

Clarion

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The Songs of Zion.*

Michael Bushell is a physicist employed by an Army research laboratory who earned a Master of Theology degree from Westminster Theological Seminary and is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. His book is published by the Reformed Presbyterians (Covenanters) and this is understandable: it is a forceful defence of exclusive psalmody and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America adheres to this exclusive use of the psalms in praise to God in services of worship.

The author first deals with the regulative principle, which asserts that nothing may be introduced into the worship of God unless it has the positive warrant of Scripture. Then the testimony of Scripture is heard and the sufficiency and propriety of the Psalter is unfolded. In this context the author discusses the obligation to sing the psalms, the doctrinal and Christological sufficiency of the Psalter, the imprecatory psalms, and singing as an element of worship. The last chapter relates the testimony of history: the early church, Calvin, France, England and Scotland, American Presbyterianism and the Dutch Reformation. The book is adorned with a helpful bibliography of ten pages. It ends with a heartfelt plea to God's people that they once again restore the Psalter to its rightful place in their churches and in their homes.

Although I do not accept exclusive psalmody, I agree with many statements, e.g., that one of the factors which accounts for the drift away from Calvinism in the Protestant Churches of America was the gradual substitution of hymns for psalms in their public worship. The present *Psalter Hymnal* of the Christian Reformed Church "contains a large appendix of hymns which can only be described as outstanding examples of the sickly sentimentalism which characterizes so much of the twentieth century American Fundamentalism . . ." (170). The author rightly states that it is no mere coincidence that the emotionalism, pietism, and individualism which characterize our Reformed churches today are in complete accord with the songs sung there.

Nevertheless, his contrast between "the songs of God" and "the songs of men" is simplistic: versification of the psalms brings about a non-inspired element and "songs of men" can be taken from and be phrased in accordance with Holy Scripture. Only forced exegesis can exclude the reference to hymns in the New Testament, e.g., by this remark about Luke 2:14: "if it

be a song, (it) was sung by angels, whose worship is not normative for us anyway" (77).

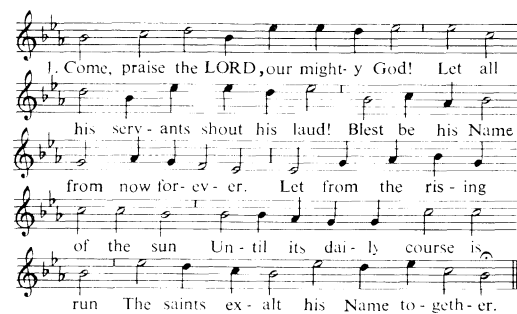
I regret that the author did not have knowledge of or access to the Dutch publication by A. Janse about the psalms as covenantal songs. It could have strengthened his argument in the passage about the doctrinal and Christological sufficiency of the Psalter. Although he is aware of the fact that in the Anglo-Saxon world the tunes used for psalms may have opened the way to the use of hymns, Bushell does not plead for a return to the Genevan tunes and does not even mention the *Book of Praise* of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

A last reluctant remark. On the first page the author states, "The strongest argument for Exclusive Psalmody is the one that inevitably wells up from within when a sincere Christian begins to sing the Psalms with Grace in his heart." But is this reasoning not an example of that sentimentalism, emotionalism, pietism, and individualism which the author rightly rejects in many hymns? A Salvation Army man may be a sincere Christian, singing "with Grace in his heart," and nevertheless, I reject his Arminian hymns as conterefts for the Scriptural songs of God's covenant, the songs of Zion, about which Bushell wrote many good words.

J. FABER

* Michael Bushell, *The Songs of Zion*, Crown and Covenant Publications, Pittsburg. 1980. 217 pp. Paperback \$7.95.

Psalm 113:1



I, Come, praise the LORD, our might-y God! Let all
his serv-ants shout his laud! Blest be his Name
from now for-ev-er. Let from the ris-ing
of the sun Un-til its dai-ly course is
run The saints ex-alt his Name to-geth-er.

Copyright: *Book of Praise*

A Son Unwanted

“Did I ask my Lord for a son? Did I not say, do no deceive me?” (II Kings 4:28)

The procession was short: a young man leading the way, pushing, encouraging, and egging on the donkey, and on the back of that animal: the Great Lady from Shunem. It was also unusual: no woman of her stature would get it in her mind to undertake a trip of some fifteen miles to the Karmel in the blistering heat of this midday, kicking up all that dust, and producing all that sweat. But she asked for no consideration; no special treatment afforded someone of her standing. Only one thing she demanded: Hurry up! Keep moving!

Outwardly, she showed no sign of emotion, offered even a reassuring smile. “All is well,” she had said to her husband when he asked what she was up to. And when Gehazi, the servant of the prophet, would enquire about her husband and about her son and how they fared and all that, she would answer: “Just fine, thank you.” But inside her was that large cloud of blackness that spread when this terrible thing had happened.

Her arms still remembered the feverish little body as they had held her young son. Her knees still felt the imprint of his small weight as he had sat shuddering in her lap, ravaged by the fever, sobbing, “My head, my head!” And then by noon life had ebbed away out of him, like water out of a broken pitcher, and the body had gone limp, his arms falling away from her neck and his head lolling against her breast. And so she had carried her dead son up to the room that was dedicated to the prophet of the Living God, up the stairs, Step, Step, Step, with her son, DEAD, DEAD, DEAD.

There had been a time when life was less complicated. That was before the prophet Elisha had come to their home. She had been well off, having an honourable position among her people (II Kings 4:13). Admittedly, there was some lack of fulfilment in her life with her husband: she did not bear him any children, and they were getting on in age. But then, she had accepted her plight, had adjusted to it, and she had found some compensation in a strong

interest in the matter of the Kingdom of God. And not all the rich who are empty would be sent away, as Mary, the mother of Christ would later sing She had even found a way for her household — without children — to be useful (not to say fruitful) in the Kingdom of Yahweh. Having perceived that Elisha was a prophet, she and her husband had made arrangements to receive a prophet in the name of a prophet. However, they asked for no prophet’s reward. They could offer no children, but whatever other small contribution

Then the promise had come of a son, as a reward for services of hospitality rendered. At first, she had protested about the cruelty of such a promise: “It is painful enough. Please don’t rub it in, sir. You should not say things that cannot become true. Shall I embrace a son? Sir, I did not ask!” But then gradually it became apparent that she and her husband would indeed become mother and father, as she began to feel giddy as women feel when they are with child, as she craved for strange food at unusual hours, as she felt like laughing and crying at the same time, as mothers-to-be would laugh and cry. What an adjustment this meant for her! She was, after all, still to become a mother in Israel! And when her son began to stir inside her, he reached deep into her heart, filling her with emotions that are too great for words.

Then came the day for her to give birth, when her body had taken on those qualities of miraculous elasticity that allows the fetus to become child, to find its way out, because it wants to crawl on the floor and play and greet the daylight. How anxious was the moment when she examined him from head to toe as mothers do with their newborn infants, and how great was the gratitude in her heart when there were no apparent defects! The barren had borne a healthy son! God had, as once for Sarah, now also for her, made laughter, and everyone, all her neighbours included, would laugh with her. And as the child drank from her, she cherished this total fullness of womanhood. How beautiful had God made the world, also the world of senses! So she was not ashamed of her tears, when, after having been fed and satisfied, her

son looked into her eyes and, for the first time, smiled at her. Not ashamed of tears, which, running down her cheeks, had splattered on his shiny little forehead from which the wrinkles had now gone, his tiny shrimp-like fingers

As she adjusted herself to the motions of the animal that carried her along the narrow paths, following the contours of the hill country, there was this terrible thing that had happened and that she could not accept. Was the life of her five-year-old son to be a dead-end street? A road leading to nowhere? Did that make sense? Was this roundabout sequence of events really necessary? The cloud of blackness filled her whole being; it was greater than she was herself. Then through the dust and the sweat she could see that they were nearing their destination. There is Gehazi with his traditional questions “Never mind, Gehazi” And there is Elisha himself, Elisha, the man of God. Then all her bitterness exploded in the despairing cry: “Did I not tell you not to deceive me? I DID NOT ASK YOU FOR A SON!”

This cry has echoed throughout the centuries whenever graves of small dimensions were to be dug. Rachel had called out for children, but when they were not, she refused to be comforted. Who wants children only to bury them? The picture of a child dying of malnutrition will deeply move even the most hardened westerner and will likely make him reach for his cheque book: the fund raisers know that all too well. Suffering has been a reality ever since the fall of man into sin, but never does it affect us more than when children are afflicted, and we, helpless bystanders, have to witness their anguish — guilty, but impotent to save.

It is said that visitors to Auschwitz were deeply moved when they saw the orderly storage of clothing of the “guests” who had departed through the chimney. The most vivid was the story told by the shoes. There were honest workmen’s shoes. There were frivolous high heels. But then there were the children’s shoes. Undersized footwear. Shoes and slippers and clogs. All fitting tiny feet, belonging to small boys and girls, descendents from Rachel, who were not, who were no more. Kindertotenlieder, throughout the centuries, have been the bitterest of cries, far more bitter than Mahler’s mystical composition would make us believe. “I DID NOT ASK YOU FOR A SON” is the extreme expression of

total despair. Is it possible to go any deeper?

Henrik Ibsen, in his play "Ghosts" has taken up this bitter explosion and reversed it. So, when an insulted mother asks her son: "How dare you speak thus to me, through whom you received your life?" the son shouts back: "I DID NOT ASK YOU FOR THAT LIFE!" Thus the wise man of the twentieth century perceives his life as something not asked for, something that had been forced upon him, as if pushed by a persistent peddler of encyclopedias. The wisdom he preaches is that man must be able to deal with this parcel, which came his way not-upon-request, as he sees fit. Thus the nausea over life with its suffering was turned into the most horrible of freedoms. The inversion was total . . .

There once was a young girl in Israel to whom also came the promise of motherhood, a motherhood which she had not desired. Her acceptance of the announcement has rendered her blessed among women: Ave Maria. Yet, on account of her Son, a sword would tear her heart apart; her Son, Who on several occasions had seemed to disown her: "woman, what have I to do with you?"; her Son Who had yet opened wide the door: "They who do the will of My Father, they are My mother and brother and sister." And before He went into that eternal night, He made arrangements regarding His son-mother relationship. Temporal life would continue thanks to His eternal death, and so things had to be put in order: "John, look after mother, and mother, look after John; he is your son now." Then He went into that blackest night of history, where in total desolation He wrestled with that eternal mystery of his Son-Father relationship. And there was no prophet available whose feet He could grab, even if His hands had been free, which they were not. David had at one time cried out: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" The great Son of David in His extreme agony recited these words. But, in His case, the cry had resounded between the mountains of eternity: Eli, Eli, Lama . . . Its sheer volume has rocked the foundations of all creation. Never was any son so unwanted. The Son of life died His eternal death. In the middle of that death struggle we have heard His great shout: "Why, why, why?" It makes our ears ring and ring — until, in the liturgy of the church, by the breaking of the bread, His ques-

tions have for us now become this answer: "that we might be accepted of God and nevermore be forsaken of Him."

The prophet Elisha stood at the Karmel, his feet being held by a bitter woman. He did not know the answer either (II Kings 5:27). Did he then give that little lecture that we always give, when confronted with a sobbing mother, looking down at so small a coffin? God knows what is best? Even if it does not make sense to us? Who knows what conversation took place after Gehazi's departure and before

their own trip back to that house of death? It does not matter. What matters is what was done: God restored the temporal life to this son of these Israelites, so that they could keep their place in the row of the generations of God's people which would eventually bring forth the Messiah, the Son of the living God. What also matters is what the woman did before she took up her son to go her way: in front of the man of God, in front of the Lord Himself, she fell flat on her face.

JOHN DE VOS

What to do with Ecclesiastical Contact and the OPC

There is little doubt that the decision of Synod Coaldale 1977 to acknowledge the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a "true church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession" and "to offer to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church a temporary relationship called 'ecclesiastical contact'" has stirred up more than a little debate among us. For almost three years now many members and consistories have been discussing the "pros and cons" of this decision. Some churches are even appealing this matter at the upcoming General Synod to be held at Smithville, Ontario.

In light of these developments, and seeing that this whole issue of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and ecclesiastical contact is going to receive renewed attention, I would like to offer some of my comments and even make a certain suggestion. I propose first to examine some of the criticisms that some members have voiced to me about this decision, and thereafter to present a different approach to the matter of inter-church relations.

THE OPC AS A "TRUE CHURCH"?

In reading Article 91 of the *Acts* of Synod Coaldale 1977, the first thing that certain members stumble over is the fact that this Synod used the confessional qualification "true" for the OPC. They allege that this was far too premature a statement to make. After all, were we not still discussing with them certain differences in matters of confession, church polity, and relations

with other churches and groups of churches (e.g. RES)? Should the designation "true" not have been put in abeyance until after all of these differences had been satisfactorily sorted out? There are also those who make the suggestion that we were "manouvered" into calling the OPC a "true" church (cf. Cl. Stam, *Clarion*, Vol. 27, No. 14, p. 315).

In response to these criticisms, a number of comments are in order. To begin with, it is rather surprising to hear such a lot of disapproval simply because the Synod called the OPC a "true church." Was such a statement not consistent with what previous Synods had said about the OPC? A careful reading of the *Acts* of Synod Edmonton 1965 (Article 141) reveals that this Synod called the OPC a "fruit of the Calvinistic Reformation" (translation mine, JV) and stated that its confessions and church polity had a "Calvinistic character." It also went on to state that the OPC had "conclusively chosen for orthodoxy and against liberalism" (translation mine). Six years later Synod New Westminster 1971 declared "that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is a group of Churches that commit themselves to the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God, and that wish to maintain the Creeds, based on this Word of God" and "that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church desires to regulate and order the government of the Church in accordance with the Scriptural confession" (*Acts*, Article 92).

Would these Synods have dared

to make such far-reaching statements if they were not convinced that the OPC was a true church? To say that a church commits itself to the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God is to say that scriptural preaching, scriptural sacraments, and scriptural discipline is to be found there. What Synod of our churches would make such a blanket statement if it was convinced that one or all of the marks of the true church were missing? Then there would not be a real commitment to the infallible Word of God.

In addition, there is also the case of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland with whom we have correspondence and who have recognized a certain church federation as "true" even though this church has the same confessional standards as the OPC. I do not recall that any church in Canada overtured our Synod to declare that we disapproved of such recognition because it is doubtful that churches having the Westminster Standards can be declared "true churches." Neither do I recall that any of our Synods ever made a declaration to that effect. Not once have we informed our sister churches in Holland, and, for that matter, in Australia too, that their correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea is out of line due to these churches' having the Westminster Standards. Surely, if we are so convinced, as some of us seem to be, that these Standards in their present form create an insurmountable obstacle to calling a church "true," then we should have lodged some sort of official protest with our sister churches in Australia and Holland. Yet, no official word of protest was ever requested by any local church nor sent by any of our Synods.

Closely linked with this is also the fact that our previous Synods have instructed the Committee for Correspondence with Churches Abroad to look into the possibility whether or not correspondence can be realized with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-pa). The Committee has in the past commented positively on their Westminster Standards and the minor changes that they made in them. These comments were received by Synod. Still, no Synod ever mandated the Committee for Correspondence to take up with the Korean churches the kind of issues that we are dealing with in the case of the OPC (re: visible and invisible church, assurance of faith, covenant of grace, descent into hell, etc.).

No local church has ever overtured the Synod to be consistent in its treatment regarding difficulties in the Westminster Standards and to apply the same measuring rod to the Koreans as to the Americans.

Was this an oversight? Perhaps it was. On the other hand, there are times when one senses a double standard creeping in with regard to these matters. Churches that are far away seem to pose less difficulty than those that are next door. Do we show a greater theological tolerance for the one than for the other?

Another item that deserves our attention is the "mischievous" remark made by my colleague in Smithville that we were "manouvered" into stating that the OPC is a "true church." In a sense he may have a point here. I, too, suspect that the Rev. LeRoy Oliver was trying to draw such an official declaration out of our Synod. But, do I blame him for that? Not at all. It is perfectly understandable from his side. Already in 1968 Synod Orangeville could gratefully acknowledge that "the OPC can accept the Canadian Reformed Churches as true Churches on the basis of their doctrinal standards and church government." Yet our Synods, while saying practically the same thing about the OPC, never dared to put it into such language, not until Synod Coaldale, that is. They only said it in a roundabout way. Needless to say, this approach was not always appreciated by the OPC.

In addition, our Synods, while saying all kinds of things about the OPC that implied that they were true churches, continued to bring to the fore the same objections time and time again. When the deputies for contact with the OPC reported to Synod New Westminster 1971 about their contact and recommended that correspondence be established with the OPC, they were rebuffed. Synod New Westminster told them to discuss many of the same issues again. Once more deputies from both sides met together. Once more the outstanding differences were dealt with. Once more the OPC, although having already recognized us as a true church, responded to our criticisms of their confessional standards and church polity.

Is it, then, any wonder that the OPC deputies sensed a certain ambivalent attitude on our part over against them. No doubt, it was in light of this attitude that the Rev. Oliver closed his letter to us by saying,

We do not presume to have answered all of your questions concerning the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, or to have provided you with answers that are satisfactory in every respect. We would affirm of ourselves as well as of the Canadian Reformed Churches that "the purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error." We do not ask you to approve of, or compromise with, what you find to be contrary to the Word of God, but to continue to exhort us to be what our Lord would have us be. Our errors and failures may be such as to prevent you from entering into a relation of correspondence with us as you have conceived of this relation traditionally. Yet we would ask whether you are really prepared to say of us, on the other hand, in terms of our witness over nearly forty years and our current testimony in our nation and in the world: that we ascribe more power and authority to ourselves and to our ordinances than to the Word of God, and will



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not submit ourselves to the yoke of Christ; that we do not administer the sacraments as appointed by Christ in His Word, but add to them and take from them; that we rely more upon men than upon Christ; and that we persecute those who live holily according to the Word of God. Our experience with you in previous discussions leads us to believe that while you are not altogether convinced that we are identical in doctrine and polity, you are much less convinced that we are nothing more than a sect of the false church. (See *Acts* 1977, Appendix VI, II Enclosure.)

Can you not feel in these words that there is a certain amount of hurt present? Here is a man writing on behalf of a church that has indeed fought the good fight of faith, that has battled valiantly against liberalism, that has experienced persecution, that has continually stood firm in the face of attacks and defended the Reformed doctrine; nevertheless, he finds himself in a position of having to defend his church, her teachings, her polity, and her history to a church federation that should be immensely sympathetic and not ambivalent, let alone exuding at times what can easily be mistaken for a spirit of superiority.

Yes, and still the ambivalence continues. After the letter of the Rev. Oliver and a careful review of our past dealings with the OPC led the Synod of Coaldale 1977 to declare the OPC a true church, the response on our part was still not completely whole-hearted. Once again there were deputies appointed with the mandate to present to the OPC the same criticisms that had already been voiced twice (or three times) in the past. For a *fourth* time we are dealing with our outstanding differences. It is akin to a merry-go-round, only there is no longer much merriment in it.

WAS ANOTHER ROUND REALLY NECESSARY?

Undoubtedly, there are some who will say, "This constant repetition of the same issues was not necessary at all. If the OPC had listened to our criticisms in the first place and changed their confessions and altered their church order according to our critique, why, then we would have had correspondence together long ago. However, as long as these differences exist no formal relationship is possible between us, not even ecclesiastical contact, let alone correspondence."

This brings us to the point as to how *serious* the differences between us really are. That there are differences

no one denies, but are they of such a nature that they prevent us from calling the OPC a true church of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession?

The Deputies who reported to General Synod New Westminster 1971 (see: *Acts* 1971, Appendix, p. 64ff) came to the conclusion, after studying all the differences between us on a confessional level, "that the divergencies in confession between the CRC [Canadian Reformed Churches] and the OPC are not of such a nature that they would prevent the CRC from recognizing the OPC as a *true church* of the Lord Jesus Christ and from entering into correspondence with this church" (emphasis mine). These same deputies pointed out that in the area of church polity "although considerable divergencies exist in church polity and in the form of government, there is no difference in the essential truth of Christ's headship over His church and of the absolute authority which His Word should have in the government of the church."

Now Synod New Westminster did not agree with the report and recommendations of these deputies. They apparently had not taken the differences between us serious enough. Yet I ask again, "How serious are they? Serious enough to affect the issue 'true' or 'false'?"

THE LETTER OF OCTOBER 13, 1978

Our present deputies for contact sent a long letter to the OPC on October 13, 1978, restating our difficulties. On the use of the terms "visible and invisible church" by the Westminster Confession, they merely raised "the question . . . whether the Westminster formulation does not betray a retrogression into a scholastic distinction, which is liable to be loaded with the misconceptions inherent in the concept "invisible church" and tends to support the abuses incident thereto" (emphasis mine). It is noteworthy here that our deputies make use of the criticism of Prof. John Murray, who was himself a life-long promoter of the Westminster Standards, although never a slavish one. It is also to be noted that our deputies do not state that this distinction is in violation or contradiction of Scriptural teaching, but rather that it is "not well-grounded" and is subject to "abuses." I agree with this assessment, but is such a "question" serious enough to alter the verdict "true" or to place it in doubt?

At the same time, the danger or abuse that we fear most with the use of the terms "visible and invisible," namely, that it will promote a doctrine of pluriformity, is explicitly denied by the OPC deputies.

Here again our deputies do not come to quick judgmental conclusions but express themselves very cautiously and state that "it easily leads to the acceptance of the theory of the pluriformity of the church." However, saying that "it easily leads to" is not the same as saying that "it has led in the OPC case to" such a theory or practice. The question can therefore be asked, "How serious a difference is this?"

Another difficulty lies in the area of the assurance of faith. It seems that the Westminster Confession and the Larger Catechism teach two kinds of faith: the one including assurance and the other excluding it. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the Westminster Standards simply approach faith from different angles. In the Confession ch. 14:2 one finds a *description* of faith; whereas in ch. 18:3 it speaks of the *personal* assurance of grace and salvation. As for the statement that full assurance is sometimes lacking in the lives of true believers, there is not that much difference between the Confession, ch. 18:3 and the Larger Catechism A.81 on the one hand, and the Canons of Dort, ch. I, Article 16 on the other. It is rather surprising that our deputies did not comment on this comparison with the Canons of Dort. It might have had a bearing on their assessment.

All in all, the matter of assurance and faith in the Westminster Standards is open to debate and different interpretations. Suffice it to say that the dangers that the deputies allude to regarding faith and assurance, namely, subjectivism and mysticism, are not present in the OPC. Our deputies openly acknowledge this when they state "we are thankful that you agree with our testimony that the hope and joy of the believer is rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ and His promises, and not in his own experience."

In light of the above, one may question whether the differences on this point, too, are as serious as some would have us believe. The matter of the relationship between assurance and faith certainly does not qualify as a major point of contention.

Another point of debate between the OPC and CRC relates to the covenant of grace. Our present depu-

ties object somewhat to the Larger Catechism A.31 and 166. They state that "the 'conception of the covenant as made with the believers and their children' is not very clear in the Westminster Standards." There is some truth in that; however, why were the proof-texts that are cited below these answers not dealt with and why was the Directory of Worship not cited which states very clearly regarding the matter of baptism "for the promise of the covenant is made to believers and to their seed" (p. W11)? If these sources had been included in the assessment, then the matter might have come into clearer focus.

Our deputies also make mention of the fact that there may be a danger in the way the Westminster Standards speak of the covenant; namely, "Are the Westminster Standards not close to the well-known theological distinction between an external and an internal covenant?" They go on to state that such a distinction played a prominent role in the decisions of Synod Sneek-Utrecht 1942 in The Netherlands regarding membership in the covenant.

In light of what we have said already about the proof texts of the Larger Catechism A.31 and 166, *plus* the Directory of Worship, *as well as* the unequivocal statement in the report of the Deputies 1968, "the Kuyperian thesis of a presumptive regeneration as ground for the baptism of infants has never been accepted in the OPC" (see *Acts* 1971, Supplement IV, p. 61), one wonders whether our deputies are not making too much of a certain point. We seem to be far too busy evaluating the OPC on the basis of our own past struggles, than on the basis of their heritage and history. To attempt to find all kinds of Kuyperian errors in the teachings and doctrinal statements of the OPC is not only unhistorical, it is also unjust. Our deputies do not do that, but there are others who make the attempt.

As for another disagreement mentioned in the past regarding our Lord's descent into hell and how this must be interpreted, our deputies state that "there seems to be no conflict between the positions taken by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Canadian Reformed Churches."

Finally, there is the matter of the law and its explanation. Our deputies "wondered whether full justice is done to the progress in the history of salvation." They would also "like to be informed about the binding character of

such details of the interpretation of the commandments." Here again we would point out that "wondering" and the desire to be "informed" do not as such mean that there are serious differences surrounding the law. That remains to be proven.

In sum total, this writer is left to wonder aloud about the *seriousness* of our doctrinal differences with the OPC. Are they serious enough, I ask again, to produce a negative judgment with regard to the OPC? The differences that do exist appear to be not so much a matter of conflict with Scripture as a matter of set-up, organization, interpretation, and poor formulation. The substance is largely the same. Mind you, I would not want to trade our Three Forms of Unity for the Westminster Standards, but that kind of choice is not necessary either. The richness of the Reformation lies not only in unity amidst diversity but also in diversity amidst unity.

As to the question of whether another round was really necessary in our discussions with the OPC, I have my reservations. Technically, it could be argued that it was necessary because we are aiming for correspondence, and that is a very close and demanding relationship. No doubt the goal of correspondence has greatly affected our approach to the OPC, but has our goal been the right and realistic one? Did we do the right thing in making correspondence our aim with the OPC?

More about that later, for I hear some of you saying, "What about our church polity differences, our differences surrounding the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES) and relations with other churches?"

With regard to our church polity differences, I can be brief. They exist. The starting point of the OPC is in the church universal. Our starting point is in the church local. The consequences being that the OPC set-up "tends," as our deputies write, "to a 'hierarchical ordering' and an infringement upon the completeness of the local congregation as a church of the Lord . . ." Nevertheless, although this "tendency" seems to be there, no proof is cited that the OPC acts in a hierarchical way. As a matter of fact, our deputies mention a number of improvements that have been made in the new Form of Government. While some more improvements would yet be desirable, there is no indication that the OPC wishes to do anything but recognize the Lordship of Christ and the authority of the Word of God. Surely

her church polity cannot be termed false.

Another item that deserves our attention is the item of inter-church relations. The OPC is a member of the RES and has an official relationship with the Christian Reformed Church, i.e., fraternal relations. As regards the first, I do not agree with the participation of the OPC in the RES. At the same time, I cannot deny that they are acting responsibly, if naively, as members of that organization. They remain among the most vociferous critics of the Gereformeerde Kerken (synodaal), with whom they broke off correspondence, and have called upon them to discipline Prof. H.M. Kuitert and Dr. H. Wiersinga, to rescind their recent decision on homosexuality, and to withdraw from the World Council of Churches. Their continuing membership in the RES is very much dependent on what that body does with regard to the Gereformeerde Kerken (synodaal). OPC General Assemblies of recent years have furnished ample proof that a continued "waffling" by the RES on this issue will lead to the withdrawal of the OPC from that body.

In the case of the Christian Reformed Church, our deputies in their recent letter to General Synod Smithville comment in the following vein:

. . . their relationship with the Chr. Ref. Church differed from ours. When they were a very small and young group of churches struggling to remain Orthodox, having just left the big Presbyterian church, then the Chr.R.C. offered them help and support. Some Chr.R.C. ministers become professors at the Westminster Seminary. The OPC received much help from such men as Prof. Kuiper and Stonehouse, not to forget Prof. VanTil who was originally a Christian Reformed minister too. Seeing the closeness of the past relationship, it is difficult to undo that relationship quickly. However, it is indicative that the OPC entertains merger talks with the other churches of NAPARC but not with the Chr. R.C.

Needless to say, more issues could be brought to the fore regarding our differences with the OPC; however, there is nothing in these differences that proves that calling the OPC a true church according to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession was either premature or ill-advised. It might even be argued that it was long overdue. Those who object to this decision of Synod Coaldale 1977 will have to come up with much better grounds.

(To be continued.)

Cloverdale

J. VISSCHER



News items are published with a view to their importance for the Reformed Churches. Selection of an item does not necessarily imply agreement with its contents.

ROME/LONDON

The request of approximately 1,000 Anglican laymen and 67 priests in the United States to be received into the Roman Catholic Church will have no consequences at all for the ecumenical relations between the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

That's what Dr. H. Smithe, representative of the Anglican Church at the Vatican, declared. He pointed out that it concerns a group of dissidents who no longer belong to the Anglican Church.

The group consists of former members of the Anglican Church who broke with the church in 1977 because of admission of women to the priesthood. Besides, they considered the Anglican Church too lax in the matter of morality. (ND)

PRETORIA

After a previously agreed upon meeting had been cancelled, the consistories of the Free Reformed Church at Pretoria (chairman Rev. K.J. Kapteyn) and of the former congregation of the late Dr. C. van der Waal, met recently.

At the combined meeting in Pretoria the discussion dealt, among others, with the teachings concerning marriage and divorce as propagated by the late Dr. van der Waal, about the latter's suspension, and about the suspension of two office-bearers in 1969. In his word of welcome, Rev. Kapteyn expressed the wish that "the Lord may so bless the discussions that they will lead to a union." In the meantime another combined meeting was held. (ND)

GENEVA (ANP)

The fund of the World Council of Churches which provides support for anti-racist activities has allotted a record-total of \$775,000 to a large number of organizations for fighting racism. The largest sums go to two organizations in South Africa, namely the SWAPO in Namibia which received \$200,000, and the African National Congress which receives \$150,000. According to the press office of the World Council, the considerable support which both these organizations receive is proof that the political situation in South Africa retains priority in the battle of the churches against racism. (ND)

MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES.

(This Message was proposed by the RES Nimes Missions Conference and was adopted by the RES Nimes 1980 for distribution to the churches.)

We, the representatives of the family of Reformed Churches from all the continents, gathered together in Nimes, France, in July 1980, found ourselves powerfully united in our common faith and allegiance to our Lord as we face a bewildered world. Currents and counter-currents of political ideology, philosophy, religion, and life-style sweep across the world, and millions upon millions are without anchor for the present or hope for the future.

Therefore, for the furtherance of the missionary mandate given us by Jesus Christ, we send to our several churches and mission agencies the following affirmations, and call their attention to the following themes which we are convinced must compel our attention and elicit our response.

1. First of all, we call for bold address to our fragmenting world, a prophetic message which clearly proclaims, "Thus says the Lord." Such fearless proclamation will not only be clear dissent from pervasive sinfulness of God's Name, but will ultimately be the means for healing and reconciliation.
2. We confess that at times we have turned aside from our mission to call the nations and peoples to faith in Christ. We have instead focused attention on lesser concerns which appeared to be of great moment because we have no longer concentrated on the centrality of Christ and His salvation which must be proclaimed in the world.
3. Our being in the world constantly confronts us with new styles of thought and action. We must al-

ways be open to the future and to new insights; yet we affirm that the spirits must be tested by the unfailing Word to see if they be of God.

4. To this bewildered world, torn by strife and hatred, there come many voices promising salvation. Various religions, some who claim unity and simplicity are making their appeal. In this context we call upon our churches to express our oneness in Christ and thus meet this challenge together. Our unity itself will be a witness to the world.
5. The life together of the Christian family unit must bear witness to Christ before a bewildered world. As it demonstrates God's covenantal love and care, it represents the whole family of God. Christian families are therefore called to a clear and distinctively Christian lifestyle, distinguished by simplicity and careful stewardship as well as by the worshipping together and wholeness the world so sorely lacks.
6. We call upon our churches to witness with renewed concern to the young people of our world, so often abused and bewildered by the confusion of this age. We call upon the churches to nurture the young with care, to recognize their personhood and unique place in God's eyes, and to realize that Christian youth may be the best means the Lord has given us for this part of our mission to the world.
7. The offices, structures and organizations of the institutional church provide significant avenues for witness. However, we affirm that the whole people of God — men, women, children — are called to exercise a prophetic witness in the world. Their role must be fully recognized and respected, and the witness of the Church must not be reserved simply for its official agencies.
8. The Church of Christ often lives in a world of great suffering and trial. As we heard accounts of perseverance in the face of persecution and hardship, we affirm anew
 - our painful awareness of the existence of millions of people victimized by war, poverty and oppression;
 - our thankfulness that the Church of Christ has survived these unspeakable sufferings;
 - our gratitude to God for the faith-

- fulness of the martyrs whose blood was shed for their faith;
- our deep concern with the suffering people of these lands, and with our fellow Christians who live and serve among them;
- our commitment as citizens of the Kingdom of God, to work for peace and justice.

9. Finally, we affirm that we do not look upon the world with abhorrence, nor to the future with despair. For though the turmoil and chaos of the world increases, we claim it for our Father, and celebrate in it the Kingdom of His Son. We do not abandon it to its sin and evil, but we seek through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to be in it as salt and yeast, and as light in the darkness. (RES NE)

HAMILTON, ONTARIO (EP)

August 21-26 saw over 1,000 clergy and laymen meet together in Hamilton, Ontario, for the thirty-second Biennial Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies in Canada. It has been the custom for these conferences to alternate from east to west. The last two conferences were held in Calgary and Ottawa.

This year's reports indicate a consistent growth has been maintained with exciting progress in every area of the denomination's involvement. Over 135 new churches have been built in the past five years. There are at present 1099 Pentecostal Assemblies' churches in Canada (including 150 in The Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland). (CC)

vO

tional flag? At first it was derisively nicknamed "Pearson's Pennant," and, even though it is now universally accepted, Canadians have never treated their flag with the kind of respect that, for instance, the Americans do. The kids in school don't sing in honour of the flag, and we don't make a ceremony of raising the flag with all the children standing around. Usually one, or at the most two, kids are sent off to raise the flag, and it is not uncommon to see it go up upside down because they don't know what is the top and what is the bottom.

Tonight we are going to discuss the Canadian Scene. Actually, the subject is so complex that we can only scratch the surface in the limited time we have, but if we go home tonight with a little more knowledge, a bit more understanding, and some more appreciation of our country, its history, its people, and its government, then we have achieved a lot and it will be well worth our effort.

The remote ancestors of Canada's Indians and Eskimos are believed to have come to North America from Asia via a land bridge to Alaska. Their numbers were never very large, and it is generally assumed that there were some 220,000 of them in what is now Canada by the time the first white settlers came to live here.

In 982 Eric the Red discovered Greenland and he started a small settlement there. According to the Icelandic Saga of Eric the Red, it was Eric's son: Leif Ericsson who discovered Canada and who was the first European to set foot on land there in the year 1000. The land he discovered was called "Vinland" because wild grapes or berries were found there. In the 1960's archaeologists discovered the remains of a Norse settlement on the northern tip of Newfoundland at L'Anse aux Meadows. It is generally believed that this is the place where Leif Ericsson spent the winter.

It was in 1492 that Columbus set out on a sea voyage to find a western route to Asia and he discovered the West Indies. This search for a new sea route to Asia was so exclusively the concern of Spain and Portugal that Pope Alexander VI assigned each of the two nations areas of exploration and set a demarcation line close to fifty degrees west longitude. That is the reason why Brazil for a long time was a Portuguese colony and the rest of Central and South America went to Spain.

The Canadian Scene

The following is a speech given by Mr. A.C. Lengkeek of Chilliwack within the context of the Political Study Course 1979/1980, held in the Fraser Valley.

Mr. Lengkeek was so kind as to give this speech for publication in CLARION, and has also promised that he will do some more writing in the future, specifically about current political affairs.

His interest in politics became evident when he ran a few times for a seat on the City Council in Chilliwack, B.C., where the last time he came very close to winning. Perhaps next time?

Of the present speech he writes, "In my opinion, it might be suitable to serve as an introduction to further contributions on current political affairs like, for instance, the repatriation of the Constitution." We are looking forward to it.

vO

"No one knows my country, neither the stranger nor its own sons. My country is hidden in the dark and teeming brain of youth upon the eve of its manhood. My country has not found itself nor felt its power nor learned its true place. It is all visions and doubts and hopes and dreams. It is strength and weakness, despair and joy, and the wild confusions and restless strivings of a boy who has passed his boyhood but is not yet a man."

I quoted these words from *The Unknown Country*. Bruce Hutchison

wrote these words some thirty years ago, and since then Canada has grown somewhat towards maturity. In the meantime, we have our own "Maple Leaf National Flag," and "O Canada" has become our official national anthem. However, in a lot of ways we are still searching for our own Canadian identity. There really is no such thing as Canadian nationalistic thinking. In this country everyone has the psychology of a minority group. The English Canadian feels swamped by the vast power of the U.S. culture. The French Canadian claims he is being crushed by the English Canadian, and then, of course, there are the Ukrainians, the Germans, the Dutch, the Poles, the Italians, the Chinese, the East Indians, and lately, the Vietnamese boat people.

In Canada we have never generated the psychology of a mass or a master race because there were never enough of us, and we had too many differences which we cherished. Canada never had a Napoleon or a Hitler with his dream of a super race. You have all heard of the American Dream, but can you imagine speaking of the Canadian Dream or how about a Committee on Un-Canadian Activities? Do you remember the long debate before the House of Commons adopted the Maple Leaf Flag as Canada's na-

King Henry VII, however, was not too worried about the Pope's decree, and, when an Italian navigator and mapmaker approached him to outfit him for a trip to Asia, he was all ears. He authorized him to sail westward and to claim for England any lands he discovered that were "hitherto unknown to Christians." Cabot set sail in 1497 and saw the coasts of Cape Breton and Newfoundland. He planted a cross claiming the land for England and established an English claim that would set a pattern that would shape the destiny of the land.

Meanwhile, the French had also become interested in America. Breton fishermen were on the Grand Banks off Newfoundland together with the English and the Portuguese. In 1534 Jacques Cartier sailed from St. Malo in the North of France. In his hand he had a letter from King François I, instructing him to "take two ships to discover certain Isles and Countries where, it is said, there must be great quantities of gold and other riches."

On the thirty-third day he sighted what was probably Labrador. The land he saw was nothing but rock and stunted shrubs. "I did not see one cartload of earth," he wrote. "I believe that this was the land God gave to Cain." He then entered and explored the Gulf of St. Lawrence and went ashore on what is now known as Prince Edward Island. He liked the country there but did not find any gold. Jacques Cartier went ashore at the Baie de Gaspé. He erected a large cross and claimed the country in the name of the King of France.

On his second voyage he sailed up the St. Lawrence River as far as present-day Montreal and Quebec City. He wintered at Stadacona (now Quebec). It was a terribly cold winter and the River froze to a depth of twelve feet. Scurvy struck, his men's arms and legs were swollen, gums rotted, teeth fell out, and twenty-five of them died. Many others would have died if the Indians had not taught them to brew a remedy from the bark of the Eastern White Cedar and its leaves.

On the third trip, Cartier set off with the idea of colonizing. His associate Roberval was appointed "Viceroy of New France." The colony he started was as unsuccessful as the other one had been. Again scurvy and famine killed off many of the colonists. The gold and diamonds that Cartier brought back to France were worthless, and the French still use the saying: *Faux*

comme diamants de Canada ("As false as Canadian diamonds"). It was through Jacques Cartier that Europeans got their first detailed knowledge of Canada. He named the St. Lawrence River the River of Canada. The word "Canada" is believed to have come from the Indian word *kanata* meaning "village" or rather "a number of huts."

For the next sixty years there was no serious attempt to colonize the St. Lawrence Valley. As far as the settlement of New France is concerned we cannot neglect to mention the name of Samuel de Champlain who was to become known as the "Father of New France." In 1608 he started a trading post on the site of the former Indian village, Stadacona, from which the City of Quebec later grew. It was not long before the settlers became involved in Indian wars. The French Fur Traders had befriended the Algonquin and Huron Indians, who were also amenable to missionary activities. Unfortunately, this antagonized the Iroquois Confederacy, the traditional rivals of the Hurons. The Iroquois who traded furs with the Dutch in New Amsterdam ravaged the Huron country north of the St. Lawrence and then turned against New France itself.

As the colony developed it was caught up in the imperial rivalries of England and France. Europe was one battlefield and France another. In 1613 the British from Virginia destroyed the French colony at Port Royal in Nova Scotia and the survivors were exiled from the coast. Later at the peace of Rijswijk, Acadia was returned to the French again. This did not last too long, however, for with the Treaty of Utrecht the Acadians faced a tough choice: an oath of allegiance to the British Crown or exile. Some moved to Quebec and Cape Breton, but for most the roots that tied them to their land were too strong: they decided to stay. The same Treaty of Utrecht had also given the British mastery of the seas, Hudson Bay, Newfoundland, and most of Acadia.

It is now the year 1713, and the power of France has dropped sharply from the first years of the century when it controlled the mouth of the Mississippi, the entrance of the St. Lawrence, and most of the Hudson's Bay Country. The mighty Hudson's Bay Company has become all-powerful in the fur trade. To compensate for their loss, the French built a fortress at Louisbourg on the south-east tip of Cape Breton. However, the fort could not save the

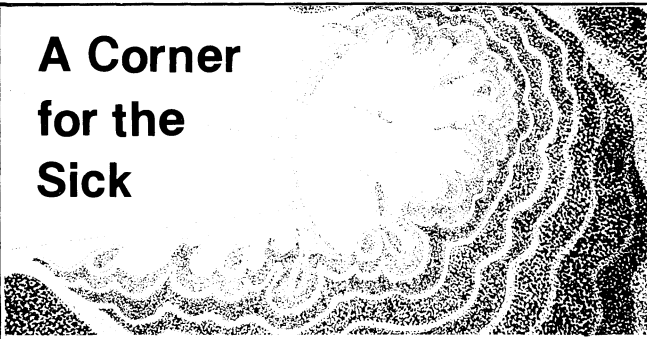
French power in North America. The fortress changed hands a few times. The French and Indian War, a counterpart of the Seven-Years War, was disastrous for France. It ended in a crucial battle on the Plains of Abraham, where the British under General James Wolfe took Quebec from the French under the Marquis de Montcalm. A large British fleet led to the surrender of Montreal in 1760, and three years later, in 1763, by the Treaty of Paris, the fact was confirmed that France had lost all her possessions in the New World except the small islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.

By Royal Proclamation, Quebec, like all colonies of England, was to have a Governor General and an elected assembly. Roman Catholic worship would be tolerated, but, in accordance with British Law, they could not hold public office or sit on juries. The newly-arrived Boston merchants rejoiced: they were Protestants and could now dominate the assembly. But they had reckoned without the man who became the new Governor General: James Murray. Murray did not like the merchants and foresaw nothing but trouble coming from changing the existing system. He wanted to cooperate with the clergy and the seigneurs whose ideas of law and order came close to his own. Murray decided to rule without an elected assembly. The merchants had powerful friends in London and the Governor General was recalled to London. The next Governor was another soldier, and he decided to follow in his predecessor's footsteps. The British responded in 1774 with the Quebec Act which reflected the view that the French Canadians should have the laws and government they wanted. Catholics were given full political rights and religious freedom. The Roman Catholic church was even given the right to collect the tithe. Instead of by an elected assembly Quebec was to be governed by governor and an appointed council of both English and French members. The Quebec Act was an attempt at fairness in the recognition of the civil rights of the French Canadians, but it also alienated the settlers in the Thirteen Colonies even more. The Quebec Act had annexed the western lands between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to Quebec. As they considered these territories theirs, this Act became a contributory factor to the American Revolution.

(To be continued.)

A.C. LENGKEEK

A Corner for the Sick



Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14:27

Jesus spoke these comforting words to His disciples in order to prepare them for things to come. He was telling them that He would soon be leaving them, but that He would go to prepare a place for them.

After Thomas spoke to the Lord about his doubt of knowing the way, Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by Me. If you had known Me, you would have known the Father also; henceforth [from this time on] you know Him and have seen Him." The disciples DID know the way. When Philip asked the Lord Jesus to show them the Father, Jesus replied, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know Me?" From verse 9 we may understand that, when we know Christ, we know the Father also; and when we rely on His promises, He will not forsake us, but grant us the comfort of His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guides us in the truth. When we are in need of comfort we should turn to the Scriptures, for the greater our knowledge of the promises of God, the richer our comfort will be!

* * * * *

Father, we thank Thee who hast planted
Thy Holy Name within our hearts.
Knowledge and faith and life immortal
Jesus Thy Son to us imparts.
Thou, Lord, didst make all for Thy pleasure,
Didst give man food for all his days,
Giving in Christ the Bread eternal;
Thine is the power, Thine be the praise.

*Book of Praise
Hymn Section 1979
Hymn 46:1*

* * * * *

Brothers and sisters, please mark the following birthdays on your calendars. The Lord willing, these young people will have occasion for celebration.

ALAN BREUKELMAN
Box 666,
Coaldale, Alberta T0K 0L0

Alan has seven brothers and sisters. (Two of them are also on our Calendar). Alan hopes to celebrate his 14th birthday on October 17th. He attends a special school, and is in Grade Six. He likes bikeriding

and visiting his friends on the farm. One of his other hobbies is playing with Lego bricks. He loves cards with farm animals on them.

* * * * *

NELENA HOF SINK
6705 Satchel Road,
Box 40,

Mount Lehman, B.C. V0X 1V0

Nelena will celebrate her 20th birthday on October 22nd. She enjoys staying in "Bethesda," a Christian home for special people. Her family lives 700 miles away, in Smithers, but she is fortunate to have her grandparents and other relatives nearby. She loves to receive mail!

* * * * *

JOHN FEENSTRA
R.R. 1,
Wainfleet, Ontario

John looks forward to celebrating his 22nd birthday on October 25th. He is mentally handicapped, but, when able, he attends a special school. He loves to look at machinery pictures in books and magazines.

* * * * *

MARY ANN DE WIT
6705 Satchel Road,
Box 40,

Mount Lehman, B.C. V0X 1V0

Mary Ann is blind, and also has speech problems. She lives in "Bethesda," the same Christian home where Arlene lives. Mary Ann can knit very well. She hopes to celebrate her 24th birthday on October 28th.

* * * * *

Michael Meints in Houston, B.C., is 11 years old. It has been discovered that he has leukemia. He had to go to the Vancouver General Hospital for treatments. After the end of October he will return home, after which he will be in for more treatments. Since his birthday is on the 16th of November, there is every reason to remember him especially with cards or letters. His interest is reading. He is the oldest of five children.

In Vancouver he will be in the Health Center for Children, Vancouver General Hospital, 715 - 12th Avenue East, Vancouver, B.C. V5T 2J1.

In Houston, B.C., the address is P.O. Box 121, Houston, B.C. V0J 1Z0.

* * * * *

Shall we give these young people some "day-brighteners," brothers and sisters? Imagine the joy we will give them by sending them our best wishes.

Send your requests, with some information concerning the circumstances, age, hobbies, and other particulars which may serve the purpose, to:

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

news medley

From my high school days I recall the first words of the speeches given by Cicero against Catalina. In translation they read, "How long, O Catalina, will you abuse our patience? How far will this audacity of yours extend?"

I had to think of that when I received a telephone call from Winnipeg whether any more copy was coming for the previous issue. Only very little had been received. It could be, of course, that the cause was to be sought with those who promised and did not keep their promise. It was more likely, however, that the reason was the wildcat strike by government employees who also prevented the mails from being processed and transported in and from the notorious postal stations in Toronto, although not only there. It must be also due to that work stoppage that I as yet have not received the latest *Clarion* issue; yet I am certain that this time as well it was sent to me by first class mail. But what do first-class mail stickers and first-class postage help when the mail is held up anyway?

How long do we, defenseless correspondents and writers, have to put up with that? How long will they abuse that well-known patience of ours? How far will they go in their insolent audacity? Authority is breaking down all over the place.

The Canadian Labour Congress will support those and other employees in their just fight for higher wages. Of course, for when — as a result of the higher wages — the price of commodities goes up, they have a chance to support others who, because of the increase in the cost of living, need more to maintain and slightly improve their standard of living. Thus "labour" (read: the ones who are in power and have the biggest mouths) is able to prove the necessity of organized action and the fruit of stubborn insistence.

Quo usque tandem . . . ?

The number of bulletins which reached me is still surprisingly adequate to produce a news medley. I had better hasten to pass on to you what is deemed worthy to be passed on. You may guess what all the rest is.

The farthest West we can go this time is Barrhead, Alberta. It appears that there is some growth in the membership, a growth which is caused by people moving into the area. The consistory decided to add a third elder to the Consistory. "Also, all further elections will be held in April instead of in December, which means that the terms of the present office-bearers will be extended by four months." I do not think that there are many Churches left where the election of office-bearers takes place in the middle of the season. I recall that, when I was a boy, that election did take place in December and that the ordination of the new elders and deacons took place on the first of January. That was not very smart, for it meant that new office-bearers came in when about half of the family-visits had already been brought. It is much better to do it as Barrhead decided now to do it: in April, that is after the completion of the visits. A good preparation for the coming season is then possible.

The growth of Barrhead also reflects in the fact that consideration is given to the possibility of having a choir of Barrhead members only. At present, if I am not mistaken, the

Barrhead members go to Neerlandia and they have a combined choir of the two congregations.

I do not know how many members there are right now that sing in the choir, nor do I know how many would join if there were a separate choir for the Barrhead congregation. I also am well aware that it is none of my business, but I may serve with my experiences, which are supported by the experience of others. And my experience is that the larger the choir, the more pleasant the singing and practising; on the other hand, the smaller the choir, the less enthusiasm, especially when only two or three tenors and perhaps four bases can be "conscripted." If all were more or less professional singers, things would not be bad. But small choirs are unsatisfactory, I have discovered. Besides, two people together can always do much more than two times one person on his own. That applies to choirs as well.

Let us leave Alberta and go to Manitoba. It is in Winnipeg's bulletin that I found something to be mentioned. That is not so much the organizing of a weight-reducing club. Perhaps that title is too glorious for what the ladies are planning, although the intention is lofty. What I have not found in any other bulletin as yet is a whole list of all the planned family visits for the whole season. The whole schedule has been published in the bulletin. The brethren and sisters are informed well ahead of time, as you can see.

There is something in favour of that, there is something against it. What is in favour is that everyone knows betimes when the office-bearers can be expected and thus every one and every family can reserve that specific date to receive the brethren. What I see against it is that planning visits so far ahead will necessitate quite a few changes, for experience teaches that many things happen in the course of four or six months. We hope not that we shall be visited with a lengthy illness, but that is quite well possible. We'll have to see how the Winnipeg experiment turns out. The following explanation is given.

The consistory has decided to inform the congregation at this time of the dates scheduled for these visits and to officially announce them on the Sunday before they actually will take place. The consistory considers this approach more in keeping with the majesty of home visits and that therefore reasons against the above scheduled dates should not be easily accepted.

It can be known from the previous medley what I think about announcing home visits. I think that such announcements have no rightful place in the worship services. Besides, I cannot see the sense of announcing in this case. What is against it when the elders, one week or two weeks before the scheduled date give the family a call and say, "Would you please remember that we are coming then and then?" That would be much more effective, I think, than "officially announce" such a visit on the Sunday before the scheduled date. Such apart from the fact that I am convinced that such announcements should not be made during the services. I cannot see that the method upon which Winnipeg now decided is "more in keeping with the majesty of home visits." But then, perhaps someone thinks that I am nearsighted.

Yes, and that is all we can talk about from the prairies or the Pacific Region. That leaves us Ontario.

The Labour Day is frequently used for Church Picnics. At least, here in Ontario. In British Columbia — at least when I was there — such picnics were more held in May, if I remember well. Perhaps it was in 1953 that we went to Mount Seymour in North Vancouver on Labour Day. That's what I remember vaguely. In 1954 the Smithers Congregation went on

July 1st to the glacier there to have their Church Picnic. I recall that, because after a hazardous journey we had arrived there for summer holidays on June 30th. It was not much of a summer, I remember, and the journey from there via the Hart Highway to Edmonton was even more dangerous, as the brethren who went with us to the Classis in Edmonton can testify. When we turned north in Prince George we saw a sign which wished us a pleasant journey. One of the brethren from Smithers who went along said that such a wish did not spell much good. He was right. Three days in the rain over a "highway" which I could see when I was lying in bed and closed my eyes: one sea of mud with two tracks in it. Those who now travel the beautiful Hart Highway to Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie and thus reach Edmonton can almost set the automatic pilot and relax. We had to swerve constantly to avoid potholes and mudpools. Even in spite of much manoeuvring I could not prevent a canvas-break in one of the front tires and had to purchase a new (recapped) one in Dawson Creek. That set me back eighteen dollars which, in those days, was a small fortune.

But why should I test your patience with my stories? Let us continue with news from the Churches.

I was talking about Labour Day picnics. In most cases they were quite uneventful. There was, however, the odd case when unusual things happened. The Brampton bulletin tells of the experiences there.

On Labour Day we were all able to share a day of fellowship and fun at the church picnic. Although it rained, our spirits were not dampened. Part of the fun was evacuating from Albion Hills Park and moving to the Tenhage estate. When a shower came we had the privilege of moving into the nearest pavilion, Bert's garage. For the young people it didn't really matter, it was raining buckets of water nearly all day!

Before we go to the Burlingtons, let me mention that in Fergus/Guelph we had our first Graduation Exercises of Grade XII students. As a report will appear in *Clarion* at a future date mere mention of the event may suffice for the moment.

I said that we were going to the Burlingtons. What I am going to quote is taken from the bulletin of Burlington East. We are promised that we shall read more about it in *Clarion*, and therefore I'll mention just a few lines.

As some of your know, Mr. T. VanderVen, Principal of the John Calvin School in Armadale, Australia, was invited by us to discuss the establishing of our Teachers' College.

He returned home to think the whole matter over and discuss it at home. This week he applied for the position of Principal and in our meeting of Wednesday, September 10, after consulting the Western board members he was appointed by a unanimous vote.

Mr. VanderVen and family hope to arrive some time in January 1981, the Lord willing, and we hope to open our College for a humble start September 1981, again the Lord willing.

Now that we mentioned something about the school-work, we may as well add a few things from other bulletins. The Chatham school bulletin contained the following passage.

Judge for yourselves. Prayer for the Toronto Public Schools. By the Canadian Press.

"Great Spirit, help me never to judge another until I have walked in his moccasins for two weeks."

Students in the Metropolitan Toronto City of North York may now begin the school day with this *Síoux* prayer —

one from a list of several dozen suitable prayers approved by the Board of Education.

The list includes the Lord's Prayer. Principals will be allowed to select the prayers they think are suitable to their schools.

Other non-denominational sections ask God to "put Thy merciful kindness into all who work or play with animals," and to help ensure that "our holidays be time of recreation."

Some weightier prayers on the list deal with friendship, family, and patriotism. Readings include the Bible and the sayings of Confucius, Jahil Gibrau and Abraham Lincoln.

If it were not so sad, we could sing here, with Erasmus, the "praise of folly."

The Hamilton School Society apparently has a rule that people who enroll their children for the first time "are required to pay an initial fee of \$1,144.00, or have paid this amount in membership dues, or have supported another school society." I recall that we oftentimes discussed such a requirement and I think that it is no more than fair. It would be "living off the other members" if parents waited with becoming a member of the school society until their first child is ready to attend elementary school. How un-Christian is the attitude: "I can wait with paying, for I don't benefit from it as yet. I'll pay as soon as I have to." If everyone thought and spoke like that, there might not even be a school by the time their children were ready to go to school. The burden is heavy enough already for the parents whose children are attending school. It is to be feared that those who refuse to help right now, will find things too expensive by the time their children will have to attend. Result? Children to the public school. So much for that.

We have some more news from Hamilton.

We are happy to inform you that the younger children of the three families (refugee families, vO) are attending Timothy. Three members of the school society, who have no children in school themselves, have taken up sponsorship by increasing their membership fee of \$18.00 per week with an extra \$7.00. If there were three more of such members who are willing and able to do the same, the tuition cost for a year would be covered.

Good!

That is then all about the schools.

One more item from Hamilton's bulletin.

That is in connection with the Catechism Classes which have been resumed everywhere this month.

Also, even though the classes are mostly in the evening, this does not mean, of course, that sloppy dress is acceptable. Please dress neatly, revealing a good attitude — one which is ready and desirous to learn the "whole counsel of God." Therefore tight blue jeans and T-shirts with slogans, for example, will not be tolerated.

The Smithville bulletin contains regularly reports of meetings other than Consistory meetings. There is the Home Mission Committee, there is the Parents Committee, and so on. That seems like a good idea, for it keeps the Congregation informed about the things that are going on, it stimulates the activity, and it makes the members aware of the needs.

The Home Mission Committee came to the conclusion, "We will have to decide on a later date whether to use an introductory pamphlet which will be the same in all Canadian Reformed Churches or whether we should make one up ourselves."

To my knowledge there is no pamphlet which is used in all Canadian Reformed Churches. There are various pamphlets in circulation, but they differ from place to place, since each Committee or Consistory or Minister may have written one. Our committee in Fergus, for instance, wrote one themselves, which was submitted to various people for their comments and/or approval. If a more extensive pamphlet were designed and written, it would indeed be advisable to have the same one everywhere. Now they are usually only brief and contain some local information. I am wondering what the Smithville brethren will come up with.

The Smithville deacons are going to ask the Congregation some questions from which it is to become evident whether any "sisterhelp" is needed. They explain the purpose of such "help" as follows.

The idea of sisterhelp is that if a sister or brother needs help and she or he does not know whom to ask, because, e.g. there is no one she knows who is able to help her, then there is an address in the congregation where she or he can ask for help (that could be the deacons or a sister who does it on behalf of the deacons because most of the deacons are not at home during the day). The need can be of various degree, it might be just the need of a babysitter for the children because suddenly a visit to the doctor has to be made, or someone needs help for a longer period of time, a help for housework and the washing is required. Older people might need help for cleaning the house for a couple of hours a week.

In the earlier days we had such an organization in New Westminster. We paid contribution to a society, and the society employed a sister who gave herself exclusively for this work. I do not recall exactly why that society ceased to exist, but some of the factors are still alive in my memory. Sometimes two or three families needed help at the same time, but there was only one person available for the position. The society could not afford to attract more persons, for they had to receive fair wages. Then there was perhaps a month when no family needed help, and the wages had to be paid, for it would not be fair to say to the person employed, "There is no work, so we are not going to pay you this month." And it certainly was not the intention that someone who gave herself to this work should have to go here and there to help with the spring-cleaning. She was more a homemaker.

Anyway, I am glad that the matter as such has the attention, and I hope from the heart that the efforts in Smithville will succeed. Especially when we have elderly brothers and sisters, they may need a little help, yet be unable to pay full wages. In such cases a society or organization would be one possible solution. I'll keep you posted.

Rev. Stam discusses Bible translations in an article in the *Family Post*. He pleads for adoption of one Bible translation, an adoption by a General Synod, if I understand him well. He quotes Prof. J. Van Bruggen of Kampen, "One of the first things needed is an agreement between the Churches in one country that they will use the SAME translation." Rev. Stam continues then, "He would even like this agreement to be given a place in the Church Order. . . . Has the time not come that we adopt ONE translation for all the Churches? Certainly, further study can (and must) be done, but meanwhile a uniform practice is desirable."

That a uniform practice is desirable is something with which I agree wholeheartedly. And it is also my wish that the Churches adopt one translation, the same one in each Church. However, how is that to be achieved? By a decision of a General Synod? Definitely not.

I am very disappointed when I visit a particular Church year after year and find that they still use the King James Version and *have done nothing to make progress* for a whole year. I also find it difficult to read the King James Version from the pulpit with the same "enthusiasm" with which I read a newer translation. But I wish to defend the right of each and every church to make the decision that the King James Version shall be used. I do not agree with that decision and I deplore it, but the right is there. The reason why the decision is made may be wrong conservatism, only sentiment and stubbornness, or whatever reason one could think of, that does not make any difference regarding the basic question whether it is the right of each and every Church to decide thus. I deny the right of a General Synod to make a decision that such and such a translation shall be used. All a General Synod has the right to do is examine objections brought in against a specific translation — if asked to do so!! — and give a judgment on the question whether use of that translation should be declared undesirable for specific reasons. No General Synod should, for the sake of uniformity, decide that one particular translation is to be used. I can speak from experience: all our General Synods have formulated their decisions regarding Bible translations very carefully. Anyone who consults the Acts can prove that.

Should we come to uniformity in this respect? Yes, please!

But definitely not via a General Synodical decision.

And no provision regarding that in the Church Order, in spite of wishes to the contrary from across the ocean. Let's remain Reformed, also in our Church Polity. Hierarchy starts with the best intentions and oftentimes for the sake of uniformity.

I believe that the Church is pluriform.

Which is vastly different from "pluriformity of the Church."

vO

Psalm 9:1



With all my heart I thank Thee, LORD,
Thy wondrous deeds I will record.
Thou art my joy, in thee I'll glory,
With psalms, Most High, I will adore Thee.

The Basis for our Actions

*Translated from DIT KONINGSKIND.
With permission.*

When a handicapped child is born, its parents often find it difficult to accept the baby as their own child. Frequently, the first reaction is: it is not possible that I should have a retarded child. Even if the parents do not make the discovery for several years, there is often the struggle with God in prayer: Why should it be my child! This cry of parents is described in a poem "Deformed Child" (*Mismaakt Kind*, by J.M. van Walsum-Quispel) and goes somewhat like this:

Behind her pure white carriage she
walks, so straight,
And round her lips her smile has frozen
still
Causing unnecessary hardness in her
face still young;
Complain she will not, so how hard
must be her will.
She shuns the pitying gaze of all
those passing by,
And still with proudly lifted head walks
on.
She only looks ahead with never a side-
ways glance,
In her determination she will yield to
none.
This is a problem between God and her
alone.
Let no one now attempt to preach or
make ado.
Later, when hiding in her inmost room
she'll speak,
And then cry out: "O God, it can't be
true
that this should be Thy will, this Thy
compassion!
Or has this been empowered by a far-
off sin . . ."
But God is silent and in sole reaction
Places the helpless babe in tired arms
again.

God places the helpless child in her tired arms! That is the answer to all our questions. We do not look after the child because we love to do it, or to practise our loving and unselfish nature. The purpose is not that we as parents can be brought closer together.

Those are the results, not the purpose of our actions.

Accepting this out of God's hand means taking care of the children no matter how severely handicapped they may be. It means that we as neighbours or friends do not shun the family with a handicapped child, but visit them more frequently. It means that we help to carry the load somewhat, offer to look after and help wherever possible. Unfortunately, how often does it not occur that we avoid such a family due to a misplaced reticence.

ACCEPTANCE

In practise, what does it mean? Accepting the handicapped? We may recognize various phases in arriving at a complete acceptance. I find it useful to discuss them here. How far have we come in accepting our neighbour who is handicapped?

The first reaction after the introduction to a handicapped person is often dislike, and especially fear. These are called the natural reactions. We would like to run away. Parents, however, can never keep this up with their child, because they cannot run away and are continually confronted anew with their child.

In a second step we accept — in the eye of the world — and try to be "nice"; however, we do not accomplish anything constructive. Internally we still abhor the situation and the handicap.

The third phase sees us tolerating the patient. We consider it our duty to keep him alive and fulfill this duty without joy.

In the fourth phase we recognize him as our fellow human being, but keep pushing his handicap to the fore in everything. We continually discuss it and the whole relationship is influenced thereby. This has a degrading effect on the physically handicapped person especially who feels this strongly.

The fifth phase brings us to complete acceptance. The handicap no longer plays a big role in the relationship. In fact, it may even be forgotten entirely.

As can be seen, the entire process of acceptance does not primarily depend on the handicapped person, but on you, the "healthy" one. What is your view in life? Have you always considered diplomas and degrees most important, or have your eyes been open also for other values?

It is often said that in a prestige society such as ours, it becomes increasingly difficult for a handicapped person to be accepted. Everything is geared to earning more money, studying for more degrees, and getting greater promotions. In a society less geared to high accomplishments, a handicapped person could more easily find his own place and input. This is indeed applicable to the communion of saints. There accomplishments, getting a good job, and high honour do not come into the picture. There we live in the mutual knowledge of our depravity and our unworthiness before God, we, the healthy ones, as well as the handicapped. In this community it should not be difficult to accept the handicapped completely as our fellow human being, or rather as our neighbour.

THE DUTY OF THE FAMILY

After having mentioned the handicapped, I should like to make a few remarks about the family. In the book *Christ and the Family*, W. Meijer lists one of the great mandates of the family: educating towards independence. "For indeed [he continues] the family offers great security. But that security may never repress or confuse the personal responsibility. Moreover, in the future every adolescent believer should be able to cope and venture on *his own* without the special support of the security of the family."

This rule: educating towards independence also applies to handicapped children; in as far as this is possible. It is extremely important that we bring up our physically handicapped children toward independence, especially when we know that already at a young age they may have to be admitted for long periods of time to rehabilitation centres, etc., where neither God nor His law are considered important.

Perhaps you ask yourself: And what about the mentally retarded child which never *can* be independent? That great mandate can then not be accomplished. However, what can be fulfilled is the greatest mandate which is so beautifully described in the mar-

riage form: "Secondly, that by marriage the human race is to be propagated and the parents are to bring up their children, if the Lord pleases to give them, in the true knowledge and fear of the Lord, to His glory and their salvation."

Do we not too often forget this task, also with regard to the healthy children? Our handicapped child once more points out to us what is most important: "to grow up to His glory." Diplomas, honour, and respect are not essential for this, only the faithful acceptance of God according to His Word. Another poem "Like a Child" (*Als een kind*, by E. Ijsker-Kooger) expresses it in this way:

He never had possessed great mental power,
He was as simple as a little boy;
He only knew his name, that it was
Willem

And that mere knowledge was enough
to bring him joy.

Of God he only had a simple notion:
God was his Father, great and strong
and stout,
Who up in heaven sat and waited for
him;
And Jesus was his Brother, without
doubt.

To read a word he never had been able,
And dogmas and of such he'd never
heard;
But doubts within him never had arisen
For he believed his Father on His Word.

Although of sin he has not one idea,
Although he was as simple as a lad,
God found with him a faith so great
and mighty
Such as great theologians seldom had.

Willem was educated for his salvation.

doors, even in the rain for the working area was protected by a huge canopy.

Our daily programs more or less followed a routine which began by rising at 7:30 and being dressed for breakfast by approximately 8:30. Clean-up was next, with the group taking turns (by tables) — one group cleaning up and the other group washing and drying dishes. At times there seemed to be no end to all those dishes! Numerous activities were planned in the mornings, interrupted by lunch. After lunch those who needed a "quiet time" (participants, not staff!) had one, and most often we spent the afternoon at the beach. Cold drinks and a bite to eat were packed along and were always welcomed in the heat of the day. When we tired of swimming, we played games, and, before we knew it, it was time for us to return to camp. Once again it was time to eat. The mealtimes seemed to be highlights of the day. Much activity was seen in peeling 10 lbs. of potatoes, laying out spoons, knives, forks, bowls, plates, cups, etc. It was all done in such gaiety that it hardly seemed like work. The meal itself was always fun and relaxed. Lots of chatter and laughter was dominant every time. Appetites were huge, and second helpings were commonly asked for by most everyone. Clean-up time came again, followed by an evening walk, and back to camp for a bedtime snack. A fire was prepared every evening in time for our Day Closing Program. We started off the session each time by singing, and then the staff took their turn in reading a piece of Scripture, giving a short

Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped

SUMMER CAMP 1980

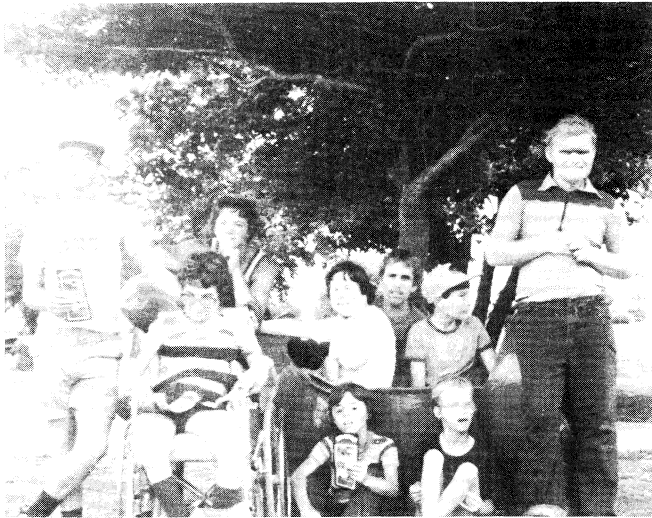
A new adventure began for us all on Monday, July 14, 1980. We had all come together to camp out at Valen's Conservation Area, just west of Freleton, Ontario. The atmosphere was rather strange and confusing at first, everyone coming and going, last minute discussions with parents, unpacking clothes and piles of groceries, putting final touches on the trailers and tents, and trying to get to know one another. Once meal time had come around and we were all sitting around the tables, most of the confusion was gone and we were all relaxed. This was probably due to the easy-going nature of our excellent camp leader, Miss Bep Hoogland. Her experience in camping with handicapped children in the past proved to be invaluable during our two-week stay.

Our camp consisted of nine participants and a total of twelve volunteer staff. The large campground was ideally situated, close to water and washroom facilities, yet surrounded by numerous trees to give us the desired privacy. Besides having room for the seven tents and trailers, there was more than enough room left for parking

all the vehicles, and an area in which to hold outdoor activities. Close by was a large shelter which we used one day when it rained. (Camping isn't camping unless it rains!) The cooking was done in the trailers only when absolutely necessary; it was more fun to do it out-



July 19th, 1980, Valen's Park.



The Kids of "Camp Boo"

Albert, Jim B., Grace, Jim. V., John, Marinus, Connie, Paul, Janine



Birthday Party "Camp Boo"

John, Janine, Connie, Grace, Paul, and "Little Jack"

explanation on what was read, and following with an evening prayer. We were always in the mood for more singing, so singing again is what we did. We must know all the songs out of the *Book of Praise* by now! We even received a comment from one of our camping neighbours on how beautiful our sing-songs were every night, saying that they always sat and listened to us. The closing program was a beautiful way in which we could talk to the children about the work of the Lord and how He kept His covenant promise and sent His Son into the world to save us, His people. Together we could thank the Lord for His goodness to us which was everywhere around us — in the nature surrounding us, in the activities we were able to do in the daytime, in the food that was put before us, and in our own particular families which we belong to. Out of thankfulness to Him we continually strive to do His good will.

Getting everyone off to bed was usually welcomed by all, for everyone seemed to tire easily when camping. Then the staff would group around the fire once more to discuss the day's activities and any problems which were encountered, and to go over the next day's program. A busy day was finished; it was bedtime for staff, too, and then all was QUIET.

Besides our activities at the beach (swimming and canoeing), other forms of entertainment kept us busy. On our agenda was a trip to African Lion Safari, a shopping mall, Mountsberg Wildlife Centre, Toronto Zoo, a

scavenger hunt, and two birthday parties. Sunday was a most enjoyable day. We all attended church at Guelph, and after the service the congregation invited us downstairs for a Coffee Social Hour. It was very much appreciated. A thank-you to the three families who took us home and provided a good lunch for us. In the evening we held an Open House and invited everyone from the congregation for a sing-song. With a crowd of 40+ we made lots of music.

The last evening was celebrated with a Farewell Program. Again the musical instruments of the boys accompanied the singing and each participant provided some entertainment either in song, play, words, or riddles. It was an evening full of fun and laughter. Saturday, July 26, was a sad day because we had to break up camp, clean up, and say goodbye to all our new friends. After the last participant left us, we felt an emptiness around us. The lunchtime with only staff was just not the same. We already missed "our kids," and they had only been gone for one or two hours! Already we started talking about seeing them again next year at camp, affectionately dubbed "Camp Boo."

We are grateful to the Lord that this camp was such a success and thank Him for the opportunity of being able to meet together in such a good spirit of unity and love. May the Lord continue to bless His special children and their families in the year that lies ahead.

A CAMPER

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

After weeks of planning, meeting, phoning, and discussing, our Summer Camp became a reality this year. This is the first major undertaking of the Association since its formation a few years ago. The date was set, a site chosen, equipment purchased and borrowed, participants came, and camp staff volunteered. We would like to publicly thank the many, many people who in some way — big or small — contributed to this cause; whether it was in giving a cash donation, tents or trailers, camp equipment, or food, or in giving of their time. We realize that without this generosity of everyone, our camp would not have been the success it was. Your kindness is appreciated!

On behalf of the Board,
MRS. N. OOSTERHOFF
MR. Wm. VANWOUDEBERG

Church News

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

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OUR COVER

*Ontario Place, Toronto, Ontario.
(Photo Courtesy Ontario Govern-
ment.)*

PRESS RELEASE

of Classis Ontario South held on September 10, 1980.

1. *Opening.* On behalf of the convening church of Lincoln, Rev. M. Werkman, opens the meeting. Psalm 122:3 is sung and then the convener reads Psalm 122. He leads in prayer. A hearty welcome is extended to all the brothers. The convener congratulates the church at Chatham that their minister decided to stay in Chatham. Also, he congratulates Rev. J. DeJong with his recent marriage, and the Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer with his engagement.

2. *Credentials.* The delegates of London check the credentials. All the churches are duly represented. There are no instructions.

3. *Constitution of Classis.* The classis is constituted as follows: Chairman: Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer; Clerk: Rev. Cl. Stam; Assessor: Rev. W. Huizinga.

4. *Adoption of Agenda.* After the addition of some items the provisional agenda is adopted.

5. *Reports. A. Church visitations.* Reports of church visits to the churches at Grand Rapids, Hamilton, Lincoln, Smithville, and Watford are read. After some discussions about these reports, they are thankfully accepted, since it is heard how the Lord continues to gather, defend, and preserve His churches in the unity of true faith.

B. Fund For Needy Students Ad Article 19, Church Order. The church at Chatham, which administers this fund, submits a proposal for the support of a theological student. A decision to provide support is made. As a result classis decides to assess the churches \$3.00 per communicant member for the remainder of 1980.

6. *Next Classis.* The church at London is to convene the next classis on Dec. 10, 1980 at London, starting at 10 a.m. Proposed moderators are: Chairman: Rev. J. DeJong; Clerk: Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer; Assessor: Rev. Cl. Stam.

7. *Question Period ad Article 41, Church Order* is held. One church asks for advice which is given.

8. *Adoption of Acts.* The Acts are read, revised, and adopted.

9. *Press Release.* This is read, revised, and approved.

10. *Censure ad Article 43, Church Order* is not necessary.



YAK'ISDA BIK'AH

Youth Bible Camp 1980

Last year when we began planning for our first Youth Bible Camp for native children of this region, one of the main questions was whether we would be able to find enough interested children for such an event. Would the parents give permission? However, during the planning stage for the second Youth Bible Camp, we were more concerned about the maximum number of children we could handle than about the minimum we needed to make it feasible! Months in advance they already began inquiring if they could go to camp this year, and if it was alright for their friend or cousin to come as well. We certainly did not need advertising.

We had kept in touch with the children of last year's camp by means of monthly get-togethers and a contact paper called *Trail News*. As a result the whole group remained mostly intact and grew steadily by friends and rela-

11. *Closing.* After the chairman thanks the ladies for their excellent service, he requests that Psalm 103:8 be sung. He closes the meeting in a prayer of supplication and thanksgiving.

For the classis,
W. HUIZINGA, assessor

tives that members of this Youth Club brought along.

When the day finally arrived for Summer Camp — Monday, August 11th — the bus (borrowed from the school) picked up twenty-nine excited children. Most came from the Smithers area, but also some families of Moricetown and Telkwa were represented. The children ranged in age from seven to fourteen years.

The camp, lasting six days, was run much the same way as last year, although we tried to improve in the areas where we discovered weaknesses. The day always started off with an hour of Bible Study. The theme this year was the Ten Commandments. Each counselor, assisted by his wife (where applicable!), would take a small group of five to six children, find a nice spot in the beautiful surroundings of Pine Crest Resort, and speak about the law of God for all of mankind, interspersed with some singing. The theme of the day would also return in the Bible readings at the table. The rest of the day was spent with games, swimming, canoeing, arts and crafts, etc., giving plenty of opportunities for more personal talks and Christian guidance.

Realizing that the white man's influence upon the native youth is met with more and more resentment from the side of the Indians, we attempt to recognize their own culture and allow

for their input within the framework of the camp as well. As we always stress, they do not need to become Europeans, no more than we became Jews. However, all must submit and honour the one supreme God, their and our Creator, with the talents and gifts given to them in a multiracial and cultural variety. The one faith can be expressed in more than one way.

In order to give recognition to the Indian culture we have started this work under the Carrier Indian name of Yak'isda Bik'ah, meaning "in God's trail, following God's ways." We invited Indian guest speakers to the camp to have an Indian culture evening. The parents of the children were invited for an evening to the camp as well, and one of the mothers joined us for a few days to help. One could notice that our interest in their plight was greatly appreciated. One of the highlights on the lighter side was when they demonstrated to us in the kitchen and by the open fire how to make bannock, one kind of Indian bread that can be made readily when travelling.

Since we had more children, the number of the staff was also increased. Four couples and a single man took care of the daily program, while four ladies looked after the kitchen, some taking turns. We were fortunate that we could draw from both of the Churches of the Bulkley Valley, Houston and Smithers, not only for the staff but also for donations and supplies which were generously given by many members of the congregations. As a result there were very few people who were not involved in one way or another, which kept the costs down as well. Both Consistories allowed their ministers to spend that week in camp.

In the meantime the Home Mission Committee of Smithers is continuing its efforts to improve the follow-up of the camp as well. Monthly get-togethers are planned again, but Bible Study will be a more integral part of them than in the past. (Before *Trail News* provided most of the Bible Study.) May the Lord bless this ministry of the congregation in its community. The opportunities to sow are undoubtedly there, but it needs much attention and good work material, and, to be more effective, it must be set up on a broader basis with an outreach to the families and older children as well. However, we are thankful for what we may do, and know that in the Lord it is never in vain.

C. VAN SPRONSEN



Fraser Valley Women's League Day

Tuesday, June 24, 1980, was the day of our 17th Annual League Day. This year it was hosted by the Women's Society, "Thy Kingdom Come," of the Maranatha Church in Surrey. As ladies arrived, they were asked to put on name tags and could refresh themselves with coffee and goodies before seating themselves upstairs. Shortly after 10:00 A.M., our chairlady, Mrs. R. Hoeksema, called the meeting to order. We sang Psalm 145:1 and 5. Mrs. Hoeksema then read Romans 12 with us, after which she led in prayer. There were approximately 150 ladies present. A word of welcome was extended to all. Then we sang Psalm 139:1 and 13.

Mrs. E. Van Woudenberg, our speaker for the morning session, was then given the opportunity to read to us her very-well-prepared introduction on the book of James. James, the brother of Jesus Christ, writes his epistle to the Christian Jews outside and within Palestine. He starts out to tell the Jews that they should count it as a blessing when they have to endure persecution and hardship for Christ's sake. God permits trials to come over Christians for two reasons: (1) For the Christian himself, to test his faith and to bring God's people to the right choice by seeking their strength and help through Him only; (2) For the world at large, because the world sees us coming through the trials of life without complaint and they see that we have something that they lack.

Temptation, on the other hand, comes from the devil, and we ourselves produce sin and death. If it was God Who tempted man, He would be destroying His own work. He is the author of nothing but good. Every endowment and every perfect gift comes from God. James exhorts us to resist the devil and remove sin from our lives. We must be willing to part with anything that is contrary to God's Word. We must be doers of the Word. We must have an inner desire to bear fruit because we love God.

James then writes about discrimination among brothers and sisters of the same faith. This can destroy all basic fellowship among believers. We cannot judge our fellow man, for only God can judge.

Next we read about faith and works. Faith we receive through grace alone and cannot be obtained by good works; but faith without works is dead.

The tongue is the hardest member of the body to control. Therefore the responsibility of Christian teachers is very great. If a man can control his tongue, he can control his whole body.

James warns us about the incompatibility of worldliness and godliness. Whoever wishes to make himself a friend of the world, makes himself an enemy of God. Therefore we must resist the devil and he will flee from us. We must draw near to God, and He will draw near to us.

In chapter 5, James accuses the rich of obtaining their wealth by cheating their employees. They live only to satisfy themselves. James tells Christians to be patient until the coming of the Lord. Even if they are ill-treated, they should not despair, for James says, "Behold the Judge standeth before the door." James also writes about swearing an oath and says that this should not be necessary among believers.

We then read about the prayer of the righteous. Prayers of faith are not answered simply because they are prayed in faith, but only if they are prayed according to the will of God. God does not always think it is best for the sick to be healed. Sometimes healing is dependent upon confession of sin. Confession is a step of repentance. We must pray for each other without ceasing so that we may be healed through Jesus Christ.

James ends his epistle by writing that if we see a brother or sister stray from the truth, we must use every opportunity to turn him back to the right way. That way is the Saviour Who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Only if we accept this way, can we be true Christians in every aspect of life.

After this introduction we sang Hymn 48:2, 3, and 4. A discussion followed on a wide range of topics. Mrs. H. Stel then read a beautiful poem to us entitled, "The Refiner," by Peter Loews. The morning session was closed by the singing of our League Song. We all went downstairs to enjoy a delicious lunch which was prepared by the Surrey ladies. This was a good oppor-

tunity to chat with friends and relatives from far and near.

The afternoon session was called to order by Mrs. B.H. Janzen of Abbotsford. We sang Psalm 119:26, 27, 28, and 29 and were then introduced to Mr. H. De Raad, a teacher at the Lynden Christian High School. He gave us a very interesting speech on "Christian Love in the Administration of Discipline."

What is discipline? Discipline is a way of life. It is an act of instructing, to correct or chastise. Discipline according to the world is very unpopular because it is an act of authority. Authority is constantly being rejected by the world because it does not accept God, Who is the ultimate source of authority. All those who are in authority are placed there by God. Parents are placed in authority above their children; therefore children must be taught the fifth commandment. Disciplining children is very difficult because of our own sinful nature. We must constantly pray to God for guidance and wisdom in this respect. God disciplines in love, seeking to save, not to destroy. He never punishes His people because Christ took our punishment upon Himself. We must be motivated by love when we discipline our children. Children need to know that they are loved. We must never lash out in anger in an unfair and un-Christian way. Children need to know what is expected of them and parents must be consistent in this. Parents must show patience, understanding, and love.

We could only have a short discussion on this interesting topic, because, as usual, time was running short. Mr. De Raad was thanked for all his work in preparing and delivering his speech. We sang Psalm 119:40, 65, and 66. The Cloverdale societies then entertained us with a guessing game. Several ladies appeared, dressed in various costumes, and the audience had to guess whom each one represented. It was very entertaining. They ranged from Helen Keller to Nana Mouskouri to Queen Elizabeth. The latter was the easiest to pick out.

General Discussion followed. In closing we sang Hymn 61 and Mr. De Raad ended with us in thanksgiving prayer. Everyone was again invited downstairs for refreshments before the homeward trip. We could be thankful to our heavenly Father for bringing us all together again for an enjoyable day of learning and fellowship.

MRS. R. VANOENE

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Are you curious who won our Big Summer Contest?
Today you'll find out!

But first let's say thanks to all the Busy Beavers who sent in such neat entries.

Just like other years it was hard to pick the winners!
Thanks to you all for making the contest such a success.

And now we want to congratulate Busy Beaver Karen Stam, who won in the Junior division (up to 10 yr.) and Busy Beaver Edith Hofsink who won the Senior division (11 yr. and up) of the Quiz Contest.

In the Story Contest Busy Beaver Annette Haan was the Junior winner and Busy Beaver Ramona Kleefman the Senior winner.

Congratulations on a job well done!
We hope you'll all enjoy your prize!

We have more congratulations! This time for all the Busy Beavers who celebrate their birthday in the autumn month of October. Here's wishing you a very happy day celebrating with your family and friends. And may the Lord guide and keep you all in the year ahead.

Jeffrey De Boer	3	Marieke	October 19
Michael Blokker	5	Geertsema	
Francine Medemblik	7	Theodore Lodder	23
Anita Tenhage	7	Carolyn Paize	23
Marian Van Dyk	8	Ken Blokker	27
Diane Beukema	10	Debbie Jongsma	29
Harriet De Jonge	10	Patsy Linde	29
Kathy Stol	12	Marian Linde	31
Lisa Harsevoort	14		

Busy Beaver Diane Smith has an alphabet poem for you.
Thanks for sharing, Diane!

- A is for ants, who don't have pants.
- B is for bears, who don't have underwear.
- C is for cats, who don't wear hats.
- D is for dogs, who catch groundhogs.
- E is for elephant, who wants a peppermint.
- F is for fly, when you slap him he'll die.
- G is for groundhogs, who don't like dogs.
- H is for hounds, who like hunting grounds.
- I is for insect, for leader, the bee, they elect.
- J is for jackel, who can cackle.
- K is for kangaroo, who lives in the zoo.
- L is for lion, who starts the deer sighin'.
- M is for monkey, who is opposite a donkey.
- N is for narwhal, who listens to its mother's call.
- O is for octopus, who is not a little puss.
- P is for parrot, who wants a carrot.
- Q is for quail, at night they wail.

- R is for rabbit, eating our carrots is their bad habit.
- S is for snake, who rushed to the lake.
- T is for tadpole, who lives in a water hole.
- U is for unicorn, who has one straight horn.
- V is for vulture, who likes agriculture.
- W is for wolf, who doesn't play golf.
- XYZ is the end of the alphabet!



From the Mailbox

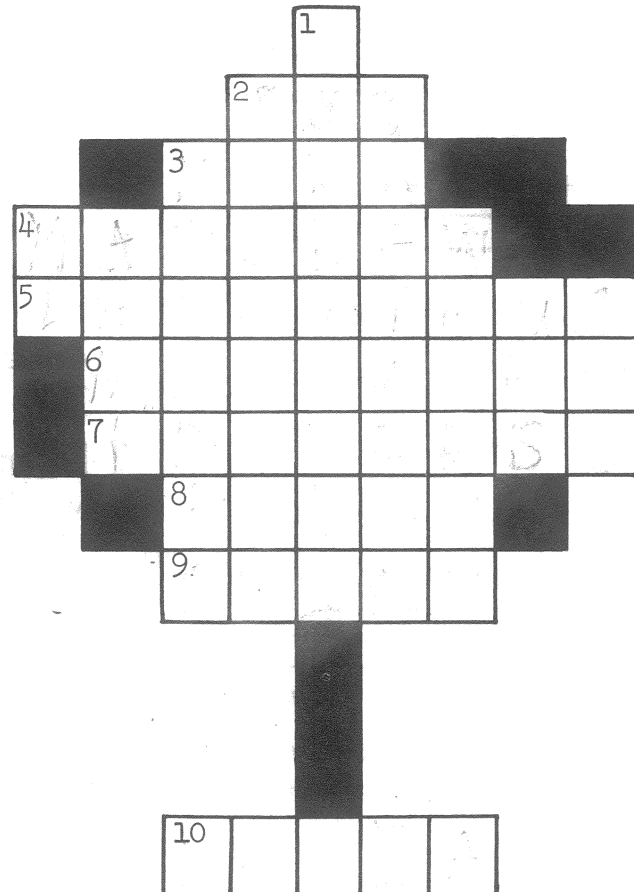
Thank you very much for your alphabet poem, Diane Smith. I see you're keeping very busy! Are you all used to school, again, Diane?

So you thought the quizzes were easy, Mary Van Raalte? Good for you! I'm glad you had such a good holiday, Mary. I hope you'll enjoy school now, too!

Hello, Ramona Kleefman. It was nice to hear from you again. How is school for you? Bye for now. Write again soon.

QUIZ TIME

A Man Who Climbed a Tree



There is only one vertical word to be filled in, and that is No. 1. The others are all horizontal. The numbers refer to the verses in Luke 19.

1. Name of the man who climbed a tree (2)
2. He _____ to see Him, he was so eager (4)