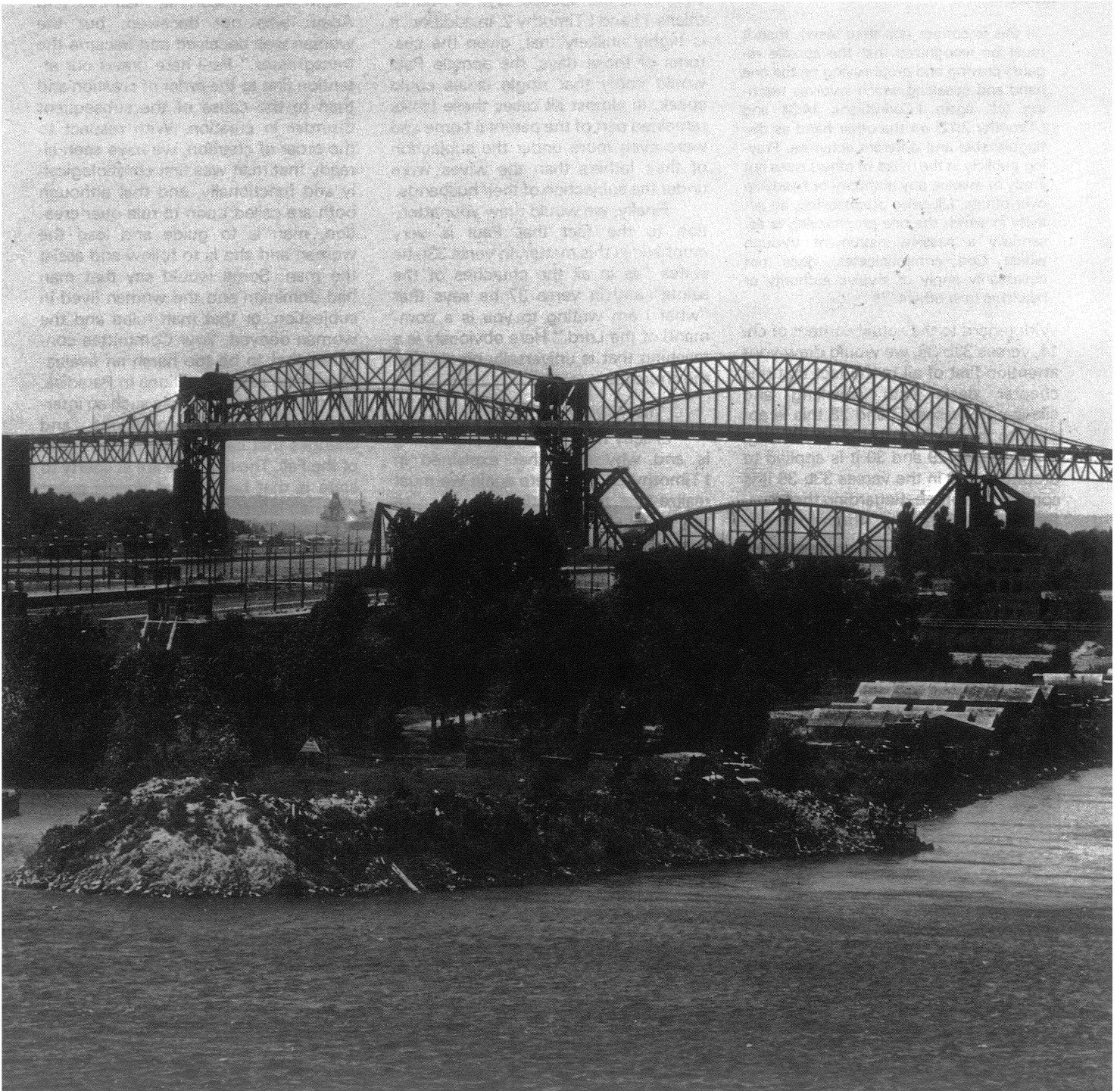


Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Vol. 29, No. 11

May 31, 1980



Tentative Report on the Matter of Women's Voting Rights⁽³⁾

Your Committee agrees that each of the above-mentioned interpretations has its merits; however, our preference lies with the third view. G.W. Knight III sums up in an admirable way our reasons for leaning towards this interpretation;

"If this is correct (the third view), then it must be recognized that the apostle regards praying and prophesying on the one hand and speaking which involves teaching (cf. again I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12) on the other hand as distinguishable and different activities. Praying publicly in the midst of others does not imply or involve any authority or headship over others. Likewise prophesying, an activity in which the one prophesying is essentially a passive instrument through which God communicates, does not necessarily imply or involve authority or headship over others."²⁸

With regard to the actual content of ch. 14, verses 33b-36, we would draw your attention first of all to the fact that this chapter deals with speaking and silence. In verses 27 and 28 this is applied to the matter of tongue speaking, in the verses 29 and 30 it is applied to prophecy and in the verses 33b-36 it is applied to women. Regarding the latter, the apostle commands them to "keep silence in the churches (v. 34) and adds that "they are not permitted to speak" (v. 35). The expression "to speak" is used here in connection with the worship services and it implies that women are not allowed to speak in the sense of teaching and that they are not allowed to ask all kinds of questions and to conduct themselves in the services as if they had no husband. To behave in such a way is a violation of "the law" (v. 34), which means the Scriptures. For a woman to reject the creation order of Genesis 2 (cf. I Timothy 2:11ff.; I Cor. 11:1ff.) is "shameful" (v. 35).

Still, there are some commentators who regard I Corinthians 14 as referring to married women only.²⁹ They contend that in Corinth the married ladies were acting improperly in the worship services and generally flaunting the Scriptural teaching concerning marriage and submission. As a

result, Paul here tells them to be silent and "to ask their husbands at home" (v. 35). As for single ladies, they were not bound by these verses.

Such a view, however, has its difficulties, especially if it is compared with what the apostle says in I Corinthians 11 and I Timothy 2. In addition, it is highly unlikely that, given the customs of those days, the apostle Paul would imply that single ladies could speak. In almost all cases these ladies remained part of the parental home and were even more under the subjection of their fathers than the wives were under the subjection of their husbands.

Finally, we would draw your attention to the fact that Paul is very emphatic in this matter. In verse 33b he states "as in all the churches of the saints" and in verse 37 he says that "what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord." Here obviously is a teaching that is universally binding on the churches.

(iv) *I Timothy 2:11-15*

Exactly how binding this teaching is and why is further explained in I Timothy 2:11-15. Here again we must realize that the apostle is referring to the church: her offices and their activities in particular (cf. I. Timothy 3:14, 15). He states that a woman is to learn in "silence with all submissiveness" (v. 11) and adds "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent (v. 12). Note, he very specifically forbids a woman to teach or to have dominion.³⁰ In stating this the apostle does not mean to imply that a woman is never allowed to teach a man or a male-child, but that within the church she must not teach or have authority over men.³¹

Once more the view is often presented here that Paul is referring only to married women. *They* are not allowed to teach or to have authority in the church. Yet it has to be said that there is no evidence which proves that the terms used here are meant to be restricted. In fact the verses 8-10 give the impression that the injunction of Paul in verse 11 and following is

general and not particular. The command has to do not only with those in the married state but with maleness and femaleness.³²

The basis for such a command is explained in the verses 13 and 14, "for Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became the transgressor." Paul here draws our attention first to the order of creation and then to the cause of the subsequent disorder in creation. With respect to the order of creation, we have seen already that man was first chronologically and functionally, and that although both are called upon to rule over creation, man is to guide and lead the woman and she is to follow and assist the man. Some would say that man had dominion and the woman lived in subjection, or that man ruled and the woman obeyed. Your Committee considers that to be too harsh an evaluation of the ideal conditions in Paradise. It is more correct to apply such an interpretation to the conditions and changes that came about as the result of the Fall. The most we are at liberty to state is that before that drastic event the man led and the woman followed. This was a harmonious relationship.

Nevertheless, it is a sad fact of history that the woman did not remain faithful to her God and to the role that He ordained for her. In listening to the Devil and in eating of the tree, she led and the man followed. Their roles were reversed and disaster resulted. If Eve had remained obedient, she would not have become the leading participant in that great disaster. But she was. And the lesson? Let the woman fulfill her original role and calling in life which is not to rule over the man but to be a help-meet to man in a spirit of "faith and love and holiness, with modesty" (v. 15).

D. *Deaconesses*

(i) *Romans 16:1, 2*

In the New Testament there are also a number of direct and indirect references which seem to indicate that women may be active in the church as

deaconesses. Romans 16:1, 2 is one of these references. There it makes mention of "our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae" (v. 1). Upon reading this some immediately conclude that since Phoebe was a deaconess this office is open to women. However, your Committee would express the opinion that it is necessary to be somewhat cautious on this point. Phoebe is here called a *diakonos* (literally — servant) of the church at Cenchreae. This word is spelled in the Greek as a masculine form meaning "deacon" in the official sense, or "servant" in the general sense. Yet *diakonos* is not always a masculine noun. It is also a feminine noun even though it is spelled exactly like the other more common masculine noun. In other words, *diakonos* could mean simply that Phoebe was a servant of the church at Cenchreae and not necessarily a church deacon.³³

(ii) *Philippians 4:2, 3*

Another alleged reference to deaconesses is said to be in Philippians 4:2, 3, albeit an indirect one. There we read that Euodia and Syntyche worked side by side with Paul "in the gospel." It would seem that the labour of these ladies had some official character to it, but as to precisely what they did and what their position was in the church, we cannot say.

(iii) *1 Timothy 3:11*

We proceed next to 1 Timothy 3:11 where we find women mentioned in the middle of a passage that sets forth the qualifications of deacons. Some maintain that this verse addresses itself to female deacons.³⁴ But the word used for "women" can also be translated "wives." If that interpretation is followed, namely that the wives of deacons are referred to here, then the passage makes sense according to the understanding of it that has prevailed for generations. Undoubtedly the last word has not been spoken on this verse.

(iv) *1 Timothy 5:9-16 (cf. Titus 2:3-5).*

Finally, we come to 1 Timothy 5:9-16 which passage suggests, along with Titus 2:3-5, that certain women did have an official position in the church. These widows were "enrolled" (v. 9) and may have received financial support. Yet it is by no means clear that they held a church office or that they were involved in a ruling or teaching capacity.

In summary, even if a case could be made for the fact that women served as deaconesses in the New Testament church, it would not directly infringe on the Scriptural injunctions that women may not teach or rule in the church. The office of deacon, as Scripture describes it, is quite obviously a *servicing office* and not a ruling office.

In bringing this part of our treatment to a close, your Committee states that it is in full agreement with the following positive statement regarding the role of women in the church.

"The exclusion of women from the ruling and teaching offices and functions in the church does not mean that woman has no place of service in the church. The teaching and ruling offices and functions are not the only gifts, functions, or services in the church. Just as in marriage and the family, so also in the church the activities and functions of women are necessary and important. No part of the body of Christ (especially men, in this case) may say of another part 'I have no need of you' (1 Cor. 12:21). And no part of the body of Christ (especially women, in this case) may say that because they are not occupying the office or performing the function of a leader, they are not a significant part of the body (cf. 1 Cor. 12:14-20). The truth of God through the apostle Paul is exceedingly important in our context: 'But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired' (1 Cor. 12:18).

The New Testament tells of women being involved in the ministry and the life of the church in various ways, but always in ways other than the teaching-ruling offices and functions. References to women granting Jesus assistance in His ministry and to His interaction with them are well-known and need no documentation. It is certainly noteworthy that women were present at the cross and empty tomb and that women were the first to announce the resurrection. A similar type of involvement and assistance to this is in view when the apostle Paul designates certain women as those 'who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel' and as 'fellow-workers' (Phil. 4:3). In Titus 2:3ff. Paul urges the older women to teach, within the church, the younger women, to exhort 'the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be dishonoured.' (Titus 2:4-5). Older widows are to be enrolled in a special order in the church, apparently both to serve (cf. v. 13) and to receive care and remuneration; they are to be enrolled on the basis of their previous service in the church (1 Tim. 5:9ff., esp. v. 10). But at the same time Paul opposes such an order for younger widows, preferring that they re-


turn to the condition which expresses their basic inclination and need — namely, the marital state and its privileges and responsibilities. (Men and women who do not have the inclination and need to be married — namely, those who have a gift from God to be single — he encourages to be single as an avenue of service but not as a condition for church office) (cf. 1 Cor. 7)."³⁵

VIII. *Summing up thus far*

On the basis of the above we come now to the following conclusions:

- a) In the Genesis 1 and 2 account, although both are involved, man stands out as the leading figure in fulfilling the creation mandate and the woman is presented as the one who helps, supports and makes it possible for him to meet

Continued on page 250.



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press review

MOVIES AND MATURITY I

The reader may know that for quite a long time already *The Banner* has been giving reviews of movies that are shown in theaters. This is done once a month. Not everybody in the Christian Reformed Church is happy with it. That was shown by Dr. L. DeKoster, the editor, in an editorial in the April 18, 1980, issue, in which such a movie review again appeared. He writes that he will pay tribute to the maturity of the readers. That means he will "honor and acknowledge the freedom" which the readers provide to *The Banner* Staff and Publication Committee "for being true — as best we can — to our commitments as we try to serve our Lord's Church." Thus the readers of *The Banner* are thanked for the liberty which they gave to the writers and editors for writing and taking up what appeared in this magazine, even though (often) there was disagreement. We read:

As committee and Staff we all believe that one of the severest tests we have laid upon your charity and wisdom is the Crosscurrents movie review column. And why this is so we all understand.

For many years the Church raised her youth on the no "shows," no cards, and no dancing principle. This principle defined for many of us the stern path of virtue running alongside the broad-way of worldliness.

And those who did seek the pleasures of the world suffered guilt, the author adds. Further:

Synod of 1928 banned the "three sins" officially from the life of the Church. For forty years it was so, even though more and more youth did slip off to the theater; and television . . . made theaters for the adults out of their living rooms.

Came the day, though, when Synod of 1966 found greater defect in a blanket ban on movies than it did in the film itself. In a report published separately as "Church and Film Arts," Synod even called upon CRC publications to consider taking an active hand in schooling the mind of the Church to appropriate encounter with the powerful and influential medium of the film.

Let us be aware of the fact that there is a great difference between a film for educational purposes and even entertainment in films about nature and

nations and the like, and the worldly entertainment movies of the theater, etc. Now we are further told that since 1974 the discussions about giving reviews of films shown in the theaters have not ceased. And then we read:

Why all this? Let me pose a counter question: how live in our world, especially when one is young and entertainment has high priority, and not encounter the film? Whether it comes via the "soap opera," or the late show, or in the theater, the movie is ever at our doorstep. If, as the philosopher says, "the unexamined life is not worth the living," it is equally true that unexamined entertainment (however innocent or otherwise it may at first appear) poses threats to the soul.

The author expresses himself very carefully. If that one statement about "an unexamined life as not being worth the living" is true, the other statement about "the danger for the soul in unexamined entertainment" is certainly not less true. However, in my opinion, the author should have said: the fear of the LORD is the beginning of all wisdom; and such a statement about an unexamined life not being worth the living is humanistic and does not come from the Spirit of God. Besides, if unexamined entertainment poses a threat to the soul, is that entertainment when examined, no longer such a threat? Now Dr. DeKoster will say: No, we do not say that. That is precisely why we give reviews of the movies, so that we can tell people which movies are bad and form such a threat. For we read further:

We do not undertake to advise movie attendance. That is up to you, and especially to parents in relation with their children. We do not approve the objectionable. We review those films which some members of the CRC, and their children, are likely to consider seeing. For such readers our reviewers simply mean to say, from their Christian perspective (not necessarily to be found in the secular press): "If you go, this in brief *characterizes* what you will be exposed to Make the mature choice, as Christians, for yourself, or with your children." No doubt so you mean to do.

The author, then, speaks about "Turn-itus," the "turn-the-page" habit when readers do not like, or do not want to read, a certain article or column. This "Turn-itus" is also a sign of maturity, he

says, while others are not content with "Turn-itus" but want the reviewing of films out. But it is not good to give in to this pressure and have a paper as some like it, while there is "the suggestion of Synod to 'review' films." Synod also appoints the editor.

Now the Periodicals Committee has developed a "Movie Review Policy," which was adopted by the Board of Publications, and which is presented to the readers in the editorial from which I quote here. Dr. DeKoster writes, "The World of 1980 is not the world of 1928! And the world of 1928 [with a ban on movies, J.G.] will never come back again. If we do not recognize that in *The Banner*, only we — not the world — will be hurt!"

From that "Policy Statement on the Publication of Movie Reviews" I quote:

Background

1. Synod of 1966 declared: "All of this indicates the need for film critique in the Reformed community There is urgent need for providing guidance and information and for the development of good Christian taste in these matters (Acts, 1966, p. 341).

2. Synod of 1976 approved a statement of purpose for *The Banner* which includes the following: "To stimulate our membership to serious reflection upon the content of the Christian faith as it relates to our surrounding culture . . ." *Agenda*, 1976, p. 139).

Basic Principles

1. Film making is a morally acceptable enterprise which significantly reflects and shapes the culture of a people.

2. Whatever lawful human endeavour shapes the culture of a people is in principle open to the Christian and should either be entirely claimed for Christ or selectively utilized to advance His cause.

3. Although there is a deep-seated antithesis between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the World, a meaningful distinction may be made between Christian, non-Christian, and anti-Christian films and plays.

4. Anti-Christian films which contravene the Gospel, undermine authentic human values, and offend Christian sensibilities, should be denounced.

5. Non-Christian films are by the common grace of God often serviceable to the ends of God's Kingdom.

6. Since good and evil are mixed in every cultural product, the Christian should exercise enlightened discrimination in the use of these products.

7. Since discrimination must be required and demands constant cultivation, such training and nurture should be provided as shall enable *Banner* readers increasingly to make a Christian assessment of film offerings.

After these *Basic Principles* some *Derived Guidelines* follow. But they have to wait till a next time. First, I would like to give comment on these *Basic Principles*. But before I do this, it may be beneficial to make clarifying distinction and have a look at the history.

As for the clarifying distinction, I have pointed it out above already, but it needs some elaboration. We do not speak here about "film making" in general. There are films made for scientific research in many fields. There are films made about historic events. There are films made to show the beauty of what God has created, flowers, trees, mountains, oceans, and so on. But these kinds of film making are not meant here. We have to do, in this article, with the making of those films which are called movies and which are shown in theaters. We can also call them "play films."

And it is true that film making is a modern enterprise "which significantly reflects and shapes the culture of people today." But is it really a "morally acceptable enterprise" that "should either be entirely claimed for Christ or selectively utilized to advance His cause"? Let us see.

I would like to state that the movie, or play film, basically is not something new under the sun. For it is a play which is put on film, with the result that people who want to see that play do not have to go to the actors themselves. In the film the actors come to the public with their play. What is new is not the play and the acting; what is new is only the film of modern technology, and the fact that the play has been adapted to the film.

Now it is clear that plays or drama is an old phenomenon. The most original form has to do with the cult in a heathen sanctuary around the altar for the pagan gods. Priests performed "plays" in which they enacted old religious myths, identifying themselves with the gods or spirits, and in which they brought about the "blessings" of the gods in a magic way. I learned this from an interesting dissertation of Dr. Z. Rittersma, principal of the Reformed Teachers' College in Amersfoort.¹ Much of the data which follows here is from this book, although they can also be found, at least to some extent, in a good encyclopedia.

Around 500 B.C., in Greece, dialogue was introduced into the plays at the festivals for the honour of the Greek god Dionysius. That is the begin-

ning of all modern, western drama and theater. Drama contests were organized.

It is remarkable that neither the Old Testament nor the New mentions anything about such a cult play or cult drama, not even for educational purposes, at the sanctuary of the Lord, or in the New Testament worship service. In the commandments of God about the ways in which His people have to worship and serve Him, such a drama or play has no place. The task of the priest is to bring the sacrifices and to teach the people the Word of the LORD. And bringing sacrifices is not a cult-play at all, in which certain myths are re-enacted. As foreshadow of the great sacrifice of Christ these sacrifices

bring reconciliation according to the promise of God. And when Israel celebrates the Passover feast, this also is not a cult play, but a memorial ceremony as a reminder of what God has done at the beginning of Israel's existence and as a promise of what God will do through the great and true Lamb of God. The Old and the New Testaments are clearly against such cult-plays as forms of worship or teaching. Worshipping the LORD is clearly a matter of *listening* to His Word and *obeying* it. We see that in Deuteronomy 4 and in many other places.

Dr. Rittersma writes that with the Romans the theater changed. The Greeks were able to listen; they liked long dialogues. But the Romans were

PSALM 139

1. O LORD my God, Thou searchest me,
My heart and mind are known to Thee!
No things are hidden from Thy eyes
When I sit down and when I rise,
And from afar Thou art discerning
My thoughts and hopes, my secret yearning.
2. Thou knowest all and thou dost trace
My journey and my resting-place.
The ways I go are clear to Thee,
And all my doings Thou dost see.
A silent tongue is still revealing
The inmost thoughts I am concealing.
3. Thou art before me and behind
And judgest all the things I mind;
Upon me Thou has laid Thy hand.
O LORD, how could I understand
Thy wondrous knowledge or explain it,
So high that I cannot attain it!
13. Search me, o God and know my heart,
See if I from Thy ways depart.
Try me and judge my inmost thought,
And let me by Thy Word be taught.
Keep me from wicked ways and heed me,
In everlasting ways do lead me.

impatient; they wanted to see action. (Does the habit of watching T.V. have something to do with the loss of ability to listen to sermons that are not too short? Does T.V. watching decrease the attention span?) The theater was no longer really a matter of cult either. And especially during the time of the Roman empire the theater became a place of entertainment in which "real" life was shown. "The theater was a powerful medium to influence and entertain large crowds." The emperors used this medium to buy the favours of those crowds for their own purposes. "At festival days with their theater plays, which were instituted by the emperors, the public streamed to the theaters all over the empire. The Christian believers saw all this with envious eyes. It was no wonder that a large number of converted Christians attended the performances. The problem of the antithesis of Church and world, the ancient theater versus Christian worship, arose as large as life. Reactions of the Church against the more and more deteriorating theater were bound to come. A strong stand was taken against the corrupt morals in the plays. Church discipline was exercised on those who took part in these plays and neglected the worship services. The Synods of Arles (314), Carthago (397), and the writings of Church Fathers like Cyprian and Tertullian spoke a clear message. Their pronouncements have served, for centuries, in the struggle of the church against the theater."²

Dr. F. Van der Meer writes in his book about Augustine as pastor: "Augustine . . . becomes indignant when he thinks of the vulgar theater. When he names the three concupiscences, when he deals with unchastity and the putting of a stumbling block on the way of the little ones, then he always points to the theater. And it did not deserve any better; it was the purest Venus temple; one could not tell without blushing what one saw there . . ."³ And, quoting from what Augustine said to those who prepared for the baptism of adults and confession, the catechumens, he gives the following admonition: "If they were bearing the cross in their heart, they would stay away from it" (= the theater, J.G.).⁴ Also in 1210, 1227, 1293, and 1316 the Church has emphatically forbidden to be entertained by the profane theater.⁵

From an article in the "*Christelijke Encyclopedie*" on the "*Fight against*

the Theater" I derived the following: The Roman Catholic Church of the 16th and the 17th century "declared many a time that theater and a Christian life were incompatible." And "In the Protestant countries the fight against the theater was fierce in the 16th and 17th century, with the aim to get it to be prohibited. Only the school drama was spared, generally. The resistance is strongest with the Calvinists and the Puritans." England, France, and Geneva are mentioned, as well as The Netherlands. Here "the Synods had dealt with this problem already in the 16th century in a negative way (Dordrecht 1578); in the 17th century we can speak of a Reformed tradition in the Dutch Republic, of fighting

against the theater, which was expressed in warnings and prohibitions at Synods, Classes, and Consistories, and also in writings of theologians." And in the 19th century Dr. Abraham Kuyper and others took up the struggle against the theater again.⁶ And although it is not stated here, I am convinced that the Churches of the Secession did exactly the same as those of the Doleantie.

Our conclusion must be that so far the history shows that the Church, throughout the ages, has fought against the theater. That is also clearly the case with Reformed Churches. But there is more to say. That will come next time, D.V.

J. GEERTSEMA

WOMEN'S VOTING RIGHTS — *Continued.*

- his objectives. She must look to him for leadership; he must look to her for support.
- b) Although there is a functional and chronological difference between man and woman, they are of equal worth since both male and female are made in the image of God.
 - c) As the result of the Fall, the harmonious relationship between man and woman is destroyed and the Lord proclaims that the husband shall rule and the wife shall obey.
 - d) In the Old Testament this rulership of husband (man) over wife (woman) is evident in marriage and in the church.
 - e) Our Lord Jesus upholds the worth and the dignity of the woman during His entire ministry on earth, as opposed to the established demeaning tradition upheld by the scribes and Pharisees.
 - f) As a result of our Lord's redemptive work all racial, social and sexual distinctions, as they bear on a believer's standing with God, are eliminated. All believers are equal before the Lord.
 - g) In the New Testament there is, however, a clear prohibition on women being involved in a ruling or official teaching capacity in the church. This prohibition does not rest on Pauline prejudices but on the creation account of Genesis 1-3.
 - h) In the Scriptures we have no indication that voting, as we know it today, was used to determine

which nominee was the most able to serve. Therefore we have no reason to conclude that women participated directly in the election process by using either voice vote, secret ballot, lot, or some other means. Those passages in the book of Acts which indicate that the congregation was directly involved in the process of selection do not reveal how this was done.

- i) There is no Scripture passage that speaks directly to the subject under investigation, namely may women vote in the church or not.

²⁸Knight, p. 46. This preference is to some extent a foregone conclusion, especially if the reader has taken note of what has been said already regarding Old Testament prophetesses and Acts 2.

²⁹cf. K. Deddens, *De Dienst Van De Vrouw in De Kerk* (Groningen; De Vuurbaak) 1978, p. 45, 46.

³⁰The Greek word for "authority" is *authentein* which means to "have authority . . . over someone" (cf. W. Bauer, W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 4th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1957, p. 120.

³¹Knight, p. 30.

³²Knight, p. 30, 31.

³³J.J. Mitchell, "Was Phoebe a Deacon — Yes?", *The Presbyterian Guardian*, Vol. 42, No. 8 (October 1973), p. 120-121. Also by the same author "Was Phoebe a Deacon — No?", *The Presbyterian Guardian*, Vol. 42, No. 9 (November 1973), p. 134-135.

³⁴Cf. R.M. Lewis, "The 'Women' of I Timothy 3:11," *Bibliothecae sacrae*, Vol. 136, No. 542 (April-June 1979), p. 167ff.

³⁵Knight, p. 47-48.

The Beauty of Reformed Liturgy ³

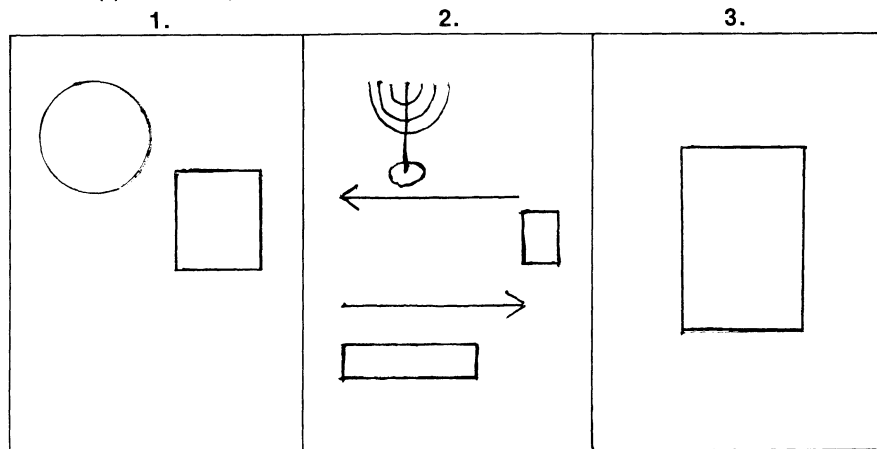
The Heavenly Pattern of Liturgy

The second article, having attempted to describe the unique character of Reformed liturgy as covenantal liturgy, came to the conclusion that sound biblical interpretation demands a redemptive-historical approach in the matter of liturgy. Also in this respect the New Testament must be understood in the light of the Old.

The Heavenly Pattern of Liturgy

Moses received from the LORD a very detailed description of the tabernacle, including the vessels, altars, the utensils and materials to be used, and the way these materials had to be adorned with various symbols. Of the tabernacle as well as of the temple the LORD God was the Architect! He made the plans. Every detail contained a message about the coming Saviour.

Thus we hear, Exodus 25:40, "And see that you make them [the utensils, etc.] after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain." This "pattern" was, first of all, the tabernacle as a whole: how it was to be set up; how the partitions were to be made. Let's call that the ground plan. It looked approximately like this.



In the front hall (No. 1) which was open towards the congregation, the main objects were the laver or wash-basin and the great altar on which the sacrifices were burned.

The middle part (No. 2) was accessible only by the priests. There stood the table with the show-bread and the lampstand. Right in front of the curtain that hid the Most Holy Place the altar of

incense found its proper place, the incense being the symbol of the prayers sent up to the mercy seat.

In this Most Holy Place (No. 3) stood the ark, covered with the lid on which once a year blood was sprinkled by the High Priest. Only he, after many preparations, was allowed to enter there. On top of the ark was the cloud, symbolizing the presence of the LORD among His people. Therefore it was called the Mercy Seat.

The two arrows in the middle part indicate that the task of the priests, as "mediators" between the Lord and His people, was two-fold. The one aspect was to represent the LORD to His people. This was done in the blessing which they laid upon Israel, Numbers 6:24-26. They also represented the LORD when they proclaimed His ordinances.

The other half of their priestly duties was in the opposite direction: to represent the people before the LORD. This they did when they brought the sacrifices and sprinkled the blood; also when they burned the incense on the altar built for this purpose. They

brought the prayers of the covenant people to their God.

This, then, was the pattern shown to Moses. From the letter to the Hebrews it becomes clear that this pattern did not stand on top of the mountain Horeb, but in heaven itself.

Yet, in the old dispensation it was a *horizontal* sanctuary. The mercy seat stood on this earth, on the ground.

Of the many things that could be said about this heavenly pattern only a few will be mentioned.

First, every object, every action, the sacrifices, the incense, etc., spoke of Christ Jesus. Then, it was indeed a "covenantal" pattern. There were the two "parties": the LORD and His people. There were also the two "parts": what the LORD did to and for His holy nation, as well as the response of this nation to their God, in their sacrifices and prayers. Finally, it was all "shadow," provisional and preparatory.

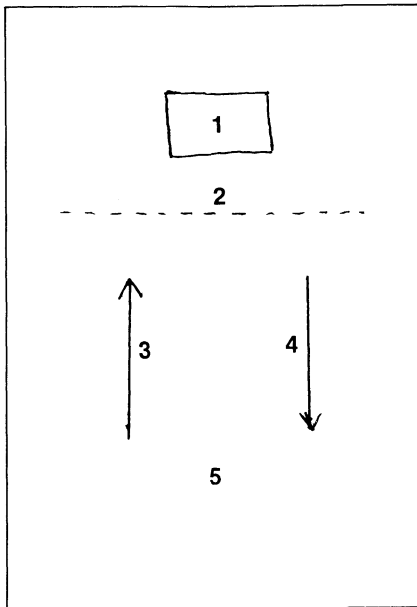
Exodus 25:40 is quoted in Hebrews 8:5, "They (the Old Testament priests) serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary; for when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, 'See that you make everything according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.'"

This tent, or tabernacle, however, belongs to the past. "Christ has obtained a ministry which is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant He mediates is better . . .," verse 6.

The whole letter to the Hebrews proclaims this excellency of the "true tent," verse 2, which is set up, not by man, but by God.

Jesus Christ, the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek, has fulfilled all shadows, and entered the real, the heavenly, sanctuary. There He ministers as our High Priest. Yea, we have now free access to the Most Holy place. "Since then we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need," Hebrews 4:14, 16.

To say it in the terminology of this article, Jesus Christ, by His perfect sacrifice with which He entered the heavenly sanctuary, Hebrews 8, etc., has set the Old Testament horizontal tabernacle *on its end!* Not even only that, but when He died God's hand tore the curtains apart; there are now no longer three partitions, divided by heavy curtains. Now the congregation is no longer kept outside the tabernacle proper. A second, simple drawing shows that the New Testament "tabernacle" is no longer horizontal but *vertical*.



This vertical "pattern" seems empty in comparison with the one that Moses built. No longer any altars, no golden ark in front of the pulpit in church, nor any of the other objects and utensils. But in fact it is much fuller. This "pattern" reaches through the clouds up to highest heaven, where Christ Jesus is ministering at the heavenly mercy seat (No. 1).

The broken line (No. 2) only indicates that "we do not yet see everything," Hebrews 2:8; as on Ascension day "a cloud took Him out of their sight," Acts 1:9. But Hebrews 4 told us already that we may draw near with confidence. We live under an open heaven; the curtains were torn apart.

The congregation (No. 5), although still here on earth, may in fact gather in the same "room" with Jesus Christ. His Spirit came down and filled the church. While He is our Paraklete in heaven, the Spirit is our Paraklete here on earth.

All this is glorious reality on the day of the LORD, when we as His people may meet with Him. According to His promise Christ is among us. And we have been made "to sit with Him in the heavenly places," Ephesians 2:6. All those glorious expressions which we heard in the previous article, reading from Hebrews 12, are true and real in the worship service. "We have come to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the city of the living God." On the Day of Christ the heavenly Jerusalem will descend, and no temple or church building will be needed any longer on the new earth. Yet, we may know that, when

the congregation gathers and calls upon the Name of the LORD, "Our help is in the Name of the LORD Who made heaven and earth," this heavenly Jerusalem descends among us and we have "come" to it or "arrived."

In this vertical sanctuary there is still but now in fulfillment — the covenantal "two-way traffic," as the two arrows indicate. There is a movement from heaven to earth, when God blesses His people, proclaims His Law, speaks His Word. There is also a movement from earth to heaven, when the congregation prays, confesses, sings, brings offerings of gratitude.

Although the minister as leader of the liturgy is no longer priest in the old sense, Jesus Christ has ordained that in this New Testament vertical liturgy certain elements should be mediated by him. He, in Christ's Name and with His authority, blesses God's people, brings the message of God's Word. But he is also the mouth of the congregation, when he brings the sacrifices of our lips, our prayers, to the mercy seat. In many churches he is also such a mouth when he recites the Creed, although this should be done by the congregation itself, as we hope to discuss later.

Thus, as long as the heavenly Jerusalem has not yet come down for good and for ever, there still is a mediating office, in two directions, just as with the priests in the tabernacle, one down (No. 4), one up (No. 3).

It now should be clear to all that our Reformed, or covenantal, liturgy consists of several elements which must be divided into two groups. Some latin words are used for this distinction. There are elements *a parte Dei* (from God's part or side); they are: 1. the benedictions, 2. the Ten Words (A.M.), 3. public reading of the Scriptures, 4. proclamation of the Word.

Other elements are *a parte homini*, from the side of man, of the congregation, such as: 1. the vatum, 2. Creed (P.M.), 3. Prayers, 4. the offertory, 5. singing the praise of the LORD.

There are, of course, also the sacraments. As will be seen later, they, and especially Holy Supper, are a "two-way" business. Also in the preaching there is, or should be, two-way traffic. Listening, "hearing the Word," is a very important activity on the part of the assembled holy nation.

Returning to the word "Reformed" in the title, we remember with gratitude that the Reformers cleansed the liturgy. Their main act in this re-

spect was removing the *altar* together with "priests" and all other "old-testamentic" elements; in its place they put the *pulpit* in the very centre, as the place from which the "ministry of reconciliation" comes to us.

Although the picture we have drawn is still far from complete, we dare say that, in contrast to the elaborate Romanist cathedrals, the Reformed liturgy is most beautiful.

Further discussion of the various elements and their proper order will show this beauty in more detail.

G. VANDOOREN

(To be continued.)

¹ Dr. Z. Rittersma, *Het Dramatigere van Bijbelse Geschiedenissen door Jeugdigen*, Diss. Offset-Drukkery "Lectura," Leiden, 1972, p. 21.

² *Ibid*, p. 21, 22.

³ Dr. F. vander Meer, *Augustinus, de Zielzorger*,³ Het Spectrum, Utrecht, 1957 Prisma. Vol. I p. 59.

⁴ *Ibid*, Vol. II p. 78.

⁵ "Theater und Kirche," in *Evangelisches Kirchen Lexicon*, Vol. III ed. Heinz Brunotte und Otto Weber, Gottingen, 1959.

⁶ "Toneelbestrijding," in *Christelijke Encyclopedie*, ed. Prof. Dr. F.W. Grosheide en Prof. Dr. G.P. Van Itterzon, J.H. Kok, Kampen, 1961.

Numbers 4:24-26

This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, in serving and bearing burdens; they shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tent of meeting with its covering, and the covering of goatskin that is on top of it, and the screen for the door of the tent of meeting, and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the entrance of the gate of the court which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords, and all the equipment for their service; and they shall do all that needs to be done with regard to them.



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.

INDIANAPOLIS (RNS)

The Rev. Georgi Vins, famed Russian Baptist leader released from a Soviet prison in a Russian-American prisoner exchange last spring, is opening an international office for the Council of Evangelical Christians Baptist Churches at Elkhart, Ind., according to an evangelist here. (CN)

For the information of our readers we copy here the First Amendment to the American Constitution.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

GRAND RAPIDS

The forthcoming General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America will be asked to approve a letter drafted by its Committee on Inter-Church Relations that the denominations invite three other Presbyterian Churches to take steps toward eventual union. The three addresses are: the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod; the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America; and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

One rationale for the proposed action is the common adherence to the inerrancy of the Scripture, the system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism, and the doctrine of the purity of the visible church. A further proposed basis for union is the Book of Church

Order of the Presbyterian Church in America.

The letter calls for individual steps by the respective churches now and for final action in June 1982, at a meeting to be held in Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. With the additions, the Presbyterian Church in America will have about 120,000 members. (RES NE)

GRAND RAPIDS

Under vociferous protests from conservatives, the Rev. Mansfield M. Kaseman was last year admitted to the ministry in the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA), even though he refused to say that Jesus is God. The denomination's Permanent Judicial Commission did, however, order that he be given re-examination by the receiving Presbytery.

During this second round the Rev. Kaseman, formerly associated with the United Church of Christ, again denied such central Christian beliefs as the sinlessness of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection, and Christ's deity. "The ultimate heresy," he suggested, "is claiming to know the truth." Even so, he received a friendlier reception than before. He was approved by a vote of 165 to 59. (RES NE)

GRAND RAPIDS

Some decades ago mainland China began to simplify its complicated written language. Today all Chinese youth under the age of 30 are able to read only the new Simplified Script.

The nearly one billion Chinese now can have a Bible in new Simplified Chinese. This Bible has been published by *Asian Outreach*, a Hong Kong based Christian communications ministry comprised mainly of Asians. Its Founder-President, the Rev. Paul E. Kauffman, hailed the new Bible as "the most significant Christian literature project in half a century."

Dr. David Wang, supervisor of the 14-year project, explained the difficulties of translation. The translators needed to know the contemporary language of the Peoples Republic of China as well as the Scriptures. The translation was done in the main by dedicated mainland Christians who were once

Communists. Helped by well-trained scholars and students from Hong Kong, their work was then given to linguists and theologians for checking. (RES NE)

The California State Board of Education has rejected a proposal that creation be taught along with evolution in school science curricula. The Board decided that to do otherwise would be to admit God into school classrooms. The decision is in response to a suit threatened by the Creation Science Research Center of San Diego, which now will meet with representatives of the Board to plan for court action. (TB)

WASHINGTON, U.S.A.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) honoured Wycliffe Bible Translators Summer Institute of Linguistics with the 1979 International Reading Association Literary Award. Initially conferred in Paris last September, the award was presented late last year in person to Dr. W. Cameron Townsend, 83-year old Wycliffe founder.

The award particularly noted Wycliffe's work in Papua, New Guinea, the world's second largest island. The Summer Institute of Linguistics works with 145 of the 700 distinct languages there. Many of the three million inhabitants live in remote, virtually-inaccessible areas. UNESCO estimates that there are 814 million adults in the world who cannot read and projects that there will be 954 million by the year 2000.

Wycliffe cooperates with governments in 25 countries, working with 700 of the world's estimated languages. (FT)

TORONTO

A minister of the United Church of Canada, who is now director of the Toronto Institute of Human Relations, has suggested that marriage licences, like auto licences, should be renewed yearly. If not renewed, the licence would be simply terminated — and so would marriage.

"The historic function of marriage as the guardian of the moral and legal rights of the parties has become increasingly anachronistic," he stated

in a review of family life. His expression was his own and not a church utterance. (FT)

* * *

ROME (RNS)

Liberal Catholic theologian Hans Küng has released the text of an unpublished letter sent to Pope John Paul II last year imploring the pontiff to reconsider the church's stand on the ordination of women.

The letter, written "for the love of our church," also pleads with the pope to rethink the church's stand on obligatory celibacy for priests in the Latin Rite, the regulation of births, and the pursuit of ecumenism.

Written at Easter 1979, the letter accompanied an interview with the 51-year old Swiss-born theologian, in the Milan daily, *Corriere della Sera*, on April 15. (CN)

* * *

REGENSBURG (ANP)

The Mennonites and Baptists of West Germany want the Lutherans to revoke the condemnation of the Anabaptist doctrine (in the "Confessio Augustana") before the 450th anniversary of this confession in June of this year. The Mennonite minister Willi Wiedermann (Regensburg) considers official participation in the celebration by Baptists possible only if the Lutherans distance themselves from the relevant passages in the confession or permit the Mennonites to expound their views during the celebration.

Wiedermann, who will take part in the celebration on behalf of the South German Baptist Congregations, revealed that the Lutheran Church in Germany is working on a declaration regarding the anti-anabaptist passages. This was confirmed by the bureau of the United Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hannover. On behalf of the Baptists, the Rev. Manfred Otto (Bad Homburg) stated that they also expect a rescinding of the condemnation of adult baptism. (ND)

vO

OUR COVER

International Bridge. Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. (Photo courtesy Industry and Tourism Branch, Toronto, Ontario.)

Ascension . . . and the Marks of the Church

It is important that we do not overlook the great significance of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. First, the Ascension was important for our Lord Himself: He entered into the glory of His Father and took in His rightful place at the Father's right hand, there to rule as Head of the Church and the King of Kings. The ascension meant for Him a great step ahead en route to complete victory on the Day of Judgment.

Then, it is also important for us. We now have in heaven our own flesh and blood, a High Priest who knows and sympathizes with our weaknesses and who is our immediate Advocate in the Father's presence. This may be for us a daily comfort.

The Ascension has great consequences also for the *Church* and the manner in which the Church lives in this world. We can best illustrate this by relating the Ascension to the "marks of the Church" as confessed in Article 29 of our Belgic Confession.

There was a time when Christ Himself walked physically and visibly in the midst of His disciples. He instructed them personally on a face-to-face basis. They could hear His own voice and see His many miracles. Because of the Ascension this is now different. Christ is physically not in our midst anymore, but is present by His Spirit and Word. He now instructs His Church through chosen office-bearers who come in His Name and with His Word. The pure doctrine must be preached (the first mark) and only in this way is Christ's presence in our midst realized and guaranteed. Where this preaching is neglected, Christ is not present. Therefore, the very fact of the Ascension accentuates all the more that we must maintain the pure doctrine and preach it fully, for only then are we assured that, although Christ is in heaven, He is with us really and truly.

It is significant with respect to the sacraments (the second mark). In the

sacraments Christ does not come down to us *physically*, as the Roman Catholic doctrine would have us believe, but we partake of Him spiritually, by faith. We do eat "the proper and natural body and the proper blood of Christ" (Art. 33, B.C.), that is, we do receive the *real* thing, but not "by the mouth, but by the Spirit through faith." Christ is in heaven, and we must leave Him there, and we are therefore correctly exhorted not to cling to the outward symbols, but to lift up our hearts to *heaven*, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

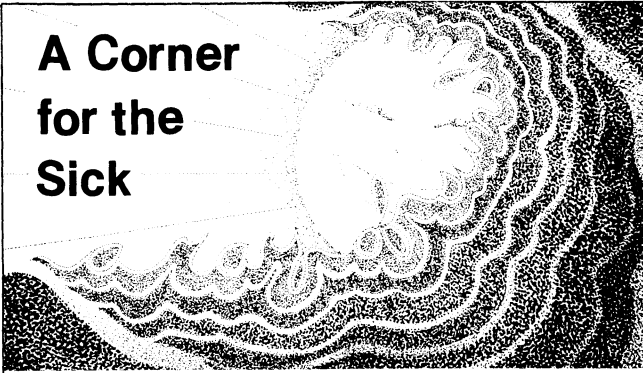
So it is with the exercising of discipline. Discipline is fully a spiritual matter and can be done only with the Word of Christ. And the Lord gave this promise, "Whatever you bind on earth, shall be bound in *heaven*, and whatever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in *heaven*" (Matt. 16:19). Church discipline is exercised on earth by responsible office-bearers, and, if this discipline is in accordance with Christ's Word, it will be confirmed by Him in heaven. In this way He personally from out of heaven rules and guides His Church.

Christ is in heaven, and we must leave Him there. Yet He is with us by the preaching of the pure doctrine. He comes to us in the holy sacraments. He exercises Church discipline in the manner chosen by Him. False doctrine, sacramentalism, and hierarchy deny the very fact and significance of Ascension.

Let us receive our Lord as He comes to us: in the preaching of the pure doctrine, in the pure administration of the sacraments, and in Church discipline. In this way, though He is in heaven and we are on earth, He is never absent from us. And one day He will be with us physically and visibly. Then we no longer need preaching, sacraments and discipline. Until that day we will make full use of what we have and need.

CI. STAM

A Corner for the Sick



Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?

Hebrews 1:14

Are we not all concerned about our teenagers? Parents sometimes experience a lot of grief because of the rebelliousness of their children. No matter how hard they try to teach them the ways of the Lord, it may seem as if it has no effect or influence on their children.

Do we not often feel that we lack the necessary wisdom to guide them?

It is when we turn to God's Word that we receive the needed wisdom, strength, and comfort. It will make us realize that we are not alone in our struggle against the powers of darkness, but that we have a mighty army helping us.

Hebrews chapters 1 and 2 (please read) speak about how high Christ was elevated above every creature, and that all dominion has been given to Him. The angels are ministering spirits sent forth to serve those who are to obtain salvation. Sent out by Christ! In our form for the baptism of infants we read, "Do you acknowledge that our children, though conceived and born in sin and therefore subject to all manner of misery, yea, to condemnation itself, ARE sanctified in Christ, and therefore as members of His Church ought to be baptized?" This belief gives us a solid basis. It is founded on God's promise of redemption.

Let us look to Christ and ask Him always to govern our children by His Holy Spirit, that they may grow in the Christian faith and in godliness, so that they may manfully fight against and overcome sin, the devil, and his whole dominion, to the end that they may eternally praise and magnify their Maker. In Article 12 of our Belgic Confession we confess, "that the devil and his helpers will do their utmost to try to bring to ruin the Church and every member thereof"; but in Article 13 we confess our belief in the providence of God. "God as our Heavenly Father watches over us with paternal care, keeping all creatures so under His power that not a hair of our head (for they are all numbered), nor a sparrow can fall to the ground without the will of our Father, in Whom we do entirely trust; being persuaded that He so restrains the devil and all our enemies that without His will and permission they cannot hurt us." Compare Lord's Day 9 of our Heidelberg Catechism.

Praise the Spirit Who will never
Leave the Church by blood once bought.
He will show His presence ever,
Fierce though be the foe's assault.
Fear not, flock which He is keeping,
Though encircled by the night;
Child of God, recall His might.
Would the Spirit then be sleeping?
Would He not securely keep
Those whom Christ bought as His sheep?

Hymn 36:3, Book of Praise (1979)

For the month of June we have two birthdays to remember. Please mark them on your calendars. Shall we try to remember to send cards during the holiday season, brothers and sisters?

JOAN KOERSELMAN

Box 624, Coaldale, Alberta T0K 0L0

Joan hopes to celebrate her 23rd birthday, the Lord willing, on June 17th. She attended Junior High School, worked at a training centre, and presently helps her mother at home. I do not know any of her hobbies, but I am sure she will love to receive many birthday wishes.

BEVERLY BREUKELMAN

Box 6566, Coaldale, Alberta T0K 0L0

Beverly attends Junior High Special Education School. She helps around the house, and enjoys cooking and baking. Shall we send Beverly some good recipes for her birthday? She will be 18 years old, the Lord willing, on June 30th.

* * * * *

Gerry Eelhart's mother sent us the following note: "My husband and I would like to thank everyone who sent Gerry a card for his 18th birthday. Everyday he asked if there was mail for him. It made him very happy! They came from all over Canada and one from Australia. Also a few Youth Societies sent cards. We especially like to thank that family who sends cards to Gerry throughout the year."

* * * * *

Mrs. L. Ruitter wrote a letter telling us that she is home from the hospital. It is not always easy to live as a joyful Christian, when being plagued by a crippling kind of arthritis. She is counting all other blessings the Lord has given her, and she hopes that she will receive strength from the Lord to live as a happy Christian. The cards she received were very much appreciated and gave her some diversion. She is confined to her wheelchair. It grieves her not to be able to attend the church services at this time, and she hopes this will change in the future. Thank you everyone!

* * * * *

Brothers and sisters, shall we spread some sunshine for our "fellow pilgrims," for those for whom the journey is not always easy?

If you know of any brother or sister who would benefit from some extra attention, send your request, with some information about the circumstances, and with permission of the person involved, to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma

380 St. Andrew Street E., Fergus, Ont. N1M 1R1

news medley

Since there is not all that much news this time either, I pass on to you some brief parts of articles which appeared in some bulletins. But first we go and see whether any brothers and sisters are to be congratulated with a Wedding Anniversary.

That is indeed the case. Apart from the names which I found in the previous issue of *Clarion*, I discovered quite a few couples to whom we are to extend our heartfelt congratulations.

Let me mention them all in one "breath," even though it will be a long one.

The fifty-fifth Wedding Anniversary was celebrated on May 14th by brother and sister P. Kok of Lethbridge, Alberta, while on that same day a couple visiting from The Netherlands, brother and sister T. de Jager, celebrated the same event at the home of their children in Burlington, Ontario; brother and sister J. De Vos remembered their wedding day for the fifty-fifth time on May 16th. They live in New Westminster, B.C.

For the forty-fifth Anniversary we go to brother and sister D. Daniels in Lethbridge of Coaldale, who celebrated it on May 4th; further brother and sister J. DeJong of Smithers, B.C. who had their day on May 18th; and brother and sister F.G. Bouwkamp of Toronto for whom the date will be June 6th. When I saw the previous issue of *Clarion*, I thought, "Have the Bouwkamps as well as the Oostenbrugs ever changed! I did not recognize them. But then I realized that the particulars about the couples had been switched, so that the Bouwkamps were called Oostenbrugs and the Oostenbrugs Bouwkamps. It does not matter all that much, does it? Those who know the above couples will have looked through the little fog that was there and recognized the real situation.

We are not yet at the end. Brother and sister F.J. VanderVelde of Smithville, Ontario, celebrated their fortieth Wedding Anniversary on May 17th.

It is good when we honour the above "pioneers," for that's what they are. In by far the most instances they were the ones who made the decision to emigrate and to go to Canada, taking their families with them, providing for their children and grandchildren the possibility to build up a new existence in a new land. May they receive the fruits upon their labours and be able to look back with great gratitude and with a certain measure of satisfaction. May they also be permitted to continue receiving those fruits and enjoying the retirement which no one begrudges them. The Lord bless you all.

Since what I am going to mention further comes, for the larger part, from the West, we may as well start in Ontario this time.

In the *Family Post* of Smithville, the Rev. Cl. Stam writes about Christian behaviour, something which also is to be shown in the field of sports, particularly hockey. He points to the fact that our young people should know, since they have received a Christian education. "But perhaps many young people do not even appreciate that education, for although there is much money for cars, recreation, and travel, there

seems to be little support from this category for our Schools."

A while ago some younger (married) brethren asked me if it was allowed to put announcements in the bulletin concerning the time and place of hockey games and practices. I said, "Sure, if you also diligently support the the schools and attend Men's Society, etc., why not?" Well, it was left at that, and perhaps that was best. Games and practices occur at almost all hours of the day and night. Money is no problem. But if there is no time for the studying of God's Word and no money for the support of the schools, something is dreadfully wrong. It is a matter of priorities; and if our young people would recognize these priorities in calling and conduct, these tournaments would be a pleasure instead of a shame.

It is especially that point of finding time and money for almost everything and the willingness to practice at any time of the day and the night that deserves further attention of all concerned. If the ice can be had from 11:00 p.m. till 2:00 a.m., that is no reason why a practice should be cancelled; the club gathers anyway. But when there is meeting of the Men's Society, many are too tired to get out after supper. If a few hockey sticks break, gas has to be purchased for transportation to the arena, and if after the game the players are so hungry that they do need a big pizza to enable them to get home alive, there is enough money, even though it is twenty-five dollars per week. But many do not think of supporting the Church either at all or sufficiently, to leave the schools out of the picture for a moment. Then all of a sudden quite a few "cannot afford it."

Mind you, no one begrudges our young people their recreation and it be far from me to suggest that they are not permitted to spend money on it. If they can afford it, let them go ahead. But let what is first come first: The ministry of the Gospel and the schools, the needy and those who have no helper. We should stay away from regulating what is permitted and what is not permitted and how much one is allowed to spend on this and how much one is supposed to pay for that. That is each and everyone's responsibility towards the Lord. It is the disposition of the heart what counts and is decisive. Seek God's Kingdom first and endeavour to live according to the obligations of His covenant.

Let's go on.

There is one more thing which I wish to mention from Ontario. That comes from the Guelph bulletin. "A brother in the congregation, upon request by the Consistory, is putting together an information booklet about our church. Besides of being of interest to everyone, it will be especially important to new members."

Herewith we depart for the West.

The ministers of the Western region plan a ministers' workshop in Calgary on May 28 and 29. Thus far all the ministers who requested "their" consistory to allow them to travel to Calgary for that purpose have received the requested permission. In the West there is always more than one day involved in such a venture. The distances are such that travelling alone will cost at least three days in all. I remember what happened once when I visited a family that lived quite a distance from the Church. When, after two hours, I decided to leave I was urged to stay a little longer with these words, "You can make a long journey productive only by staying long." This is perhaps the reason why the Western brethren plan to have a workshop for two days instead of the one we have here in Ontario for that purpose.

Once you are together, you have to make the best possible use of it. And the costs involved also warrant a longer being together. With the present-day salaries the cost of travelling is no longer an impediment to such a get-together. Sometimes I think that it would be fair if the costs were calculated on a per-person basis to make the burden equal for all, also for those who come from farther away. I would commend this thought into my brethren's attention. Perhaps there is no merit in this suggestion of mine; if there is, it might help some of us. Of course, we cannot go to the Consistories and ask for their financial support. I don't think there is any need to do that either.

I have not yet read anything about topics to be discussed at that workshop, but we hope that we shall receive a report on it, as we always do on the workshops that we conduct here in Ontario. We do it twice a year, once immediately after New Year's Day and once after the conclusion of the work at our College, before the holidays start.

Another more or less general news item is that the ladies of Alberta are planning a league day, at which the Rev. D. DeJong will speak on "In Him We Live" (separated from strange religions). That can be an interesting introduction. I shall not be mistaken when I surmise that the title of the introduction (and its contents) is the result of the study which the Calgary minister has undertaken at the University of Calgary. Thus we see that whatever a minister learns always turns out to be to the benefit of the membership.

For our next item we go to Edmonton. Actually, there are a few things which I wish to mention from the Edmonton bulletin, *The City Guide*.

First of all: each one of us will have received or seen at one time or another one of the so-called chain-letters. Recently they seem to have taken on a "pious" appearance. The Rev. DeBruin warns against them in the following manner.

At the best of times I have little or no use for any kind of chain letters, for most of these letters work on the greed principle, i.e., people are enticed to write to fifteen or more addresses in order eventually to receive some material benefits as a reward.

However, recently one of our members showed me a chain letter of a somewhat different nature, i.e., it is the most sacrilegious I have ever seen. It is introduced with the pious caption, "Trust in the Lord with all good faith and He will acknowledge and light the way. This prayer has been sent to you for good luck. The original copy is from The Netherlands and has been around the world nine times. The luck has now been brought to you. You will receive good luck within four days of receiving this letter, providing you, . . . etc."

Then follows a number of cases of so-called good luck received by those who followed the instructions and a number of disasters, including death of those who have failed to do so. It ends with the sentence, "This is true, even if you are not superstitious."

What should our response be to such satanic drive! What comes to my mind are the words we confess in Answer 94 of our Heidelberg Catechism, "That as much as I love my soul's salvation, I avoid and flee all idolatry, sorcery, soothsaying, superstition, . . ." etc. Therefore the only possible response for a Christian is to immediately throw such letters into the garbage can, where they belong. The same must be said of all junk mail, especially the material which entices us to covet,

50th Wedding Anniversary



Brother and sister J. Werkman were married in the Gereformeerde Kerk at Uithuizen, in the province of Groningen, The Netherlands, June 5th, 1930. They emigrated with their ten children to Canada in March, 1950, spent a few weeks in Neerlandia, Alberta, then lived in Coaldale, Alberta for two years, after which they moved to Edmonton. Two years later a farm was bought in Bloomsbury, near Neerlandia. Several years ago they retired and are now living in the Emmanuel Home in Edmonton.

Brother Werkman is 78 years of age and his wife is about two years younger. After a major operation some months ago, brother Werkman recovered sufficiently and still makes his daily walks of several hours. His eyesight is suffering which is a hardship, since reading is his only pastime besides walking. Sister Werkman underwent a painful operation last year and had to learn to walk again, but with the help of the Lord both are keeping up remarkably well. Their great number of grandchildren (65 plus 1 great-grandchild) are a source of great joy to them. Four of their married children live in Ontario, two in Neerlandia and four in Edmonton. They are thankful to the LORD their God Who has blessed them during all these 50 years together. Their address is: 105 - 13425 - 57 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5A 2G1.

e.g., so called free tickets for draws, etc. Let us not be deceived by all this satanic trickery, but rather, let us continue to carefully (in the light of God's Word) test all the spirits which present themselves as true, beneficial, or harmless, to see whether or not they are from God cf. I John 4:1.

The splitting of the Congregation or institution of a new Church keeps the thoughts and minds occupied. On May 5th, a special meeting was held.

This meeting was called to discuss a request received from the Committee which is endeavouring to institute another church. Its request was to postpone any further action in calling another minister until May 31, 1980, since this would give it sufficient time to see whether or not a viable institution request can be presented to Council.

An Evening to Remember

The building was familiar, the visitors many, the parking difficult, the evening one in which gratitude to and praise of the Lord were the main themes.

I am referring to the evening of May 2, 1980, when many brothers and sisters had come to the Wellington Square United Church on Caroline Street in Burlington.

The building was familiar: here we usually have our Convocations and College Evenings, for it is a beautiful building and can seat many hundreds. This time the building was packed beyond the limit of the pews. Chairs had to be added to enable everyone who had come to sit down.

The Burlington Churches had sent invitations to the Churches in the neighbourhood, inviting them to be present and/or represented when they celebrated the 25th anniversary of Burlington's institution. That institution took place on May 1, 1955, according to the Yearbook. I am a little puzzled by the date of May 5, 1955, which is mentioned in a booklet handed out when we entered the Church building. Behind that date it says, "Burlington became an independent congregation with a total membership of 363." Did Burlington, then, not become an autonomous congregation on May 1st, at the institution? Interesting for a historian to find out the answer to that question.

Many brothers and sisters accepted the invitation and followed it up. They came from far and near to celebrate with the Burlington brotherhood the great works and the infinite mercies of the Lord. The result was that already fifteen minutes before starting time the streets around the building had to be used for parking because the parking

lot was full, and cars were lined up even alongside the walks around the edifice.

When we entered, we were handed a program, containing the songs to be sung together, and the order in which the various points were going to be presented. We found the same information — minus the songs — in a beautiful booklet that was presented to all who came and which contains various informative notations, besides messages from present and former ministers of the (now two) Congregations of Burlington. Further we find in this booklet some photographs which give a summary picture of the history: from Utter Farm via Dynes Road and Highway 5 to Vietnamese and Laotian families. I wished, however, that the booklet had been submitted to an expert in the English language, for there are a few incorrect constructions and expressions which would then have been avoided. It seems to be hard to get rid of the Dutch "The Family So-and-So" and to be converted to the correct English "The So-and-So Family," to mention only that point.

Mr. H. Aasman was Master of Ceremonies. Before he opened the assembly, the children's choir of the John Calvin School gathered on the platform, almost hiding the beautiful flower arrangements which adorned the podium. When we saw all those children there, we became the more aware of the riches which the Lord has given us in our children and of the blessings which He bestows upon us in our schools. Where would those children and many of their parents have been right now if the Lord had not kept and protected us, if He had not kept us together by His mercy and power, and

if He had not given us the faithfulness and the means to establish our schools and to maintain them?

We began with the singing of Hymn 42: "O God, our Help in ages past."

Mr. Aasman read selected passages from the prophecies of Micah, and led in prayer.

In his opening address he bid everyone welcome. We are together here this evening to remember the grace of our God. May the Lord also this evening show us again His favour so that in the unity of the Church of all ages we may see this evening become a lasting memorial of gratitude and of His love and faithfulness.

Mr. Aasman gratefully acknowledged the presence of the local member of Parliament, of the Major of the City of Burlington, and of the representative of the Netherlands Government. Further there were the Rev. and Mrs. Stam, former minister of Burlington West, the Rev. and Mrs. W. Loopstra — who was the first minister to serve in Ontario and to whose congregation also the Burlington members belonged who instituted the Burlington Church — the professors at our Theological College, and further representatives of the neighbouring Churches. Many former members were there as well to celebrate together with the present members the great deeds of the Lord. Gratitude was expressed to the Board of the Wellington Square United Church for their permission to use this beautiful building and the adjoining facilities.

* * *

The children's choir made itself heard after this, and we enjoyed the enthusiasm with which not a few of the

NEWS MEDLEY — *Continued.*

After some discussion, it was decided to grant this request.

From everything we read about the future of the Edmonton Church, we may draw the conclusion that every possible aspect is being considered and that care is taken not to force anything upon anyone. Only in that way bitterness will be prevented and thus estrangement will get no chance.

We conclude our journey in the far West, in Smithers. It

is not all that important, but it shows our dependence on the conveniences of modern life.

At 9:30 p.m. the power goes off. After a slight delay the meeting continues by candlelight.

For a change, these lines were written by sunlight. I hope that they reach you in good health and that at least some part of this medley may be read unto your edification.

vO

children gave themselves to that task.

When they had completed their assignment, they were permitted to disperse throughout the auditorium in order to find their parents and sit with them for the rest of the evening.

Together we then sang Hymn 52:1 and 2. Therein the gathered throng here on earth also remembered those whom the Lord took unto Himself in the course of the years, so that they were prevented from celebrating here with us. Their names can be found in the booklet which I mentioned above.

The Rev. W. Pouwelse then appeared on the pulpit to introduce the Rev. G. Van Dooren. However, he did more than just that. He remarked that it would have been more "natural" that the latter should introduce him, since he was a "newcomer," having been installed as Burlington West's minister only three weeks earlier. The Rev. Van Dooren, on the other hand, was installed in Burlington in October 1955, some five months after the institution of the Church and he still is its minister, he it retired from active service.

Occasions such as the present one, the Rev. Pouwelse said, are splendid opportunities for conveying congratulations. He wished to use the opportunity to convey the greetings from the brotherhood in The Netherlands. At his farewell evening he quoted from Paul's letter to the Philippians, "And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." The Rev. Den Broeder replied at that occasion with Paul's following sentence, "Greet every saint in Christ Jesus." That was the message which the Rev. Pouwelse got along for the brotherhood here, and he conveyed these greetings this evening: They and we are sharing in the same blessing, and that makes us rich.

The Rev. G. Van Dooren then took the floor, in this case the pulpit. Since he was permitted to speak for only fifteen minutes, he had to confine himself to some "word-pictures," as he called them, introduced by the words, "I remember."

When he received the call from Burlington and decided to go there, he and Mrs. Van Dooren "fell in love" with Burlington, and that has remained ever since. After having been installed by an elder, he conducted the services for some time in the Sea Cadet Hall, having for his "bodyguards" an anti-

aircraft gun and a searchlight. Both instruments of war became symbols of the task of the minister: shooting at everything that would endanger the safety of God's people and searching the hearts by the light of the Word of God. When the Hall became too small, the Congregation moved to the Glenwood School auditorium and from there to the Arena, where sometimes the music and the noise of skaters drowned out the voice of the minister and the singing of the Congregation. Then the property on Dynes Road was purchased and a basement built. After having met in the basement for quite a while, the superstructure was added, and finally they could meet again in a real Church building. Sadly enough, the first official use of the completed building was not for a service, but for the funeral of a sister who had been looking forward so much to the day when they would be able to sing the Lord's praises in the completed auditorium.

Rev. Van Dooren reminisced on the importance of the Utter Farm and expressed regret that that property had not been purchased to serve as a memorial, as a monument reminding the Congregation of those first years.

He did not conceal from his audience that sometimes the Congregational meetings were a little noisy and that there were occasions when people spoke up a little too loudly. That was understandable, since the Church

was the only place where they could make themselves heard: having trouble with the English language and difficulties at their work, not having a voice in the economic or political arena, the Congregational meeting was actually the only place where they could speak up, and they could do so in their native language. All that has changed as well. And: the Lord has kept us throughout all those years from conflicts which could have torn the Congregation apart.

Having come from different backgrounds and provinces, having different characters, we had to grow into a unity, and we did. Each and every one did things his own way, and yet we listened to each other.

When we started with conducting services in English, the English services were attended very badly; however, it took only a few months to change that.

Growth of the Congregation brought a second minister; then a second Church was instituted. At first there was some friction, but now we live in harmony with one another, and there are already plans to come to the institution of a third Church.

Much more could be said. I could, Rev. Van Dooren stated, well say with the Epistle to the Hebrews, "And what shall I say more? Time would fail me."

Let me remind you of what the Lord Jesus said, that we should seek the Kingdom of God first of all. Then we shall receive all things, as we have

42. O God, our help in ages past

Psalm 90: 1 - 6

St. Anne

William Croft, 1708

1. O God, our help in a - ges past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast,
And our e - ter - nal home.

received them. And, having received them, we say with Jacob, "We are not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness which Thou hast shown to Thy servants."

* * *

After we had sung stanzas 1 and 4 of Psalm 89, the Choir "Soli Deo Gloria" was heard. The congregation participated in one of the songs, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

The "Historical Reflections" by Mr. A. Buist took us along in poetical lines from the beginning to the present situation. His presentation certainly deserves an honourable place in Burlington's archives.

Another choir was heard; this time the Male Choir, that sang a few selections which were well appreciated.

The closing remarks were made by the Rev. M. Van Beveren, at present minister of the Burlington East Church. He reminded us of Paul's prayer for the

Church as we find it in Ephesians 3:20, where we are assured that God can do far more than we ask of Him or even dare to ask of Him. This evening we celebrate the mercies which God has given to us in these past twenty-five years. We are also looking ahead. When we ask what the next twenty-five years will bring, we must say that we do not know that. Will they be crucial years? Again something which we don't know. Perhaps the Lord Jesus Christ will have appeared by then. This much we do know, that the Church has been chosen to everlasting life, and that all the preaching of the past twenty-five years has served the great purpose that the children of God should be revealed and be filled with all the fullness of God. That is still the purpose today. And God can do far more abundantly what is needed for that than we can ask Him for.

Thereafter the Rev. Van Beveren led in thanksgiving.

We sang the fifth stanza of Psalm

75, upon which we assembled for a social hour in the adjacent auditorium, the one so well-known to visitors to our Convocations and College Evenings.

I do not know whether it was the place where we were sitting or the manner in which the various speakers utilized the microphones, but I have the impression that everyone could follow all that was being said.

The singing was recorded, and we may hear it again some day via "The Voice of the Church," the radio program which has expanded now here in Ontario to three radio stations.

It was good to be there and to rejoice with the brotherhood. I hope that I have been able to convey some of it to our readers. Perhaps the "report" was a little lengthy, but then — who would not rejoice with others when they are commemorating the works of the Lord?

That's what we did.

Let's continue doing it.

vO

Books

J. VanBruggen, *The Future of the Bible*, Thomas Nelson Inc., Nashville Tennessee 1978, 192 pp., price: \$4.50.

This is an interesting book which expands and brings together some of VanBruggen's earlier publications. Dr. VanBruggen, professor of New Testament at the seminary of our sister churches in Kampen, is to be commended with the publication of this book. The text is very neat, and the whole work is presented in a clear, descriptive style. His aim in this book is to provide some guidance to English speaking readers as to what Bible translation is to be preferred, and what things are important in judging a translation.

The aim of this book is not to defend the Authorized Version. VanBruggen simply wants to state some of the pre-requisites for proper Bible translation, and then to judge some of our versions according to the principles he has laid down. Some of the versions discussed are the King James Version, the Revised Standard Version, the New American Standard Bible, the New English Bible, the New International Version, Today's Living Bible, and Today's English Version (Good News for Modern Man). He concludes that the King James still

presents us with the most reliable version. Such versions as The Living Bible and Good News Bible should be avoided, because they are paraphrases rather than translations, and in many respects poor ones at that. His judgments with regard to the modern translations like RSV, NASB, and NIV are reserved, in some cases favourable. Accuracy and clarity are two main requirements to proper translation, and while the AV is stronger on one, the modern translations are stronger on the other point. Other important attributes are: faithfulness to form, authoritative and completeness.

The problematic aspect of the book is that VanBruggen's recommendations regarding translations are based on his view concerning the transmission of the text of the New Testament in the ancient languages. Prof. Selles has discussed this viewpoint of VanBruggen's in *Clarion* (Vol. 25, No. 14). Basically, this book defends the Majority text theory, i.e., the theory that what for years was the commonly received and accepted text is also the most accurate. It is, of course, difficult to speak with certainty here.

In discussing the history of Bible translation, VanBruggen also strongly defends the view that Bible translation is the task of the Church, and should

not be left to private groups or Bible Societies. The Word has been entrusted to the Church and therefore the Church is responsible for preaching, spreading, and translating it into the various languages of the peoples of the earth. He also says the Bible should not be translated in all languages, but preferably only in official, national languages. As a book of authority, it must carry its authority in its appearance and form.

On these points, too, one may raise certain questions. The task of translating the Bible is a vast and costly task requiring many people of knowledge and expertise. It was certainly a blessing when the King of England commissioned this task in 1611. And it would be hard for the Church here in Canada to produce its own Bible translation. We will always have problems with regard to acquiring a translation that is both accurate, clear, and faithful to the original.

Nonetheless, the opinions of Prof. VanBruggen are worthwhile to consider and anyone concerned with this field of Bible translation will benefit from his book, and will find it interesting. It also presents a lucid history of both problems and principles involved in this subject. On the whole, the work makes good reading. Recommended for the interested reader.

J. DE JONG

mission news

BRAZIL

FROM THE COUNCIL

Rev. Meijer wrote to Council about his trip to Curitiba, and, because of that and because he has been sick, there is no regular report from him.

He writes, "On February 27 we left Rio de Janeiro by bus, and on the 29th we arrived in Maragogi again. Unfortunately, I did not feel well, and I was tired. The first week of March the situation did not improve. We were thinking of flu, but the second week I became yellow; all the symptoms proved that it was jaundice. The doctor ordered some tests, and last Friday, the 21st, when we saw the results, he said that I had to keep to my bed. Since there are no medicines for jaundice, I have to rest . . . I don't know how long the rest period will take; it depends, of course, on the development of the disease. By the time you receive this letter, the situation hopefully will have improved."

Rev. Meijer also wrote that while visiting in Curitiba he had an opportunity to discuss with Rev. Oldenhuis and Rev. Simpelaar matters of common interest; he also went along with Rev. Oldenhuis to pick up the family van de Kamp in Rio de Janeiro. While there he visited the Mission Information Bureau in São Paulo and a Mr. Viana in Rio de Janeiro. This man had arranged for the documents of the Curitiba missionaries. Useful insights were obtained from these visits.

With respect to visas, Rev. Boersema wrote to Council March 13, 1980, "Our visas were refused for the same reason as the Meijers: lack of professional qualification. But ours had the additional words "from the point of view of immigration." The point is not that we are not qualified, but that our profession does not qualify for entry into Brazil. On Monday, March 10, we finalized (with the help of the lawyer) a request for reconsideration, similar to the one for the Meijers. This was accepted by the Federal Police, and we are now in the same situation as the Meijers.

In a letter to the Mission Board, Rev. Meijer indicated that with two Council men from São José he went to speak to the Vice-leader of the Legislative Assembly in Pernambuco.

This man has agreed to put his political cloak to work on their behalf. "Humanly speaking," Rev. Boersema writes, "he will be successful, unless there is absolutely no way that we get visas."

Obviously, much time is taken up by the matter of visas. However, the work is continuing as indicated by the report of Rev. Boersema.

We will continue to pray and work for the task that still lies ahead. The Lord will show us the way.

J. VanderLinde

J. Vanderstoep

FEBRUARY IN SÃO JOSÉ

This month was the month of testing. For the first time I had to do all the work of the missionary here. Would it be possible to do it all? There's the work of preparing for Sunday School, for evening worship, for Bible study, for Young People's Society, for Boys' and Girls' Club, as well as for congregational meetings and other meetings which are not organized on a regular basis. Such preparations take the usual time plus about as much time again exploring Portuguese dictionaries and grammars. Besides that, the sick and other members of the congregation have to be visited. The work of evangelism is also important. Nor do we forget the on-going labours for a church book in Portuguese, preparations for the congresses to be held this year, and the writing of letters as well as reports to Canada. The labours for the expansion of our ministry in other places surrounding São José also has our attention.

By the grace of the Lord we were allowed to do all the work. He allowed us to pass the test. How will it be in the future? On the one hand, the work load will increase, because our calling is to expand the work of the Lord here as much as possible. On the other hand, Portuguese will gradually come to us more easily, and every day we accumulate more background and materials in Portuguese which will make the preparations easier. We also work for and pray that the Brazilians will also help out more and more. As I am writing this, I hear the steady pounding of the typewriter. One of the

members of the church is learning how to type. She wants to help out. Presently, I spend some five or six hours a week typing and duplicating materials for Young People's, Boys' and Girls' Club, and Sunday School.

February was a rainy month. The winter seems to have arrived very early. However, it has not dampened our spirits or hampered the work of the Lord. Nor could the absurdities of carnival really hurt the work, although some of the people who are somewhat interested in the church, and come on an infrequent basis, did not come around carnival time.

Let me now point out the highlights of this month. The societies all began their meetings again after the Summer break. For the first time the young people elected their own board; president, secretary, and treasurer. The president is learning how to lead the meetings and shortly he will be completely in charge. I will no longer conduct the meetings or give the explanations of the Bible passages. Instead, I prepare an explanation with questions for discussion which is duplicated and distributed to the members who study it at home. One has to make an essay, and the explanation is also read at the meeting. The young people are very enthusiastic about taking their own responsibilities, although things are not yet running all that well. They need time to learn.

On February 7 we had our monthly congregational meeting. We had a good discussion about the Christian discipline of our children. In the discussion a lot of complaints came to the fore about the discipline in the schools. There was considerable interest in a Christian school as the right solution. So, it was decided that five people should work on the matter. They should work out the first steps concerning how to proceed in order to improve the Christian education of our children. These people have met in the meantime and will propose to start a society for the promotion of the education of our children with a three-point program: 1. helping the parents to involve themselves more directly with the education of their children at home; 2. giving supplementary education, besides the present school; 3. organize a Christian school. Of course, it will be a long, hard road to follow. Especially when we consider that some of these people do not even

have enough money for their daily bread.

Do not misunderstand. We are not asking for money for a Christian school. There are other things which come first. The regular mission budget can receive much more support and could be expanded many times over. Mission Aid is helping to provide the very basics for food and health. This aspect of the work can also easily be multiplied greatly. As basic and important as a Christian school is, the work of mission and what the mission aid is doing still need much more support.

At our congregational meetings we have been talking several times about the communion of saints. We also mentioned how important it was to visit one another, but little seemed to come of it. One of the members, Maria Cassimiro, has an elderly husband who suffered a stroke and is paralyzed on his right side. Because she does not want to leave him alone, she has come to church only once in two months. At the last meeting I

mentioned how she ought to be visited. Then the suggestion was made that we should mark a time for any members who want to get together to visit: this is a practice among other churches here. We decided on Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock.

For four Sundays now we have gone visiting with a group of five or six. We read a part of the Bible, sing a hymn, and then spend some time in prayer with various members praying. Sometimes we sing another three or four hymns. We very much enjoy this time of fellowship together and those who are visited are even more thankful. We first visited Seu Jaime who is blind. It was the second visit from a church member he received in two years. That evening he talked to several people at church about how wonderful the visit was. The husband of Maria Cassimiro was in tears when we left his house after visiting him.

Another important development of this month was a meeting of the men of the church to study together

for the training of office-bearers. All the men were there, as well as one who is not yet a member, but is enrolled in the membership class and shows much interest. We first dealt with Acts 6 and saw how, although a missionary is not an apostle, he must devote his time to the ministry of the word and prayer and does not have time to do all the work of the church. Then we turned to I Timothy 3:8-13 and discussed the requirements for a deacon. In the last part of the evening we read together and briefly discussed the first two articles of the Belgic Confession. There was much appreciation for the meeting and the decision was taken to meet every two weeks to continue this work.

So the Lord's work grows. We pray that it may also grow much more in numbers. There are so many thousands around us who are without hope in the world. Let's all multiply our prayers and our dedication of this battle of the Lord.

Ralph Boersema

Minister's Workshop

On January 7, 1980, the ministers in Ontario held their semi-annual workshop in our college building. Our convenor, Rev. Werkman, asked us to sing Psalm 16:1, 5. He then read Psalm 16 and led in prayer. He welcomed all the ministers and students present.

In the morning Prof. H.M. Ohmann submitted his speech entitled, "Life and the Hereafter in the Old Testament: Death, Grave, and Sheol." There are plans to publish this speech in the ministerial paper, *Koinonia*.

For the benefit of those reading these lines who will not be able to read this speech we give a brief overview. Against the dark background of paganism we see life and death in the Old Testament as two extremes or opposites, related to good and evil, or to blessing and cursing, respectively. Life is never just mere existence in the Old Testament. Consider Psalm 34:12,

Who is the man who desires life,
And loves length of days that he may see good?

Life is akin to happiness and bliss. It is positive. Overly-pious souls have downplayed this positive idea of life, while they consider only life after death as deserving such a positive definition.

In dealing with Genesis 2:7,

Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Our speaker stressed that this does not teach a dichotomy (man is made of two separate parts). God formed a complete physical man, but yet, apart from breath, he remains dust. With breath the puppet starts to live.

What happens when man dies? The Old Testament says that God takes away his *ruach* or spirit, or his *nephesh* or soul. Our speaker pointed out how natural this expression is. Concerning the state of the deceased after death, the professor said:

For the umpteenth time it is necessary to state that the Bible does not speak the language of science, but simply the language of observation, expressing itself in the terms, notions, words of the people of those times, the God of the Scriptures accommodating Himself to the level of their understanding. And please let us not look down on it as on an outmoded point of view, as modernist theologians are in the habit of doing. We only become convinced of how necessary the knowledge and study of the original languages in which the Bible was revealed really is. Let the student and the minister fight his

inborn easygoingness, not to say laziness! . . . What exactly can we tell, how much do we know as to be really able to describe the condition of those deceased in the hereafter? We only can go by what the New Testament revelation of 2000 years ago is pleased to tell us in the language of those days.

About the place of the dead, the Old Testament again attached much importance to what was visible and tangible. Thoughts about the dead pivoted around the grave. To be deprived of a decent burial was a curse and a shame.

About the term "sheol" our professor took us on an extensive word-study tour through the Old Testament. It can refer to the deepest place, as opposed to heaven, the highest place (Isaiah 7:11). Or it is the insatiable monster (Proverbs 1:12; 30:16). It is often used to express the power of death and the abode of the godless (Isaiah 14:9ff.). It is under the control of God. In a certain sense all people go to "sheol," which is then identical to death and the grave. The righteous often rejoiced when God redeemed them from "sheol" (see Psalm 16). And the New Testament sheds much redemptive light on these passages such as Psalm 16.

In the discussion our speaker confirmed that there are various aspects to the one word "sheol." Questions

MINISTER'S WORKSHOP — *Cont'd.*

about the use of etymologies, the Old Testament world-view, the phrase "he was gathered to his people," Jesus' words as recorded in Matthew 22:32, the indestructibility of the *ruach* or soul, and the words of Jesus — "Lord, into thy hands I commend my soul" and "Today you will be with me in paradise" — from the cross, were all amply discussed and hopefully answered satisfactorily.

The wives of the professors served us a hearty lunch. Lunchtime with its table-talk is always a pleasure.

In the afternoon, Rev. J. Mulder continued our discussion on "Catechetical Instruction." As the attentive reader may remember, we had previously discussed the wider subject of catechesis. However, we wanted to zero in on a common method and possibly a common catechetical textbook. With respect to this the decisions of General Synods 1971 and 1974 were recalled. Various methods were again described and discussed. Rev. G. VanDooren promised to submit a sample of lesson plans on a number of Lord's Days for such a textbook.

The next workshop will be held on June 9, 1980. Rev. VanOene would be asked to introduce a topic. Our ministerial paper was discussed and hopefully it can be published regularly from now on. After singing and thanksgiving we left one another again.

For the workshop,
W. HUIZINGA

APOLOGY

Our sincere apologies to br. and sr. F.G. Bouwkamp and br. and sr. L. Oostenbrug for the error we made in the May 17th issue of *Clarion*. The two pictures accompanying their anniversary notices on pages 232 and 233 were inadvertently interchanged.

— The Publishers

CORRECTION:

In *Clarion*, Vol. 28, No. 9 an error was made in the article "Remarks on Letters Received Concerning the New Hymn Section" by M.M. deGroot in column 3, paragraph 1 which should have read: "In this book you will find pages with the musical lines (of the Genevan Psalter with underneath the corresponding lines) of the Roman Catholic mass (Gregorian!)."

ONCE MORE

“THE REVISED HYMN SECTION”

By now, our churches have been able to use and test this Section of our Provisional Report in our church services. Although in some letters received our committee was commended for the tremendous effort that has been put into this work, there were also a considerable number of writers who were not happy with the contents of the "green booklet." The main stumbling block seems to be that many hymns are written in the old notation, a change sometimes quite different from the well-known accepted versions.

On account of these changes, there is a great deal of confusion in the liturgical singing of these hymns.

I have therefore been instructed by the committee to advise the organists to use the Music Edition of the Revised Hymn Section in our church services. In it you will find most hymns as

we know them. A copy of this publication may be ordered in writing the Publication Committee, Box 854, Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Y7. The price is \$4.00 plus \$0.60 postage.

It all shows that we are not yet ready with this delicate part of our work. We assume that all aspects of musical, doctrinal, and linguistic nature have been brought to our attention and therefore are not accepting any more criticisms.

Taking into consideration all suggestions and comments for improvement, the committee will examine in detail all hymns with careful and critical attention, in order to make the necessary changes, which, hopefully, will bring about overall approval.

M.M. DE GROOT
Member of the Committee
for the Church Book.

SUBMISSIONS FOR “CLARION”

From time to time we receive submissions from our readers for publication in *Clarion*. Sometimes such submissions are introductions which were read at society meetings, sometimes they are translations of articles which appeared in the Dutch press; sometimes they are written especially for our magazine.

We welcome contributions, for they may help us to cover a wide field of topics and even to widen it.

We must, however, request contributors to bear a few things in mind.

An introduction, although perhaps much appreciated by the society, is not necessarily material suited for publication.

A submission may have to wait for a few issues because of other copy which should be published first, and it may have "outlived" its immediate appeal because of that waiting period.

Oftentimes submissions must be almost totally re-written because they cannot be published in their presented form and structure. We lack the time to take on that additional workload.

We do not have the time either to explain the reasons why a certain submitted article has not been published;

much less do we have the time to enter into a discussion about that.

We also lack the time to type and correct handwritten submissions. Sometimes we can hardly decipher the handwriting, and do not dare to submit such a document to the printer, even if we should consider it suitable for publication.

For the above and other reasons the following rules will be followed.

1. Submissions must be type-written, one-and-a-half or double-spaced. Only one side of the paper should be used.

2. Submissions will not be acknowledged. If a submitted article is not published within four months, the conclusion may be drawn that it will not appear in print.

3. No correspondence will be conducted about the reason(s) for non-publication.

* * *

Articles for publication and correspondence should be sent to:

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

vO

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Did you have a good time on Victoria Day?

Did you remember we have the holiday to celebrate the Queen's birthday?

Victoria Day is called after Queen Victoria who lived when your great-grandmothers were little girls.

But today on Victoria Day we celebrate our own Queen's birthday.

What did you do at her birthday party?

We're all interested in hearing how our Busy Beavers across Canada enjoyed Victoria Day.

Let's hear from you!

Here's the address:

Aunt Betty
Box 54,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7

Busy Beaver *Irene De Jong* has a fanciful poem for you all. Thanks for sharing, Irene.

A Strange Man

1. In the woods stood Mr. Pepperpot,
A very strange man.
All the children liked him a lot
For on his head he wore a can.
2. He lives in his cottage, all alone,
Except for his dog,
Who gnaws on his bone,
And a teeny, tiny groundhog.
3. He cooked his food with a lot of pepper,
He was by himself.
He had a lot of pepperpots on his shelf.
That's where he got his name!

And Busy Beaver *Michelle Van Egmond* has another spring poem for us. I think you'll enjoy it, too. Thanks, Michelle.

Spring

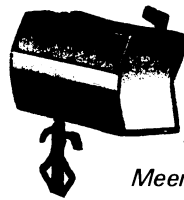
The birds do sing.
The flowers do bloom.
The sun starts to shine
into my room.

The trees start to bud.
Fun and laughter does ring
All to show the coming
of glorious Spring!

* * * * *

Now to wish all you lucky Busy Beavers with a birthday this month of June a very, very happy day! We hope you all have a very good time with your family and friends. May the Lord bless and keep you all, also in the year ahead. Many happy returns of the day!

Henry Dekker	June 1	Jacob Jongs	June 20
Doane de Witt	2	Catherine Smouter	20
Gerrilynn Huizinga	3	Debbie Medemblik	21
Marcelle Lindhout	3	Joyce Dalhuizen	21
Arlene Buist	6	Marianne Bergsma	22
Rosalinde Moeliker	7	Joyce Pegelder	23
Carina Ploeger	10	Lynda Van Middelkoop	24
Calvin Lodder	11	Karen Gay Barendregt	26
Julia Huttema	12	Miriam Vanderwerf	26
Jason Klaver	13	Cathy Dalhuizen	28
Linda Van Dyk	14	Debbie De Boer	28
Cheryl Hansma	17	Harold Jansen	28



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Shona Meerstra*. We are happy to have you join us! You're a real Busy Beaver already, I see, sending us a puzzle. Keep up the good work, Shona!

And a big welcome to you, too, *Helena Hamoen*. Thank you very much for the poem, and also for your contribution to our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT! How do you like helping with the animals? Do you go to the barn very often? Bye for now, Helena.

Hello, *Francine Medemblik*. It was nice to hear from you again. And I see you're a member of the Busy Beaver Bird Watching Club, too. Good for you! Thanks for your contribution to the BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT, Francine. Write again soon.

Did you clean the fish you caught, *Doane de Witt*? If you did I think you're very brave! And how about eating it! Did your family enjoy it? Have a nice birthday, Doane. Will you be going fishing?

Thanks for the puzzle, *Peter de Witt*. I hope you'll have a really good time when your Oma comes to visit. What kind of fish did you catch, Peter?

How are your new friends at school doing, *Elaine Hamoen*. Do you think they're used to your school already? I hope you had a good birthday, Elaine. What did you call your new dog?

Are you keeping all of Buffy's kittens, *Michelle Van Egmond*? I'm glad you liked your little prize. Watch closely, we'll have more contests! All the Busy Beavers think they're fun. Thanks for your very nice poem Michelle.

Hello, *Cynthia Oosterveld*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thanks for the riddles. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will enjoy them, too. Bye for now.

Thanks for the puzzle, *John Linde*. You're a real Busy Beaver, I see. What do you do when you help in the barn on Saturdays, John? I'm curious how you help look after the pigs!

QUIZ TIME

First some riddles for you, from Busy Beaver *Cynthia Oosterveld*. Are you ready?

1. What did one penny say to the other penny?
2. What did one toe say to the other toe?
3. What band can't you play?
4. What is black and white and read all over?
5. What is black and white and red all over?
6. Where do you bring a sick ship?