Answers next time)

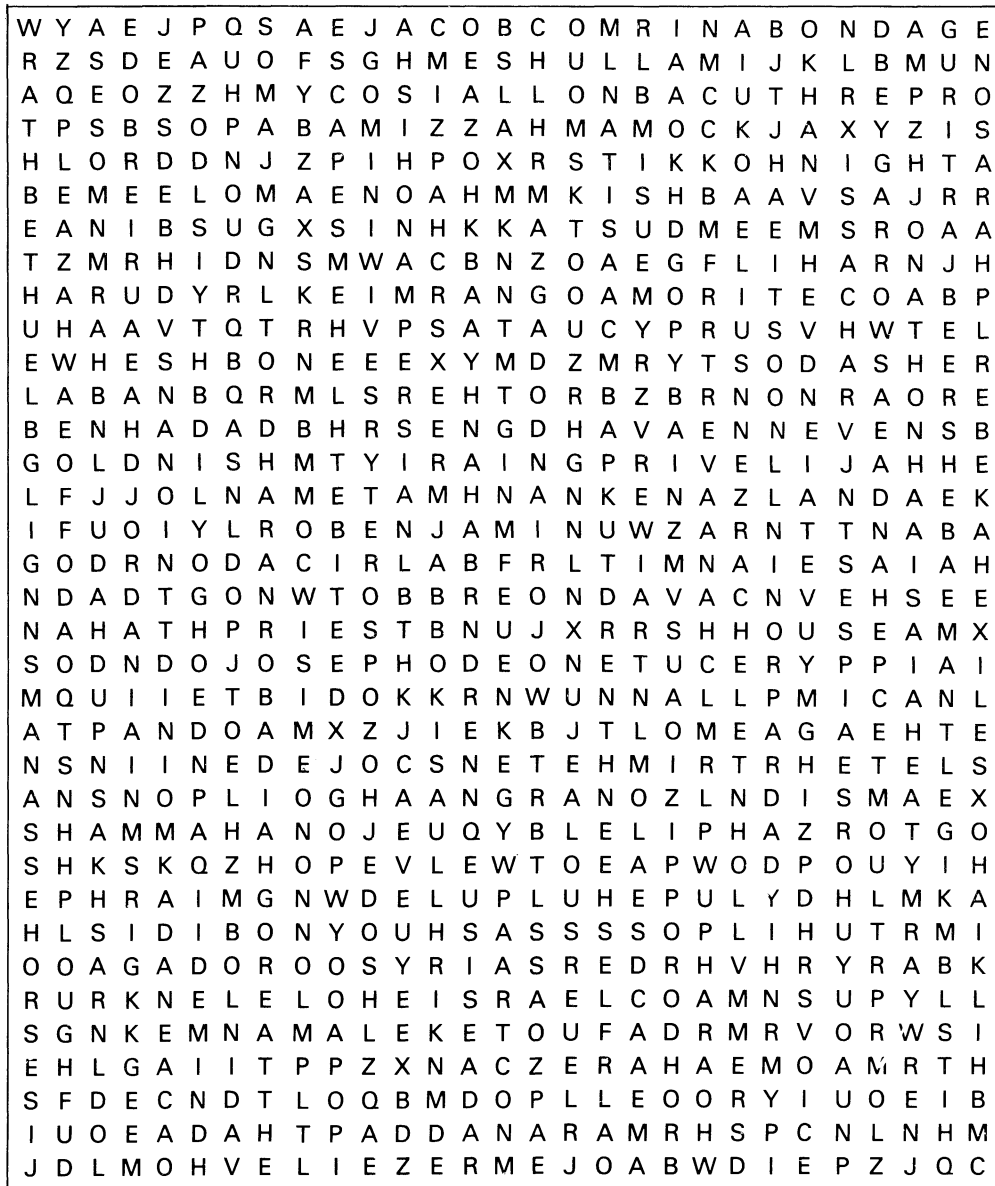
A while ago Busy Beaver Marnix Sikkema had pneumonia and stayed home from school for two weeks. He had plenty of time to make this (very) large Word Search puzzle for you. Marnix is all better by now, but see if you can solve his quiz.

Try your best, Busy Beavers!  
Till next time.

Yours  
Aunt Betty

# Word Search

In this puzzle there are 1,015 letters and 737 word letters with 136 words. They go in all directions.



- |             |           |               |         |          |          |           |             |        |         |
|-------------|-----------|---------------|---------|----------|----------|-----------|-------------|--------|---------|
| Abner       | anoint    | Bethuel       | Elijah  | gold     | Jahaz    | Leah      | Naphtali    | plough | send    |
| Abraham     | ark       | bondage       | Eliphaz |          | jealous  | let       | Ner         | priest | Shammah |
| Adah        | army      | brothers      | Elisha  | Haran    | Joab     | Levi      | night       |        | Sihon   |
| Adar        | Arnon     |               | Ephraim | Hazeael  | Job      | loud      | Noah        | Rachel | Simeon  |
| Adin        | Aroer     | Chemosh       | Esau    | Heshbon  | Jonathan |           |             | rain   | Syria   |
| Adna        | arrow     | Cyprus        | escape  | Hilkiah  | Jordan   | Manasseh  | Obadiah     | rent   |         |
| Ahab        | Asher     | Dan           | Eve     | horses   | Joseph   | mantle    | Og          | Reuben | Teman   |
| Ai          | avert     | David         | exiles  | house    | Joshua   | Meshullum | Omar        | Reuel  | Timna   |
| Allonbacuth | Azgad     | Dibon         | Ezra    |          | Judah    | Micah     | Omri        | ruler  | tribe   |
| Amalek      | Bani      | Dinah         |         | Isaac    | judge    | Mizzah    | ox          |        | twelve  |
| Amorite     | Beersheba | dust          | flesh   | Isaiah   | Kenaz    | mock      | oxen        | Samuel | Uri     |
| Amos        | Benhadad  | Eleloheisrael | Gad     | Issachar | king     | Moses     |             | Sarah  | Zerah   |
| Amoz        | Benjamin  | Eli           | Gatam   | Jabbok   | Kish     |           | Paddan-Aram | Saul   | voice   |
| Anakim      | Bethlehem | Eliezer       | gods    | Jacob    | Laban    | Nahath    | Persia      |        | Zippor  |
|             |           |               |         |          |          |           | Pharaoh     |        |         |

Done by *Marnix Sikkema*.