



Clarion

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The Form of Subscription in the RCN

The new forms of subscription for ministers, elders, and deacons are of paramount significance for the doctrinal development in the synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (RCN). How do they relate to the form of subscription accepted by the Synod of Dordt 1619? Are the RCN still in the line of Dordt, or are the hearts of the children turned away from their fathers? A discussion of this question will underline my argument that the Interim Committee of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod and the latest General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church gave too mild an evaluation of the confessional status of the RCN. It will also constitute a warning for our concerned brothers in the Christian Reformed Church; their denomination has already too often followed the Dutch example.

Let us first have a quick look at the classic Form of Subscription. Ministers of the gospel in our churches declare that they heartily believe that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Three Forms of Unity do fully agree with the Word of God. They promise diligently to teach and faithfully to defend this doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same by their public preaching or writing. They are disposed to refute all errors that militate against this doctrine and to exert themselves in keeping the Church free from such errors. "And if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrine should arise in our minds, we promise that we will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiments to the consistory, classis, or synod . . ."

If one joyfully accepts the authority of God's Word and is convinced that the Reformed confessions agree with Holy Scripture, there can be no problem at all in signing this classic form of subscription. The problems, however, arise as soon as there is deviation from the Reformed doctrine. Alas, this was and is the case in the synodical churches in The Netherlands.

Let us begin our narration at the synod of the RCN in 1971. There was a report called "Binding to the Confession" which dealt with the question whether the confessions still function in the church, or not. A growing independentism endangered the very life of the RCN and the church must address itself to this in a pastoral way. According to this report, the current form of subscription had a strongly juridical character and was intended to be "watertight" in checking inroads of error. Three main difficulties with the form were spelled out:

- a. It seems to put Scripture, the ecumenical creeds and the Reformed confessions too much on a par.
- b. It does not distinguish between ministers in the pastorate and theologians in the schools.

- c. Its sanctions seem to be too absolute; there is only the alternative of suspension and deposition.

The conclusion was drawn that a way be found to retain a more meaningful binding and to allow greater freedom. Instead of the juridical-literal direction of the old form, the church should seek a more dynamic kind of subscription.

Synod 1971 of De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (syn.) adopted the following new form:

We, ministers of the Word, belonging to the classis . . . of the Reformed Churches, declare by our subscription that we acknowledge the Holy Scripture as the Word of God, the authoritative revelation of God's gospel in Jesus Christ, and therefore, as the only rule of faith and life.

We promise, in the unity of true faith, to hold resolutely to the church's confession, which the fathers brought to expression in the three ecumenical creeds and in the three formulas of unity. Therefore we shall oppose and help to avert all that contradicts this confession.

We declare ourselves ready, if we come to a sentiment departing from that confession, compelled by brotherly love, to lay this matter for examination before the ecclesiastical assembly (council, classis or synod).

At the same time we recognize the right of ecclesiastical assembly (council, classis or synod), if it feels there is sufficient reason, to ask for a further explanation of our sentiments.

And if the ecclesiastical assembly adjudges, in regard to any point of doctrine, that we contradict the Holy Scripture in a clear and impermissible manner, and therefore violate the unity of the faith, we promise to submit to her judgment and to conduct ourselves in accord with the stipulations ascertained by synod in that regard.

This translation was made by Dr. Philip Holtrop and approved by Dr. H.B. Weijland, the reporter for the RCN committee "Binding to the Confession."

Even in this translation the main points of difference with the classic form are clear. Dordt 1619 declared that "we heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Confession and Catechism of the Reformed Churches, together with the explanation of some points of the aforesaid doctrine made by the National Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-'19, do fully agree with the Word of God." Lunteren 1971, however, lacks all clarity and preciseness. It vaguely speaks of "het belijden der kerk, dat de vaderen tot uitdrukking hebben gebracht in de drie algemene belijdenisgeschriften en in de drie formulieren van eenigheid." When it thus speaks of the church's confession which the fathers *brought to expression* in the creeds and formulas of unity, it does not identify the confession ("het belijden") with the confessional writing ("de belijdenis").

Every one who is acquainted with the terminology of the Netherlands Reformed Church and the influence of Karl Barth upon their actualist concept of confession as an *act*, recognizes the trend now followed by the formerly Reformed Churches in The Netherlands.

The classic form spoke of "any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrines" (plural); the new form simply mentions "a sentiment departing from that confession." Moreover, it no longer asks for a promise of silence. It is clear that Lunteren 1971 regarded the form of Dordt too strict; the committee even stated that the present form of subscription — taken literally with its heavy-as-lead stipulations — had a rigidifying effect through its lack of nuances upon the *spiritual* development of the Reformed churches. One gets the impression that the *theological* renewal is adorned with the well-sounding words "spiritual development." A freeway was opened for the young theologians to experiment with their new ideas at the cost of the congregations. The possibility was left, though, that an ecclesiastical assembly adjudges "that we contradict the Holy Scripture in a clear and impermissible manner" ("op een duidelijke en voor haar niet toelaatbare wijze"). One would be inclined to ask if a minister of the Gospel may contradict God's Word in an *unclear* manner and if an ecclesiastical assembly ever may permit contradiction to the Holy Scripture.

Even the Church Order in The Netherlands was revised to give opening to toleration of errors. While Article 80 had previously spoken about "false doctrine or heresy" as a ground for suspension or deposition from office, now Article 116 of the new Church Order only mentions "een in ernstige mate afwijken van de gezonde leer." Only a *serious* deviation from the sound doctrine gives occasion for justitiary church discipline. Such expressions show a great tolerance with respect to what are called minor errors.

The story, however, is not finished. When people tamper with the binding to the confessions, they are always inclined to loosen the bond more and more.

In November 1977 the synod of the synodical churches in The Netherlands produced another pronouncement concerning a greater degree of qualification in the censure of pastors and professors of theology. The form of subscription was again altered and weakened. The 1971 redaction spoke of deviation in *any* point of doctrine. The latest form of 1977 shows the change into the formula "ten aanzien van enig *gewichtig* punt van de leer klaarblijkelijk ingaan tegen de Heilige Schrift." Now it deals only with any *important* point of doctrine, and the deviation must be obvious.

The question arises: What are the *important* points of doctrine? Who decides this and on what basis? What is the standard and when is the deviation obvious? When is the unity of faith at stake in an impermissible manner and when is the *disunity* of faith still permissible within the congregation of believers? The Form of Subscription in the RCN (syn.) is subjectivized; it is completely subject to the whims of individuals and ecclesiastical assemblies. It will undoubtedly cause much friction and debate, at least if the synodical churches do not descend further along the path of abandoning the confessions as formulas of unity.

There are symptoms of such further decay. I do not only think of the official complaints about the lack of knowledge of the Reformed confessions that became evident in the ecclesiastical examinations of candidates for the ministry. But I read a resume of a report by the deputies for the contact with the Free University. They addressed the

synod of the RCN in November 1979 about the refusal by twenty-six senior students to subscribe to the formula of agreement with the confession which the fathers brought to expression in creeds and symbols ("instemming met het belijden der Kerk, dat de vaderen tot uitdrukking hebben gebracht in de drie algemene belijdenisgeschriften en in de drie Formulieren van Enigheid"). Even this weak formulation is unacceptable for these senior students of theology. Because they do not agree with the *contents* of the creeds and the confessions, they regard subscribing to them in whatever form a matter of dishonesty. In an address to synod thirty-five students from Amsterdam and Kampen attacked this simple form of subscription for students who want to speak an edifying word in the congregations. They discard *every* form "als een beperking van de nodige bewegingsvrijheid" (a limitation of their necessary freedom to move).

In the meantime, Synod 1977 had already decided to change Article 26 of the revised Church Order and to delete the word "complete agreement with the confession of the churches." The pastors and professors, therefore, had received mild, non-rigid terms. Should there then not be even more room for theological students to play around in the confessional garden of the churches?

The deputies now proposed to abandon every form of subscription for senior theological students. They reasoned that those students speak an edifying word within the framework of their training and only need the consent of their teachers in the diaconological department. Deputies regarded supervision by these teachers sufficient. Students may operate in the pulpits of the congregations without any ecclesiastical action and without any subscription form. It should be sufficient that they are communicant members of a Reformed church. In the meantime, the deputies are aware that these senior students who do not now want to sign any subscription form, will have difficulty to do so one year or so later, when they have finished their theological studies and want to become ministers of the gospel in the RCN.

Deputies now requested synod to study the problematics of the Form of Subscription for church officials again. They posed the question whether the loyalty with regard to the confession of the church could not be expressed in a manner more adapted and adjusted to the modern mind ("of er niet een meer bij het moderne levensgevoel passende weg kan worden gevonden, waarop de kerken zich van de loyaliteit van haar ambtsdragers ten aanzien van het belijden der kerk kunnen verzekeren").

Although my latest information dates from November 1979 and therefore after the report of the Interim Committee of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod and after the 46th Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, I repeat my thesis that study of the doctrinal development in the light of, e.g., the decisions of 1971 and 1977 with respect to the Form of Subscription for office-bearers in the RCN (syn.) would have provided a wide angle lens. Focusing on the cases of Dr. H.M. Kuitert and Dr. H. Wiersinga would then have meant that we ask the question whether the historicity of Paradise and fall into sin or even the vicarious atonement of our Saviour do not belong to the important points of doctrine any longer. Deeply sorrowful about the situation in the synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands with whom we have a glorious heritage in common, we conclude that the decay is far more advanced than the too-optimistic RES and OPC reports surmise.

J. FABER

Report on a Marvelous Tour ¹¹

ISRAEL: MAY 1979

Ayyelet Hashahar; A model kibbutz.

In the central east of Galilee the extremes meet; I mean the extremes of very old and brand new. We had been told so by our guide before we started on the first day of our tour, but here the contrast was striking. On the one side the tell, covering the remains of ancient Hazor; and just across the highway that kibbutz, a modern, in any case 20th century settlement, named Ayyelet Hashahar — a wonderful name calling to mind the heading of Psalm 22. In the Authorized Version it is not translated, but the RSV gives the words in translation: "Hind of the Dawn." In Ayyeleth Hashahar both groups enjoyed their lunch in the best-known kibbutz guest house in the country, and most of them went for a walk around the premises. It was only a small minority, among others, the present writer, who were so fascinated by the history of Hazor that they spent the hour in the Hazor museum, which is in the precincts of the kibbutz, about a stone's-throw from the excavation site. So, among my fellow tour members there are some who in my opinion are undoubtedly more competent to write on the subject. However, because I have taken it upon myself to write the report, let me try to pass on some information. If I am not accurate, please write me to correct me.

I feel urged to write about the kibbutz also because, back from the trip I was approached many-a-time by friends who were eager to learn more about the kibbutz. "Can you tell me more about it?" I was asked over and over again. They had heard about this way of life. Some had a nephew, niece, or cousin who had even stayed there for a year or so to partake in the work and learn by experience what it is all about. Obviously the theme of the kibbutz arouses much interest. It secretly may even make an appeal, somehow or other, as a sort of ideal way of life.

* * *

Let us now first pinpoint what we are talking about. What is a kibbutz? In the booklet, *Our Visit to a Kibbutz*, the writer defines it in a rather negative way:

"The kibbutz movement is not a religious

sect, although there are some twenty religious kibbutzim. It is not a Russian style kolkhoz, although there is a common farm for all members; it is not a Chinese type commune, a life style enforced by the state; nor is it a commune like those recently set up in the U.S.A. by young people fleeing from civilization and "western" society; It is not a "summer camp," where youngsters not yet burdened with family and responsibilities can gather to enjoy a few months of carefree communal living."

If we do try to define a kibbutz, then we can give this circumscription: *It is a cooperative way of life created by the special living conditions of the Jewish people in the land of Israel, activated by Jewish national ideals and social humanitarian ideas.* When the first kibbutz was established in 1910 at Degania, the young people aimed at founding a new society based on communal labour and a complete equality among its members. Not being used to the difficult local conditions, they thought this the only way to turn the uncultivated areas of the land of their forefathers into productive land as free and independent farmers.

Doing their own work, without exploiting others, was a basic principle for them. There is a principle behind this. Even if not all of the thousand kibbutz members are idealists, the movement as such is activated by an ideal, an ideal that, just like the modern State of Israel itself, has its roots in the Zionist movement. These roots are of a practical as well as of an ideological character. Two strands are interwoven here.

Around the turn of the century, due to the enormous influx of Jews from all over the world, a new problem arose, a very practical one, namely, that of the accommodation of all these people; and at the same time that of what the relationship between the newcomers and the land, allotted to them, was going to be. "Allotted to them" is an Old Testament term. We are going to meet more of those terms. In their own way modern Jews try to keep the memory of Old Testament days alive, as they understand it.

Basic, here, was the principle that the Holy Land was the inalienable property of the entire Jewish people. A new concept in the principles of land owner-

ship was introduced, which was to be in the hand of the *nation* and not of individuals. Foregoing private ownership of means of production and assets, they farmed land leased to them by the Keren Kayemet LeJisrael (abbreviated KKL), also known as the Jewish National Fund. This Fund, founded in 1901, was engaged primarily in land redemption, soil reclamation, and reforestation. KKL-land cannot be sold and is allotted to the settlers on the basis of a 49-year hereditary lease. "Forty-nine years" again reminds us of the Bible, of the institution of the Year of Jubilee, each 50th year, in which "each of you shall return to his property" (Leviticus 25:13). The KKL lets out land on lease for a term of 7 x 7 years. So, in the 50th year the land returns to the original, the real owner. Then the lease is renewable, yet it ceded. The tenant binds himself to till the soil, to regard the sabbath and other Old Testament ceremonies. He may look for the farm hands he needs among the Israeli pioneers. And he is free to choose the form of colonization he likes: individualist, cooperative, collectivist.

Each family is entitled to a plot it needs for making a living, but the KKL wishes to retain the right of redistributing the land, not arbitrarily, but provided the subsistence to handle things of the family living there is not threatened; which is possible when in a certain plot hidden resources come to light (a water well, ore, oil or natural gas). This way, they claim, also poor people can be admitted to the land. They have to pay only a symbolic, low fee for admission during the first five consecutive years. Afterwards the amount is raised.

In this way, in the course of sixty years, four million hectares have been purchased mainly from Arab proprietors and about one third of the entire Israeli population lives on ground belonging to the KKL. Quite a lot of work has been accomplished: reclamation of marshland; clearing of the ground of stones, especially in mountainous areas; construction of terraces; reforestation. It took a central organization to achieve all this.

Having dealt with the principle behind the kibbutz movement and the land-distribution I come to the people to whom it was distributed or allotted. I take a historic view now of the kibbutz and wonder: How has it ever come to such a form of settlement? It was in the second *aliyah* (I wrote about it in my first article, May 1979) which started in 1904, that a completely new type of settler arrived. They were mostly young people who saw themselves not only as redeemers of Palestine and rebuilders of the Jewish state, but also as bearers of social justice, freedom and equality. As I wrote in the above: Jewish national ideals and social humanitarian ideas "formed an alliance." These people were the founders of a new type of agricultural settlement, a collective type, in which no private ownership prevailed, in which the classic formula of Socialism; "to each according to his needs, from each according to his ability," was not only a theory, but an ideal put into practice.

Even before the end of World War I, thousands of Jewish youths in Eastern Europe began to organize themselves into the Hehalutz (Pioneer). Joseph Trumpeldor, an officer in the Czarist Russian army, was the guiding spirit. These pioneers trained themselves as labourers, farmers, and craftsmen. At the end of the war they set out from Russia, Poland, Galicia. Penniless, they hiked for weeks and months over untracked areas, smuggling themselves across sealed borders until they reached Palestine. They organized the Labour Brigade which contracted road building and other public works. They also gave rise to the Histadrut, the General Federation of Labour, with almost half a million members out of a population of almost two million. The tasks of this organization in the development of the country cannot be compared to those of a labour union in the usual sense of the word. The Histadrut is not only what they call the legitimate defender of the interests of the wage earner, but it is also the most important single employer in the country. Among its founders were the members of the first kibbutzim; so it has always seen the agricultural resettlement of the country as one of its main tasks. A major part of all farming communities, among them all kibbutzim, are affiliated to it. The economic functions of the Histadrut are manifold. In all sectors of the national economy there are cooperatives run by or affiliated with the Histadrut; in 1955 there were 725

separate enterprises employing 146,000 workers. Let me just mention some: The Agricultural Market Co-operative handling over 70% of Israel's farm products; the Cooperative Wholesale Society, which acts as buyer for the consumer's co-operatives, collective farms, and other federation enterprises; the largest building firm in the country, running also some of the most important industrial plants in the country. On the other hand, goods needed by the settlers and their enterprises are supplied by many Histadrut-controlled institutions, like pension funds, an unemployment fund, vocational schools, publishing houses, daily and weekly newspapers, a theater and sports organization. Kibbutz members hold important positions in all these organizations.

So, the reader sees where the kibbutzim have their links: in the world of the unions. And again you see, taking into account the difference between America and Israel, that there is an ideal — I can just as well say a sort of belief — in the background, a kind of "faith" inspiring them all. "Faith" between quotation marks, sure! It is different from, and contrary to, what we understand by FAITH. And yet this "faith" in the world of kibbutz and Histadrut "works"! It is effective in some way. Let us see in what way.

* * *

Just as one is free to join a kibbutz or not, so one is free to stay as long as one is pleased to do so. No power can force any member to remain in his kibbutz a day longer than he chooses of his own free will. However, one wonders, what about his freedom once he has joined such a type of community? It is a society, we are told, in which all members have equal rights, and each individual is responsible, according to his power and ability, for his participation in the economic, social, and cultural life of the society. The society, in turn, is collectively responsible for every individual in all that befalls him, good or bad. This assistance includes adequate housing, provision of daily living requirements, facilities for co-educational study and cultural development. As members of the Histadrut they are automatically taken care of by that organization's sick fund, which maintains clinics and doctors in the kibbutzim and pays for hospitalization.

The way in which things are dealt with is often what we call provisional. There is no set of rules. Every day the

kibbutz must deal with the problems arising within the community. In a way they put into practice the words: "Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day." From time to time the kibbutz decides on internal changes like the distribution of requisites among its members. Over the years there have been quite a few improvements.

The next question is now: What about the management? It is the General Assembly of all its members that is the highest authority in the community. It convenes regularly once a week or bi-weekly, and discusses the more important affairs of the community, deciding on them by majority vote. Every member, male and female, has voting rights. The more important affairs of the community are the election of the members of an executive committee (by secret ballot), the approval of the budget, the discussion of the personal application of members who are not happy with the decision of a particular body, the accepting of new members, and, very rarely, the expulsion of a member who did not measure up to the principles of kibbutz life. In fact, there is no ideological or private mat-



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IN THIS ISSUE:

Editorial — J. Faber	103
Report on a Marvelous Tour (11) — H.M. Ohmann	105
International — W.W.J. VanOene	109
Circumspection	110
A Corner for the Sick — Mrs. J.K. Riemersma	111
Letters-to-the-Editor	112
News Medley — W.W.J. VanOene	113
Mededeling over Jongeren — Programma's Canada-Nederland	116
Olivier Van Noort-Medaille Toegekend aan J. Heersink te Burlington, Ont.	116
Press Release — Board Meeting of Can. Ref. High School Association	118
Classis Ontario-North	118
Puzzle No. 62	119
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty	120

ter which a member of the kibbutz cannot raise at a meeting.

Who chairs such a meeting? Well, the kibbutz secretariat is the institution which administrates the daily life of the kibbutz. It is an executive committee rather than a board. It consists of a secretary, the economic manager, the treasurer, and several other key functionaries. The secretary also serves as chairman of the General Assembly. Besides, there are boards to regulate all aspects of life, such as cultural activities, job assignment, education, security, health, and construction. There is a board for social problems, which serves also as an arbitration board. Board meetings take place during its members' leisure time. This way every member of a kibbutz has the possibility of taking part in the running of the affairs of his community. Membership in the executive committee or service on one of the boards entails no special privileges. Generally, there is no connection between the rights and duties of a member and his field of activity. On the other hand, they are faced daily with the criticism of their fellow kibbutz members. **UNLIKE OTHER ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, THE GREATER PART OF THE KIBBUTZ CAMPAIGN CONSISTS OF THE CANDIDATE EXPLAINING WHY IT IS NOT WORTHWHILE TO ELECT HIM!!** Imagine! As we learn, the secretariat is merely an executive institution. They are just there to do the job. Its decisions are subordinate to the General Assembly or membership meeting.

The place of meeting is the dining room or communal dining hall. That originally was and still is the purpose. Three meals prepared in the adjoining kitchen are served daily. The kitchen prepares the food and makes an effort to cook the meals to the members' liking. Be a good meal ever so important, the dining hall above all serves as a place of meeting. You can meet one another, discuss, talk, chat, and pass on gossip . . . Here cultural and social activities take place.

* * *

Let me now pass on some information on the work done in the kibbutz, the facet with which the casual visitor or tourist comes in touch.

As to the daily work, from the outset kibbutz life was lived in a way that cannot be phrased better than by the words of the book of Nehemiah: "each with one hand laboured on the work and with the other held his weapon"

(4:17). It was largely from the kibbutzim that the Haganah sprang up and also the defending forces known as Palmach, which played such an important part in the establishment of the state in 1948.

All work must be done by members alone without employing hired workers. Seamstresses, cobblers, electricians, housepainters, carpenters, a barber and all other artisans take care of the requirements of the community. Since kibbutz members receive neither salary nor other monetary remuneration, these services are free. For their clothes and shoes they have at their disposal a yearly allowance, which enables them to choose from the kibbutz stores as they see fit, or else may be used for purchases in town. At peak seasons or when the number of members is insufficient to complete all the work, much assistance is provided by youth and volunteers from Israel and abroad. That is how your nephew or niece or cousin could stay in a kibbutz for some time.

Speaking of peak seasons, our thoughts are led in the direction of farming. Right. Work on the kibbutz means first and foremost farming. But how? Let us not forget, originally the Jewish farmer had neither experience nor knowledge of agriculture. He came, moreover, to a country where agricultural work was performed in the most primitive way and with poor results. Perhaps it was precisely because he was forced to start from the beginning, with no tradition of farming, that he achieved the impressive results which have become famous the world over. The kibbutzim today lead Israel in agriculture in advanced mechanization, speedy modernization, and application of scientific knowledge.

What do they grow?

Grain, of course, you say. Barley, wheat. Right. Under plastic, early winter fruits and vegetables are grown for European markets. Further, grapes; and nowadays bananas. During the tour we have seen the latter covered with blue plastic in order that the entire bunch may ripen simultaneously, as we were told.

Raising of fish in ponds — I touched on this subject already, as the reader will remember — is carried out almost exclusively in kibbutzim. Recently, due to the shortage of water supplies, the growers achieved impressive results with special methods of feeding and in output of fish per unit of space and quantity of water.

In dairy farms mechanized milking has been developed mainly in the cowshed, but it has also been applied to the milking of sheep. Work in the cowshed is still considered hard and requiring long and inconvenient hours.

On chicken farms, the poultry run is completely mechanized with air conditioning and automatic feeding.

In addition to those, many kibbutzim also have industrial branches partly for the utilization of their farm products, but frequently they are of a type unconnected with agriculture: plywood factories, light industries, etc. The combination of agricultural and industrial enterprises has proved to be economically successful. Kibbutzim hold many interests in other enterprises as well.

* * *

A question always brought up when you touch on the subject of kibbutzim is: What about family life? Is there any? It is especially the children who are in the focus of interest then. In this respect there are widespread misrepresentations. For there is family life, we are told. The evening, or already part of the afternoon, when the daily work is done, is devoted to it. The parents go to see their children in the place reserved for them, and it is said to be a moving scene. After supper the evening is devoted to social life or cultural life, reading, music, or a movie. Every kibbutz has a library of books and records, a cinema, and sometimes a little orchestra or band.

The kibbutz devotes great effort to rearing and educating its children, whether they grow up in communal children's houses, still prevalent in most kibbutzim, or whether they live with their parents. Some kibbutzim take recourse to the old manner of life, the family way, again. Otherwise they live in their own quarters divided into age groups, where they are looked after by so-called "house mothers." They also sleep in these quarters. The kibbutz takes full responsibility for each child from infancy to graduation. This responsibility includes physical welfare, social adjustment, basic education, and advanced studies. The many special problems of difficult or gifted children must also be attended to. They are given a twelve-year school education. Smaller kibbutzim send their children, mainly during high school years, to a regional kibbutz school. It is enjoyed by all kibbutz children without exception. At the age of 18 they finish school and

are then accepted to membership of the kibbutz by a vote of the General Assembly (= membership-meeting). They then join the armed forces, and, upon completion of their military service, begin their adult life in the kibbutz.

As the reader understands, we are far from singing the praises of this system. According to the Scriptures, first of all the Old Testament, it is the parents who are in charge of the education. However, with Mr. A. Kamsteeg in his book, *Israel, Verleden, Heden en Toekomst*, I must say we cannot content ourselves with this criticism. When the kibbutz people themselves sing the praises of this system, they point a finger at the deteriorating trend in family life in the "western world," where the parents all but set an example, and the children do not find a home when they come home; where neither Dad, tired from his daily task, nor mom takes time to listen to their children and their problems. Kibbutzniks say that their families really enjoy their get-together during the few hours they see each other.

Now a little on religious life. In most of the kibbutzim special emphasis is placed on the sabbath and Jewish festivals, and they try to celebrate them in a manner which creates an atmosphere which sets these days apart from the normal week-day routine. Although the festivals are those known from the Bible and tradition, we read (and this is meaningful for our understanding of modern Jewry!) that with the return to Israel — *and to nature* — the kibbutzim have endowed the festivals with a different and more modern character. That is why you are not only reminded of the Biblical background, but also, by certain features of the modern celebra-

tion, of ancient — yes, Canaanite — practices and rites! For one thing, the Passover, with its exceptionally historic background in the Bible, is celebrated as . . . a spring festival. The *Shavu'ot*, or Feast of Weeks, comparable to our Pentecost, the time of the presentation of the Torah to orthodox Jews, is now only the Feast of the First Fruits. "It is natural that in the agricultural community of the kibbutz stress will be laid on the bringing of the first fruits," we read. Actually, we witness the same thing in the non-Jewish western world, where Christmas is turned into Yuletide or Xmas; and of Easter nothing is left but a spring festival. That Purim, a joyful festival with its fancy parade, calls to mind a modern carnival rather than the history of Esther, stands to reason, for they have lost sight of the Biblical roots.

When a certain kibbutz grows too big, one group splits off, which can serve for the establishment of a new kibbutz on arid grounds, the same way all kibbutzim once started. For that was their beginning; let us not forget that whenever we meet a kibbutz that has managed to "reshape the desert into a paradise." In the course of the decades the number of kibbutzim increased to about 240. About 3% of the population of the country lives in them. But they have played an important role in the development of the modern state. During the war they were the *avant garde* in the defence of the nation, situated at the outskirts as many of them were.

Besides the kibbutz in the proper sense of the word, another type, not so well-known, exists: the Moshav; plural: Moshevey Ovedim, villages of labourers; a cooperative settlement differing from the kibbutz in that now it is the families that exploit the land. The coop-

erative village consists of families each of which bears the full responsibility for its own farm, having the revenues at its disposal. So the landed property around the village is divided into equal parts and distributed among the settlers. All the families are as such represented in the General Assembly. The latter is in charge of the sale of the crops and also of all sorts of public services like schools, public health, mutual aid. If a farmer passes away the farm returns to the community.

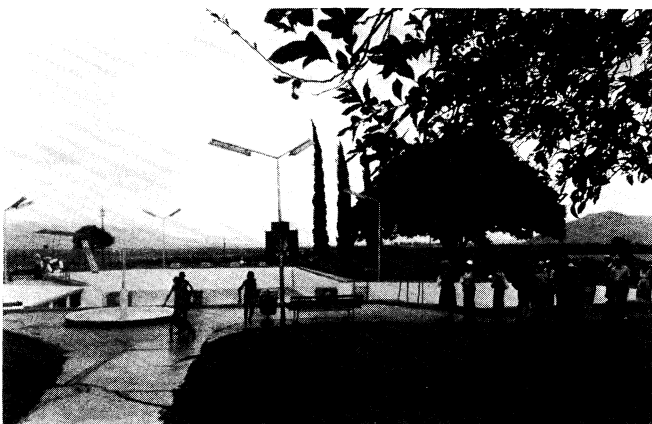
Finally, there is a type of mixed cooperative village, which has something in common with the kibbutz proper, namely, collective labour, and the *moshav*, namely, family life. The exploitation is carried out according to the principles of the kibbutz (common property, daily distribution of work), but the benefits, instead of being used for investment, are distributed among the members. The families have their meals at home, where the housewife is the central figure, rearing the children, preparing the meals. Yet, she must devote three hours a day to the community by doing some chores.

I have come to an end of my article about our visit to Ayyeeth Hashahar. Founded in 1915 by young people from Russia, who took over arid land as lessees, it has come a long way with its ups and downs; downs mainly before the war, more prosperous times thereafter. Today it is one of the larger fruit producers in the country. Citrus plantations, cotton, all types of livestock, and beehives gave the settlement its fame.

The newly-added fishponds get their water supply from canals draining the former Huleh swamps. We were impressed by the Guest house, with its two compartments, one for meat, the other for milk-food as befits the kosher Jewish kitchen, due to a misinterpretation of Exodus 23:19b. During lunch our group was split, one part being served in the milk, the other in the meat, compartment, according to everybody's taste. "*De gustibus non est disputandum*" (There is no disputing about tastes), goes a Latin saying. So the split was not deep. It was a happy group that reunited in the bus after an hour, taking us to the hotel in Tiberias.

My next and last article will be devoted to the trip from Tiberias to Tel Aviv.

H.M. OHMANN
(To be continued.)





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.

ST. PAUL, MINN. (RNS)

When schools teach only the evolutionary theory of origins, they are forcing an "animal, atheistic, accidental, aimless ancestry" on young people, says Judge Braswell Deen Jr.

The chief justice of Georgia's court of appeals likes to alliterate.

He calls evolution teaching "monkey mythology, monopoly methodology, and mysterious madness."

Judge Deen's message that he brought to several Minnesota audiences, including one made up of legislators and other state officials, was that schools must provide "equal time" for scientific creationism whenever they teach about evolution.

"Students are entitled to academic freedom and scientific inquiry for the claims of many Ph.D. scientists who say that humans have only human ancestry and that we do not have animal ancestry," said the judge, who at six-foot-five seems to tower over his audiences.

"If you teach long enough that students are animals, it should be no surprise that they act like animals."

Judge Deen insisted that the writings of Charles Darwin, father of the evolutionary theory, are "racist." (CN)

PHILADELPHIA (RNS)

The Permanent Judicial Commission of the United Presbyterian Church has ordered a presbytery to conduct a new examination of a minister who gave a negative answer when asked if he believed Jesus Christ is God.

It remanded the case of the Rev. Mansfield Kaseman to the National Capital Union Presbytery with the direction that it "exercise its consti-

tutional responsibilities in conducting a proper examination of Mr. Kaseman's doctrinal and theological beliefs."

Following its examination, the presbytery voted to accept Mr. Kaseman as a member. An appeal by a dissenting minority of the presbytery was filed with the Synod of the Piedmont, which turned it down and the minister's critics then took the matter to the Permanent Judicial Commission of the UPC

Mr. Kaseman, who was ordained by the United Church of Christ, said later that he believes that Jesus is divine but wanted to "hold God as supreme" in answering the question. He indicated that the problem was partly one of semantics, in that Presbyterians equate Jesus with God while his UCC perspective, "that's unusual language for me." (CN)

(The old errors come back all the time. What Mr. Kaseman says was said already seventeen hundred years ago. The only difference is that at that time the word "semantics" was not used to pull the wool over the eyes of the Church membership.)

CLAREMONT, CALIF. (RNS)

All world religions achieve at least a glimpse of transcendent reality, declares British religious philosopher John Hick, who says that calling any faith the one true religion is a form of bigotry.

Historical and cultural differences have shaped such images of deity as the God of Israel, Allah or the non-personal Void of the Eastern traditions, Mr. Hick says. (CN)

Yes, and Mr. Hick can know things, for he is a philosopher. Give him a big hand, will you! But don't hold his hand: there is no Void after this life!

The United States' first test-tube baby project has been given the go-ahead, and doctors hope to attempt the first pregnancy next month. Virginia Health Commissioner James Kenley sanctioned an in vitro fertilization program at Norfolk General Hospital, deciding after five months of hearings and studies that the clinic would violate no state or federal laws. (CT)

A group of Reform rabbis has provoked an uproar in Israel by encroaching on the exclusive right of Orthodox rabbis to perform marriages. They did so by performing a ceremony last month, then prevailing on an Orthodox

rabbi who witnessed the marriage to register it with the Interior Ministry. Since the founding of Israel in 1948 only Orthodox rabbis have been allowed to marry, bury, or receive converts into Judaism. The influence of Orthodox Judaism — out of proportion to its numbers — stems from the fact that no political party, right or left, has been able to form a government without its support. (CT)

A recently established Muslim mission academy in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, recently graduated its first class of 36 imams (teachers) and preachers, according to Willi Hofner, executive secretary of Orient Dienst, a German evangelical agency at work in the Muslim world. He also said that attempts were under way to unite Muslim missionary organizations and to train Muslim missionaries in specialized subjects. (CT)

CINCINNATI (EP)

Eight Protestant leaders have criticized President Carter's plan to reinstate draft registration, asserting that "this country is in no immediate danger" as a result of the crises in Iran and Afghanistan.

In a statement drawn up during the adjourned session of the 14th plenary meeting of the Concultation on Church Union (COCU) here, they said they support "the restrained, rational stand the United States government has maintained" in the Iranian crisis, but expressed distress "that the Russian invasion of Afghanistan seems to be stampeding the United States into an ill-considered/-military buildup." With regard to the planned reinstatement of draft registration, the Protestant leaders asserted that "there is no reason — beyond political expedience — for us to again impose regimentation on our youth." (CC)

I wonder what those "Protestant leaders" will say when, because of a lack of vigilance, they wake up under communist domination from the sleep into which they have been lulled and try to lull the American people. They will see what kind of "regimentation" will be imposed not only upon the youth but also upon the older people who profess to be Christians as well as upon those who declare that they have no religion at all. It might be good for them to visit Afghanistan for some first-hand information.

vO

OLYMPICS AND POLITICS

Every four years the world is treated to the grand spectacle of the Olympics, a colourful, international undertaking dramatizing the vanity of victory and the disenchantment of defeat.

Both in preparation and in execution, the Olympics are truly a "spectacle." Incalculable sums of money are spent erecting immense facilities, monuments of lasting national pride. Thousands of athletes spend all free time and daily effort to receive the honour of representing their country, hoping to win a medal or two. Major television corporations are willing to spend millions of dollars acquiring "exclusive" rights to full coverage of the Games. Then, with the ring of anthems and the show of flags, the spectacle is declared opened, and during the exciting weeks that follow, the Olympic happening captivates the souls of millions.

The Olympics — known already in ancient Greece — were formally revived in 1896, appropriately in Athens, to ventilate the atmosphere of international competition. The "father" of the present Olympic movement, one Baron de Coubertin, stated that the purpose of the Games was "to promote the spirit of international togetherness."

Thus the Olympics were slated to overcome all political (ideological) differences and difficulties, and to prove that the various nations of the world could enjoy peaceful competition. It was argued that the world would be better off jostling merrily in the arena than grappling gravely in the trenches. A worthy ideal, no doubt, but it simply cannot be. No Olympic Games have ever brought about real togetherness or unity.

Time and again it appeared that Politics and Olympics cannot be separated. As a matter of fact, the Olympics have always been nothing else than a political and ideological battlefield, a caricature of reality.

In 1936, Nazi Germany utilized the image of the Games to present a completely false picture to the world. As the athletes competed, Jews were arrested and Generals conspired. Shortly afterwards, the world faced an unprecedented, bloody showdown. In 1967, Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada used the Olympic platform to make a dashing political move: recognize Communist China and "rebuff" Taiwan.

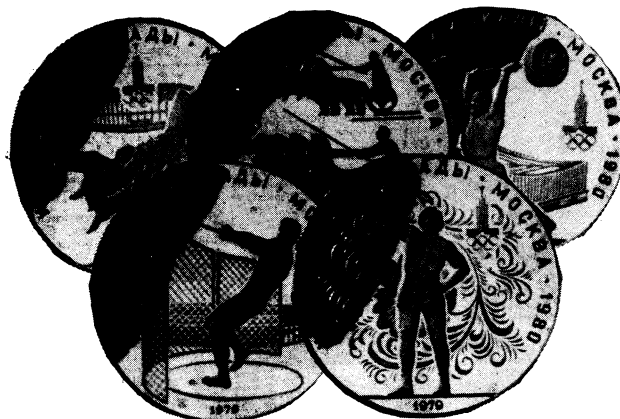
Circumspection...

Such has now become quite fashionable, but in those days it was superbly daring. In 1972, Palestinian terrorists massacred almost the entire Israeli delegation, a splendid example of "international togetherness."

And now, in 1980, in the aftermath of the Soviet take-over of Afghanistan, the discussion concerning the political background of the Olympics has again found headlines. President Carter suggested an Olympic boycott in order to exert political pressure on the Soviets and thus cause a blow to communist confidence. Who says that Olympics and Politics don't mix?

worldly athletes not waste in obtaining perishable wreaths and tarnishable medals; how much MORE effort should we not exert to receive the eternal crown of glory?

And the present background should make us reject the Olympics even more severely. How can we celebrate "the spirit of togetherness," when the host-nation has just brutally occupied another nation? Must we boost Soviet morale and prestige through our naive support? Must we politely listen to the anthems of atheistic nations whose one purpose it is to destroy the Church of Christ? Depend-



Even without considering the present political crisis, a Christian, on the basis of principles, should reject the "bread and games" mentality so prevalent in the Olympics. The spectacle is now, as it was in ancient times, an idolatrous religion of hero-worship, a heinous display of man's own prowess and endurance. In all its pompousness, the happening is hollow to the core, because it does not seek the glorification of God's Name and the gathering of Christ's Church. The REAL battle is elsewhere. The Apostle Paul once warned his young friend, Timothy, who also lived in a very Olympic-minded world, "Train yourself in GODLINESS, for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way . . ." (I Timothy 4:7, 8). Perhaps the only thing that a Christian can learn here, per analogy, is to "exercise self-control in all things to receive an imperishable wreath" (I Corinthians 9:24-27). How much time and effort do

able sources have confirmed, by the way, that Soviet authorities in Moscow are "cleaning up" the city of all dissidents in order to give an "orderly" impression to visitors from the Western world. Shall we compete freely in a land where freedom is non-existent?

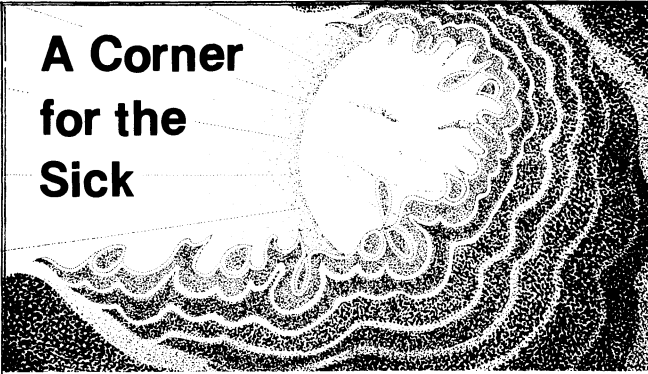
If we cannot play games with communism, we cannot support the Games in Moscow.

If the Games are staged, as planned, and I am afraid they will, every true Christian should not only refuse to participate, he should refuse even to watch from afar.

When the Moscow Olympics come on, the television and radio should go off. We cannot feast our eyes or lend our ears to a worldly spectacle, hosted by an atheistic power which has vowed nothing less than to destroy the Church of Christ. If we do, do we not deny our Lord?

Christians have better things to do. Cid

A Corner for the Sick



I will sing of Thy steadfast love, O Lord, forever.
Psalm 89:1a

What comfort do you derive from the article of "the life everlasting"?

The answer according to Lord's Day 22 of our Heidelberg Catechism is: "That, since I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, after this life I shall possess perfect bliss, such as eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, therein to praise God forever." "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood," I Corinthians 13:12.

"Blessed are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. For Thou art the glory of their strength; by Thy favour our horn is exalted. Blessed be the Lord forever!" Psalm 89:15, 17, 52.

We have received two requests for elderly sisters in B.C. Please, send them a letter or card.

MRS. BRIENEN

Room 425, 1018 Burrard Street,
Vancouver, B.C.

Mrs. Brienen underwent an operation on both her hips. She has experienced years of pain, and hopes that the operation will now relieve her of her pain. She always had to help out to do farm work (she lives in Houston), but presently she enjoys handcrafts. Mrs. Brienen and her husband are both thankful that the Lord has made everything well so far, and trust that He will guide them in the future.

It will be a while before sister Brienen will be able to return home, so please send your greetings to the hospital in Vancouver, B.C.

MRS. A. STAD

Box 2374, Smithers, B.C. V0J 2N0

The Lord willing, Mrs. Stad will celebrate her 81st birthday on February 19. She lost her husband five years ago. She lives by herself and is usually in good spirits. The Lord is her strength!

In December she experienced sickness, but is feeling a lot better presently. Most Sundays she is able to attend church services twice yet. She likes handcrafts also. Shall we surprise our sister with many happy wishes for her birthday, brothers and sisters?

The Lord willing, two young brothers will celebrate their birthdays in the month of March. Please mark them on your calendars.

GERRY EELHART

Box 32, Site 18, R.R. 5,
Edmonton, Alberta

Gerry will celebrate his 18th birthday on March 12th. He attends a school for mentally-handicapped children. He enjoys communicating with people, is physically active, and likes music.

JIM VANDERHEIDEN

R.R. 1,
Smithville, Ontario

Jim will be 21 years old on March 15th. He attends school, and helps his father in the greenhouse. He loves reading and playing his accordion. His problems are of an emotional nature.

Both boys would very much enjoy receiving cards. Shall we send them plenty, brothers and sisters?

From Mrs. Homan of Smithville, Ontario, we have received a thank you note. Grace was very happy with all the cards she received for her birthday. She will paste them in an album again, as she did before. "It was overwhelming, that our 'Royal' children are not forgotten. We have been given proof of the communion of saints again. Also Young People's Societies, as well as older brothers and sisters groups, responded. Thank you, brothers and sisters."

Mrs. Homan sent me a picture of Grace to be put in our corner. It was taken right after her birthday.



Grace Homan

From Mrs. Hamelink of Smithers, B.C., we received the following note: "Brothers and sisters, thank you very much for the many cards and letters I received. I really feel that we are all one in the Lord. Thank you, all! Hymn 55:1, 2; 1979 Hymn Section."

Continued on next page.

Lo, what a Glorious Sight Appeared

Hymn 55:1, 2 (Revelation 21:1-5)
1979 Hymn Section, *Book of Praise*

Lo, what a glorious sight appeared
To John's admiring eyes:
The former seas had passed away,
The former earth and skies.
From heav'n the new Jerusalem came,
For Christ as bride prepared.
A voice resounding from the throne
These wondrous things declared:

"Now God in glory down to men
Has moved His blest abode.
He dwells with them; His people they,
And He His people's God.
His gracious hand shall wipe the tears
From every weeping eye,
For pain and grief shall be no more,
And death itself shall die.

Please send your requests to:

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

Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Mr. Editor,

Without wishing to prolong the discussion needlessly, may I ask for your indulgence once more for a brief reply to the Rev. Werkman's response to my original letter?

I just want to ask Mr. Werkman two questions: The Canadian Reformed Churches have recently come to the conclusion that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. But as yet there is no fellowship around the Lord's table with them. Is it or is it not possible to have "the communion of saints" with these brothers and sisters?

Secondly, if Mr. Werkman went to England or Scotland, where the Reformation took a different turn and had a different development than in Canada and The Netherlands, e.g., would he be able to experience the communion of saints with believers there? Or is there "no address" of the church there?

I end with three brief quotations: "You may never say, 'they made that schism, and I now eagerly broaden it'" (Schilder).

"Liberation (Vrijmaking) without humility, liberation attended with strife for the first place, liberation whereby we consume each other and push each other away, is not liberation" (B. Holwerda).

"History has demonstrated how separated churches are exposed to the serious danger of making their own peculiar principle and point of view a constituent part of the truth, and so to go in the way of a sect" (H. Bavinck).

J. TUINGA

Dear Mr. Editor,

Rev. Werkman goes on and asks

then the question, which forms the heart of the matter: Are they not my brothers and sisters?

His answer here is very typical! We read: "I say, if we are brothers, why then do we not 'dwell together as brothers'?" This is a clear example of simplifying matters. Do you really think it is that simple? You take upon you a great responsibility by leading the church members in this way of thinking!

You say: "If we are brothers . . ." This implies, we are *not*, if we do not join the same church, if we are not sitting on the same table. Let me ask you an important question here Rev. Werkman: Where do you find the scriptural base that you can be members of Christ and still not brothers and sisters? According to me, these are the consequences of your human reasoning. We can for the sake of unity confine the brother and sister name of the visible church, but this would be a misinterpretation of scripture. Hence, you are obliged as a minister of the Word to make it clear that we *are* brothers and sisters, when through faith we belong to Jesus Christ!

Here many will say, as I have heard it so often: So, it doesn't matter to what church you belong! But here again, let us learn to listen, to take your brother's word at face-value, to be objective by not jumping to conclusions. For according to Scripture, joining the Church, as we also confess it in our confession, is only the manifestation of *being* brothers and sisters and an obedient follow-up of Christ's revealed will. Although the question of uniting as brothers and sisters, wherever Christ gathers his church in the world, is definitely a matter of obedience, it never may be stated as a prerequisite for salvation.

The danger is not imaginary that we in unscriptural fear become so

zealous for the church, that we lose sight of the Scriptural norms.

Fear is therefore excluded, when these norms are obeyed!

In the gathering work of Christ's Church He requires from us that we show *understanding, concern and brotherly love* for those, who as yet are not gathering with us and so our godly walk will become an element in His unifying work.

For our attitude will be accordingly, when also in this matter, we let ourselves be ruled only by Scripture and not by our feelings or human reasonings.

B. BIKKER

Dear Mr. Editor,

May I be allowed to add a few remarks in *Clarion* to the letter of Rev. Tuininga in the year-end issue of *Clarion* and to Rev. Werkman's reply? I do so with the hope that these comments will not only be a *contribution* to the discussion, but also that they may help to establish the closest possible unity between us as brothers. My main concern is that we should remove any possible reason for thinking that the Canadian Reformed Churches are affected by a sectarian spirit.

On the one hand Rev. Tuininga writes:

What Mr. Werkman is saying is that it's only possible to have the communion of saints when that communion is seen and *visibly* expressed with members of the same church. And those who do not belong to the visible communion of that "true church" are not brothers.

But Rev. Werkman does not say this, neither in his article, nor in his reply to the letter.

On the other hand, I wonder whether Rev. Werkman has now really cleared away all misunderstanding. He asks,

Continued on page 117.

news medley

Following our custom we start with some personal information. More than once we mentioned the name of the Rev. W. Loopstra in our last few issues. This time there is some better news. The Hamilton bulletin tells us, "It was a cause for thanksgiving to have Rev. W. Loopstra in the church service last Sunday." That is indeed a cause for thanksgiving. Meanwhile, if the plans could be executed, Rev. and Mrs. Loopstra have left for some holidays in Florida. No operation was necessary as yet, and it is hoped that the treatments and therapy will have the desired result.

There are no more "personal" items, unless you wish to qualify as such the word of thanks which I am speaking here to all who sent me a new directory of their Congregation. They do come in handy many-a-time, for oftentimes I receive a letter or phone call asking me whether I know the address of so-and-so. In by far the most cases I can help the enquirers by pulling a directory out of a drawer and telling them right at the spot. I appreciate the thoughtfulness of the brothers and sisters and want them to be sure of that.

There is not all that much news to be mentioned from the Churches. Without infringing upon the rights and territory of Rev. Geertsema, I shall quote a few parts from bulletins in order to enlighten our readers. I certainly am not planning on starting another "press review," since our present editor for that part does an excellent job. As a rule, however, he does not quote extensively from bulletins, and therefore I feel more or less at ease when doing it in this column.

Now that I am speaking about bulletins anyway, I should like to ask whether we cannot have some improvement and make it a little easier on each other in one particular respect. That is the matter of sending pieces to be inserted in the bulletins of sister Churches. There is no bulletin being issued in our Churches which I do not get and read. Thus I see the same pieces appearing over and over again. The Churches in the Fraser Valley are "lucky" in this respect: they have one *Church News* for all five Churches. Thus a piece sent for insertion will have to be typed only once in order to reach all. In by far the most Churches, however, a separate bulletin is issued. For that local bulletin we get submissions from World Relief Fund, Fellowship of Canadian Reformed University Students, High School, Political Study Societies, Performances of choirs in neighbouring Churches, and so on. And many of those submissions are oftentimes quite lengthy.

I do not know what the other typers-of-bulletin-stencils think of it, but I, for one, would greatly appreciate it if another way could be found. Announcements have to be sent in well ahead of time if they are to appear in *Clarion* in time for the event that is announced; but publication in our magazine could relieve the local typists and "stencillers" of quite some work. It would also save the Churches some money, for I sometimes notice that an extra sheet has to be typed and run off because of those announcements coming from outside the Congregation. Could not some other way be found?

And in any case, let your words be few when you request a neighbouring bulletin to insert a message from you.

We return to Hamilton.

"After some discussion it is decided to end the trial period and to continue singing Hymn 1 in the same manner as we have done for some time now."

In Fergus, too, we have had a trial period now for three months and we have three months to go before it is over. We sing the Credo only on the first Sunday of the month, and the attentive reader can conclude from that that we have sung it now three times in the service. That is too short a period and too few times to be able to have a well-founded judgment about the matter. We did practice on a Sunday afternoon before the service, and we also sang it a few times at the Congregational meeting. After three months the Consistory will decide whether to continue or to discontinue it.

More Congregations are discussing this matter. In some the singing of the Credo is customary by now. In others it is still under discussion. That is the case, for instance, in Smithville. I should like to quote a rather lengthy piece by the Rev. Stam. All aspects should be considered, and we shall do well when we take note of all arguments pro as well as con.

Under the heading "Should We Sing the Credo?" the Rev. Stam writes the following:

In our local, unpretentious bulletin, we simply cannot discuss all the individual questions which arise at the regular homevisits. Sometimes, however, a question occurs so frequently that, perhaps, it does merit some broader attention.

At one time there seemed to be a rash of objections against hymn-singing. Now I have written about this previously and I will not enter into that matter again. But this time a related question: Shall we SING the Credo, the twelve Articles of our undoubted, catholic, Christian faith?

As you know, the procedure now is that in the p.m. services the minister recites the Credo and the Congregation responds with a Psalm or a Hymn of praise. In some of our sister Churches it has become the custom to SING the Credo together. What are we to think of such a development?

It strikes me that those who oppose the singing of the Credo do not seem to have any real argumentation and reason emotionally rather than rationally.

Personally, I have seldom (either in Burlington-West or Smithville) asked the Congregation to sing the Credo (Hymn 45) as we presently have it in our *Book of Praise*. I have two reasons for this omission: I know of many "conscientious objectors" and (even more important for me) I do not really feel that the MELODY blends in with the general musical style of our liturgy. Most of our hymns are in a "Genevan" setting, while the Credo sounds rather "Gregorian" to me. I would prefer another tune and setting, and I am not alone in this preference.

But all this does not mean that I am against the singing of the Credo per se. The Credo, as ACT of the Congregation, could indeed be sung together. In my first congregation, Langeslag, we sang the entire Credo before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, Gezang 6 in the Dutch *Book of Praise*. We could, e.g., alternate the reciting by the minister and the singing of the Creed by all. I see no reason why this would be impossible in principle.

Recently, in *Dienst* (the magazine for office-bearers of our Dutch sister-Churches) a comprehensive article was written on liturgy by Dr. K. Deddens of Groningen-Zuid. He also makes remarks about the SINGING of the credo in the worship services. Now Dr. Deddens is listed as "contributor" to *Shield and Sword* (although I have not seen any contributions from his hand of late) so when I quote him, we are undoubtedly in "good" company, and you will consider his words seriously. Dr. Deddens writes the following, "Presently the confession of faith is not done justice as an act of the congregation. It is not desirable to RECITE the creed together. Therefore the best form is: to SING the Credo, but then unrhymed. Some good melodies are available, e.g., the one of Strassbourg, 1525, and the melody of Paul Chr. van Westering, with music on motifs of a Credo from the seventeenth century. There could be a choice between these two, and besides we could choose between the Apostolic Confession and the Nicene Creed." (*Dienst*, Dec. 1979, page 16.)

So Dr. Deddens indeed feels that the Credo should be sung, and I do hope that by expressing his views he has not dropped in your esteem.

Have no fear that we will implement such ideas in our worship services. Such is not the point of this brief article. But being "against" the singing of the Credo is not synonymous with Reformedness. There are Reformed brethren with excellent credentials who do feel that it is possible to sing the Credo.

It is always wise to consider the opinion of others especially of those who really know the history of the Church.

That was a long quotation, I admit, but I do think that it helps us reach a definite conclusion regarding the singing of the Credo. I do not know all that much about music and the different types of music, but in my opinion the present melody is no more "Gregorian" than the melody of our Psalm 23 when the latter is sung properly, without the accidentals. However, I leave that up to experts and hope that we shall hear from them, too.

Hopefully our readers do not take it ill of me when I give another rather lengthy quote from the *Family Post*. This time the brief article deals with the laying on of hands. Also about this point I must say that the remarks which Rev. Stam makes about it are well worth to be considered. With him I am no formalistic "sticker" and with him I am convinced that we are to adhere to the agreements which we have made within the Church federation. But let me now give you the "article."

The Laying on of Hands.

In recent reports in *Clarion* concerning the ordination of candidates into the Ministry, I came across an item at which I would like to place a question mark. The item reads approximately as follows, "With the (officiating) minister, also the elders laid their hands upon brother . . ." In other words, at the ordination both the minister(s) present and the *elders* partook in the laying on of hands. My problem is not so much whether the elders have the inherent right or not to partake in this "laying on of hands." Maybe they do. This matter was raised and excellently treated by Dr. S.G. Huh in his doctoral dissertation entitled *Presbyter in volle rechten* (De Vuurbaak, 1972, *Presbyter in Full Rights*).

Dr. Huh argued (contra Dr. Charles Hodge) that the elders indeed have the right to take part in this action. He

bases this especially on Paul's words to Timothy, "Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance, when the *Council of elders* laid their hands upon you" (I Tim. 4:14, RSV). The scholars differ on the exact significance of this "laying on of hands." Some have defended that in this way the office is "conferred," passed on from the one to the other. But this is hardly Scriptural for one received his office from the Lord via the election and calling of the congregation. Dr. Huh argues with Herman Bavinck who does not consider the laying on of hands an *essential* element, but a "public appointment of those who have been called to the office" and a "solemn introduction" to his office (page 169).

Personally I wonder whether this laying on of hands does indeed not function as a sign of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, since the Lord also *enables* those whom He calls (roeping en *bekwaammaking*, as they say in Dutch). It seems appropriate that this sign is given at the time of the ordination (I. Tim. 4:14) or when a special mission is given (Acts 13:3). I remember that when Dr. Huh's dissertation was published and being discussed, I was of the opinion that perhaps some more significance could have been given to this act of the "laying on of hands." But who am I to argue with scholars?

Even, all this aside.

As I said, my point is not whether the elders do not have this right; my point is that *at the present time*, both the Church Order and the Form for Ordination do not grant the elders this right.

In Article 4 of the Church Order we read, "the imposition of hands by the officiating minister (and by any other ministers who are present) . . ."

In the Form we read, "Thereupon the minister . . . or another minister, if there are other ministers present, shall lay his hands upon his head . . ."

One might argue that these formulations do not *forbid* the participation of the elders in the laying on of hands. But it is clear that in the positive sense of these stipulations this right is given *only* to the ministers of the Word. The historical background of these stipulations also confirms this.

If the Church Order is to function well, we are to abide by it, also in its details. We cannot simply neglect sections of the Forms, even if we do not agree with them. This might lead to a practice of "Freebooting" not only on this point but also on other more significant matters.

If the stipulations agreed upon in our Church Order and Ecclesiastical Forms are not in accordance with Scripture, let us change them together but not bypass them privately. Otherwise we devalue our own agreements.

I am not a formalist. But Church history does teach us that where people do not adhere to commonly accepted rules, trouble brews.

There is enough trouble, as it is.

I promise that I shall not make it a habit to quote lengthy pieces from bulletins, but I do think that the above quoted matters are well worth to be considered very seriously.

From one more Ontario bulletin I should like to mention something. That is from the bulletin of the Ebenezer Church in Burlington. There I read a request for *Books of Praise*. Perhaps you'll say, "That is not the only Church asking for them. We all will be short in the very near future. And the definitive book will not appear before the fall of 1981, if Synod 1980 adopts what the committee puts before it."

However, the request is this time not for the Church itself. It is only a short quotation, and therefore I dare to give it in a medley in which we already had two rather lengthy ones.

The Lake of Bays Mission Church has asked us if we could get 100 copies of the *Book of Praise* for them. Some time ago we gave one copy to the minister, Rev. Sisel. After he and his consistory had carefully looked it over, they decided they liked our *Book of Praise* much better than their present hymnal, and would like to have enough copies to use in their church services and in their families. Since the *Books of Praise* are no longer in print and cannot be bought, we are asking anyone who has a spare copy they are willing to donate to contact Mr. John VanderBoom Sr.

I mention this not in the first place because I wish to pass on the request. That is also a reason, but it is not for that in the first place. I foresee that our own Churches will have a hard time to keep "things" (i.e. the *Book of Praise*) together and that there will not be all that many we can spare. Yet we should consider the request seriously.

My main reason is to share with you the joy that this work appears to bear more and wider fruit than we dared to hope. I do not think that it is common knowledge that there is a Church somewhere in California that bought a quantity about a year ago, and is using it. We know that the interest in our *Book of Praise* is growing, and we are thankful for that. Now there is another group that is interested in our work and its fruits. The Churches have laid out a considerable amount to have such a book, and we can only be very grateful when we receive some unexpected benefits and fruits in that this work is seen, recognized, and used. May many more follow.

Yes, and herewith we have exhausted the news from Ontario. Thus we proceed to Alberta. No, let me first stop over in Carman. From there I received a photocopy of the design of the new Church building. It was sent to me because it was noticed with compassion that yours truly was unable to visualize the building from the descriptions given in the bulletin. Having pity on my weakness and shortcoming, a brother was so kind as to send me a drawing. Now I have a good idea. The auditorium that is planned is almost identical to the one of the Toronto Church. That will give our Ontario readers a helpful hint. I may speak now from experience (I preached in Toronto last Sunday) and say that it is a very good set-up; pulpit in the corner and the pews arranged in a semi-circle (actually a quarter-circle, if that is a good expression; I never was all that good in math!) so that every one is as close to the pulpit as possible.

There will be no basement, if I understand it well. And, since the old building will have to make room for the new one, I foresee great difficulties in the future: there are practically no meeting rooms for the societies. I do not know whether the societies meet in private homes or in the school; if that is the case it will be alright. However, I speak again from experience, within a few years the complaints will be heard that we heard: there are no meeting rooms! More than a year ago we had to remedy the situation to the tune of some \$100,000.00! If a basement is planned, my fears are unfounded. Otherwise I foresee difficulties. As for the rest: apart from the fact that I still consider a seating capacity of 400 far too high, my congratulations.

And now we proceed to Alberta. There is not all that much news there either, but there was a remark in Edmonton's bulletin which made me reach for the *Clarion* issue of January 12, 1980. I discovered anew that writing is difficult,

but reading is sometimes even more difficult, as appears, from that remark.

First the lines which made me reach for that issue.

As far as the *City Guide's* new cover is concerned, we have had no complaints from any of our own members. Therefore it would seem that the change was relatively well accepted. (The lone critic was Rev. VanOene in News Medley — he could not find more than three gates. Granted, the fourth gate is hard to see, but it *is* there).

Dare to be a Daniel! I thought. But was I one? Was I a critic? I read again what I wrote and it is a fact that I wrote that I could see only three gates. Was that criticism? I mentioned that Jerusalem has twelve gates. Does that imply that I expected to see all twelve from a point in front of one of the corners? I pointed to the solidity and to the vastness of the city as seen from that point. It is so great that I could see only three gates. Is that criticism? Reading well is a great art, I thought.

We had better move on to the Valley.

Under the general news we are told that another session is planned for a possible second record with Psalm singing. The first record was well-received among our people and this gave the originators the impetus to try for a second record. It is the intention to have a few more songs with cantus firmus, I read. If anything comes of it, we will hear in due time.

As for the individual Churches: the Church at Abbotsford expects to have its organ ready by now, and I also read somewhere that our brother Dirk Jansz Zwart — who advised the Abbotsford Church regarding their organ — was expected to "initiate" it. I can well visualize the "precarious" position of Rev. VanderWel during a few Sundays, for we had the same when we remodelled the auditorium and raised the organ by about forty centimeters. It was held up by a little sturdier supports than the 2 x 4's of which my colleague speaks, but then: at that time there was nothing "hanging above his head" as yet.

Chilliwack will have to exercise patience, for it will be a while before they can take possession of the Church building which they purchased. Here is the message.

It appears that in all likelihood the possession date of the church on Chwk Central will now not be until sometime near the end of this year. Shared use has been discussed with them. This, too, does not seem possible seeing that they will need the church for quite a period of time each Sunday morning. So we can expect to be using our present facilities for the greater part of this year.

It is an ill wind that blows nobody good, I thought when reading that. Now the Congregation of Chilliwack has the opportunity to save some money for the rest of this year. That will make it a little easier on them once they take possession of the building. Yet it is a disappointment. Those last few weeks will last longest, and the closer the date of transfer comes, the more slowly the time seems to go. However, there is an end in sight now.

The last news item will be about the New Westminster Church. That is the last time I am allowed to use that name. It was decided to change the name to Surrey (Maranatha). That's how it is said in the *Church News* and that's how we shall have to do it. The Rev. VanDam writes the following about that:

The name New Westminster has now disappeared from the heading of our section of *Church News* and Surrey with the further specification, Maranatha, is in its place.

Understandably, there was some nostalgia and a reluctance with a few of us to let go of the name New Westminster. But, although there has been somewhat of a name change, the church remains the same. May we continue to strive to be faithful where the Lord has called us and gathered us, which now has more and more become Surrey.

I can well understand that there was some nostalgia. It is here with me, too. However, it is a fact now and we shall have to get used to it. After all, it is true that the majority of the Congregation lives in Surrey and that the Church building is there. We did see more changes of name in the past. The present Cloverdale Church was first called Aldergrove,

then Langley, and finally Cloverdale. Lethbridge became Coaldale, and so on. We have to be realistic and although it seems that part of our life has died with the disappearance of the name, development has to be taken into account.

One thing has to be underlined. That's what the Rev. VanDam writes about the Church remaining the same. After all, that is the thing that counts most. Change of name does not affect the character of the Church. On the other hand, keeping the same name does not guarantee that there will not be any deviation from the Truth.

And: it is still a Canadian Reformed Church.
May we all remain just that, and that in truth.

vO

Mededeling over Jongeren-Programma's Canada-Nederland

Ook in 1980 wordt aan Canadese jongeren de mogelijkheid geboden deel te nemen aan een van de stage-programma's in Nederland. Deze programma's zijn te beschouwen als de tegenhanger van de reeds vele jaren bestaande jongerenprogramma's voor Nederlanders naar Canada.

De gelegenheid voor jongeren in Canada (18-30 jaar) om gedurende een kortere of langere periode werkend in Nederland door te brengen lijkt vooral aantrekkelijk voor diegenen, wier ouders of grootouders uit dat land afkomstig zijn. Het zal hun interesseren zelf de stad of de streek te leren kennen, waar hun familie vandaan komt. Zij zullen doorgaans minder moeite

hebben met de Nederlandse taal. Zij hebben misschien nog familieleden in Nederland wonen, die eventueel met het vinden van huisvesting een behulpzame hand kunnen bieden.

Er is een korte stage-programma voor agrarische studenten, een lange stage voor jonge boeren, een beperkt programma voor vakantiewerk voor studenten en een lange stage-programma voor niet-agrariers, die werkervaring willen opdoen in het beroep waarvoor zij een opleiding hebben gevolgd.

Belangstellenden kunnen zich voor het verkrijgen van verdere informatie en/of aanmeldingsformulieren wenden tot:

a. Netherlands Vice-Consul for
Emigration Affairs
1 Dundas Street West,
Suite 2106, Box 21,
Toronto (Ont.) M5G 1Z3
(voor inwoners van Ontario en
Manitoba)

* * *

b. Netherlands Vice-Consul for
Emigration Affairs
P.O. Box 954, Station "A"
Vancouver (B.C.) V6C 2N7
(voor inwoners van B.C., Alberta,
Saskatchewan)

* * *

c. Netherlands Emigration Attache
275 Slater Street, 3rd floor,
Ottawa (Ont.) K1P 5H9
(voor inwoners van Atlantische
provincies en Quebec)

Olivier Van Noort-Medaille Toegekend aan J. Heersink te Burlington, Ont.

Het Nederlands Emigratie Fonds heeft met instemming van de Minister van Sociale Zaken besloten, de Olivier van Noort-medaille toe te kennen aan de heer J. Heersink te Burlington. Tijdens een plechtige bijeenkomst van de Netherlands Luncheon Club in Toronto op vrijdag 15 februari heeft Hr. Ms. Ambassadeur, mr. P.W. Jalink, de als legpenning uitgevoerde medaille aan de heer Heersink overhandigd.

De onderscheiding, die wordt toegekend aan personen die zich op bijzondere wijze verdienstelijk hebben gemaakt voor de emigratie van Nederlanders, werd voor de 21e maal sinds 1958 uitgereikt. Zij is genoemd naar de eerste Nederlander die, in de jaren 1598 - 1601, rond de wereld voer.

Met de Olivier van Noort-medaille heeft het Nederlands Emigratie Fonds zijn waardering tot uitdrukking gebracht voor het belangrijke emigratiewerk van de heer Heersink gedurende een lange periode. Zelf in 1951 geëmigreerd, werd deze al spoedig door de Reformed Church of America aangesteld voor plaatsingswerk en nazorg van voornamelijk Hervormde emigranten in Ontario. De heer Heersink was van de oprichting af ook voorzitter van de Canadian Netherlands Immigration Council. Hij is sedert lange tijd honorair vice-consul voor het Hamilton-district, een gebied waar zich zeer veel Nederlandse emigranten hebben gevestigd. Tallozen van hen zijn in de loop van de jaren door de heer Heersink met raad en daad terzijde gestaan. Van zijn onderscheiding met de Olivier van Noort-medaille zal dan ook door velen met instemming kennis worden genomen.

De Emigratie Attaché
IR. F. JENSMA

Church News

DECLINED:

the call to the Free Reformed Church,
Albany, Australia:

REV. W. HUIZINGA

of Hamilton, Ont.

OUR COVER

*Legislative grounds, Winnipeg,
Manitoba. (Photo courtesy Mani-
toba Government Travel.)*

* * *

FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of *Clarion* was mailed
from Winnipeg Central Post Of-
fice on March 1, 1980.

Letters-to-the-Editor — Cont'd.

The problem arises when other true believers do not want to join the communion of saints in a visible way in the Church of Christ. Are they not my brothers and sisters?

I wonder whether it would not be helpful to give a direct answer to the question. *All* true believers are our brothers and sisters. They are adopted by the Father as His children in Christ. I do not in any way want to minimize the sins involved in not seeking the total unity between believers which must find expression in our church memberships. However, I think we should not leave any cause for doubt about what we believe in this regard. We do maintain the Biblical teaching that all the children of God are our brothers and sisters.

Rev. Werkman asks:

Why is it always so much more important to talk about and praise the communion of saints in various different ways *outside* the Church while the *visible* communion around the Table of the Lord is ignored or minimized?

It is a legitimate question to ask why the responsibility to seek unity in one church federation is so often minimized. However is it *unimportant* to recognize the communion of saints we have with all true believers? Is it *not* important to praise the gracious working of the Holy Spirit? That we are all united in the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ is important and also visible. That we are all children of the Jerusalem above, having arrived at Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, is most important and visible in our life of faith in the mediator of the new covenant. Only when we start out from this unity already present can we urge each other to *maintain* the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace by putting away the sins in regard to our local church memberships and inter-church relations here on earth.

I would also like to add some comments to Rev. Werkman's statement, "The Church is not the total number of all believers." The Bible teaches that every believer in Christ has eternal life and is not condemned because God gave His only-begotten Son (John 3:16-18). Having believed, he is in Christ and sealed by the Holy Spirit as the result of God's electing love (Ephesians 1:13). The Bible also teaches that Christ gave Himself up for the Church to make her holy and blameless (Ephesians 5:25-27). I think that the connection between these two teachings concerning Christ's relationship to

the individual believer and his relationship to the church can be expressed in the statement, "The Church is composed of all true believers." Is it possible to be united to Christ the Head and not be a member of the body?

As to the meaning of the Belgic Confession, someone else will have to give a more definitive answer. I do not have the books available. The Dutch text says, "een heilige vergadering *der* ware Christgelovigen," (which I think should be understood as meaning "all." Rev. C. Vonk in *De Voorzeide Leer* (part IIIb, p. 112) points out that the Latin translation of Hommius reads, "omnium" (of all). He also refers to a book written by Guido de Brès called *Baston*, in which *de Brès* says, "qu'il n'y a qu'une seule Eglise, qui est la congregation de tous les eleus . . ." (That there is but one single Church, which is the congregation of all the elect . . .) (Vonc, p. 91). That is a Biblical and historical Reformed statement about the church. A list of Reformed teachers from Calvin to Greijdanus could be appealed to for support. However, this type of letter should be kept short.

If believers in other church federations have for some reason gotten the impression that there is a sectarian spirit in the teaching in the Canadian Reformed Churches, I think it is important to clear away any misunderstandings in that respect so that our call to true and complete unity may be altogether clear. I hope this letter serves that end.

Sincerely, in Christ,
RALPH BOERSEMA

* * *

Dear Mr. Editor,

Reading the Press Release of the decisions of the Classis Alberta-Manitoba and the Regional Synod of the West, (*Clarion*, January 12, 1980), I was left with a sense of dismay about decisions that have been made in the matter regarding the preaching of my colleague, Rev. D. DeJong. The events do not affect me directly, but I must say that I find decisions taken with regard to access to the pulpit supply of the Church of Neerlandia quite distressing. I wonder, too, whether the concerns of the Church of Neerlandia have been adequately dealt with.

I for one find it a bit disappointing how the ecclesiastical decisions up to this point seem to avoid what to my mind is still a pertinent question, and perhaps the heart of the matter. I

mean this: I cannot escape the conclusion that the Church of Neerlandia does have a valid point concerning the sermon in question on Lord's Day 21, when it states that the intent of the Catechism as well as Scripture does not apply to the exercise of the communion of saints with believers belonging to different church federations. When the Catechism states that "every one must know himself bound to employ his gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and salvation of the other members," I interpret that quite simply to mean that I must use my gifts for the growth and upbuilding of everyone in the congregation, and for the upbuilding of all those of whom I can be certain that they share in the blessings of Christ. As I read it, therefore, the application of the Lord's Day cannot cross "denominational" lines unless there is a clear testimony that another given church federation seeks to live out of the truth of the Scriptures.

In other words, while there may be many other believers in other church federations, and while I may even be acquainted with many of them, I do not believe that I may exercise the communion of saints with them, for the simple reason that I am not in a position to judge whether they belong to Christ or not. I may feel they do, but I cannot go by that. They may well be members of the Church *in the eyes of God*, but as long as there is no clear testimony of that in word and deed, I find it difficult to jump to the conclusion that according to Lord's Day 21 I must see them as members of the Church through my eyes, i.e., acknowledge that they are members of the Church *in the eyes of men*. If this is the application of Lord's Day 21, we are stuck with the doctrine of the plurality of the Church.

Now I do not deny that the sermon in question has other points which clearly state that my colleague does not believe in the theory of the plurality of the Church. And I also like to say openly that I do not support any rash charges against him. Yet I write to express my concern for the matter. My point is that there is ambiguity here, particularly in the conclusion of the sermon (as quoted on p. 18). I believe that some discussion of the point of the communion of saints in *Clarion* may contribute to bringing this matter to a good Christian solution.

Yours in Christ,
J. DEJONG

PRESS RELEASE

of the Board Meeting of the Canadian Reformed High School Association in Ontario, held on February 18, 1980.

1. The chairman, br. J. Schutten, opened with the singing of Psalm 42:1 and 5, and the reading of Malachi 4; after which he led in prayer. Br. H. Nobel, the new delegate from Hamilton was welcomed.

2. The agenda was proposed and adopted.

3. *Incoming mail:* (1) Letter from br. Bakker in Holland with another 230 guilders from the drive in The Netherlands. An answer and thank you was prepared and read by the secretary. (2) Several letters expressing opposition to, or worry about, the decision of the Board to allow a smoking corner were read. The receipt of the letters has been acknowledged and the Board established a committee of Board and Staff, and possibly students, to work on the problem and, hopefully, to resolve it.

4. *Principal's Report:* (1) One student left school, leaving an enrollment of 258. (2) The two-year program is functioning at Guido. (3) The smoking corner has been instituted. (4) The report cards have gone out. (5) Two successful assemblies with speakers Dr. P. Bom (to Grade 12 history students only) and br. T. Zietsma were held on the topic of politics.

5. *Education Committee:* The Board appointed the following to the staff: (1) (Mrs.) Ruth Meerveld, as a part-time teacher, and (2) Miss Konnie VanWeerden as teacher of math and physical education. Miss Metzlar was granted a one year leave of absence to pursue her studies.

The Education Committee was granted a change in the method of classroom visits. A schedule will be provided to the Board in the event that a Board member wishes to accompany them.

6. *Treasurer's Report:* The Board decided that because of the bank loan on which we pay about \$18,000 annual interest, a drive should be instituted in each congregation in a concentrated effort to reduce or eliminate the loan. Further details will be forthcoming. Enrollment figures are to be provided by the various locals as soon as possible.

7. The date for the Spring Membership Meeting was set for April 11,

1980, at the school. Members are asked to keep this date open. An agenda will be forthcoming.

8. After the singing of Psalm 46:1 and 5, br. P. Schoon led in prayer, following which the chairman adjourned the meeting.

For the Board,
L. ROZEMA

* * *

PRESS RELEASE

of Classis Ontario-North of February 7 and 13, 1980.

1. On behalf of the convening Church of Ottawa its Counsellor, the Rev. VanOene calls the meeting to order. He requests to sing Psalm 122:3, reads Psalm 122, and leads in prayer.

2. The brethren from Orangeville examine the credentials. All Churches being lawfully represented, Classis is constituted: Rev. Mulder is chairman, Rev. Van Beveren clerk, and Rev. VanOene assessor.

3. The chairman mentions various facts and occurrences from the past months affecting the Churches of this classical area.

4. The agenda is established.

5. The Church at Burlington East asks advice re the date of the Regional Synod 1980. Classis advises that Church to convene the Regional Synod in the latter part of May or the beginning of June. In connection with this, the next Classis will have to consider whether to let the appointments to the Regional Synod, made by Classis September 1979, stand or to make new appointments.

6. The Church at Burlington West requests Classis to postpone the March Classis for one week. As date for the next Classis is set March 20, 1980.

7. A letter from a brother of Burlington West is read in closed session. Classis will send an answer to this letter-of-appeal.

8. A letter-of-appeal from a brother in Orangeville is read.

9. Classis adjourns for lunch.

10. After lunch Psalm 25:2 is sung, and rollcall held.

11. Discussion of the letter mentioned under 8 is continued; another letter-of-appeal concerning the same matter is also read.

12. Classis appoints a committee to draw up an answer. After supper, the answer prepared by this committee is adopted and will be sent.

The brethren from Ottawa receive permission to leave.

13. A committee is appointed to prepare an answer to the second letter-of-appeal mentioned under 11.

14. A third letter-of-appeal from Orangeville is read and discussed.

15. Classis is adjourned until February 13, 1980, at 9:00 a.m. in Toronto, after Psalm 25:4 and 5 have been sung and Rev. Mulder has led in thanksgiving.

16. Classis is reopened on Wednesday, February 13, 1980, at 9:00 a.m. Psalm 87:1, 4, and 5 are sung and Ephesians 4:1-16 and 25-end are read. The chairman then leads in prayer.

17. The committee mentioned under 13 reports. Its advice is adopted.

18. A fourth appeal from Orangeville is read and discussed. An answer has been drafted and is adopted.

19. Classis also deals with a draft-reply to the appeal mentioned under 14.

20. After intermission for lunch Psalm 107:1 and 2 are sung, rollcall is held, and the discussion continued.

21. After the supper-break Hymn 46:2 and 3 are sung. The discussion is continued and an answer to the appeal is adopted.

22. Church visitors report on a visit brought to the Church at Orangeville.

23. Question Period ad art. 41 is held. The Churches at Orangeville and Ottawa make use of the opportunity to ask for advice.

24. Personal question period is held.

25. Next Classis will be held March 20, 1980, at 9:00 a.m. Convening Church: the Church at Toronto. Moderamen: Rev. VanOene chairman, Rev. Mulder clerk, and Rev. Van Beveren assessor.

26. For the expected Colloquium with the Rev. W. Pouwelse the brethren Mulder and VanOene are appointed. The discussion will last approximately 50 minutes.

27. No censure ad art. 43 is deemed needed.

28. The Acts are read and adopted.

The Press Release is read and approved.

29. The chairman speaks a few closing words. We sing Hymn 46:5. Rev. VanOene leads in thanksgiving.

30. Classis is adjourned at 1:10 a.m., Thursday, February 14, 1980.

By order of Classis,
W.W.J. VanOene, assessor i.t.

Word Search — Puzzle No. 62

PSALMS

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

abide	enemies	glad	Israel	majestic	preserve	sing	
abounding	enthroned	glory		marvelous	purge	sojourn	
amen	equity	gracious	Jerusalem	melody		statute	
answers	establish		joy	merciful	recount	steadfast	
ascribe	everlasting	habitation	joyful	mercy	refuge	strength	
	exalted	hear	justice		rejoice	supplication	
blessed	extol	hear		name	remember		
blot		heart	keeper		right	testimonies	
	faithful	heavens	knowledge	offer	righteousness	trust	
covenant	footstool	heed		ordinances	rock		wonderful
cry	for ever	help	lamp			understanding	wonders
	forgiving	high	light	path	salvation	unsearchable	
David	fortress	holy	love	patiently	save	upholds	Zion
dominion	founded	hyssop	lyre	praise	shelter		
				prayer	shepherd	victory	
ear	generations	iniquities	magnify	precepts	shield	vindicate	W.DIEK

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

It's still a little early, but Busy Beaver *Gwen Van Esch* has some very good ideas in her poem about;

SPRING

Every year will come the spring,
Flowers and trees it will bring.
It may come early, it may come late,
The weather may be good, or maybe not so great.
But any way it comes,
I still like the spring!

Don't you agree, Busy Beavers?
Hope you all liked Gwen's poem as much as I did.
It will get us in the mood for spring!

Let's have an EARLY BIRD CONTEST, Busy Beavers!
Here's what you do.

Be on the look-out for that first robin!

Listen for it. Look for it. (Look for other signs of spring, too, while you're at it, of course.) When you SEE with your own eyes that very first robin, grab a postcard and write on it: "I saw my first robin at _____ o'clock today."

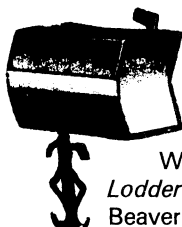
Mail the card THAT day to:

Aunt Betty
Box 54,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7

Be good bird watchers! And good detectives!

Busy Beaver *Gwen Van Esch* has one more poem to share with you. I didn't want to save it. I thought you should see and read it right away!

JOY
Joy
Laughter, fun,
Playing, being friends,
Knowing that God cares,
Love.



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Theodore Lodder*. We hope you'll really enjoy being a Busy Beaver and joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. I see you're already a real Busy Beaver making a puzzle for us. Thanks, Theodore. Will you write and tell me your birthday, please. Then we can include your name in the birthday list!

And a big welcome to you, too, *Annette Haan*. We are happy to have you join us. I'm glad you like Our Little Magazine. Do you practise on the organ every day, Annette? Bye for now.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Les Haan*. We hope you, too, will like being a Busy Beaver and joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Will you write and tell us something about yourself, Les?

Thank you for the lovely poems, *Gwen Van Esch*. Our last Poetry Contest was finished, but we'll have one again sometime soon, hopefully. Yes, I hope you'll write and tell us when something interesting happens to you. You don't have to wait till then, though! We always enjoy your letters. Or maybe you have a puzzle or some riddles (or a poem!) to share. Did you receive your membership card already, Gwen?

How did you like being bridesmaid, *Cynthia Eenkhoorn*? Did you have a very nice day on your sister's wedding day? Maybe you'll write and tell us what it's like being a junior bridesmaid? Thanks for the poem and the quiz, Cynthia. Bye for now.

Do you help gather all the eggs the hens lay, *Plony Hof-sink*? Too bad you didn't get to see the moose. Are you used to hearing the coyotes howl, Plony? And did you have a good time playing in the snow?

Congratulations on your new niece, *Darlene Lodder*. She has a very pretty name, doesn't she? Thanks for the word search puzzle, Darlene. Bye for now. Write again soon.

Hello *Diane Smith*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thanks for your letter and quiz and poem. I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy them! Bye for now.

Thank you for the riddles and for your letter, *Gerrilynn Huizinga*. I think you must have lots of fun looking after your rabbits. Do the little ones stay small very long? Also thanks for your contribution to our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT, Gerrilynn.

I guess you were all very happy to see your Dad and Mom come back from their trip to Holland, *Anne-Marie Jonker*. Did they have lots of stories to tell and pictures and souvenirs to show? Thanks very much for your funny poem and quiz, Anne-Marie.

Hello, *Francine Medemblik*. Thank you for the riddles. You had a good idea for a contest, Francine. We'll do that sometime. Did you enter the Finish-the-story Contest we started last time? Yes, I'm sorry, you were too late for the Poetry Contest, Francine. Try again next time!

QUIZ TIME

Busy Beaver *Anne-Marie Jonker* has a go-together poem and quiz. Have lots of fun!

The Rabkey

He hops up and down,
He is very brown.
He swings from a tree,
and gets stung by a bee.

So you see,
why he is brown
and hops up and down,
Swings from a tree,
Gets stung by a bee.
I hope you understand,
Like me.