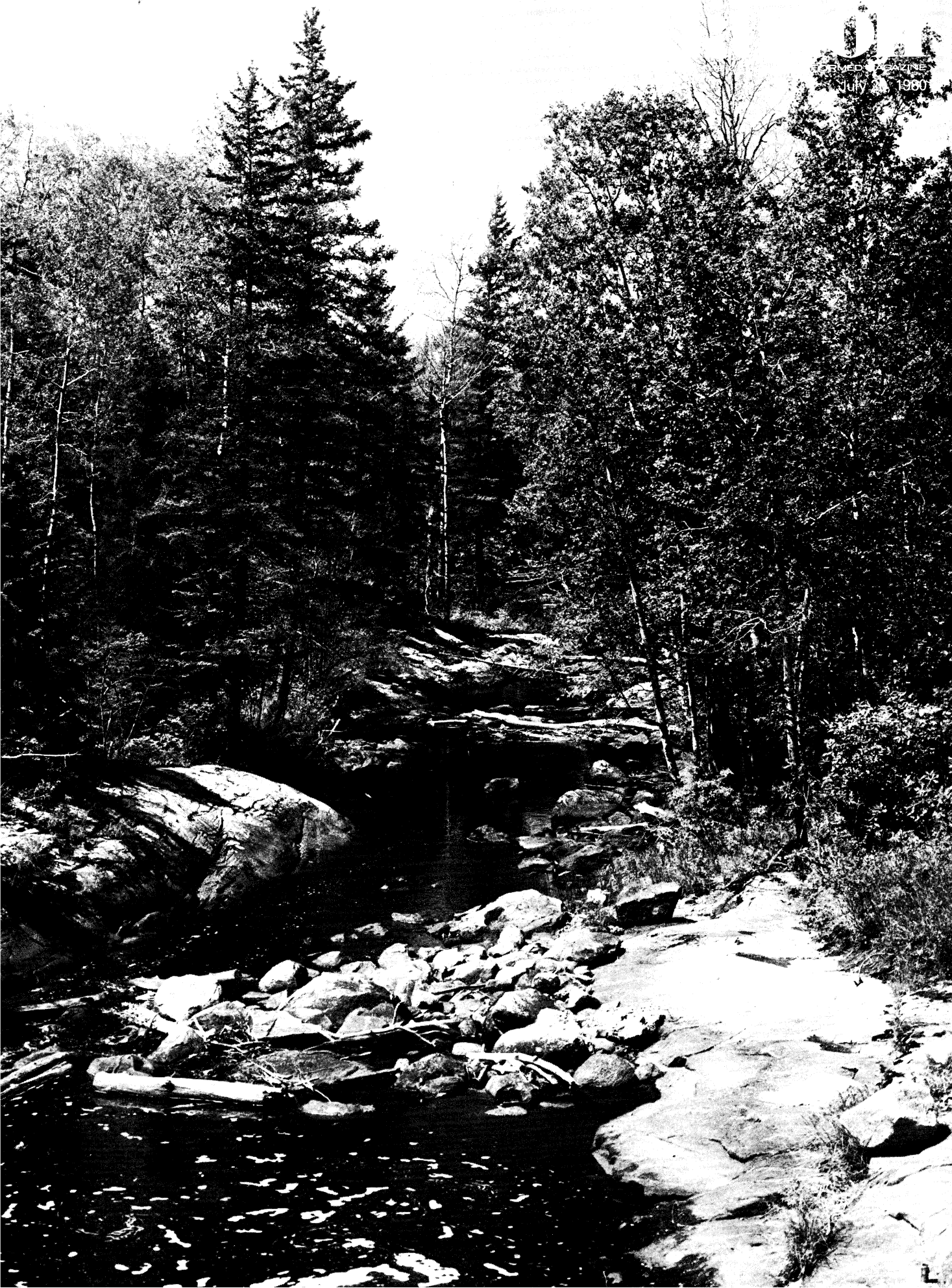


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July 1980



Refinished Treasures

(Revision of Creeds, Forms and Prayers)

During the last week our family had a pleasant experience. It was the first full week of school holidays and my wife skillfully organized some worthwhile jobs around the house. Our sturdy Dutch furniture, bought more than twenty-five years ago, had been reallocated to the basement when we emigrated to Canada. Often we had planned to discard it, but, you know, sentimental reasons restrain sometimes even us. To make my story short, in the past week our old-fashioned mahogany table underwent a face-lift, and we are quite excited about the result: the cosmetic changes make the grain of the wood stand out beautifully and the fresh varnish gives it a sparkling glow.

During the same week our Theological College was the forwarding office of the Committee on Translation and Revision of Confessional and Liturgical Forms. The churches will receive a second package of reports about the work of "refinishing" our beloved, but centuries old, confessions and forms. Although the work could not entirely be completed at this time either, the list of reports is impressive. The Confession of Faith is "redone" up till Article 23, and the Canons of Dort have been linguistically revised as far as the positive articles are concerned. There is a new translation of the Forms for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the installation of ministers, the ordination of elders and deacons, and readmission into the Church of Christ. Moreover, the Committee prepared an abbreviated Form for the Lord's Supper and rewrote the prayers for the ecclesiastical assemblies, etc. With this second harvest, Forms and Prayers are finished, while Articles 24-37 of the Confession of Faith, and the Rejection of Errors of the Canons of Dort must still be done. The Committee did not yet give a new translation of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds either. Nevertheless, the churches have to do enough homework to keep us busy until the synod of 1983.

Let us glance through the papers that are now laying on the desks of all our elders and deacons. The most important reports are those about our confessions; less important are the Forms, although every Sunday some are used quite frequently. In their new clothing the prayers possibly receive some attention, too. Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer have been maintained.

Basic for the translation of the Confession of Faith is the text of the Synod of Dordrecht 1618/1619. In this part of the Belgic Confession, Articles 14-23, the deliberate choice for this text is important especially for Article 16, the article about God's election. Our readers possibly remember that I wrote about the differences in the texts of 1561 and of 1618/1619 in connection with Report 33 of Synod 1979 of the Christian Reformed Church. Although I do not acknowledge a difference in principle — as Report 33 alleges there to be — the formulation of 1618 is more clear and concise. There is, however, one occasion in which our Committee preferred the original text of Guido de Brès of 1561. It is in the well-known words of Article 15 about original sin, where the present text reads: "Nor is it *altogether* abolished or *wholly* eradicated even by baptism." The proposed text is as follows: "It is not abolished

nor eradicated by baptism." This prevents the misunderstanding as if original sin is partly taken away by baptism as such.

This example makes it clear that the churches do well to scrutinize the proposed text of the Confession and the Canons. The Scripture references in the margin of the Confession and the headings of the Canons, now added, are an asset; but decisive is the answer to the question whether or not the Committee left the contents of these treasured documents of our Christian faith intact. The grain of our confessions should come out, even more clearly than before.

We now go the reports about the Forms. The mandate of the Committee was "to *revise* the Liturgical Forms and to update the language, especially the Form for the Holy Supper and the Form for the Solemnization of Marriage." The Committee read in the word that I underlined that, while the work on the Confessions had to be a new translation, the Forms could be subject to a revision. Not without reason, the Form for the Lord's Supper and the Marriage Form were mentioned in particular. With respect to the first the churches are in need of an abbreviated form, and the exegesis of some Scripture references in the wedding form had been the object of criticism.

The Committee now followed the line of our Dutch sister churches in drafting a shorter form for the Lord's Supper. New is the element of the expectation of Christ's coming:

Christ has commanded us to celebrate the Lord's Supper until He comes. We receive at His table a foretaste of the abundant joy which He has promised and look forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb when He will drink the wine new with us in the Kingdom of His Father. Let us rejoice and give Him the glory, for the marriage feast of the Lamb is coming!

The Committee regarded this element such an improvement that it inserted this passage into the existing form. The churches have to make a considerate decision about this and to inform the corresponding sister churches abroad. Another striking new aspect of these forms will undoubtedly be the use of the RSV in the liturgical formula "The bread which we break is a participation in the body of Christ . . . The cup of blessing, for which we give thanks, is a participation in the blood of Christ." Older members of the congregation will have to get used to the contemporary expression of "participation" instead of "communion." The words "for which we give thanks" are easier to understand than the present clause "which we bless." The last feature in these Forms to which I draw your attention is that the profession of our catholic undoubted Christian faith is lifted out of the prayer and that the Forms state that after the prayer the Apostles' Creed may be recited by the minister, said in unison, or sung by the congregation. I for one am convinced that the present expression "of which we make confession with heart *and* mouth" in the sixteenth century was meant to exhort the congregation to recite the Creed *together*. In a period in which many people could not read, the liturgy in the church had also a paedagogic element in teaching the people by repeating and

having them repeat the three summaries, i.e., the Creed, the Ten Words, and the Lord's Prayer. Saying the Creed in unison the congregation would not fall back into Romish customs but express the communal character of our catholic faith. The Committee also opens the possibility that the Creed is sung (Hymn 1) on the melody composed by J. Schouten in 1966, as is done in some congregations sometimes or always in the afternoon. Many more details could be pointed out but we proceed to the Forms for the ordination of office-bearers.

The Form for the installation of ministers in the Word has a new Christological beginning: The exalted Christ gathers His church through His Word and Spirit, and in His grace uses the ministry of man (Ephesians 4:11, 12). "As the Chief Shepherd, in unceasing care for His flock, He appoints shepherds to take heed to the flock in His Name. They take care of the sheep of Christ by means of the proclamation of the Word, by the administration of the sacraments, by prayers and pastoral supervision. In this way the flock is fed and led in the paths of righteousness." It will be interesting to study this revised Form, to compare it with the present edition, and to see whether we made Scriptural gain. If I understand the work of the Committee well, it was their aim to utilize direct Scripture references instead of expounding an allegory of the minister as a shepherd. As far as the laying on of hands is concerned, a note simply states that this shall not take place in the case of those who are already in the ministry. It does not say as the present Form that "the minister who asked these questions of him, or another *minister*, if there are other *ministers* present, shall lay his hands upon his head." In the light of I Timothy 4:14 I cannot see any reason why the elders of the congregation should be excluded from the laying on of hands on the head of a young minister who is ordained for the first time. The revised Form does at least not forego this possibility, although it would be orderly if a general ruling would be made.

The most conspicuous aspect of the revised Form for the ordination of elders and deacons is the reference to the Old Testament:

The people of God have never been without elders. The Lord told Moses to gather the elders of Israel together in Egypt and to inform them of His promises to deliver them from bondage. These elders were with Moses in the desert. The LORD told them to select from their midst seventy men to bear the burden of the people with him. In this manner the Form goes on to relate the redemptive-

historical position of the elders in the Old Dispensation, the rejection of the Christ also by the elders of God's people, and their replacement by the elders of the New Testament Church. A similar approach from the history of God's revelation is made with respect to the office of deacons.

Concerning the ministry of mercy, assigned to the deacons, the LORD impressed upon His people Israel to show mercy to the needy. Moses did not tire to repeat the command that the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow might eat within their towns and be filled. In the old dispensation the needy and suffering were protected and provided for by God's fatherly love. His ordinances taught the covenant people to imitate that love as beloved children.

The Lord Jesus Christ, Who has shown us the Father, came into the world to serve. In His mercy He fed the hungry, healed the sick and showed compassion for the afflicted. Thus He gave an example that His church should do likewise.

The ministry of mercy as assigned to the deacons, proceeds therefore from this love of our Saviour. These samples of our revised Forms may whet your appetite.

I would like to make a few remarks in conclusion. First, our churches should not be in a hurry but, nevertheless, act in an energetic manner. Synod Smithville should not try to check the entire work of the Committee, but give a general judgment about the question whether the Forms and the Prayers — the parts of our *Book of Praise* that are completed in translation and revision — may be multiplied in a temporary fashion and used by the churches in order to test them thoroughly. A following synod — 1983, the Lord willing — could then make a definite decision. Would it not be wise in the meantime to inform our corresponding sister churches abroad about the work that is being done? The last Synod did not make a decision about this point, but our Dutch sister churches expressed a desire to receive these reports and especially our Australian sister churches should not feel left out, even in the preparatory stages. We hope to use the same *Book of Praise* for many decades to come, and we, Canadians, should at least listen to remarks from "down South." But the main point now was to arouse your interest and to make this translation and revision of our creeds and confessions, our forms and prayers, a point of communal care. Let us refinish our God-given treasures and enjoy the deep grains of their solid contents.

J. FABER

ARTICLE XIV, BELGIC CONFESSION

Present Text

THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN AND HIS INCAPACITY TO PERFORM WHAT IS TRULY GOOD

We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after His own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will agreeably to the will of God. But being in honour he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but wilfully subjected himself to sin and consequently to death, and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil.

Draft

THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN AND HIS INCAPABILITY OF DOING WHAT IS TRULY GOOD

We believe that God created man of dust from the ground and He made and formed him after His own image and likeness good, righteous and holy. His will could conform to the will of God in every aspect. But when man was in this high position he did not appreciate it nor did he value his excellency. He lent his ears to the words of the devil and wilfully subjected himself to sin and consequently to death and the curse.

Ministers' Workshop

Rev. G. VanDooren, filling in as chairman, opened the workshop by asking us to sing Psalm 19:3, 4, and by reading from Psalm 119. He leads in prayer. Fourteen ministers are present. A new chairman is first of all elected. Happily we welcome our new convenor, Rev. Cl. Stam. A special welcome was extended to Rev. Pouwelse who attends these workshops for the first time.

In the morning Rev. W.W.J. VanOene introduced, "Legalism and Liberalism in the Application of the Law: The Scripture Cannot be Broken." After an introduction our speaker noted how someone sometimes enjoys pleasures or practices which another considers a flagrant violation of the law of God. He pointed to the puritans (1550-1650) who often selected Old Testament laws or rules and simply imposed them on men without seeing these as fulfilled in Christ.

Our speaker then entered a discussion concerning the law. What is it? After explaining how it can refer to the ten words of the covenant or to the five Books of Moses or to the whole Old Testament, he prefers the wider reference to the whole Bible as a unity. The Scriptures cannot be broken. He deplores the fact that the ten commandments are treated as though they are an entity which can be lifted out of their Old Testament context without doing any damage to them. No, leave them in their context! Also, he laments and rejects the distinction of the different uses of the law and the three types of law — civil, ceremonial and moral. No, the whole Old Testament foreshadows Christ and the redemption which He brought. The whole law showed the riches of salvation. It strengthened the covenant people to fight the battles of the LORD in their maintenance of the antithesis announced in Genesis 3:15.

Having explained the term, "law," he investigated the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament. John 1:17 — "for the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" — received attention. In explaining this text the conclusion was drawn that the fulfilment of the Old Testament came through Jesus Christ. Colossians 2:16, 17 confirms this. Then the expression, "Christ is the end of the law," came

under consideration. Various commentators' views were quoted. Our speaker chose the explanation that "the end" means "the end goal," "aim," or "fulfilment." Article 25 of our Belgic Confession was quoted to show how we should use the Old Testament today. The WHOLE Old Testament is binding on us today in, through and via Christ. They are God's Words which cannot be broken. Though the shadows are abolished for usage by the church, yet their message as fulfilled in Christ is still binding on us today. We must read the Old Testament as the remnant of the seed of the woman, as followers of Christ.

Our speaker gave some examples of how these principles must be applied. He referred to the fourth word of the covenant, expressing happiness with its explanation in Lord's Day 38 of the Heidelberg Catechism. The year of the jubilee has arrived with Christ Who brought the deliverance and freedom foreshadowed in the Old Testament so that "*all the days of my life I rest from my evil works . . .*"

During a noon intermission we enjoyed a hearty lunch served by Mrs. J. Faber and Mrs. H.M. Ohmann. After the "three uses of the intermission — relief, refreshment and recreation" (guess who said it?) came to an end, we returned to the discussion of the morning speech.

In order to give an uninterrupted report of the discussion we first of all jumped ahead to lunch, but now we will go back to "appetizer."

A long and thorough discussion ensued about the question whether the "summary of the law" should be read after the law in the worship services. The speaker defended the viewpoint that no summary should be read. Others thought that the summary of Christ shows harmony between Old Testament and New Testament and it also prevents legalism, i.e.: going only by the letter of the law. Another reminds us that the origin of the reading the summary in the liturgy goes back to the false dilemma between Old and New Testaments. This person introduces the ten words by "God *speaks* all these words . . ." while another says "God *spoke* all these words . . ." Yet another overcomes the difficulty by leaving out such an announcement

altogether. As you can tell, each method has some virtue but it cannot convey the whole truth of God's rich Word.

Secondly, it was asked that, if the whole Old Testament is still binding, what becomes of Romans 7:4, Hebrews 8:6, 13, and Galatians 3:23ff? Our speaker reiterated his comments with respect to this intricate relationship between the Old and New Testaments.

The practical application of this speech came up next for discussion. Is it legalistic to say, on the basis of Deuteronomy 22:5 for instance, that women should not wear pants? How do these principles apply on questionable issues such as possession of a T.V., theatre-attendance, observance of feast-days, dancing, etcetera? One answer to this was that the pharisee was concerned about the liberty others took, while the publican looked at himself. Another contributor to the discussion added his fears of legalism, and the adoption of a set of rules which would spell a return to a pharisaical yoke. But someone else stressed that love meant the keeping of God's commandments. We need to strive for holiness and for separation from worldliness. How does one avoid false dilemmas, though? One church member liberally enjoys holidays down south while another fulminates against the practice. Here you touch the heart of the topic: legalism and liberalism in the application of the law. To answer this, Romans 14 and 15, about the weak and the strong, is used. However, it is also stated that Paul admonishes the brothers not to *take* offense as much as he warns against *giving* offense. If we are in Christ, our love and thankfulness will be displayed in our Christian distinctiveness, another points out.

At 3:30 p.m. we stopped the discussion in order to make arrangements for the following meeting which will be held, the Lord willing, January 12, 1981, at 10:00 a.m. Rev. G. VanDooren will introduce "Catechetical Instruction" in the morning and Rev. M. VanBeveren will speak on "The Strong and the Weak' in Paul." Our magazine, *Koinonia*, was discussed. A new issue was passed out and will be mailed to all ministers. Though it is only a modest effort, yet we strive to keep a high standard, since we send it to other theological institutions. After praise and prayer we dispersed to our families and churches.

For the workshop,
W. HUIZINGA

The Beauty of Reformed Liturgy 7

The main part of Part 6 was dedicated to a plea to restore the ancient "public confession of sins" with the various parts: the Law, prayer of confession, proclamation of pardoning grace, song of thanksgiving. We now come to the main part, the "first" in Lord's Day 38 of the Heidelberg Catechism: "to learn God's Word."

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

The third "block" of liturgical elements in the covenantal, corporate worship service circles around the sermon. One should not expect an elaborate treatment of preaching in this series. That is a topic by itself and could easily fill fifty-two articles. Be it only stated that we as Reformed believers still consider the sermon to be the most important part of the service. All other elements must serve to bring out this very heart of our meeting with the LORD in full force. Catechism Lord's Day 38 mentions this as the first purpose why we attend the church of God diligently. "Oncing" is therefore out! Would we dare to let the LORD talk to empty pews?

One may ask whether we were faithful to the priority of preaching in the previous articles, where so much stress was laid on, first, the opening elements, and second, the public profession of sins.

Our answer is not only that these two parts, as described, need not take all that much time. Our answer is rather that those, who stubbornly cling to what is thought to be the *old* order, but which is in fact of later date, postpone the ministry of the Word unduly. They want the "long prayer" for all the needs of christendom *before* the sermon. In addition they also put the offertory before the sermon, contrary to the order of Lord's Day 38. And on top of that they put all this in between the two elements that should not be separated: the public reading of the Scriptures and the preaching.

Without arguing further about these matters (enough was said in previous articles), we now proceed to the *Ministry of the Word*, which consists of these components:

1. Brief prayer before the sermon (B)
2. Public Reading of the Scriptures (A)
3. A Psalm that leads to the text (B)

4. Text and Sermon (A)

5. The Amen of the Congregation (B).

This order is not "infallible." Some might prefer to put the "Brief Prayer before the Sermon" between the reading of the Scriptures and the sermon; in other words, right before the sermon. We will discuss the five parts in the order given.

BRIEF PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON (B)

This prayer should be brief, as brief as the model given in the *Book of Praise*, on page 476. A second example is given on page 481. It is a prayer for the opening of the Scriptures, the opening of the mouth of the preacher, and the opening of our hearts so that the seed may fall in good soil, well-prepared.

We should be excused for one additional remark. When at *this* (late) moment we pray to the Lord, "Open now the mouth of Thy servant . . .," we cannot mean that this servant may not have a cold, a sore throat, and is able to read literally a document that could be sent straight to the printer. We like to speak about "preparation" and "delivery" of the sermon. The former means that the preacher has worked hard and prepared himself well, which also means prayerfully. Whatever he takes along to the pulpit — an outline, some notes, or nothing at all — he has all that he has prepared at his fingertips. Now he faces the congregation; he looks into their hearts, their souls, and within this contact he "delivers" the sermon, the message. Only in this way will there be two-way traffic (more on this below). Only then will he need this prayer. I still hear elders pray before the service for "*indachtigmakende genade*" for the minister: that God in His grace may grant him to remember what he had prepared in his study. He wouldn't need such grace if he had every single word in front of him. A minister who, well-prepared, enters the pulpit for a free delivery, needs this prayer to the full.

PUBLIC READING OF THE SCRIPTURES (A)

In our College Library we have several volumes on preaching and

"The Fine Art of Christian Worship" that deal extensively with this important part of the service; some call it "the most important part" because in this part the LORD God speaks directly to us in His own words.

Some remarks are in order. The first one is that this expression is taken from *1 Timothy 4:13*, "Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching." The Early Church took this custom over from the synagogue, where in every service the Law was read and then the Prophets. Rev. G. Van Rongen, in his *Liturgy of God's Covenant*, pp. 23/4 says many worthwhile things about this (maybe) oldest part of corporate worship. First he asks, "Why break in on the reading and preaching of God's Word by means of prayer [he must mean here the "long prayer," vD] and — even worse! — by the offerings and singing?" Then he refers to Luke 4 and Acts 13 to show how this reading of



THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Published bi-weekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Second class mail registration number 1025.

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
1249 Plessis Road,
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2C 3L9
Phone: (204) 222-5218

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION
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Fergus, Ontario, Canada N1M 2W7

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SUBSCRIPTIONS:
\$19.50 per year (to be paid in advance).
Foreign Countries: Seamail — \$30.00
Airmail — \$39.00

ISSN 0383-0438

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what we now call the Old Testament was rightaway followed by preaching. Quoting Paul more accurately, we should speak of "Public Reading of Scripture" (singular), thus stressing that God's Word, now completed with the New Testament, is *one* "scripture," containing the Law, the Prophets, and their fulfilment in Christ. As such it is the *Covenant* Word, containing the Covenant Law, the prophetic preaching to keep the Covenant, and the New Covenant that replaced the Old. Also for this reason careful attention to the public reading of Scripture fits within the context of Reformed or covenantal worship.

Although this reading of Scripture stems from Old Testament times, we do not propose to do it the same way, i.e., a continuous reading according to a one or three-year program. The minister selects the passages in harmony with his text and sermon. The rule should be at least two passages, one from the Old, one from the New Testament. In *Van Zijn Schone Dienst*, Rev. Van Rongen pleads for a "redemptive-historical" combination of passages, meaning that the New Testament passage shows the fulfilment of the Old Testament Scripture. That's why we spoke of a "careful selection." When the text is chosen from the Old Testament, the New Testament passage could be read first, because we deem it of importance that the reading of Scripture concludes with the text. In the P.M. service at least three passages should be chosen which throw light upon the doctrine confessed in Lord's Day number such-and-such.

Careful selection is not enough. Careful preparation of public reading is also a must. Nothing is worse than hearing the minister stumble over a sentence, put the emphasis in the wrong place, making mistakes. He should read and re-read the passages in his study, maybe aloud. After all, it is God's own Word that he is going to read solemnly and forcefully to His people! Only then — and all Bibles in the pews are open, of course! — can this part of the liturgy become impressive and a blessing to all who hear it. It will not, if the public reading of Scripture is considered as a necessary "evil"(!), be rushed through in a hurry to come to the sermon.

SINGING (B)

We have put singing of a Psalm or Hymn after the reading of Scripture, for a personal reason. When, years ago, we started with the order of liturgy as

proposed in these articles, we "lost" one occasion for the congregation to sing. We think we should sing much in church. We made up for it by choosing a Psalm (like from Psalm 119, etc.) in which the congregation can express her eagerness to hear the message that now will be brought to them. It underlines the brief prayer before the sermon. Everyone is free to stick exactly to what Rev. Van Rongen wrote: no separation of reading and preaching.

TEXT AND SERMON (A) [and (B)!]

The reason for mentioning the text (which was already heard during the reading of Scripture) is that the reading does not always end with the text. And even if it does, a repetition of the text, especially when the reading was followed by singing, is no luxury: everyone should have the words of the text clearly in his mind, now that the sermon starts.

It may not be superfluous to point out that a "text" is not a "verse." Sometimes it is, more often it is a passage. "Text" comes from *textus*, which means a woven unit, which in its turn is woven into the whole of Scripture, and then must be woven into the sermon.

It is not so easy to give a *definition of a sermon*. The "classic" one is "explication and application of God's Word in the text." It sounds simple enough, but it is not really that simple. Once we tried to formulate a "complete" definition in the College; we already had a whole page full and still realized that such a long definition still did not say everything that should be said. We are not going into that "problem" now. Mentioning it is only an occasion to say that people are wrong when they assert that preaching is a "one-man business" and that in this modern age we should replace it by a *dialogue*, a discussion between the group-leader and the group.

Preaching is not a one-man business! The counterpart of preaching is *hearing*. The Catechism says, Lord's Day 38, "learning." This word stresses the fact that listening to a sermon is a "verb," i.e., a work, and a difficult work at that! The minister should, as we pointed out, strive for a "free delivery" in which there is room for eye, for heart-contact. Then he will experience a *feedback* from the pew. One who smiles at this, should be careful! Preaching is more than an endeavour of the preacher. The Word is the testimony of the Holy Spirit. No one but the Holy Spirit works faith (as the Catechism teaches repeatedly) by the preaching of the Word; not just by the

Word. Thus the church building has been rightly called the workshop of the Holy Spirit. We have asked Him not only to open the mouth of His servant but also to open our hearts. This working of the Spirit establishes the rapport between pulpit and pew. The minister does not "shoot" his sermon against a wall: he speaks to open, responding hearts.

For that reason the "preaching event" can be called an (A) element mixed with a (B) element. It is an activity not only of the minister but also of the congregation. That is not my invention. The Lord Himself says so. "The message which they heard did not benefit them, because it did not meet with faith in the hearers," Hebrews 4:2. The KJV has the literal translation, "not being *mixed* with faith . . ." That is the reason for speaking of the "preaching event." It is a mixture of the message and faith in the message. In and during the preaching the Covenant God and His people enjoy the most intimate fellowship of the Covenant.

THE AMEN OF THE CONGREGATION (B)

Without this "Amen" the Ministry of the Word is not complete. It has been said previously that we, Reformed preachers, are nearly the only ones who conclude their sermon with "Amen." In several churches the congregation says it in unison. That must be a terrific experience for the preacher! He delivered his sermon with all the energy and power he could utilize, and there, as the sound of many waters, comes back to him the "Amen" of the people to whom he was allowed to address the message of his Sender.

We do not do that. Why not? Previously we quoted some texts, where the Bible clearly tells us, "and all the people said, 'Amen!'" Well, if we think this suggestion is shocking or strange, then in any case the Amen should come from the congregation by her Amen-song, preferably right after the Amen of the minister, without announcement or reading of the song. It stands to reason that — again — this Psalm or Hymn should be chosen with the utmost care, so that it indeed is an answer to that specific sermon. If all the people fully engage in this "preaching event," the beauty of our corporate worship will overwhelm us: God is in our midst!

(To be continued.)

G. VAN DOOREN

press review

COMPULSORY UNION DUES PLACE ONTARIO ON ROAD TO SERFDOM

The words of the title of our article are also the title of a short article in *Calvinist Contact* of June 13, 1980. It is written by Edward VanderKloet, a CLAC representative. The reader knows that CLAC stands for Christian Labour Association in Canada. We read:

Ontario's Progressive Conservative government, in a move that is not conservative and even less progressive, proposes legislation under which the deduction of union dues becomes an automatic feature of every unionized company. If Bill 89, introduced on June 3, becomes law — and there are indications the government will try to push the bill through before the Legislature goes on summer recess — an employer must deduct and remit union dues from all employees the moment a union gains the bargaining rights. The compulsory checkoff, also known as the Rand Formula, is already a standard feature in British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec.

In taking this step, the Ontario government demonstrates again how insensitive it is to the need for a society in which diverse convictions and aspirations are respected. The Rand Formula is a blunt weapon by which the majority, no matter how small that majority may be, imposes its will on all.

A good example is the current dispute between Blue Cross and the United Auto Workers. Last year the union obtained a bare majority in the representation vote and ever since has insisted on dues check-off for all. When the new bill becomes law, it would force Blue Cross to deduct UAW dues from every employee.

The Rand Formula derives its name from the 1946 ruling by Mr. Justice Ivan C. Rand who imposed a checkoff on the Ford Motor Company after a lengthy strike by the UAW. However, in his deduction, Rand strongly warned against a wholesale application of his formula.

Said Rand: "I should perhaps add that I do not for a moment suggest that this is a device of general applicability. Its object is primarily to enable the union to function properly. In other cases it might defeat that object by lessening the necessity for self-development. In dealing with each

labour situation we must pay regard to its special features and circumstances."

It is therefore ironic that by making the Rand Formula a universal feature of unionized industries, the Ontario government does something which Justice Rand emphatically warned against.

The *London Free Press* of June 4 wrote about it, too. From it we take the following quotations:

Proposed changes to Ontario's labor relations act . . . are welcome but long overdue, local labor leaders said Tuesday. "There's no doubt about it, it's pretty good," Dick Ingles, president of the London Labor Council, said. . . . The issue has been a frequent bone of contention in contract talks.

Other changes would give non-union employees in certified bargaining units voting rights in all strike and contract ratification votes. An employer may ask the labor ministry to supervise employee votes in the last contract offer.

Bill Lloyd, international representative of the United Steelworkers of America, said automatic dues checkoff has been "a fundamental issue in every major strike in the last few years."

He said that unionists' reasoning has been that non-union workers, by law, receive the benefits of collective bargaining and grievance procedures and should therefore be required "to pay the freight" even if they choose not to join the union.

The effect of the amendments, he said, will be to give non-union workers "obligations as well as rights" in a workplace represented by a union.

Most union locals have negotiated automatic dues checkoff clauses into their agreements, Lloyd said, and the proposed changes would affect "probably only a small minority . . . the impact will be in first agreements. It should prevent strikes."

Indeed, it should prevent strikes. Precisely this point has been a major bone of contention in all major strikes of the past years. And so we can also understand the following lines:

In announcing the changes, Labor Minister Robert Elgie said they will "address important problems in industrial relations in Ontario and the bill represents a fair and equitable balance in respect of rights and obligations of trade unions, employers and employees. . . ."

Outside the house, Elgie said those who are employees at the time of union certifi-

cation will still have the right to ask that their dues go to a charity of their choice in stead of to the union.

We read further that the NDP leader in Ontario, Michael Cassidy, as well as the Liberal opposition leader, Stuart Smith, "hailed the proposals as a move in the right direction"; and that Cassidy "attributed the changes to pressure exerted by his party and unions. 'It's a surprising step for a Tory government to take,' he later told reporters." When one keeps in mind that there is not much difference in principles between these three political parties but that the differences in thinking and in policy — all more or less socialistic — is only gradual; and when one, then, also keeps in mind that Canadian politics is very much opportunistic, and that there is a provincial election coming up in Ontario in the not-too-distant future, this move of the Progressive Conservative ruling party in Ontario might not be all that surprising.

But this is actually beside the real point. The comment of the NDP leader and of Labour representatives shows very clearly that we have to do with a socialist move. And where it has been "a frequent bone of contention in contract talks" in the last years, we can conclude that we have here another victory of the trade unions in their battle against managements: another victory in the class struggle.

Now it sounds good that they speak here of the rights and obligations not only of union members but also of non-union workers. The obligation is that they also pay the dues. The rights are that they also may vote whether to strike or not. But is freedom of conviction, especially religious conviction, maintained here? Again I say: it sounds good to speak here of the rights of also the non-unionized workers. But at how many places, where the union has the bargaining rights, are people allowed to work who are not a member of the (local) union? Is this often not one of the first agreements with the management: not to hire people who do not want to join the union? Is it often not so that there is "closed shop"? When in such cases they speak of the rights of those who are not a member, it does not mean much, really.

But let us now first continue to listen to what Mr. VanderKloet writes in *Calvinist Contact*:

To be sure, a mandatory checkoff is frequently unavoidable to prevent freeriding by selfish employees, or to stop an unscrupulous management from intimidating

the workers and defeating the union. But such a checkoff should always allow the employees to direct their money to the union of their choice or to a charitable organization. (This arrangement is adopted in most CLAC collective agreements.)

The Ontario government is not only insensitive to issues of justice and freedom, it also seems to be out of touch with popular sentiments. Opinion polls have already for several years indicated the public's wariness about the power of big labour. There is a growing concern about the fact that our lives are more and more directed by powerful vested interests. Yet the forced dues checkoff strengthens the monolithic power of the mainline trade unions.

The New Democratic Party members of the Legislature have enthusiastically endorsed the bill and this may well ensure its adoption in the near future. Mr. Davis seems willing to go to great length to keep his minority government in power as long as possible. Nevertheless, we should voice our strong opposition to the proposed legislation and urge our M.P.P.s to vote against the bill. Only a loud protest from the constituency will make the M.P.P.s sit up and listen.

By introducing Bill 89 the Ontario government has taken another big step on the road to serfdom. Let us learn from the experience of Mrs. Thatcher, the British prime minister, that on this road there is a point of no return.

So far the article in *Calvinist Contact*.

As I said above, we have to do here with another victory of Labour in the continuing class struggle. And it is a pity that not only the government but also so many, many Christian labourers think along the same lines. I do know that time and again the "management" does not seek the well-being of their workers. There has been a lot of unfairness in the past, and there is still unfairness today. However, is there not quite a bit of unfairness also on the side of the big unions, both with respect to the "management" and to fellow non-unionized workers? Is it not unfair that there is a demand for a law which allows unionized workers to quit working, that is, to strike, when they have to work together with non-unionized workers at a construction site? That compels the contractors to hire only people that are unionized. Who wants the risk of a strike? And what about that closed-shop business? Is that really fair over against workers who do not want to join a union, not for selfish reasons, but on religious grounds, and who are willing to give their money to a charitable organization?

But it is not really my intention to place unfairness over against unfair-

ness. For me it is a matter of principles. For a Christian the struggle according to the Bible is not the class struggle, but the struggle of faith that lives by the Word of God over against unbelief and sin. For a Christian it is the old enmity that God has put in paradise. It is that enmity which the apostle Paul maintains, for instance, in II Corinthians 6:14-7:1 to which I also pointed in the previous article. We as Christians may not be blind for the unfairness of the management. That is clearly shown in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Through Moses the LORD gave laws that protected the slaves and other workers. The prophets protested strongly against social injustice of the rich. And a proof of such a strong protest we find also in James 5. But the great unfairness and injustice does not make James lead the Christians into a revolutionary power struggle. On the contrary. He writes that they must not stir each other up unto rebellion, but give their condition into the hands of the LORD Who will come as Judge to do justice. A Christian believer does not seek worldly power to crush other worldly powers. He confesses Christ Jesus as Saviour and wants to serve others in Christian love in the way of the Word of God.

In line with what James writes there is also the instruction of the apostle Peter. He tells the Christian slaves of his days to be "submissive to their masters with all respect, not only the kind and gentle, *but also the overbearing.*" And when a slave has to suffer injustice because he wants to live by what Christ says, he may see this as grace; Christ Jesus also suffered injustice for God's sake and for the sake of His Church.

This does not mean that we may not protest against injustice and work to have an unfair situation corrected. We should. But a believer does these things, not in a revolutionary way, but as a confessor of Christ Jesus as Redeemer, with the gospel of Christ in opposition to humanistic philosophies and socialistic ideas in which Christ has no place as Redeemer.

The apostle Paul, too, writes about labour and the labour relations. He does so, for instance, in his letter to the Colossians. The main theme in this epistle is that Christ Jesus is a total Redeemer. He redeems heaven and earth (1:15-20). He redeems not only the soul for eternity, but also this earthly life as it was created by God but ruined through

sin. For those who believe, Christ redeems this life from the slavery of sin. He brings God's harmony back into human relations: He redeems marriage relations; He redeems the family relations between parents and children; He also redeems daily work and labour relations; Colossians 3:12-4:1.

Christ redeems daily work. For the apostle writes to the slaves with their often-humble and even humiliating daily work that they may do that slave work day after day *for the Lord*. That, in essence, is paradise regained. They work, not in the first place for men, but for their Lord and Saviour. That, indeed, is redemption in Christ.

But Christ now also redeems the labour relations between master and slave, between employer and employee. In preaching Christ as the Redeemer Who brings God's harmony back into the relations, Paul writes to the slaves that they must now obey their masters in singleness of heart for the Lord's sake. He also tells the masters to treat their slaves justly and fairly. Where Christ comes as Redeemer there is love and mutual care; there is the harmony of cooperating in His service also in this socio-economic life. For Christians there is no longer a *class* struggle as such. This is not idealism. This is the truth of the Bible, the truth of Christ. This is therefore also a Christian's confession. And this confession of Christ Jesus as his Redeemer rules the thinking and acting of a believing employee or a believing employer, even when and where the other party does not want to live in the same faith but rejects Christ Jesus; even when the other party wants to live by the marxist-socialistic class struggle philosophy. The believer continues to confess Christ Jesus as Redeemer also for labour relations.

We understand that the Christian faith that holds on to the Bible, and the Marxist-socialistic philosophy of modern humanism, are diametrically opposed to each other. In the modern, socialistic philosophy the labourer is his own redeemer through the class struggle. That is the basic thinking in and behind the big unions. It is a struggle for power. It is a struggle in which it is not the love of Christ that rules on both sides, but selfishness which so often and so easily is revealed in open disdain and hatred. It is true: on both sides. This means that a Christian should say "no" to sin on both sides of the labour relations.

Besides, it is often so that trade

unions ask total allegiance from their members; total allegiance to the brotherhood of the union, the labourers. This total allegiance means total obedience to what the union has decreed and also in the future will decree. I may refer the reader here to three articles about Unionism in *Clarion* written by the Rev. W. Huizinga. They can be found in Volume 25 (1976) issues. And I ask: How can a true believer, who confesses to believe in Christ as Redeemer of his life in all its aspects, and who has pledged total allegiance to Christ as His Lord and Master, His Redeemer, at the same time pledge that total, blind allegiance to an organization that denies Christ as Redeemer but comes with a different redemption for labour relations? To me that was an impossibility not only in the past, but remains so also today. Here confession stands over against confession. Here Christ stands over against Belial; faith over against unbelief. And therefore the antithesis of II Corinthians 6, which is the spiritual enmity of paradise, has to be maintained also here. Christ over against humanistic bargaining collectivism. And it is indeed a bad thing that governments do not stand for freedom of religion, even when they claim to fight for human rights. It is also bad that unions fight for human rights, their own rights, and for power, while rejecting the rights of others through their power. It is bad. But that it happens is not a wonder. For people do not see that serving God is a matter of our whole life in all its relations. People see religion as a private business of the soul and God. It is not a wonder. For outside Christ people fight for themselves, for their own power, and for their own good life.

Let us, then, hold on to our confession that Christ is a total Redeemer for all of life, also for labour relations. And let us hold on to the antithesis also in this field of labour, and pray that freedom may be maintained yet. There will be a time that those who do not have the mark of the beast cannot buy and cannot sell. For anti-christ hates Christ.

J. GEERTSEMA

OUR COVER

O'Hanley River. (Photo courtesy Manitoba Government Travel, Department of Tourism and Recreation.)

Our Reformed Response to the Secular Labour Unions³

A SOMEWHAT CONFUSING SITUATION

As shown in the first part of this article, the Canadian Reformed Churches, in their early history, raised a strong voice against participation in the secular union movement. In many congregations this led to a voluntary loss of jobs, admonishment and silent censure of those who refused to repent, and even to withdrawals from the church of those who refused to be disciplined. We should also remember the traumatic experiences of those who, due to their refusal to submit to the yoke of darkness, were, as it were, forced to move to other parts of the country. For example, it almost meant the end of the congregation at Houston, B.C.

However, since the fervour of these earlier years, a gradual erosion seems to have taken place. Some congregations maintained a strong stand over against membership in a secular union, whereas in others a more relaxed or permissive atmosphere was permitted to grow. Perhaps this was due to the shocking experiences in some congregations when a number of families or individuals withdrew themselves as a result of the union issue, but this is more than likely also due to the composition of each congregation. For example, a predominantly farming congregation would not be bothered nearly as much with secular unionism as a city congregation.

PROBLEMS AND INJUSTICE

However, due to this gradual erosion, some strange situations have arisen. It is quite apparent that there are a number of congregations (We may not name them in public) where certain brothers have systematically been bypassed when it came to the nomination for a special office, and that not for preference, but rather, for Scriptural reasons, i.e., the sin of secular union membership. It is not that we disagree with such a decision, but the problem is that some of these same brothers have not been given the benefit of church discipline and have been al-

lowed to continue living in sin. This is what Scripture calls measuring with different measuring rods. They are considered guilty of putting their trust in man instead of God, and of a corporate guilt with the union in question, and at the same time they are allowed to sit at the Table of the Lord eating and drinking judgment to themselves. As such, the whole congregation has become guilty, cf. Lord's Day 30 of the Heidelberg Catechism. This gradual development of such unjust situations has led to a number of problems.

For example, what must a consistory do (which has reasserted the earlier principles of the incompatibility between membership in Christ's Church and in a secular union) in relation to those members who have with tacit approval been permitted to maintain their membership in anti-Christian bodies? The answer may seem easy to some, but consider some difficult. For instance, there are some who have been members for up to twenty-five years and are now too old to retrain for another job. Others have acquired trades which are by and large completely union-controlled. Besides the secular union problem there are others who have in the meantime joined dubious Professional and/or Business Associations. Some have even joined purely humanistic and, in practice, anti-Christian Recreational Clubs or Associations. The problems of wrong associations have grown with the more and more relaxed attitude in our churches.

It happens nowadays, as members of our churches move from one congregation to another, that they discover that perhaps their past hardships due to their refusal to bow to the unions was seemingly all in vain, since in their new congregation it is condoned, be it silently. This undoubtedly creates friction, heartaches, and frustration. Now the questions are: How can we as Canadian Reformed Churches regain our balance? How can we reverse the gradual erosion of principles which has taken place in our Confederation? It is quite easy to say that the church must

be continuously reforming, but how must this be done with respect to the Association question? Should we approach one of our General Synods and request such a Synod to pontificate on the matter? Perish the thought, for this would constitute an imposed reformation instead of a desired reformation which should begin in each congregation.

WHAT WE NEED

How can our present dubious situation be rectified regarding unionism and other secular associations? This can be done in each congregation by means of promoting well researched lectures, discussions in study societies, etc. on topics such as:

- a) The Biblical understanding on the concepts anti-Christian humanism, Christian antithesis, the two main world religions, i.e., for or against Christ, so-called "neutrality," etc.
- b) A Biblical understanding of the principles of labour and business, pros and cons of "Free Enterprise," profit, etc.
- c) The adversary approach in labour-business relations (This was made legitimate by Franklin Roosevelt's "Wagner Bill" in 1935) and our response. E.g., in view of this current method we need to be taught how to bring the peace of Christ in the labour/business arena.
- d) We need to establish a clear position as churches on issues such as secular unionism, Business/Professional/Recreational Associations.

The above can also be done by actively encouraging those in our midst whom the Lord has given special talents for doing research from a biblical perspective and then to publish their findings in *Clarion*. This should by no means be limited to our present ministers, for many of them are already overloaded with all kinds of work.

In order to enhance such a development, allow me to do a bit of prodding by means of a few very sketchy paragraphs in relation to Association, Labour, Unionism, and a possible Christian response, in the hope that some of our qualified members will become sufficiently enthused and concerned to use their talents for the welfare of the churches. You will notice that I will touch many related subjects in a broad field; therefore there ought to be sufficient material to generate some articles on the individual topics. If some of you are planning to do so, it would be nice if you could inform Rev.

VanOene of your intentions so that he can arrange them in some logical order for publication. Wishful thinking? Perhaps.

Since the intent is to come to grips with humanistic or anti-Christian organizations, let us first of all attempt a brief analysis of these adjectives.

↳ ANTI-CHRISTIAN

When speaking of the above, our first question should be: What constitutes an anti-Christian organization? In I John 2:18 we read that the anti-christ *will* come and that many anti-christs *have* come into the world (emphasis mine, SdB). Who are these people, you ask? In the first place, they are those who have left the faithful church of Jesus Christ due to their refusal to acknowledge Him as the Word who has taken upon Himself a human nature, or in their refusal to bow under the gospel. Secondly, they can also constitute those people who actively refuse to acknowledge the Kingship of Christ in the civil sphere of life, or when they, e.g., refuse to allow Christians to exercise their task to provide leadership with principles derived from and/or based on God's Word (binding their conscience). When such people then band together and form Associations, Unions, or Confederations which knowingly refuse to bow the knee to the only Name given under heaven (cf. Phil. 2:9-11), then they are against Him, i.e., anti-christs. These people may also be called the "humanists."

II. WHAT IS A HUMANIST?

Such a person adheres to the teachings of humanism. Humanism is a system of thought or actions which assumes or intends to convey that man is quite capable of self-fulfilment, peace on earth, and right ethical and/or moral conduct, without recourse to God. As such, humanism is a religion which deifies man and dethrones God. It is a religion which centres entirely in the values, interests, and desires of man. A true humanist does not believe in God, in creation, in heaven or hell, nor in salvation through Jesus Christ. In brief, it is a system of thoughts and action where all trust is placed in man, i.e., the worship of a creature instead of God. What does a true humanist believe? This can be summarized with the following statements. We could call these "The Five Points of Humanism."

1. The irrelevance of Deity. Of prime importance are man's cooperative efforts towards social well-being. God

has little or nothing to do with man's progress or achievements.

2. The supremacy of human reason. I.e., man is quite able by himself to think out the answers to the great questions that confront mankind today.

3. The inevitability of Progress. I.e., evolution is the real answer to man's salvation. The State is or must become the guardian angel that will control the environment and look after the interests of man (à la Communism).

4. Science and Technology are the twin guides to Progress. These will be the ultimate providers for mankind. They will eventually come up with all the genetic answers to a more uniform and manageable world population.

5. The Self-Sufficiency of Man. I.e., man is inherently good, and therefore there is no need of salvation. Man is autonomous and can function quite well independent from God.

You will agree that the above is quite the opposite of "The Five Points of Calvinism." The humanist is Anti-God (Christ), and many fall for him when he appeals to a person's compassion and emotions, especially when it is pointed out that much of the social justice in society has been or is the work of so-called "true humanists."

For more information, I direct you to the humanist membership brochure published by "The American Humanist Association." This Association was incorporated in the 1940s in Illinois. Let us now have a closer look at some of these true humanists.

III. SECRET SOCIETIES

You will undoubtedly realize that there are many other organizations or societies besides labour organizations, which must be classified as being purely humanist or anti-Christian. Among these are the secular Fraternal Societies, of which quite a few can be termed secret lodges. These secret lodges have passwords, ceremonies, and initiation rites. They are governed by elected representatives, and most have constitutions and by-laws based entirely on the humanistic principles of the general brotherhood and basic goodness of all men (see above).

The secret lodges which are probably best known to you are the "Independent Order of Foresters" and the "Ancient Free and Accepted Masons." The first finds its origin in Newark, N.J., 1874. It is a secret pseudo-Christian society, in which all

its members must believe in God, i.e., the deistic idea of a god divorced from the God as revealed in the Bible. This quasi-religious organization endeavours to do for the brotherhood what is normally practised in a Christian church. They look after their poor, sick, and retired members in a (humanly-speaking) commendable manner. Their main method of gaining new converts is by offering cut-rate life insurance policies. At present there are about 540,000 such policies in force. In brief, the way to ultimate happiness in the Foresters is sought via human works and not through the atoning blood of Christ.

Much the same can be said for the Free Masons. This secret order has an ancient history with some of its practices and rituals dating back to the 10th century. However, this organization, as we know it today, was founded in 1717, and in its history has included such men as Benjamin Franklin, Frederick the Great of Prussia, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, George Washington, and Voltaire. It now has a membership of approximately four million in the U.S. and one and a half million in the rest of the world. In the U.S.A. this means that one out of every sixteen adult males is a Mason. (N.B. Only adult males can be members.)

The Masons endeavour to promote a "religion in which all men agree, that is, to be good men and true." Men of any religion are welcomed as long as they believe in one God. This God they call the "Great Architect of the Universe." Most of its quasi-religious rituals are secret to all but its members. It has a number of related organizations such as "The Order of the Eastern Star." This is for women relatives of Masons who have achieved at least the degree of Master Mason. Their children also have organizations, i.e., "Job's Daughters" for the girls and the "Order of De Molay" for the boys.

In brief, the above organizations and the like do not see the need for an organized church life, since *their* brotherhood fills the needs of its members. They like to talk about the Great Architect of the Universe, but completely ignore the Great Architect of the Church, Jesus Christ, as He has been revealed to us in God's Word. As such, they can only be seen as the minions of Satan disguised under a cloak of imitation love, brotherhood, and a so-called faith in the one God. (Arabs and Jews can also be mem-

bers.) It stands to reason that when a Christian joins such an organization he thereby denies Christ and enters the kingdom of darkness. Cf. Matthew 6:24, i.e., He no longer has any part in Christ. N.B. This is still the official position of the Christian Reformed Church.

IV. ANCIENT UNIONISM

When labour unions are mentioned and their origin discussed, it often happens that it is popularly accepted that it all began in the 19th century as a reaction to the excesses of Capitalism. However, even though unionism may appear to be a modern phenomenon, this is nevertheless not true, for trade unionism has an ancient history dating back at least to the first centuries A.D. We know from ancient history and archaeological discoveries that the trade guilds had a very prominent place in the ancient Grecian world. These guilds possessed property and their own temples (each guild had its own god whom they worshipped in these "labour temples"). They also exerted quite some influence in the cities where they were organized. This seems to have been primarily due to the fact that in order to ply one's trade profitably in such a city, membership in such a trade guild was necessary, and some even hold that it was compulsory. It seems that in order to work and do business one had to give allegiance to the deity of the guild. This, then, included the sacrifices or dedication of food and drink to this god.

Since this seems to have been the case we should be not at all surprised that the early Christian churches, which were situated in the trade centres, were plagued with the questions of: to associate or not to associate with these guilds. These infant churches were instructed by the Lord as to how they should respond to the demands of the prince of darkness. In I Corinthians 10:20-21 (NIV) we read: "No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have part in both the Lord's Table and the table of demons." Similar instructions are given in II Corinthians 6:14-7:1: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers . . . Therefore, come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing and I will receive you," etc.

In other words, the Corinthian Church was instructed to steer clear of any association with these trade guilds

and their pagan practices, and if they did not do that, then they could have no part in the Lord's Supper celebration and would consequently not have God as their Father, i.e., no salvation.

Also, in those days there were probably members of the church who had the mistaken notion that it was quite all right to compromise a little here and there and be a member both of the church as well as of one or more of the anti-Christian trade guilds. This seems to have been the problem also in Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29). There was a woman there whom the Lord named "Jezebel." She laid claim to being a prophetess, i.e., a person who has received a special revelation from God. It was more than likely that this was not her real name but given to her because she was doing the same thing as the Jezebel of the Old Testament, that evil queen of I Kings 16:31, 18:4ff. who imported false prophets (baal priests) and who taught her people to compromise their principles. We need only read Revelation 2:18-19 to see that the Lord would not tolerate any compromise between His people and the minions of darkness.

A refusal to join the anti-Christian trade guilds undoubtedly caused much grief and hardship. As such, the faithful Christians already experienced the beginning of the great boycott of the beast, as revealed in Revelation 13:16-17. (We cannot help but wonder to what extent this was responsible for the suffering spoken of in Hebrews 10:32-39.)

However, there were also members in the Church of Thyatira who evidently had fallen victim to this compromise theology. Perhaps there were some who hid behind statements such as, "This is the only trade I know. How else am I going to provide for my family," or even assertions such as "This is my God-given talent and it would be a sin to let it go to waste. Besides, I don't believe in their practices. I know what I believe, and therefore I can work there." There may even have been those who would argue that it was actually a good thing for them to join these trade guilds, in order that they could then be the salt of the earth and a light for them. All such flimsy excuses were brushed aside by the Lord's stern warning to stop committing adultery (serving other gods), i.e., repent or else!

V. THE CHRISTIAN LABOUR ETHIC

Since Christ has fully restored to us that which we lost in Paradise, i.e.,

our office of prophet, priest, and king (with all its righteousness and holiness), He now claims our whole life for Himself. We are a royal priesthood and a holy nation, cf. I Peter 2:9. As such we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit, i.e., set apart from the rest of mankind in order to perform our priestly service. This priestly service is not just to be relegated to our actions in personal, family, and regular worship services. It includes every facet of our lives. As the Apostle Paul says: "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship," etc., Romans 12:1ff; or I Corinthians 10:31: "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." The same Apostle reminds us of our position with the words: "You are not your own, you were bought with a price." etc., I Corinthians 6:19-20.

Yes, we belong to the one who bought us, and He did not just redeem a part of our life but all of it. We either belong to Him completely or not at all, and of those who belong to Him, He requires *total* allegiance. He does not condone divided loyalties; as a matter of fact, this is not possible, for He says: "No one can serve two masters . . . God and Mammon," Matthew 6:24. Of those who endeavour to do so anyway, He says: "Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth," Revelation 3:15-16.

Since all of our life is to be a life of faith and commitment to Jesus Christ, it stands to reason, then, that this includes that very large part of our lives devoted to labour.

We should all realize that all the labour performed by the priests must be done for, and is under the supervision of, the High Priest, Jesus Christ. All too often we fail to realize this fully, for we sometimes tend to think or act that we must do our work well in order to please the foreman, supervisor, or the boss who signs our pay cheque. All too often the only reason we do our best is in order to get a raise in pay or to get a promotion, rather than to please the Lord whose possession we are. We so easily become "men-pleasers" instead of doing all our work to please God. Cf. Ephesians 6:6, Colossians 3:22. All labour must ultimately be done for our Master, who says: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, *not* for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward," Colossians 3:23-24.

The distinction is quite simple, i.e., our earthly bosses will pay us our wages for the work we do, but our heavenly Boss will graciously give us a reward (not wages) for the same labour when done in faithful obedience to Him. All our labour is a part of our "religious" life. This religious endeavour will be directed either to man or to God. Therefore, to deny God His proper place in the field of labour is equivalent to denying Him in any other facet of life. Concerning such denials our Lord says: "Whoever denies me before men I will deny him before my Father," Matthew 10:32-33.

Therefore a Christian's labour ethic or desire is: "I want to do all my work to the honour and glory of my Lord, out of thankfulness to Him for having redeemed me from the darkness of this world and for having made me His own, and in order to do so I will continue to ask Him for daily bread in order to be enabled to do my work as a citizen of His Kingdom."

VI. THE WORLDLY LABOUR ETHIC

Having talked briefly about the Christian labour ethic, it could be relatively easy to say that the worldly labour ethic is the exact opposite of the Christian labour ethic, and leave it at that. However, this won't do; therefore let us be a little more specific.

In the first place, we must realize that the worldly man does not see himself as having been created in the image and glory of God. It is for this very reason that his life is not God-directed, and, as such, he sees no need

whatsoever to direct his labour, or the purpose of his labour, to God. The only other direction which is left open to him is himself, or the world. The natural man is entirely self-centered; as such his labour has as its primary function the service or enhancement of the self. Invariably he seeks self-glorification in the development of his God-given skills, or else self-promotion in position or pay-scale. You could easily summarize the basic difference between the man of God and the man of the world in the purpose of their labour by stating: "The Christian eats in order to be enabled to work, and the non-Christian works in order to be enabled to eat." The Christian prays upon command: "Lord, give me this day my daily bread in order that I may receive the strength to glorify Thee in my work," and the non-Christian thinks that he must do his best in his work in order to receive more material benefits and/or personal honour. The Christian desires to have all his labours directed by God's Word, as the only norm for all his conduct of life, whereas the non-Christian has only his own mind as the norm for his conduct. He follows his sinful feelings and desires in the hope of achieving happiness.

It stands to reason, then, that, since the Christian and the non-Christian are so radically different in their understanding of the essence and purpose of labour, this difference will also become vividly apparent in the field of organized labour.

(To be continued.)

S. DEBRUIN

Ephesians 6:5-9

Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ; not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. Masters, do the same to them, and forbear threatening, knowing that he Who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with Him.

Christians were Blamed for Disasters and Adversity

This is a translation of an article which appeared in DE VARIANT, insert with NEDERLANDS DAGBLAD of September 8, 1979. Translation by B. Mulder of Burlington.

Much has been written about the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. There are the stories of the martyrs. Are they slanted and made more interesting? There are dissertations by historians who have exerted themselves to know exactly what happened, to report it truthfully and appraise it fairly in all its aspects. The stream of publications hasn't dried up yet.

Is it difficult to know the truth and report it? Apparently it is. We can observe it daily. Ten competent journalists will have ten different reports on the same event. How difficult is it not for the police to piece together the stories of eyewitnesses of an accident or a crime? It is impossible to record history, historic events, even from three or more different angles and then be able to think that it was reported exhaustively. Furthermore, it is impossible to plumb the heart of man in history, while the researcher, reporter, historian, as an improved journalist himself, in turn, is bound and restricted by his own character and capabilities. Still history has to be written; it is a necessity put on the shoulders of mankind. Therefore it is mandatory to familiarize oneself with it, and, since we do not deal with first-hand knowledge in this article, we will do this in all modesty.

The history of ancient Rome is somewhat hazy, notwithstanding all the stories about it. M. Rostovtzeff writes, "The historic tradition, as preserved by the Italians themselves and poured into a new mould by the Roman historians of the last three centuries before Christ, is not only incomplete, but intentionally forged. The Italian tribes possessed hardly any traditions of historic events of this period of time."

According to A. Alföldi it is a fact that the oldest religious manifestations

in the Roman world were connected with the worship of their deified ancestors. The solidarity within the tribe and between the tribes is expressed during offering festivities. The Latins, at those occasions, used to slaughter a white bull, whose meat was divided according to a set pattern among the tribes which were entitled to it. Every tribe got the same part of the animal each year. Communal meals signified having part in the vitality of the ancestor whom they had in common and they confirmed the relationship. How this tradition developed in later years we will leave aside. It is a reflection of the religious concept of the growing Roman state. Prof. Dr. J. Vogt writes that Emperor Augustus made the worship of the "state gods" a foundation of Roman politics. "This political religion, the worship of 'state gods' was continued by all his successors in Rome and the provinces; as you know, all rulers held the office of supreme state priest." Wherever Roman magistrates resided, the gods of the Capitol were worshiped; where Roman citizens settled, offerings were made to Mercurius and Hercules; where the Roman soldiers were stationed, Mars and Victoria were called upon; whether people were civilians or non-civilians, the emperor cult was a matter of course. Even though this state cult had become purely a formality, still, during times of danger, the Roman people were brought together through the conviction that only the gods could help; yes, that the Roman rule would stand firm, as long as men worshiped the gods. "Because thou worshippest the gods, thou rulest." This word of the poet Horatius was a political creed of the Romans.

ROMAN GODS

According to Ortegay Gasset life for the Romans was not a merely human thing; it was a relationship with the gods, which are first of all the gods of collectivism. The Roman individual could not relate to them directly: there was not even the "liberty of prayer."

The state had its magistrates, one of whom had the task to be in touch with the gods according to a set ritual.

Christians were persecuted in the Roman empire. However, it is incorrect to think that persecution took place with the same intensity all over and during the whole period until Constantine the Great. Herod had James put to death, but did not do this in the name of some kind of Roman faith. He had murdered more people; it was convenient for him in a given political situation. Paul was persecuted on his journeys, but that happened most of the time at the instigation of angry Jews. Once, when the people in Ephesus, led by Demetrius, turned against the Christians, the city clerk, who represented the Roman rule, put the whole matter aside. In Corinth, Gallio sent the people away; he did not want to concern himself with their complaints. Later, Paul appears before the Roman judge, but even then it was the Jews who wanted to use the Romans in order to kill a preacher of the gospel whom they hated.

NERO

There was talk of a massive attack on the Christians for the first time under Nero. That time it was incidental and was restricted to Rome. Nero had acquired a bad reputation among the Romans. He discredited the esteem of the emperorship in a shameful way and dragged the name of Rome through the mud. The great resentment against this fool on the throne could be felt, and, when the fire which destroyed a large part of the city (which was a fire hazard) started, Nero was suspected of arson. That was not surprising, since they considered him capable of doing almost anything. Nero wanted to divert the anger of the unfortunate people away from himself and looked for a scapegoat. Should he blame the Jews who, to say the least, weren't popular? That was not easily done, since his wife was a follower of the Jewish faith. Who then? Someone then drew his attention to the Christians, who were a particularly horrible variety of the Jews. Weren't they involved in cannibalism and the most scandalous demoralization: incest? It is not known how many Christians were imprisoned by Nero, but he tortured and openly killed a large number in the most cruel way in front of a sensation-loving public. It was terrible, and it isn't for nothing that the name of this godless man entered history as a curse. A few years later, in

68, abandoned by all his friends, he felt compelled to commit suicide.

The spotlights, however, were directed at the Christians forever, and, every time new disasters and tribulations struck city or countryside, the cause of that judgment of the gods was sought in the atheistic outlook on life of the Christians. Tertullianus said that at one time the Christians were blamed because the Nile River did not overflow its banks, and another time because the Tiber did. The Christians were accused of atheism: they didn't want to worship the gods and in that way broke the sacred unity of the people. Liberal philosophers, who in subtle or blunt ways ridiculed the gods, in due time paid tribute as required to the emperors who were considered to be gods. Why wouldn't they? The Roman state religion didn't contain anything that had any personal appeal, that meant anything for the "soul." It was the conviction of the rulers that the foundations of the state could only be kept from destruction as long as the superiority of the state religion was honoured, i.e., certain ceremonial obligations were fulfilled. Someone spoke of state magic.

TWENTY-FIVE EMPERORS

In the period after Nero's death, until the year 250, when Decius reigned and started his severe persecutions of the Christians, approximately twenty-five emperors sat on the throne. That indicates unstable relations. The average term of office was seven years. In comparison, in The Netherlands, calculated in 1979, the average reign of the king (queen) is more than 33 years. Fortunately, we don't have to analyze this difference. When we take into account that the power of the Roman emperors was considerably greater than any of the Dutch rulers ever possessed, we can easily understand that the policies of the governments were subjected to strong fluctuations. There was a lot of confusion, and that showed in the attitude over against the Christians. Some emperors or their representatives persecuted them as it suited them, others let things be or even adopted a more or less sympathetic attitude. The Roman criminal law was not as completely developed as the famous civil law. Some rules applied only to certain areas, others for the duration of the lifetime of the emperor who had initiated them.

TRAJANUS

This insecurity shows, among

other things, in the correspondence between Emperor Trajanus (98-117) and Phinius, representative of the emperor and governor of Bithynia and Pontus. The area is located south of Byzantium (Constantinople) where the cities of Nicaea and Chalcedon were to acquire great fame in church history. In an English translation of Betty Radice (Penguin Books) we read, among other things, the following in the letter of Plinius to Emperor Trajanus.

I have never been present at an examination of Christians. Consequently, I do not know the nature of the extent of the punishments usually meted out to them, nor the grounds for starting an investigation and how far it should be pressed. Nor am I at all sure whether any distinction should be made between them on the grounds of age, or if young people and adults should be treated alike; whether a pardon ought to be granted to anyone retracting his beliefs, or that, if he has once professed Christianity, he shall gain nothing by renouncing it; and whether it is the mere name of Christian which is punishable, even if innocent of crime, or rather the crimes associated with the name.

For the moment this is the line I have taken with all persons brought before me on the charge of being Christians. I have asked them in person if they are Christians, and, if they admit it, I repeat the question a second and third time, with a warning of the punishment awaiting them. If they persist, I order them to be led away for execution; for, whatever the nature of their admission, I am convinced that their stubbornness and unshakable obstinacy ought not to go unpunished. There have been others similarly fanatical who are Roman citizens. I have entered them on the list of persons to be sent to Rome for trial.

Now that I have begun to deal with this problem, as so often happens, the charges are becoming more widespread and increasing in variety. An anonymous pamphlet has been circulated which contains the names of a number of accused persons. Among these, I considered that I should dismiss any who denied that they were or ever had been Christians, when they had repeated after me a formula of invocation to the gods and had made offerings of wine and incense to your statue (which I had ordered to be brought into court for this purpose along with the images of the gods), and, furthermore, had reviled the name of Christ, none of which things, I understand, any genuine Christian can be induced to do.

Others, whose names were given to me by an informer, first admitted the charge and then denied it; they said that they had ceased to be Christians two or more years previously, and some of them even twenty years ago. They all did reverence to your statue and the images of the

gods in the same way as the others, and reviled the name of Christ. They also declared that the sum total of their guilt or error amounted to no more than this: they had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day to chant verses alternately among themselves in honour of Christ as if to a god, and also to bind themselves by oath, not for any criminal purpose, but to abstain from theft, robbery, and adultery, to commit no breach of trust and not to deny a deposit when called upon to restore it. After this ceremony it had been their custom to disperse and reassemble later to take food of an ordinary, harmless kind; but they had, in fact, given up this practice since my edict, issued on your instructions, which banned all political societies. This made me decide it was all the more necessary to extract the truth by torture from two slave-women, whom they call deaconesses. I found nothing but a degenerate sort of cult carried to extravagant lengths.

I have therefore postponed any further examination and hastened to consult you. The question seems to me worthy of your consideration, especially in view of the number of persons endangered; for a great many individuals of every age and class, both men and women, are being brought to trial, and this is likely to continue. It is not only the towns, but villages and rural districts, too, which are infected through contact with this wretched cult. I think, though, that it is still possible for it to be checked and directed to better ends, for there is no doubt that people have begun to throng the temples which had been almost entirely deserted for a long time; the sacred rites which had been allowed to lapse are being performed again, and flesh of sacrificial victims is on sale everywhere, though up till recently scarcely anyone could be found to buy it. It is easy to infer from this that a great many people could be reformed if they were given an opportunity to repent.

The answer of Trajanus was as follows:

You have followed the right course of procedure, my dear Pliny, in your examination of the cases of persons charged with being Christians, for it is impossible to lay down a general rule to a fixed formula. These people must not be hunted out; if they are brought before you and the charge against them is proved, they must be punished, but in the case of anyone who denies that he is a Christian, and makes it clear that he is not, by offering prayers to our gods, he is to be pardoned as a result of his repentance, however suspect his past conduct may be. But pamphlets circulated anonymously must play no part in any accusation. They create the worst sort of precedent and are quite out of keeping with the spirit of our age.

GUILTY/NOT GUILTY

This correspondence provides an insight into the rule of conduct which

was followed most of the time, though not always, by the government in the time period until the rule of Decius (250). In respect to the prescribed offerings to the gods in order to prove innocence, Tertullianus made the following sharp remark, "Others (in common criminal cases) who say that they are not guilty are being tortured, forcing them to confess, but Christians are only tortured in order to make them deny their guilt." The offence in these procedures was "being a Christian." One was not punishable if one "had been" a Christian. There is no parallel to be found of this ruling in Roman criminal law. A point of conflict among the Christians has been the use of purchased documents, from which it was evident that the requirement to offer to the gods had been fulfilled. Tertullianus and others, justly so, put up a strong opposition against this. Denying Christ is not the same as using stratagem.

POGROMS

First here, then there, Christians were persecuted. That's how an earthquake in Antioch in 115 provoked a pogrom against Christians. In 156 Polycarpus died a martyr's death. In 165 Justinus with six fellow believers died as martyrs in Rome under the city prefect Junius Rusticus. In 176 and 177 there were persecutions in Pergamum and Lyon, the latter the city in which the well-known Ireneus was a bishop at that time. It would take up too much space to list all the martyrs. The fact that the church organization was developing and that martyrs were found shows that the persecutions did not rage continually with the same fierceness. God preserved His Church, even though she went through severe oppressions.

PROVOKED?

In all honesty it must be said that more than once the persecutions were provoked by the Christians. G.E.M. de Ste. Croix of Oxford states that "voluntary martyrs" played a much greater part than initially was expected. It did not restrict itself to Montanists and Donatists, but it also applied to the orthodox Christians. From the history of Euplus, who was killed in Catania on Sicily, we learn that this brother presented himself before the judge, calling out, "I wish to die, since I am a Christian." The judge, Calvisianus, had him brought before him and ordered him to be put to death. In 305, on the occasion of certain celebrations in Caesarea in

Palestine, the rumour spread that Christians would be thrown to the wild animals. When the governor was on his way to the amphitheater, six young men with their hands tied behind their backs suddenly drew up before him, calling out that they were Christians and wished to be thrown to the animals with their brothers. We can believe Eusebius (who tells this story) when he says that the governor and his following were astounded. The young men were seized, but instead of finding their death by means of the wild animals, they found death by being beheaded. Eusebius gives more examples. Tertullianus told that, when Arrius Antonius was proconsul of Asia, on a certain occasion a whole group of Christians came to Arrius Antonius with the request to receive the privilege of martyrdom. The surprised proconsul had a few of them stand trial but sent the rest away with the words, "If you then really want to die, poor devils, use some rope or jump off the cliffs."

In view of this, a letter from Ignatius to the Christians in Rome deserves attention. Ignatius was bishop of Antioch and was taken prisoner during a persecution in the days of Emperor Trajanus and sentenced to be thrown to the wild animals. Since Rome sometimes had too few convicted persons who were sentenced to death, he was transferred there. On the way he had the opportunity to write letters. The following is part of one of them:

So far, things have made an admirable beginning, and all now depends on whether I can reach the goal and secure my inheritance.

I shall never have a better chance than this of getting to God, and you on your part will never have a finer piece of work to your credit, if only you will keep your lips sealed.

For my part, I am writing to all the churches and assuring them that I am truly in earnest about dying for God — if only you yourselves put no obstacles in the way. I must implore you to do me no such untimely kindness; pray, leave me to be a meal for the beasts, for it is they who can provide my way to God. I am His wheat, ground fine by the lions' teeth to be made purest bread for Christ. Better still, incite the creatures to become a sepulchre for me.

How I look forward to the real lions that have been prepared for me! All I pray is that I may find them swift. I am going to make overtures to them, so that, unlike some other wretches whom they have been too spiritless to touch, they may devour me with all speed. And if they are still reluctant, I shall use force to them.

PESTILENCE

During the reign of Emperor Decius a large persecution was started, this time initiated by the emperor; in other words, not on a charge of a citizen. Rome had then already for a few years been visited by the plague, which claimed a countless number of victims. The emperor held the Christians responsible for this; they had angered the gods and these took revenge on the people, which tolerated Christians in their midst. Fortunately, because of the invasion of the Goths in March of 251, the persecution had to be stopped. Among the many martyrs was Pope Fabianus. Some years later, in 257, Emperor Valerianus started a new persecution. This one was also severe. This time among the martyrs Pope Sixtus and Bishop Cyprianus of Carthage were counted.

A final severe outburst of persecutions, initiated by the emperor, started in 303 by means of edicts issued by Diocletianus. Prominent Christian civil servants were dismissed; lower officials lost their freedom. Even Empress Prisca and her daughter had to bring offerings to the gods in public. When the Christians in Nikomedia put part of the palace on fire, the emperor issued a new edict, that any refusal to offer to the gods was subject to punishment by death. But even now the persecutions were not carried out everywhere with the same vigour.

After all kinds of uncertainties Constantine the Great managed to get sole dominion and along with his rule Christianity obtained public recognition in the twenties of the fourth century, which brought an end to the persecutions.

Church News

Address change of the Clerk of Eben-Ezer Canadian Reformed Church of Chatham, Ontario:

Dr. A.E. Smid
70 Main Street East,
Ridgetown, Ontario N0P 2C0
Phone: (519) 674-2356

Address change of the Clerk of Grace Canadian Reformed Church of Watford, Ontario:

Don Van Gorkum
R.R. 7, Watford, Ontario N0M 2S0

REPORT

of the Forty-seventh General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church held on May 15-22, 1980 at Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania.

The undersigned delegate of the Canadian Reformed Churches attended the forty-seventh General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) from Monday, May 19, until Thursday, May 22. He would like to report the following points:

1. He was well-received and introduced to the assembly. On motion he was enrolled as a corresponding member. He used this privilege only to address the assembly once in order to introduce the Canadian Reformed Churches, to sketch our present relationship, and to wish the assembly obedience to the exalted Christ as Head of the Church.

2. The first point of the report of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-church Relations dealt with the conversations with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES) and the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The Committee recommended that the assembly inform the PCA that it would be receptive to an invitation to join the PCA. The assembly, however, followed a more cautious course of action. As proposed by its advisory committee, it opted for a meeting of representatives, including the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), in order to draw up a statement that exhibits the representatives' joint understanding of the compatibility of the participating churches.

3. The report also mentioned conversations with the RPCNA, dealings of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), and reports from fraternal delegates, but did not make any mention of the Canadian Reformed Churches, since there had been no action in the period between May 1979 to May 1980.

4. The report of the Committee on Reformed Ecumenical Synod Matters evaluated the RES reports on the World Council of Churches in a right manner, and it counterbalances the influence of the synodical churches in The Netherlands (RCN) within the RES. It judges the RCN report to the 1976 RES to be substantially without merit as a justification for their membership in the WCC.

The assembly decided to withdraw its request to the RES Nimes, 1980, concerning consultation of the RES Interim Committee with the RCN and to call for more prompt and forthright action concerning 1) the doctrinal views of office-holders in the RCN and 2) the membership of the RCN in the RES. Both the committee and the assembly were very concerned about a recent statement of RCN policy with respect to active homosexuals.

The forty-seventh General Assembly requests the RES Nimes of 1980 to advise the RCN to report to the Interim Committee at least once each year, beginning in March 1981 as to the response being made, with the understanding that if the exhortations are not heeded, the Interim Committee will recommend to the 1984 RES that the membership of the RCN in the RES be terminated.

The OPC also wants the Indonesian Churches to be exhorted to withdraw from the WCC prior to one year before the next RES.

5. The last report of interest for our churches was an analysis of the principles and policies of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). The full-scale joint diaconal ministry proposed by the CRWRC within the framework of NAPARC was rejected as it involves principal policies with which the OPC cannot concur. A second supplementary report of the Committee on Diaconal Ministries was entitled "*Covenantal Benevolence — the Theology of World Diaconal Involvement.*" The conclusion is that the covenant community (organized church) is *obligated* to help covenant members but that there is no responsibility here to relieve all the material (social) ills of the world. Those outside the covenantal community in dire need and those within the immediate proximity of that community may be temporarily objects of mercy (cf. Galatians 6:10). Copies of these reports are sent to the Christian Reformed Church for their information and a special committee will prepare a report that will present principles grounded on the exegesis of Scripture, leading to positive attitudes and actions on which the church may base its diaconal ministry, for the following General Assembly.

6. To conclude this short report your delegate may make the remark that although he observed the divergence especially in church government between the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches, and although he

would have preferred a stronger decision with respect to the membership of the RCN (synodical) in the RES, namely, to terminate its membership already in 1980, the sincere appeal to Holy Scripture, the clear desire to be obedient to Christ as the Head of the Church so apparent in this forty-seventh General Assembly, and the direction and contents of its decisions, convinced him again of the fact that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession.

J. FABER

PRESS RELEASE

of the Board Meeting of the Canadian Reformed High School Association in Ontario, held on June 16, 1980.

1. The chairman, Mr. Jack Schutten, opened the meeting with the singing of Psalm 147:1, 2, and 6, the reading of John 1 and prayer. The 19 members present were welcomed.

2. Mr. Schutten informed the board that official instruction at Guido for the 1979-80 term would be finished this week.

3. The minutes of the May 26th board meeting were read by the Recording Secretary, Mr. H. Harsevoort, and adopted as read.

4. Incoming and outgoing mail was discussed.

5. Mr. A.J. Hordyk reported on a visit to br. R. Bakker in The Netherlands. Br. Bakker extended his good wishes to all members of our High School Association.

6. Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff gave the Principal's report. There has been no change in enrolment for the coming year. The Student Council donated \$800 to the Track Fund.

7. The Education Committee report was read by Mr. A.L. Hartman. School visits were reported favourable. The board is to decide on new appointments to this committee at a later date.

8. A financial report was given by our treasurer, Mr. H.F. Stoffels. It appears to be a constant problem to find enough funds to operate the school. To date the results of the special drive have netted about \$15,500 — still much below the accumulated shortage.

9. The next meeting was scheduled for July 21, 1980.

For the Board,
A.J. Hordyk, Secretary

our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Here is our Big Summer Contest to help you enjoy your holidays even more!

I hope you'll ALL join in and have a really good time doing the quizzes.

You may use your Bible, of course.

Send your NEAT entries in as soon as possible, all right?

Before we start the quizzes let's wish all the Busy Beavers celebrating their birthday in August a very happy birthday and many happy returns of the day! May the Lord guide and keep you all in the year ahead. Here's hoping you have a wonderful day celebrating with your family and friends!

Cynthia Dam	August 2	Marcia Veldman	August 16
Joanne De Vries	2	Trudy Tamminga	17
Billy Doekes	3	Kathy De Boer	18
Karen Ellens	3	George Alkema	20
Evelyn Geusebroek	3	Sandra Knegt	21
David Bisschop	5	Marlissa Lindhout	21
Cynthia Linde	5	Arthur Pieterman	21
John Hofsink	6	Shane Pieterman	22
Joyce Huinink	6	Henry Vis	24
Margaret Hansema	9	Brian Vander Laan	25
Elizabeth Medemblik	10	Hetty Witteveen	27
Joanne Hulst	11	Greg Hofsink	27
Carol Griffioen	11	Adele Hulzebosch	28
Diane Smith	13	Jeanette VandeBurgt	28
John Beukema	15	Craig Alkema	31
Sidney Doesburg	16	Jeanette DeBoer	31
Bruce Hartman	16	Theo Wierenga	31

Now for our Big Summer Contest!
Here are the quizzes.

Quiz # 1 — Plants in the Bible

1. What plant provided shade for Jonah?
2. What plant provided the basket for baby Moses?
3. What plant provided a crown for the Lord Jesus?
4. What plant hid the spies on Rahab's roof?
5. What plant provided food for the prodigal son?
6. What plant was offered the Lord Jesus to drink on the cross?
7. What plant did the Lord Jesus say we should consider?
8. What plant did the disciples pick food from on the sabbath?
9. What plant provided food for Ruth?
10. What plant provided proof of the richness of the Promised Land?

Quiz # 2 — Name the Threes

1. The three friends thrown into the furnace.

2. The three friends who came to console Job.
3. The three lost things in a parable.
4. The three disciples in the Lord Jesus' "inner circle."
5. The three people raised from the dead by the Lord Jesus.
6. Three disciples who went to Gethsemane with the Lord Jesus.
7. Three women who first saw that the stone was rolled away from the tomb of the Lord Jesus.
8. Three people for whom Peter wanted to build tabernacles.
9. Three fruits brought back from the Promised Land by the twelve spies.
10. Three things Joseph dreamed about.
11. Three women who stood by the Lord Jesus' mother at the cross.
12. Three famous heads of hair.

Quiz # 3 — Expressions of Love

Match the name of the person (on the right) with what he or she said (on the left).

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Woman, behold thy son! | (a) Peter |
| 2. I will nourish you and your little ones. | (b) the Lord Jesus |
| 3. Would God I had died for thee! | (c) Esther |
| 4. Thy people shall be my people. | (d) Paul |
| 5. My eye runneth down with rivers of water because of the destruction of my people. | (e) Elkanah |
| 6. Give her the living child. | (f) Judah |
| 7. Let thy servant abide instead of the lad as a bondman for my lord. | (g) Ruth |
| 8. For us are our glory and our joy. | (h) an unnamed woman |
| 9. If I perish, I perish. | (i) Moses |
| 10. . . . and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book. | (j) Jeremiah |
| 11. Am I not better to thee than ten sons? | (k) Joseph |
| 12. Thou knowest that I love thee. | (l) David |

Part of our Contest is the STORY CONTEST!

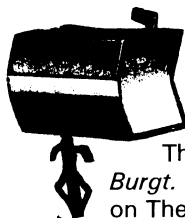
Here is your title:

"How to Enjoy Yourself at Home During the Holidays."

I think the person who wins our Story Contest deserves a very special prize, don't you?

Try your best! Have fun!

I'm looking forward to hearing from ALL of you.



From the Mailbox

Thanks for a nice chatty letter, *Mary Vande Burgt*. I hope you really enjoyed your camping trip on Thetis Island. And are you all used to your new house by now, Mary? How did your record turn out? I hope