

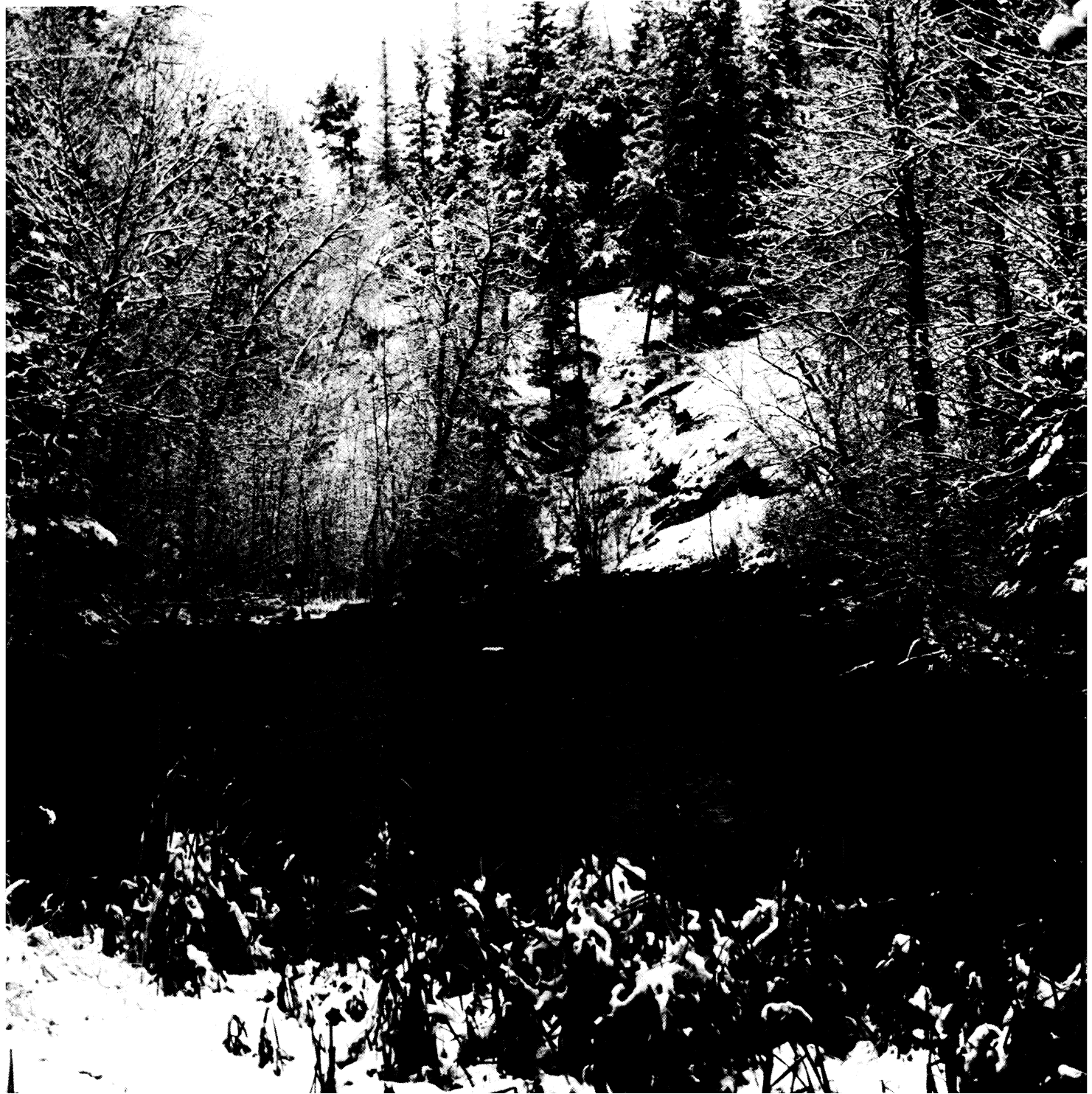


# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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November 29, 1980



# True and False Church

One of the publications around the Reformed Ecumenical Synod and its meeting at Nimes in the summer of this year 1980 deserves our special attention. It is an essay written by Dr. H.B. Weijland, the stated clerk of the synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, and published under the title "A Principal of Separation (Afscheiding)? Some observations on the Significance of the True and False Church in the Belgic Confession" (in *RES Theological Forum*, June 1980).

Although it is a personal publication, it was occasioned by a question raised during the discussion of the RES Interim Committee and the moderamen of the Dutch synodical churches. The latter had joined the World Council of Churches; do they not now have church fellowship with unbelief? Does our confession concerning the true and the false church have any bearing on this question?

Dr. Weijland, however, does not want to hear a reference to the false church in connection with the World Council and its members, not even those member churches that tolerate false doctrine. He deals with the point in the light of the following questions:

- a. What is the origin of the expression of a true and a false church in the reformational creeds, particularly in the Belgic Confession?
- b. What does the Confession itself mean by this distinction and "the principle of separation" which is sometimes derived from it?
- c. Did our fathers in the previous century rightly appeal to this "principle"? And to what extent should this "principle" currently be considered as normative for inter-ecclesiastical and ecumenical activity?

Dr. Weijland elaborates on these questions in a remarkable manner. He gives a history of the doctrine concerning the church in a nutshell. It is no wonder that he who wrote a doctoral dissertation on Augustine begins with this church father. He then proceeds to the Reformers and the Belgic Confession. The third stage is the Succession of 1834 and the last development is the use of the distinction of true and false church by the Liberated Churches — our sister churches in The Netherlands — and by all those who object against an alignment with the World Council. The tendency of this dogma-historical survey is to warn against an ecclesiastical narrow-mindedness.

Let us listen to Weijland's own summary of the development in the thinking about the true-false scheme with respect to the one catholic church:

In Augustine the Kingdom of God as the undivided church stood over against the earthly kingdom as the domain of Satan. In the Reformers the true church came to stand over against the false church . . . . Here a first change was made.

In the Secession we observe how amidst other "churches" a specific Reformed national church is judged to be false. Now a (not one) true church comes to stand over

against false doctrine . . . . Thus a second change occurred.

However, in the discussion on ecumenical relations one more step should be taken. In the question of whether one exercises ecclesiastical fellowship with unbelief by entering into such relations, the accent no longer lies on the contrast between a true church and a false doctrine, but a false tolerance.

Dr. Weijland observes here what he calls "a compulsive process of narrowing in ecclesiastical thinking: true church/false kingdom — true church/false church — true church/false doctrine — true church/false tolerance." Our magazine is not the apt place to consider whether Weijland's picture of Augustine is right. One should have to investigate the way in which the Donatists e.g. in the famous conference of 411 spoke of the true and false church and the way in which the Catholic defenders of the faith — Optatus and Augustine — responded, while sometimes using the terminology of their adversaries.

Of more direct interest is Weijland's interpretation of the distinction of true and false church with the Reformers and in the Belgic Confession. According to Dr. Weijland the Reformers made a switch by speaking about the church in the plural, something which was foreign to Augustine. The false prophet, the Antichrist, who in Augustine still had a place within the framework of the one catholic church, now comes to stand outside as the false church.

When I read this, I thought of Calvin's strong statement about the catholicity of the church: The church is called: 'Catholic,' or 'Universal,' because there could not be two or three churches unless Christ be torn asunder, which cannot happen. (Inst. IV. 1.2.). In chapter 2 of Book IV of his *Institutes* he gives his famous comparison of the false and the true church. In a recently published *Analysis* Ford Lewis Battles summarizes Calvin's exposition about the papal "no-church." Calvin himself writes: So in place of the church the Romanists display certain outward appearances which are often far removed from the church and without which the church can very well stand (IV 2.3.). Although Calvin acknowledged vestiges or traces of the church under the medieval papacy, he said of Rome "that every one of their congregations and their whole body lack the lawful form of the church." (IV. 2.12). It is clear, therefore, that Calvin did not speak of the church in the plural. He did not bring the true and the false church under a common denominator and he did not act as if they were two species of the same genus. If Dr. Weijland were right, we could accuse the apostle Paul of multiplying the gospels and subtracting from the glorious truth of the *unicity* of the good tidings. Does he not complain that the Galatians had turned to a different gospel (Gal. 1:6)? But every one who heeds the context, knows that Paul precisely denies that there is another gospel, v. 7. In the same vein Calvin speaks of the false church that is no church.

Although Dr. Weijland speaks about "the stiff and hard

language of the Belgic Confession" compared to the Westminster Confession, he believes that De Bres' concern was not with the true church as the one lawful "address" in a specific place. The concern was first of all the church as it is before God, the spiritual body of all who belong to Christ and are gathered by Him. As often as three times Article 28 admonishes one not to withdraw from the church. It does not teach separation from the church; on the contrary it calls precisely for the ecclesiastical union of all true believers. By presenting an elaborate exposition of the marks of the church, the Belgic Confession in Article 29 makes an effort to prevent precipitate judgments and actions. As the only one of all the Reformed creeds the Belgic Confession continues with a description of the marks of the false church, but one does not find laxity or toleration of evil, but the charge of *false discipline*. The persecution-motif plays a large role. "This shows how much the Reformers were concerned not just about a deviation from the Gospel, but about a false doctrine which results in *ethical wrong*, in greed, superstition, intolerance, usurpation of power and cruel persecution." It is not a form of tolerance but oppression of the conscience and persecution that makes a church false.

Weijland's conclusion is that the Belgic Confession affords no ground for a "principle of separation" from a tolerating church. In view of the circumstances it is sometimes necessary to condone much evil, though, of course, not without witnessing against it.

When we try to evaluate this exegesis of our Confession of Faith, we characterize Dr. Weijland's explanation as a minimalizing of what the Confession says about necessary separation, and an ethical maximalizing of the description of the false church. In both minimalization and maximalizing Dr. Weijland renders our Confession inapplicable for the period in which we live, the period after the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

First, he minimalized what the confession says about necessary separation. Sure, Article 28 confesses that everyone is bound to join himself to the true church, but this duty is indissolubly connected with the mandate "to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to the Church." The one side of the coin — separation — is connected with the other side, union. The positive aspect is seen against the dark background of the negative. And the description of the marks of the church is not only and not even primarily "to prevent precipitate judgments and actions," but to show that and when and why we have to break with the false church and where we have to join ourselves to the assembly of true christian believers.

The description of the false church reminds us of the Roman Catholic Church in the time of the Reformation, but it is no exhaustive description. One should not give the impression as if the Confession rejects false discipline but condones toleration of evil. Article 32 declares that excommunication or church discipline is requisite, with all that pertains to it, according to the Word of God. And in the description of false discipline the persecution motif certainly plays an important role, but we should not maximalize this element, as if the Confession puts all emphasis on the ethical aspect.

Dr. Weijland writes: "I do maintain that the focus of the charge concerning the false church in the Belgic Confession lies in the ethical failure of the church as a whole and that the presence of a false teaching *within* a Reformed church, however serious it may be, does not warrant writing off such a church in its entirety as being false."

This strong statement does no justice to the real text of

the Belgic Confession. Article 29 speaks first about false doctrine and church polity. This is something else and something worse than an "ethical failure." The false church ascribes more power and authority to itself and its ordinances than to the Word of God, and will not submit itself to the yoke of Christ. Neither does it administer the sacraments as appointed by Christ in His Word, but adds to and takes from them, as it thinks proper; it relies more upon men than upon Christ; and persecutes those who live hollily according to the Word of God and rebukes it for its errors, covetousness, and idolatry.

This picture of the disobedient "church" should not be reduced to an "ethical failure" and then enlarged as if this ethical failure of the church as a whole could only be found in certain extreme "eschatological" circumstances in which the total darkness stands over against the light. In the reasoning of Dr. Weijland Article 29 is almost never applicable in the history of Christ's church.

The Act of Secession and Return in 1834 appealed specifically to Articles 28 and 29 of the Belgic Confession. But Dr. Weijland attacks forcefully this application of the Confession of Faith. "So much had changed. The days of the inquisition and the stake were a thing of the past." The *total picture* of the Dutch Reformed Church was certainly not as black as is suggested in the Act of Secession, he says. Was the suspension of ministers ground for *now* writing off the entire Dutch Reformed Church as a false church? "Even if the errors in the Dutch Reformed Church of the 19th century had been at least as dangerous as the errors of the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century, one could not charge the Dutch Reformed community with the ethical sins of robbing churches, greediness and the methods of Inquisition . . . all of which were inseparably connected with the false church in the thinking of the Reformers."

It is clear that Dr. Weijland attacks the Secession of 1834 in its core. It is our firm conviction that the Dutch Reformed Church, in silencing preachers of the pure doctrine of the gospel and condoning false teachers who publicly denied the death of our Surety and His resurrection, had become a false church. Even if there had not been the "dragonnades" (Dr. Weijland should re-read Groen van Prinsterer about the harsh measures against the Seceders!), the deposition of true preachers of the gospel as such is persecution. And let us not forget that Satan may even come as an angel of light. Toleration of the truth — if only the lie may have the upper hand — can even become a modern form of persecution. The twentieth century sometimes uses, instead of the sixteenth century sword, a poisonous needle, painlessly and almost imperceptibly applied.

The essay of Dr. Weijland is another indication that after the synodical churches had exercised false discipline in 1944, their eyes became closed to the ongoing struggle between light and darkness. Now it is the last hour, the apostle John writes. Now we have to make decisions. Now we have diligently and circumspectly to discern from the Word of God which is the true Church. There is the dynamic movement of the risen Christ Who gathers His congregation and there is the counter attack of satan. One should not label easily and we gladly let ourselves be warned against narrow-mindedness. Divergencies even in the formulation of the Reformed doctrines do not have to be matters of true and false church. But *relativism* is a danger that looms at least equally large in our day. Weijland's misinterpretation of the Belgic Confession cuts loose the roots of the Reformed past and future.

J. FABER



*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.*

## LUNTEREN

In 1978 the synod of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (GKN) (Syn., vO) decided that under certain circumstances children may participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In the two years the decision has been in effect children's communion has become family communion.

This year's synod had to evaluate the 1978 decision. Many objections had come in. Many of the objectors felt that the 1978 synod had acted too hastily. This year's synod agreed that the 1978 decision was indeed in conflict with the Church Order. However, with the exception of one delegate, synod was also of the opinion that family communion could not be undone in churches that have introduced it. Synod decided to make a brief addition to the Church Order to the effect that under certain circumstances the rule of public profession of faith for admission to the Lord's Supper may be waived. (RES NE)

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## GARDEN GROVE, CALIFORNIA

On September 14, 1980 the Garden Grove Community Church in California, a member of the Reformed Church of America (RCA), dedicated its Crystal Cathedral. The steel and glass structure features more than 10,000 window panes and accommodates 2,890 people in opera-style seats. At the opening of the church, pastor-founder of the congregation, Dr. Robert Schuller, was able to announce that the total cost for the construction, 18 million dollars, had been received in

cash gifts or pledges. The church, an architectural masterpiece, was designed by architect Philip Johnson.

Recently Dr. Schuller, a graduate of Hope College and Western Seminary in Holland, Michigan, briefly returned to Western Michigan where he was well received by his colleagues in the RCA. Dr. Schuller has often been under fire in his denomination for his type of preaching. Schuller, who clearly favours his ties with the Reformed Church, openly admits: "I believe in the Bible, but if people want Bible preaching they can get it elsewhere." He has also been much criticized for erecting this lavish Crystal Cathedral. (RES NE)

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## LUNTEREN

Unlike Reformed Churches in other countries, as for example, the Christian Reformed Church in North America, each congregation of the Reformed Churches (GKN) in The Netherlands has its own precisely outlined district. Church rules stipulate that church members can belong only to the congregation in their own district. An attempt made in 1976 to allow members who are unhappy with their home congregation to transfer to a neighbouring church was turned down by Synod. In the judgment of Synod, allowing this might have turned the church into a "club of likeminded people." This year's GKN Synod turned down a similar request for more liberty in joining another congregation. Synod felt that allowing such spiritual migration would be an obstacle to the common struggle for the one faith. (RES NE)

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## AMERSFOORT

The relationship between the Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (CGK) and The Netherlands Reformed Churches (a break-away group from the Reformed Churches, "Article 31") [taking over the terminology of RES NE does not mean approval of this outdated and wrong designation, vO] is not progressing. The recent Synod of the CGK rejected, with a tie vote, a proposal to receive mutual delegates at their respective major assemblies. However, the talks between the two churches will be continued. (RES NE)

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The terminally ill have a right to commit suicide, according to a two-

month-old California-based group, Hemlock. The 300-member group (which claims to be growing at the rate of 50 per week) will publish a manual describing consideration of, and means for, suicide — or "self-deliverance" — by the incurably ill. Hemlock is a member of the newly formed World Federation of Right to Die societies, some of whose 22 member groups advocate only "passive euthanasia" (removal from life support systems, for instance) to those such as Great Britain's EXIT, which support active suicide. (CT)

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Brazilian Mormons recently opened a new headquarters building in Sao Paulo. The complex, which includes administrative offices and a training center, serves the ballooning Mormon church in Brazil. Its membership jumped 50 percent in the last five years — from 75,000 to 115,000 — and has been influenced by large numbers of missionaries sent from the U.S. (CT)

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The East German Communist party moved to improve its relations further with the church last month. It dropped the requirement — in force for ten years — that churches obtain advance permission from authorities for all meetings and other activities by registering with the militia. The party stipulated, however, that lifting of the pre-registration applies only to events of an "exclusively religious character." Earlier conciliatory gestures were the granting of television time to churches on church holidays and creation of a 100-member committee to prepare for the five-hundredth anniversary in 1983 of the birth of Martin Luther. The East German Protestant Church provided four advisors to the committee, but declined to join it, having set up its own committee in 1978. (CT)

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Koreans are sending church-planting missionaries to Indonesia, and Americans are helping with the funding in a pacesetter international partnership arrangement. Chan Chul-Ha, associate director of the Asian Center for Theological Studies and Mission in Seoul, Korea, started the project. He formed the Asia Evangelistic Commission to help export Korea's rapid church growth to other parts of Asia. World Vision agreed to provide support. Each new congregation is tied to

# Serpents and Doves\*

an Indonesian "mother-church," which provides oversight and a pastor or evangelist. Workers are trained in church-planting techniques by the Indonesian Bible Institute. Outside assistance to a new congregation will be limited to approximately three years. The Korea-Indonesian Church Planting Project plans by next September to increase to 75 its sponsorships of congregations moving toward self-support. (CT)

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## SEOUL

The general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-Pa) decided to expand its theological seminary in Busan with a medical faculty: two years of pre-medical studies and four years of a medical faculty. A very important reason for that decision is the great lack of Christian physicians in Korea. The Korean government has expressed its agreement with the expansion. (ND)

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## LA PAZ

After an abortion has been performed, the physicians, nurses, and midwives who took part in it run the risk of being excommunicated. The same applies to the women who demanded and got an abortion. That's what the archbishop of Santa Cruz, Luis Rodriguez Pardo has stated in a declaration which he issued. (ND)

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## APELDOORN

At the Theological Seminary of the Christian Reformed Churches situated in Apeldoorn, the first doctoral examination took place. It was the doctoral examination of Mr. M.H.Th. Biewenga of Zoetermeer.

The Theological Seminary of the Christian Reformed Churches has had the right to hold doctoral examinations and to confer the doctor's degree since 1978. (ND)

vO

### OUR COVER

Winter Scenery, Winnipeg, Manitoba. (Photo Courtesy Manitoba Government.)

I am both honoured and thankful with the opportunity to speak to you this evening, and on behalf of my wife and I, pass on our congratulations to you. While I am not directly involved in the operation of your high school, I still feel I have had a little "in," since my wife spent some years teaching you at this school. Let me just say that I heard a few things about you once in a while.

However, you should not think that this explains the title of my speech, as if I know exactly who are the serpents and who are the doves. In fact, my title comes from the Bible, from Matthew 10:16, where the Lord Jesus says: "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." This word of the Lord Jesus is, if you will, a sort of graduation address to His disciples, made at the time when they were sent out to administer the gospel of the kingdom. What could be more fitting than to consider Christ's graduation message at your graduation?

Actually, these words of our Lord Jesus Christ sound simple, but yet do not lend themselves to an easy explanation. You may wonder about them. Why does the Lord Jesus tell His disciples to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves? Must they develop some sort of sneaky, underhanded approach in communicating the gospel? What does this tell them to do?

Not only may you wonder what the Lord Jesus means by these words, you may also have difficulty applying them to yourself. Maybe these words were quite applicable to the disciples, but do they say anything to us, today? As I said, I have a little "in," so you will allow me to be a little tongue-in-cheek: I know you have had a good education, and that you have been good students. But would you dare say that now you are wise as serpents? I know, too, that having our own school does make a difference with regard to moral behaviour. To a certain extent you are shielded from the world. But does that mean that you are as innocent as doves?

Nevertheless, I believe we must apply these words to ourselves today.

We, too, must be disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ in this world. We may not be sent out in the world to preach the gospel, but we are certainly called to confess it in whatever field we choose to work in. From the moment the Lord Jesus said "Follow me!" the disciples were drawn into an intimate community with Him, a close learning fellowship. In a way, they were "at school" with Christ, and His initial teachings are meant primarily for them, Matthew 5:1. At the point of their mission to the world they become more separate



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from the Lord Jesus, and see Him less often. That is an ordinary development, and it is also reflected in the way Reformed students are educated today.

Perhaps the key to these words of the Lord Jesus is the first thing He says: "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves . . ." That forms the reason for being like serpents and doves in the world. This word of our Lord Jesus points to something you have all heard about by now: the antithesis that exists between the believers and their children, and the unbelievers and their children. That antithesis or hostility is the God-ordained hostility of the covenant and the community of the covenant in the world. Dr. A. Kuyper, in his meditation on this text, even saw in these words the reason for having Reformed education.<sup>1</sup> The enmity of the covenant demands it.

That hostility is still present in the world. That, I'm sure, is also what you have been taught. Perhaps you have not really noticed it yet; nevertheless, the Lord Jesus also warns us in this passage that it is still there. It is like something that you run into just at the moment when you are expecting it the least. That is why the Lord Jesus tells us to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. The "maschal" form of speaking He uses emphasizes that we must really have our wits about us, and use all our energies in being as wise and as innocent as we can. Let us consider each of these characteristics separately.

It is remarkable that the Lord Jesus starts off with telling us to be wise as serpents. It shows how deep the antithesis really is, and how our biggest struggle against sin must be with ourselves. The wisdom that the Lord Jesus speaks about here is the same as the wisdom we read so much about in the section of the Bible called Wisdom literature, particularly in the books Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Not knowledge or facts, but the fear of the LORD forms the heart of this biblical idea. The man of wisdom and understanding is the man who knows the LORD and walks in the ways of His covenant.

The Lord Jesus was probably more schooled in this part of the Bible than we think, and His words at this point reflect the tone found there. He cautions His disciples against being too bubbly right off the bat; against taking on their surroundings with a spirit of excess confidence and superiority. They should rather be cautious about what they are going to say, and how

they are going to say it. Doesn't the wisdom gospel say the same thing more than once? Take, for example, Proverbs 11:12: ". . . a man of understanding remains silent." Or Proverbs 12:18: "There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Or Proverbs 13:3: "He who guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin." The more well-known Proverbs 17:28 also applies here: "Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent."

I think you can grasp the flavour of this expression with these quotations. That makes them easier to apply. You have been here at this school for four years, have been trained in the Reformed doctrine, and besides that have been given a biblical perspective on the different areas of learning. You might feel like taking on the world. But the Lord Jesus reminds us to be cautious and careful. Let us not forget that we are weak, and stumble easily. The Lord Jesus reminds us that it is easy to talk, but much harder to do. If we are just going to be foot-in-the-mouth Christians, it is the serpent of the beginning who laughs. Rather, says the Lord Jesus, be wise as serpents, which means at the same time, be wiser than *the* serpent. Let the word follow the deed, rather than have the deed fail to meet the word. That is the way our Lord Jesus did things, too.

All this, however, should not give us an excuse, so that we can keep mum all the time. That is why the Lord Jesus also says: "Be innocent as doves." That does not mean that we can or will be perfect. The Bible tells us that there is no man who does not sin. Rather, the Lord Jesus impresses upon His disciples the continual covenant demand never to consent to the practice of sin. We must never be silent about it, or act as if it does not exist. We must never agree to it, or allow ourselves to be caught up in it. If we see things that are clearly wrong in the environment in which the Lord places us, we must have the courage to speak up.

In I Peter 3:16, the apostle Peter really summarizes what the Lord Jesus says here when he tells readers to "keep your conscience clear." While we do not have to convert everyone we meet, we must at the same time avoid the situation of a nagging conscience, a situation that arises when we

freely and silently join in with and participate in activities and actions that are clearly wrong. You can apply that to all relationships: boy-girl relationships, family relationships, labour relation, and so on. The Lord Jesus would rather have us cover sin through the road of confession and forgiveness, than try to cover it by pretending that it is not there. The apostle Paul captures the flavour of this exhortation when he says, "Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as light in the world . . ." Philippians 2:15.

It is this road of silent speaking, this road of a cautious but radical word-and-deed defence of Christ's word of power that we must follow if we truly wish to be Christ's disciples, and bear His name in this world. An obedient Christian will meet with hostility, in the world and also in the Church. That is what happened to Christ. That is what happened to His disciples. And, as He said, it will also happen to us.

So I do not have any advice of my own to give you this evening. In extending our congratulations to you, we would only draw your attention to this word of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that as you go your separate ways in the community, you might be what He calls us to be, and what we only can be by the power of His Spirit: serpents and doves for God.

J. DEJONG

\* Text of a speech delivered to the graduating class of Guido de Brès High School, October 24, 1980; slightly altered.

<sup>1</sup> A. Kuyper, *Als Gij in uw Huis Zit: Meditatiën voor het Huislijk Saamleven* (Amsterdam: Höverker & Wormser, 1899), p. 120.

## I John 2:5b & 6

By this we may be sure that we are in Him: he who says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which we walked.

# press review

## FOOLISH FOOLS FOR CHRIST

In the *Standard Bearer* of November 1, 1980, the Rev. R. Flikkema gives his comment on an article in *Time* magazine. He starts his article with an imaginary church attendant who expects to hear a solid, sound, sermon from the minister, but instead sees him appear as a clown, and clowning around. This imaginary clergyman, then, points at what the apostle Paul writes in his first epistle to the Corinthians. Paul says: "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may become wise" (I Cor. 3:18). And: "We are fools for Christ's sake" (I Cor. 4:10).

Also then we read:

In *Time* magazine's September 1 issue in its department on "Religion" you will find an article entitled "Becoming Fools For Christ." And underneath that title you will find a subtitle which reads "Clowning as an aid to holy ritual and service." If you have *Time* magazine in your homes, you ought to read this article. But if, however, you do not, allow me to quote some pertinent excerpts from the article.

On the darkened stage, a white-faced clown with bulbous nose, orange woolen wig and baggy red-and-white costume sits at a table reading a large book marked *Bible* (emphasis mine, R.F.). He eats from a box of popcorn as big as a milk crate. Beside him two mimes in blue leotards do their silent best to act starved. When the clown notices, he merely makes the sign of the cross and calmly resumes reading and eating. Now a large banner unfurls up-stage saying FEED THE HUNGRY! At last the clown gets the message and hands small bags to two members of the audience, with gestures to indicate that each is to put a piece of popcorn into the mouth of his neighbor and embrace him, then pass on the bag so the neighbor can do the same. Soon the audience of 200, nearly all dressed as clowns, is busy munching and embracing.

As an explanation for the above, *Time* has this to say.

It was not a bizarre come-on from Barnum and Bailey. Not at all. The 200 clowns were a congregation. The popcorn passalong was part of a two-hour Christian Communion service conducted entirely in mime and gesture by the Rev.

Floyd Shaffer, the red-and-white clown, who is really a Lutheran minister from Roseville, Mich.

For our Michigan readers, that brings this type of thing close to home. Concerning the "theological justification" for this new ministry, the article goes on to say:

The clergy clown finds a theological justification for their unusual ministry in the injunction of St. Paul to the Corinthians to become "fools for Christ's sake" because God has "made foolish the wisdom of the world."

As proof, therefore, of this clown ministry they cite the Apostle Paul. Interesting it is to note, however, that they do not only cite the Apostle Paul, but they also cite the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. Concerning that fact the article says:

They discern multilayered analogies between the clown and Christ: the clown's joy in living and mimed delight in simple things, like the scent of a flower, for instance, recalls Jesus' command to "consider the lilies of the field, how they grow." The simplicity and child-like persistence of the clown can have a special meaning for Christians. "The clown refuses to accept the limits of the possible," explains Tim Kehl, a professional clown and magician who is also a United Church of Christ minister. "A clown will insist on riding a bicycle whose wheels are out of kilter or trying to walk a slack tightrope. Sooner or later he will succeed — to the great delight of the audience. *The resurrection of Jesus is the supreme example of God's refusal to accept the limits of the possible*" (emphasis mine, R.F.). Through love, the clown, like Jesus, can transform the ordinary into the sacred.

And, finally, as proof of the fact that this clown ministry is by no means small in numbers, I submit the following quote:

Today there are 3,000 clown ministry groups in the U.S. who put on big noses and suits of many colors in order to serve God.

I take also from the *Time* article the following quotation in which more examples are given of a transformation "of the ordinary into the sacred":

At the Last Supper, ordinary bread and cheap table wine became eternal symbols of Jesus' love and sacrifice. At Pentecost, a group of illiterate fishermen were turned into inspired preachers who could speak to every man present in his own language.

In his comment, the Rev. Flikkema

writes that he does not want to say much about the quotations taken from I Corinthians 2 and 3: only that what Paul writes is simply not understood. Neither does he comment on the proof taken from "the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ." But it made him remember something:

As I read this article my thoughts immediately went back to my high school years. I remembered a chapel exercise that we were required to attend. It was a film. It was a film about a clown who went about doing good things for the people round about him. But in the end no one understood this clown or appreciated the good things that this clown did for them. And because they did not, they hanged him. That's right. They hanged him! Or was it that they crucified him? It really makes no difference. The point is that this clown was supposed to represent Jesus! Jesus, according to that film, was that clown! And that brings me to the second observation that I want to make, and that is this. I took exception to that film which represented my Savior as a clown then. And I take exception to that film and any other person or organization representing my Savior as a clown now. Jesus was no clown!

I think that I saw that film also, a few years ago. And I agree with the Rev. Flikkema in his criticism. But let me first continue with what he writes:

A clown, according to my Webster's dictionary, is by definition, "A clumsy, boorish, or incompetent person. A performer who entertains, as in a circus, by antics, jokes, tricks, etc.; jester. A person who constantly plays the fool, makes jokes, etc.; buffoon." That according to Webster's dictionary is what a clown is. I submit to you that Jesus was not clumsy! He was not boorish! He was not an incompetent person! He did not entertain people! He did not play the fool! He did not make jokes! He was not a buffoon! But on the contrary, He was the Savior, the Son of God in our flesh Who preached the good news of salvation to those whom the Father had given to Him from all eternity, and Who preached everlasting damnation to all those whom the Father had not given to Him from all eternity.

Here I must make a remark. The Rev. Flikkema writes that Christ "preached the good news of salvation to those whom the Father had given to Him from all eternity," and "preached everlasting damnation to all those whom the Father had not given to Him from all eternity." May we call this typically Protestant Reformed language? The covenant and the promise of the gospel is only for the elect. And so Christ preached the good news of salvation only to the elect. This is not bib-

lical. Christ preached the good news to *all* who heard Him, with the demand of faith. See, e.g., John 3:16, 36; Hebrews 3:19. It is true, only the elect receive salvation: But this does not mean that the promise of salvation is not addressed to all who hear! And reprobation is not the ground or reason for everlasting damnation. God will condemn the reprobate just because of their sins, and their unbelief! See, e.g., John 3:18, 36. We can say: the reprobate will be condemned, just because they have *rejected* the gospel promise of salvation. See, e.g., Matthew 11:20-30, when election and reprobation (vss. 25, 26) do not take away the calling to believe to "*all* who labour and are heavy laden" (vs. 28).

But let me return to our topic. And I give also the rest of the article now first:

And the point is, He preached! And so also does He command every single one of the men whom He has called to stand before God's people in His house on the Lord's Day. He commands them to preach. Not to be clumsy! Not to be boorish! Not to be a bunch of incompetents! Not to be a performer! Not to play the fool! Not to make jokes or be a buffoon! But to be a preacher and to preach! And woe unto the preacher if he does not do that! It is by the preaching, the God-ordained means of the official proclamation of the Gospel, that God saves His people — not by a bunch of clownish actions. Those who want to quote the Apostle Paul ought to read what the Apostle Paul has to say in I Corinthians 1, verses 16 to the end. The one word of the Apostle Paul in all those verses is: preach. Preach for it is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Preach "lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." Preach for "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." If you want to talk about foolishness, then all you have to do is preach. To the ungodly world, preaching is foolishness. But not to God. To God, preaching, a minister standing upon the pulpit and saying, "Thus saith the Lord," is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

But the so-called church today does not like the God-ordained means of the preaching, and in its place has set up a bunch of clowns. Is that a sign of the times? To be sure. He that hath an ear, let him hear.

In I Corinthians 1 and 2 the great task of Paul is, indeed, to preach, and this means: preaching Christ and Him crucified. Folly in the eyes of men is: preaching the cross of Christ, the only payment for sin, is the (only) way for salvation. I wholeheartedly agree. The apostle Paul teaches us that a fool — in the eyes of men — is not someone who

acts like a clown, but someone who believes in Christ Jesus and Him crucified as ground and way for his salvation, for the forgiveness of his sins, also of his foolishness in the way of repentance and unto conversion from foolishness.

The Jew wants signs, and the Greek seeks human wisdom, humanistic philosophies of self-redemption (man's good works, man's love, etc.); and for both the cross as means of salvation is foolishness. However, Paul writes, when you really want to be saved (and become wise according to God) then you must become a fool (in the eyes of the humanistic world): a believer in Christ crucified!

One more point I like to pay attention to. It is true that Paul writes in I Corinthians 4:10, "We are fools for Christ's sake." But this does not mean: we are and act as clowns! The apostle writes in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Honourable, gracious excellence, and dignity is the opposite of playing the fool. The "foolishness" which Christ committed (but this with great, majestic, dignity) was

that He surrendered Himself to be crucified. And *that* must be *preached*.

The first *preachers* of this gospel preached with power of the Holy Spirit, with honour and dignity; they did not play foolish, clumsy clowns. The gospel of the cross is far too holy and majestic for clownery. Being "illiterate fishermen" did not make the apostles into clowns. And "ordinary" is not identical with foolishness and clowning around! On the contrary.

Are not those "fools for Christ" fools, indeed? Fools, not in the sense of Paul and the believers in I Corinthians, but in the sense of the book of Proverbs and of II Peter 3:16: people who are ignorant and twist the Scriptures?

It makes us sad and angry, when we see the holy name of Christ and of God, and the holy Gospel connected with the vanity of clownery. Does this playing the clown "for Christ" (a contradiction in the terms) just like a film about a "clown" who shows the message of "Christ" underline what I wrote a few months ago in connection with so-called Christian movie reviews?

Let us live and act and speak and clothe ourselves in such a dignified, gracious, lovely, pure, and excellent way, that we are truly honouring our Lord and Saviour, and His holy Gospel.

J. GEERTSEMA

## Geloof je dat nog?

Hoe kun je nu nog in het wonder geloven,  
het wonder van God, Die de werelden schiep?  
In 't vuur van Zijn liefde, dat niemand kan doven,  
in Christus, Die ons tot discipelen riep?

Hoe kun je geloven dat Hij met Zijn leven  
jouw losprijs betaalde aan graf en aan dood,  
dat God Hem tot Vorst van het licht heeft verheven  
en dat Hij steeds bidt voor Zijn kind'ren in nood?

Hoe kun je geloven dat wie Hem verwachten  
vervuld zullen worden met vuur van de Geest,  
en dat Hij terugkomt met engelenmachten,  
en dat Hij ons roept tot Zijn eeuwige feest?

Ik vind het vaak moeilijk, hierop te vertrouwen,  
en tussen mijn hart en mijn mond ligt een kloof;  
maar zalig zijn zij, die niet mochten aanschouwen  
en toch leerden zeggen: 'Ja Heer, ik geloof!'

From Nel Benschop, *Geloof je dat nog?*, Kok, Kampen.



# Remarks in Answer to Mr. Salomons' Second Submission on "Prophecy Today"<sup>2</sup>

3. You make an appeal to prominent Christian authors of the Early Church. Again I ask: So what? I have always been very interested in the history of the Early Christian Church. I certainly hold those brothers and sisters, ready and willing to sacrifice their lives, in high esteem. However, I do not gloss over the fact that in many respects they have been leading the Church of their times in the wrong direction, e.g., by their view regarding the Gospel as a new law, to be kept by man in order to deserve eternal life; regarding the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice to be offered by the Church, partaking in what Christ himself did on Golgotha; regarding the bishop as the successor of the Old Testament high priest; regarding the veneration of martyrs prevalent in those pious circles. By these, the way was paved for what in and after the Medieval period became the Roman Catholic Church. Concerning the alleged pre-millennialism of these brothers, Rutgers writes (p. 239):

The common *Pre.* assumption that the church of the first three centuries embraced the *Pre.* faith, when weighed in the balance is found wanting. Historically this cannot be justified. It is assumed upon the authority of some church historians, but is not supported by the evidence at hand.

The irony of it is that among those scholars are modernists and liberals like Harnack! But pre-millennialism gratefully adopts their claims. Rutgers, after a detailed examination writes (p. 52):

The prevalence of chiliasm in the early centuries . . . has been unduly exaggerated and must be cut down appreciably.

As for Origen, I would ask: Would you, please, keep *his* allegorization of Scripture and our symbolic interpretation of parts of Holy Writ, demanding such an approach, apart?

Concerning the Synod of the Chr. Afgescheiden Geref. Kerk of 1863 in The Netherlands, the following: When, in connection with a sermon of the Rev. P.B. Bahler (of Deventer) in Amsterdam, in which he launched chiliastic ideas, the Regional Synod of Noord Holland made a proposal reading:

De Synode bepale, of de leer van Jezus' persoonlijke wederkomst om 1000 jaren op aarde te regeren de leer is der Gereformeerde kerk al dan niet, of ook daartegen strijdt

the Synod, after ample consideration, made the following decision:

De Synode oordeelt, dat onze formulieren van enigheid zich duidelijk verklaren en dat het gevoelen van de leer der wederkomst des Zaligmakers om 1000 jaren zichtbaar en lichamenlijk te regeren geen leer der Gereformeerde Kerk is, maar daartegen zoowel als tegen Gods Woord strijdt, waarom het niemand toegelaten wordt dat gevoelen te leren of te verbreiden.

"Deze uitspraak liet aan duidelijkheid niets te wensen over" is the comment of Dr. L. Praamsma, from whose book *Het Dwaze Gods* I borrowed the passage.

As to Hal Lindsay, a peculiar fruit of seed sown on this continent for some centuries, his type of Christendom is very different from that which the Word of God teaches you and me, br. S. I hope that you learn to use the gift to test the spirits, whether they are of God. Scripture forbids me to make a show of my belief, as Lindsay does. The man does not hesitate to have his book put on the screen. The Close of the Centuries and the signs it is attended with, is nothing to make a sensation about, only to pray that the LORD may sustain us in the hour of temptation.

Then I would ask you, who uses the term "fundamentalism": Do you have a clear concept of what fundamentalism really is? and in what respect it differs from sound orthodoxy?

\* \* \* \* \*

4. "Hermeneutics are in the limelight," I wrote in my last series of articles. And you must be impressed by it, for you refer to it over and over again. Well, I am thankful, because it shows that my endeavours have not been fruitless or in vain altogether.

However, to put things straight, it is not what you call a-millennial views that influence my interpretation, br. S. I am not a man like you or others whose

mouthpiece you are, to whom the millennium is about all and everything in their considerations: to such an extent that the rest is in danger of becoming of secondary importance. You look at me and speak to me as if I were cast in the same mould as you.

I frankly admit that, once I broached the issue of hermeneutics, I should have said more on the subject. The issue as I put it requires further elucidation. My point of departure is the rules summarized, not by H.M.O. (as you write), but by nobody less than the late Prof. S. Greijdanus, in his book: *Schriftbeginselen ter Schriftverklaring* (If you were a student at our College I would give you as an assignment to study this book, before opening your mouth or taking up your pen again!) and Prof. J. Ridderbos in an article in *Bijbels Handboek*. I am a little hesitant to say more, though. Hermeneutics is a really theological subject, taught at Universities and at our Theological College. I never heard that someone was asked to speak on it for our men's or women's societies or a young people's conference. But not so as to keep it hidden from the layman, oh no! I am willing to explain it and discuss it with any interested church member. It would take me too long to elaborate on it now. If you are really interested, I can strongly recommend to you what Prof. H.J. Schilder of Kampen wrote in his contribution in the book: *Orientatie in de Theologie*, where he outlines where and how the ways of Reformed and modernist (Barth, Bultmann, Von Rad) hermeneutics part; that it is a matter of belief in God's revelation on the one hand, and a theory about Israel's traditions, creeds — so a mere human affair — on the other hand. Shame on the pre-millennialists who bracket these two opposites together! This can only be due to malevolence or to ignorance about the real issue.

Hermeneutics are in the limelight, I wrote. And partly I am not so happy about it, because it tells me about prevalent modernist trends in Old Testament scholarship and hermeneutics, requiring an answer.

Hermeneutics are in the limelight, I wrote. And, on the other hand, I am grateful that Reformed study of the Bible is not scared of going into the matter but gives it real thought and comes up with a sound solution, honest before God and faithful toward His word. You don't hear from their mouth cheap slogans like "Take everything to the letter." Take it literally no

matter whether it is history, law, prophecy, poetry. What we need is a believing and sober approach. It is God's Word in human language. I sometimes wonder, br. S., do you really judge a poem or a novel you read in your spare time with the same standards as a report you go through with respect to your work or when you take note of statistics? The Reformed believer, who knows about the sound doctrine, honours his God WHO SPOKE OF OLD IN MANY AND VARIOUS WAYS TO OUR FATHERS BY THE PROPHETS, as it says in the opening lines of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In principle, this is where the problem lies. And the church has in its midst gifted and capable brothers, who set themselves to the task. Quite a task, for it takes a sound and balanced judgment. It remains a life-long task for theologians, and you'll never hear a good theologian laugh about others not so learned as he, for they know what is all implied to come to a sound exegesis. And I don't laugh at you, br. S., because you did not study hermeneutics, but I do ask that you finally: do me a pleasure and listen to others instead of to your own opinion. For otherwise there is no end. It is here that the ways of the Church and sectarianism part. Yes, sectarianism, where not the concern about the true doctrine according to the Scriptures, but the pious man, and the mood or spirit he is in at a moment, is in the centre.

Regarding the Rev. Boersma in *De Bijbel is geen puzzelboek*, his exegesis of Zechariah differs from mine, I know. In my copy of his book I have put question marks in the margin, because I am not convinced about what he writes following the Rev. Wiskerke's track; I would rather take sides with J. Ridderbos here. However, this is just a detail; there may be more; but in principle we agree.

When you write that my method is not satisfactory, perhaps you misunderstand me, as if I had said that it did not matter so much whether you take Genesis 1 as simple historiography, or poetic or prophetic historiography. To me Genesis 1-3 or 1-11 are history throughout. Going further into details, explaining the chapters verse by verse, word by word, even if, or rather exactly when, you take the narrative as history, questions can and must rise, concerning the length of the days and the character of the days, especially the character. Instead of disputing about the twenty-four hours, no

second more, no second less, I would rather, with H. Bavinck, G.Ch. Aalders, A.G. Honig, and K. Schilder, state that what matters in this history is that those days are a (longer or shorter) part of the current of time set in motion in the beginning, THE BEGINNING of Genesis 1:1, and flowing ever since. Concerning Light, Firmament, the separation of dry ground and water, our God in Genesis 1 means exactly what He says, no doubt, but taking into account what science has discovered etc., about the light waves, heat waves, gamma waves, electricity, stratosphere, and ionosphere, space, etc., I add that He did not say in Genesis 1 all that might have been said. First, because ancient Israel — and even we today — would not be able to bear the burden of information. Second, because Holy Writ is no handbook for science. No, our God and Father, and Creator, accommodates Himself to Moses' and Israel's level of understanding. This way we hear Him speak in a way we can grasp, about what has been going on in the days when heaven and earth were called into existence, in a span of time He is pleased to call six days, days of the first week; exactly the time the LORD "needed" to accomplish His work. That was in the first unequalled, unparalleled week of history, a week as there has not been ever since.

You are oversimplifying things in jumping from the seven days of Genesis 1 to the seventy years of the exile. I would like to ask you: How do you figure those years? Is a span from 586 (the fall of Jerusalem) to 536 (the return of the exultanists) exactly seventy years? I count fifty. Or do you maybe number from 597, when Ezekiel was carried away, or from 604 when Daniel was led into captivity? But let me help you: in Jeremiah 25:11 it does not say that the exile would last seventy years, but "and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." It applies to Judah and its neighbours both! And in Jeremiah 29:10 we read: "when seventy years are completed for Babylon." Well, since the fall of Assyria, in 606, Babylon was the world power! And in Daniel 9:2, not the beginning, but *the end* of the exile, the desolations of Jerusalem, is connected with the end of Babylon's dominance.

Then you send for Prof. H.M. Kuitert. For what reason? To intimate that H.M.O. is half an H.M. Kuitert or well on his way to becoming one? Thank you for nothing! That H.M.

Kuitert comes to the rejectable points he has made has — I say it again — nothing to do with an a-millennialist stance, but rather with his study on the anthropomorph God and the views developed there.

As to Dr. C. VanderWaal, with his remarks on the elements of fundamentalism in the thinking of K. Schilder and B. Holwerda, he is (or was) a man apart. His book is recommended in our circles, yes, but with all proper reservation. To my knowledge hardly anybody follows in his footsteps in his peculiar exegesis of the book of Revelation, which book, according to him, found its fulfilment in the first century A.D. already. He has met with much criticism in our circles. Prof. K. Schilder and Prof. B. Holwerda were genuine representatives of what you call a-millennialism. Your "Golden Rule of Interpretation," which you mention sub 18, looks quite impressive, but actually I am not impressed at all. And — excuse me — I am glad that the Handbook by Prof. Greijdanus, and the aforementioned articles by Prof. J. Ridderbos and Prof. H. J. Schilder are the literature our students have to be familiar with and not what you write in your articles. For, sorry, your "Golden Rule" does not make them much wiser, be there ever so much in it which in itself is true. "Exegetical Nivelism," Dr. Rutgers calls it on p. 136ff. of his book, and he justly remarks: "A hermeneutic principle which in its rigid application at once combines so much that is chauvinistic, fanciful, impossible, and contrary to common sense as to defeat itself."

If Reformed Hermeneutics, as a workable whole, were just somewhat in between the fundamentalist and modernist approach, then certainly it would be a poor show, a zigzag course, not too much to the right, not too much to the left, looking around circumspcctly. Away with that. Reformed hermeneutics go on the royal way of searching what the LORD reveals in His Word and the *manner* of revelation. Is not the LORD free? In the Bible we meet the LIVING GOD in His living Word.

About the interpretation and application of Holy Scripture by the Early Christian Church (you refer to Ch. L. Feinberg), I have written in my series: How do we avail ourselves of having the Old Testament history in our Bibles? "Be their method of exegesis interesting to take cognizance of, it is not a model for us today." Even J.

*Continued on page 549.*

# *News From The Canadian Teacher's College Association*

In the last couple of months several things have happened which is bringing the reality of opening our own Teacher's College a lot closer.

The board was informed that Mr. T.M.P. VanderVen of Armadale, Australia would be a good person to contact for our Teacher's College. This contact was made and the result was a visit by Mr. VanderVen at the end of August. It gave the board a chance to meet Mr. VanderVen on their meeting of August 27. In turn Mr. VanderVen had the opportunity to survey the situation here in Canada. He spoke with many educators and principals. All of this was mutually very informative and has no doubt contributed greatly to the decisions which have subsequently been made.

The first decision which was made was the application of Mr. T.M.P. VanderVen who applied for the position of Principal/Director. In September the board received this application. We dealt with it on our next meeting and after a frank discussion the executive committee accepted the application and appointed Mr. VanderVen as Principal/Director. Our western governors were contacted regarding this matter and unanimously ratified the appointment. Mr. VanderVen was advised of this appointment and accepted same.

A bit more information about the family VanderVen is in order. Mr. VanderVen started his teaching career in 1963 in Dordrecht, The Netherlands. In 1964 he was appointed as principal of the John Calvin School in Launceston, Australia. In 1972 he was appointed as teacher of the John Calvin School, Armadale, West Australia. In 1976 he was appointed as Principal of the John Calvin School, Armadale.

Presently there are 10 grades and the school has about 320 students.

He received his education at Dordrecht at the Protestant Christian Kweekschool. He continued his studies in Australia and received his B. of Ed. degree in Perth, Australia. He successfully followed a course in English Literature at the University of Tasmania.

In 1970 he completed a course in music from the Australian Music Examination Board, and at present he is studying towards a Diploma in Special

Education.

Emigration to Canada is becoming rather difficult. We have immediately set the wheels in motion. A document was drawn up to support the application for immigration. The hurdle of a work permit has already been past. The paperwork has been completed successfully in Canada. It is now up to the Canadian Embassy in Australia to finalize the immigration process.

The appointment is effective January 1, 1981 and we hope this will also help to facilitate a speedy approval.

As a result of this appointment we can now start advertising for applications from prospective students. In the last issue of Clarion you may have seen such an ad.

After lengthy discussions and input from many sides it has been decided to have as a prerequisite grade 12 diploma. There will be certain requirements for this grade 12 diploma.

On October 18 the Board of Governors met in the Theological College to discuss this particular issue along with many others. It was decided to set the following guidelines, For Ontario: grade 12 graduates must have a minimum of 30 credits, with an average of 65% in the final year of study. For other provinces a senior matriculation (grade 12) is required. An average of at least 65% is required. At this meeting the final draft of the constitution and bylaws was discussed and accepted.

Now this has been done, we can finalize our application to the government to be registered as a charitable organization. This will allow for contributions to be tax deductible.

Now our activities are moving from the planning stage to actual development of the College, many things will have to be considered. One of them is support for the College. Although many have indicated their financial support when we originally contacted societies, and many have sent us funds over the past two years, now is the time that we set up a program where we can actually cover our expenses. We have been given the go ahead as far as hiring a principal is concerned. Now it is up to you, the Canadian Reformed Community to make sure that we can honour our commitment. The financial committee will

contact the societies regarding this matter.

Each of the governors will also bring this to the attention of the societies in their local area.

The budget presented by the financial committee shows that we need \$50,000 for this financial year. When enough people support this endeavour we feel that \$75.00 per member per year will cover this. The Financial Committee which is compromised of members from Burlington has been reappointed. Our treasurer br. J. Gelderman has also been reappointed. The Hamilton Committee will be asked to look for property. Also, the Lodging Committee has been reappointed. The Public Relations Committee has two new members. They are the brs. W. McConnell and K. McIntire of London.

The program of studies has been established as follows for 1981-1982. The course of study normally requires a full-time attendance at the College for a period of four years. Each year of the last three years will be a self-contained unit. A one year condensed course will be offered for university graduates.

At the Board of Governors meeting it was suggested to invite 1 delegate from each school society or, where applicable, from the local Teachers Training Association to sit on the Board of Governors. The reason is that in this manner we have wider representation and less danger from alienation as each governor can keep his or her local society informed of the proceedings and activity. After weighing the pros and cons it is decided to accept this suggestion.

On our October 18th meeting we had a change in the executive committee. Prof Dr. J. Faber and J. Gelderman resigned. Both have put in a lot of hours for this work and we thank them for their efforts. E. Kampen is now our new chairman and J. Gelderman's vacancy is filled by G. Nordeman from Burlington.

We have now reached an important point in the establishing of the Teachers' College. The work continues. Part of that work is that we all bring this in prayer before the throne of grace. God alone can grant us what we need. It is in His Service that this task has been undertaken. Let us continue to serve Him in this matter so that the ultimate outcome may be to His Glory and may lead to teachers being trained to teach covenant children.

FOR THE BOARD, C. HOFF

# news medley

Do you have the same experience with letter-writing which I have? It is my experience that it does not make all that much of a difference whether you write to your parents or children every week or once a month: if you write every week, there is little trouble filling a letter; if you write every month there seems to be just as little (or as much) news as there is when you write every week. If anyone should think that there will be much more news after six weeks than after two, he will find out that he is wrong.

At first I thought that I would have too much news for this medley. The other time I had to disappoint you. All the things that had to be done to get everything ready for General Synod, including the sermon for the prayer service, took away whatever time I might have had available for our bi-weekly encounter.

By the way, apart from a few minor mistakes in the printing of that sermon, we did not sing or read Psalm 13 at the end. What we did sing was stanza 13 of Psalm 139. I gave the liturgy by telephone and that is always a risky thing: so easily a word is misunderstood. It is not all that important, but I thought I should pass this correction on to you, for some might have been wondering what Psalm 13 had directly to do with the text.

As for the General Synod, there are two co-editors of *Clarion* at the meetings, so that we may expect at least some sort of a report on the progress and achievements. Of two of the decisions our readers were already informed the previous time, via the Principal's Report which we published. Those two decisions were: the appointment of the Rev. C. Van Dam as professor of Old Testament, and my own appointment as lecturer in the Ecclesiological Department. Having accepted the appointment, I was installed at the Convocation which we held on November 7th. I'll try to get some report on that ready before the copy has to be sent to Winnipeg by express mail.

First our news medley.

Also via our news medley I wish to express our heartfelt sympathy to our brother the Rev. W. Loopstra, since it has pleased the Lord to take his wife away from him. I did mention something about her illness in the previous medley: when those words were read we had already buried her with great honour: hundreds came to show their sympathy, and the row of cars which accompanied her to the cemetery was very long. As wife of the first minister in Ontario, she was a great support for our brother, in the first years as well as during the difficulties they had to go through in the middle fifties. Whenever I see the Christian Reformed Church building on Mohawk Road in Hamilton and read the name of one of the main figures in the difficulties, now being featured as a prominent figure in the Christian Reformed Church, I have trouble suppressing a feeling of bitterness and I find it difficult to take some things that are being done and said nowadays seriously. Perhaps, however, that is my "old man." Let's skip it.

As far as the condition of the Rev. H. Scholten is concerned, when we saw him last and talked to him for about a quarter of an hour, he appeared to be in excellent spirits, in the full sense of the word, showing interest in everything

going on, and claiming his right (as minister of the covering Church) to receive the reports of advisory committees and, if he so desired, to take part in the discussions. May the Lord grant him continually that truly Christian comfort which is given so richly, and may He also make it easy when the moment is there to be loosed in order to be with Christ.

We may mention a few couples to whom the Lord gave many years together as husband and wife. Beginning with the higher number of years, we offer our congratulations to brother and sister V. Van Leperen of Beamsville, Ontario. On November 21 they will celebrate (have celebrated) their forty-fifth wedding anniversary. According to the information which was provided, they both are enjoying good health, and that is a blessing, especially when we get on in years. It is our wish that our gracious Father may add more years to those they have already received. The older a husband and wife become, the more they depend on each other, and the more difficult it is when life's journey has to be continued all alone. For that reason we gratefully receive each and every day which it pleases the Lord to add to our days.

Another couple which we have to mention are brother and sister H. Bouwman of Guelph. On November 25th it will be (was) their fortieth wedding anniversary. Although I could tell our readers quite a bit about this couple, I shall refrain from doing so, for I do not wish to be accused of discrimination. Let me say that they are now retired and have moved from Fergus to Guelph, a fact which does not prevent brother Bouwman from coming to the Fergus parsonage at certain intervals to check whether the hedge has to be clipped or whether any other jobs have to be done around the house. We express the wish that they may continue to enjoy good health and may continue to be blessed as richly as they have been blessed in the past.

Herewith we conclude our "personal" remarks and proceed to the news from the Churches.

Since the General Synod is held in Smithville, we might as well start there. And the first thing I mention from the Smithville bulletin is, again, of a more personal nature. I informed our readers the other time that the Rev. Werkman has to take a rest. From Mrs. Werkman I learned that there were no "fainting spells" as I had heard, and I hasten to make this correction. Now I go by the words of the Rev. Stam in the Smithville *Family Post* who writes,

Meanwhile, as some of you noticed last week Sunday after the a.m. service, Rev. M. Werkman (who was in our midst as an appreciated guest) took ill towards the end of the service. Some extra rest would no doubt be beneficial and we express the wish that our former counsellor and present neighbouring minister may soon be able to resume all his work.

We underline that wish, and make it our own.

The size of the Smithville congregation has increased during the past years, and more than once already the thought of a second minister or splitting up of the congregation was expressed and discussed. Now the *Family Post* contained the information that "A proposal was made with respect to the size of the congregation, to appoint a committee to investigate the possibilities of dividing the congregation and the calling of a second minister. To be discussed at the next meeting." However, at the next meeting the Rev. Stam was not present and therefore it was decided to postpone the discussion. We hope to hear about it once Synod is over and life has returned to normal in the Smithville congregation.

Hopefully the discussions will not result in a decision

similar to the one which I read in the bulletin of the Ebenezer Church in Burlington. "The committee which was appointed by our consistory reported their findings . . . and has made it clear . . . that a third congregation would be ideal, but that they at this time see no possibility to go into that direction." That is a disappointing conclusion, and it is the more disappointing when I quote right after it something which the Rev. Pouwelse wrote in the bulletin of the Church at Burlington West: "We are still busy with our acquaintance visits. As of now, we have made almost 140 visits, so we have to make another 35." That means a total of some 175 addresses, families and single persons. I do not know exactly how many there are in Burlington East, but I guess that the difference would not be all that big. Then I come to the conclusion that there are a total of some 350 families on both Churches, which would mean that, if the membership were divided equally over three Churches, each Church still would number between 110 and 120 families.

Did I say too much when I called the committee's conclusion disappointing? I think that it is sort of irresponsible to expect of a minister that he can take adequate care of a congregation of 175 families. Even 110 or 120 families would actually be too many, but that could be done. Those numbers would represent a total membership of approximately 450-500, a number which I consider to be the maximum for size of congregation. I hope sincerely that the need will be felt more and more to limit the size accordingly, and that the need be not only felt but also bring to actions in this respect.

The Burlington bulletins (as those of neighbouring Churches) contained an invitation to attend a special meeting.

#### A New Publication

On Tuesday, November 11, at 8:00 p.m. a public meeting will be held in the Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church, Highway 5, Burlington, to discuss the possibility of a new publication, something like a Canadian version of the "Variant" of the *Nederlands Dagblad, Gereformeerd Gezinsblad*. This meeting is an initiative of Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, and "Stichting Nederlands Dagblad, Gereformeerd Gezinsblad to Amersfoort."

Information will be given and questions will be answered by Mr. J.P. de Vries, editor-in-chief, and Mr. J.C. Boersema, director of the *Gezinsblad*, and by Mr. G. Kuik of Premier Printing Ltd.

It is good when also the membership in other parts of the country become aware of the plans, and therefore I mention it in the medley.

For all the years of *Clarion's* existence, we have been trying to give a more comprehensive coverage of all the aspects of Christian life. Alas, due to lack of cooperation we have not been able to present anything more than the occasional article about other than strictly "ecclesiastical" topics. Things have improved a little of late, but we sorely miss contributions by knowledgeable people in the field of medicine, economics, national and international politics, finance and banking, and so on.

It is also for that reason that we welcome the initiative from the heart. We expect that our membership will unite solidly behind the effort to issue a periodical which will give solid, Reformed information about all those things. We of *Clarion* have promised the brethren visiting from The Netherlands our full cooperation. It is not the intention of all concerned to effectuate a sort of merger. The new

periodical — if it gets off the ground — is not intended for the Reformed community within the Canadian Reformed Churches only. It is the desire of those who took the initiative to reach also others who are longing for Scriptural guidance in all of life.

I am certain that our readers will hear more about it in the future. We, on our part, will keep you informed.

A last item from Burlington West. I do not insert this to embarrass the brethren there or to give the impression that the situation is worse there than it is in other places. I only quote it because I am convinced that there are many Churches that struggle with the same problem. Perhaps they'll be helped by the following.

It is decided to continue the practice of having an elder sit in the back of the church. It has been observed by elders who have been sitting in the back that too many members (and not only the younger ones) seem to come to church for the sole purpose of catching up on their sleep.

It is not only in the back of the church that people try to catch up on their sleep, I can assure you. Personally I hesitate to say something about it, for I do not know what kind of a night or week the people had. Once a brother said to me, "Sir, you will think, 'There he has been sitting sleeping all the time again.' But I had to watch a cow till 2:00 a.m., then went to bed for a couple of hours of sleep, and got up again at 4:30 for milking in order to be in church on time with the family." In such a case I would say, Let the brother go back to bed after milking; that's much better than sleeping in Church all the time. But that was in the days when the children were small and the wife, most likely, did not have her driver's licence.

However, it is a sad thing that those back pews have to be watched all the time. The elders are overseers over the flock, but they are no policemen. It should not be so that they have to function as such because of misbehaviour of some members. It may be amazing how the influence of an elder's presence brings outward peace to the last few pews in an auditorium.

The odd time I have to warn those sitting in the rear of the auditorium from the pulpit. But when, a few months ago, I had the privilege of listening to one of my colleagues and sat down in the very last pew, because we both had to go somewhere else right after the service, there was no talking or paper-shooting going on, and I was wondering why it looked somewhat different from the pulpit. Must have been my imagination.

Before we take off for the West or even farther away, I should like to mention that the Brampton Consistory decided: "The mileage rate for driving done by Consistory members for Consistory work is adjusted to 12¢ per kilometer." That is realistic. In some instances the rate is still 15¢ per mile at the most, and that is far behind our progressive times. Brampton's decision is perhaps an occasion for others to do the same or something similar. By the way, if we think that we are off worse than some thirty years ago, let us remember that some twenty-five to thirty years ago a fair rate in The Netherlands . . . 12¢ per km!

Brampton had another experience. There was an explosion in the basement and the result was black smoke throughout the Church building. Result of that: an early spring-cleaning. Even the organ had to be taken all apart and everything had to be cleaned, including the contacts. Services were held in the Credo Christian School, but it was

expected that by now the building would again be ready for occupancy and use.

From the Guelph bulletin I quote, "From several brothers and sisters of the Church at Orangeville regarding an appeal to General Synod." And the Edmonton Consistory report tells us, "A copy of an appeal to Synod re Rev. Olij from certain brothers and sisters of the Church of Orangeville was received. This was received for information."

From the Edmonton decision it appears that the Consistory there was of the opinion: this is none of our business. They are perfectly right in that. Only I wished that the Consistory had decided to return the document, since it is totally out of place at a Consistory "level." The only place where a Consistory would be entitled to receive such a copy is the Consistory of the Orangeville Church, because they are directly involved. As for the rest: it is totally wrong to send copies of appeals in matters of persons to the Churches.

As our readers know, I have always refrained from making any remark about the situation in Orangeville as such. In the first place: whenever there are difficulties (apart from the question of who is at fault) we should not increase the difficulties by interfering via the press. If there are matters of general concern things are different. But when the situation is such that all sorts of local relations and differences are involved, others should keep out and only those who are called upon directly to participate in discussions and decisions are to busy themselves with the matters at hand.

In the second place: one is considered innocent unless proven guilty. For that reason the press should keep out and leave matters to the proper instances that are to deal with them. That is in case of an appeal against a Consistory decision *only* the Classis to which the appeal is directed, and not the Consistories of that region. That is in case of an appeal to Regional Synod *only* that Regional Synod and not the Churches on whose behalf that assembly is constituted. Likewise, when an appeal is directed to a General Synod, no one else but that General Synod should receive the appeal and copies of it. One appeals to the major assemblies, not to the Churches.

Further: Is that now really protecting and defending someone's reputation, someone's "name" among the brotherhood when all sorts of things are spread throughout the Churches? Regardless of where the larger part of the responsibility for everything is to be sought, is it not a requirement of Christian love to keep things as much as possible restricted to a small, to the smallest possible group of people? What is the use and sense of spreading all sorts of things throughout the federation?

It is wrong in every respect: Church-politically as well as morally.

Send it back. C.O.D.

We continue our journey. If this medley becomes too long, this might be a good point to stop for this time. Now we go to Manitoba and further West. I leave it up to the printer.

Meanwhile, we continue courageously, for there are more things waiting to be communicated to the readers. It seems, after all, that there is far more when we have skipped one turn.

The Carman Church is erecting a new building, as we will recall. They got help from unexpected quarters as the following will make clear: "A gift of \$50.00 was received from a citizen of our town towards the new church building. Also two Dutch families, visitors here, donated \$20.00 and \$200.00. These gifts were received with thankfulness."

Yes, I can understand that those gifts were received with thankfulness. I am specifically happy about that gift from an outsider in Carman itself. That tells me something about the reputation of the Church in that place, and it shows that outsiders show interest. Would that it happened in more places.

From Carman we move on to Edmonton.

The Consistory had some lengthy discussions about splitting the Congregation. In the *City Guide* quite a few points were mentioned that are being pondered. I shall not quote them all, for then this medley would become too long for sure. Leaving many particulars out, I pass on the following points.

The Consistory decided

- a. that the Church of Edmonton be split into two congregations on April 1, 1981, the Lord willing;
- b. to appoint a committee . . . to serve Council with a definite recommendation regarding the geographic boundary between the two proposed congregations;
- c. that this geographic boundary will be presented to the members of the Congregation in order to obtain their advice on this matter, and, having heard the advice of the Congregation, Council will establish a definite geographic boundary at the first Council meeting after December 21, 1980.

The ownership of the assets of the Church were also part of the considerations and as for the preaching arrangements, they would remain more or less combined for as long as the vacancy will last.

The Consistory also made a decision some time ago regarding non-communicant members who come from other places. Let me put it that way for brevity's sake. The reason for publishing that decision now was the fact that a non-communicant member that came from another place expressed the wish to belong to the Church at Edmonton. That member had not been all that faithful in the Church where it came from. That sometimes happens: a non-communicant member leaves the place where they live, in many instances never notifies the Consistory of their departure, does not express any desire to belong to the Church in the place to which he or she moved, but the "Home-Consistory" dutifully sends an attestation to the Church in the new place of residence. What is such a Church, the Consistory of such a Church to do? Announce that someone has come in from that and that place? But what if the young man or the young woman does not give any evidence that he or she wishes to live in obedience to the Lord? Is the Consistory then to declare that they do belong to the Church on the basis of an attestation sent by the Church where they did belong?

I think that almost all of the Churches can recall such a case. I also wrote about it before, if I remember well. And I may also say that I can find myself very well in the course which the Edmonton Consistory has chosen, with one exception. Let me first pass on the decision as the Rev. DeBruin published it.

The Consistory of Edmonton has adopted the policy that when baptismal attestations arrive, the person in question should first be visited by a delegation of Elders before his/her attestation is accepted. One of the main reasons for this is to determine whether or not there is a real desire to submit to the oversight of the Elders and be a living member of the Church. Regarding those who refuse, or those who cannot be contacted, this attestation will then be returned to whatever church had sent it. N.B. It has happened in the past that a new, but unwilling baptized member from another Canadian Reformed

Church almost immediately became a discipline case. The above is an attempt to avoid this. Our Elders have quite enough work in the present congregation without having to be burdened by the problems from other congregations

The exception to which I alluded above is the point of "accepting attestations." There I cannot go along with the brethren. An attestation from a sister-Church has to be accepted at all times, and should not be sent back. If it appears that a member is not willing to join the Church in the new place of residence, notice can be sent to the other Church that the attestation has been received, but that the young man or young woman cannot be registered as a member of the Church because of apparent unwillingness; the attestation should be accepted automatically and be deposited into the archives.

As for the rest, I believe that the policy adopted by the Edmonton Consistory may prevent unnecessary troubles and difficulties or even confusion.

I do not think that it is correct to state that the elders would be "burdened by the problems from other congregations" if they have to admonish members (either communicant or non-communicant) who moved in from other congregations.

The news from Alberta is exhausted by the above, and thus we move on to British Columbia. Let us first visit the Bulkley Valley. There we have to compliment the Churches at Houston and Smithers with the new cover of their bulletin which now bears the prestigious name of *Bulkley Valley Echo*. The title page shows the Hudson Bay Mountain with the glacier, towering high over the drawings of the two Church buildings. Some fir trees adorn the buildings by their protective presence. It would look even nicer if the covers were printed. Perhaps that is a wish which will come true in the future.

Let us, from the cover, proceed to the contents.

In Smithers "the minister informs the consistory about an informal meeting held with all the Reformed ministers in the Bulkley Valley." That is all we hear about it. Maybe we shall get some more particulars about results?

## Final Reminder

All copy, photographs or other matters for the Year End 1980 issue should now be submitted by special delivery.

Deadline is December 5, 1980.

The Smithers Consistory also discussed the question "whether a Consistory member can at the same time be a member of the School Board. The guideline for the Consistory is not to nominate a member of the School Board for the office of elder or deacon." That seems like a good guideline to me; I only doubt whether it will be possible to stick to it all the time. Perhaps there are Congregations where it is feasible to maintain that rule, but I am afraid that it will not be possible to find such a Congregation. Experience teaches that the number of brethren who can be nominated for the office of Elder or Deacon is frequently so limited that it is practically impossible to bypass those who are a member of the School Board. One can deplore that fact, a fact it is.

Apparently the younger children in Smithers are listening well to the sermons. The Rev. VanSpronsen places the following Thank You note to the pupils of Grades 1 and 2:

I was very surprised to receive a nice booklet Monday morning full of pictures made by the students of Grades 1 and 2 expressing what they remembered of the sermon dealing with infant baptism! Beautiful! You must have really listened. Keep it up! And I like to thank you very much for this encouragement!

Down to the other Valley.

The *Mission News* informs us about the efforts to obtain permanent visa for the missionaries and their families, efforts which until now have remained fruitless.

Neither Rev. Meijer nor Rev. Boersema have any real news about the granting of permanent visa for themselves and their families. There still seem to be many unknowns about enforcement of the new immigration law and how it will affect them and the work there. Of one thing they and we are certain: our heavenly Father has everything in His hands."

Some general news from the Valley is the "Band Notice: Yes, we are still growing." Good for you!

Langley's Church building is nearing completion if I understand the information well. Before long the services can be held in it. Then there will be only the Church at Chilliwack left that is waiting for the moment when they can use the building they purchased from the Mennonite Brethren. There is not much progress there as yet, according to the latest information that reached me.

Langley's Consistory received "a letter from the Committee of Organists with information concerning the building of a pipe organ together with the church building." That letter was read and discussed. "It is decided to hold this in abeyance." As long as they are working on it, there is hope.

That exhausts the news that has to be mentioned from the Fraser Valley.

Let me, for a change, close far, far away.

If counsellors in our country sometimes think that they have a hard life, what to think about a counsellor in South Africa! The Church at Capetown is vacant, since the Rev. D. Los accepted a call by a Church in The Netherlands and returned to the country of his birth. Now the Rev. Boessenkool is the counsellor of that Church. Let me give you a small sample of what that entails.

One day the Rev. Boessenkool had a flight of two hours to reach Capetown. He arrived about 2:00 p.m., brought a visit in the hospital, solemnized a marriage, brought another visit, and left again at 6:15 for a two-hour flight home. No wonder that the writer in the bulletin states, "Rev. Boessen-

kool, you are allowed to know that we as a congregation are thankful for such a counsellor." Well-deserved, I should say.

Being vacant, the Church at Capetown has many reading services. It is not all that easy to have a minister come over. In the first place there are not many ministers in our sister Churches in South Africa, and in the second place, there they cannot just conduct a service in another Congregation between their own two services or after the conclusion of the afternoon service. The situation is there somewhat what it was with the Churches at Houston and Smithers when there was no minister in the Bulkley Valley: when we had to conduct services there, we had to stay for two Sundays, and in the week between those two Sundays we brought visits, attended Consistory meetings, and did all those things which may be expected of a minister.

Having reading services brings its own difficulties. One of the difficulties is that you don't wish to burden the one elder more than the other. Thus the load of reading a sermon is divided as equally as possible. However: the one brother can read, the other brother doesn't have a "voice" for that

work. He may start off speaking clearly and understandably, but tire soon and in the end become almost inaudible and ununderstandable. No one can take that ill of someone who hasn't been trained to speak for a longer period of time. And: we have to admit that sometimes the same has to be said of ministers.

Anyway, what I wished to mention from Capetown is that "there are complaints that some of those reading sermons cannot be understood too well. The Consistory has decided to rent a P.A. system, to try it out and, if the result is satisfactory, to purchase one."

As you can see: the problems are the same all over the world.

This, dear readers, is then the end of this medley. I hope that you have not become bored while reading it. But then: if you did become bored, you won't even read these lines, so, why should I continue? I wish you a good night's rest, much strength to your work and joy in all your labours which are not vain in the Lord. Isn't that a glorious promise?

vO

## A Corner for the Sick



The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.

Psalm 23:1

*It is with great trust and confidence that David speaks these words. David knew what it was like to be a shepherd. He had tended the sheep for many years and had killed bears and lions, in order to save the sheep (I Samuel 17:36). In his song of praise he compares the Lord with a shepherd. He KNEW that the Lord would take care of him all the days of his life. Even if his path would go through the valley of death; he feared no evil. He knew that the Lord would be near. David knew from experience that a true shepherd never leaves his sheep. He would go out of his way to do the utmost to make them feel secure.*

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*The Lord Jesus is a true example of such a shepherd. "Of His own accord He laid down His life for His sheep" (John 10:18). "That is why they follow Him and listen to what He has to say. He gives them eternal life, and they never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of His hand" (John 10:27, 28).*

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*In verse 5 of Psalm 23 we read that the Lord prepares a table before them. This reminds us of the beautiful, comforting words: "Blessed are those who are*

*invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9).*

Who does fear the Lord sincerely,  
Walking with Him day by day?  
God will lead him safely onward,  
Guide him in the chosen way.  
Then at ease his soul shall rest,  
In the LORD his God confiding,  
E'en his children shall be blest,  
Safely in the land abiding.

Psalm 25:6, Book of Praise

*Please send your requests to:*

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

### What More Can You Ask

God's love endureth forever —  
What wonderful thing to know  
When the tides of life run against you  
And your spirit is downcast and low . . .  
God's kindness is ever around you,  
Always ready to freely impart  
Strength to your faltering spirit,  
Cheer to your lonely heart . . .  
God's presence is ever beside you,  
As near as the reach of your hand,  
You have but to tell Him your troubles,  
There is nothing He won't understand . . .  
And knowing God's love is unending,  
And His mercy unending and great,  
You have but to trust in His promise —  
"God comes not too soon or too late . . ."  
So wait with a heart that is patient  
For the goodness of God to prevail —  
For never do prayers go unanswered,  
And His mercy and love never fail.

*Helen Steiner Rice*  
from: *Someone Cares*



# Books

*The Bride's Treasure, Introduction to the Canons of Dort* by J. Faber, H.J. Meijerink, C. Trimp, and G. Zomer.

The above book is published by the Publication Organization of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia and is a translation of *De Schat van Christus' Bruid*, which book was published originally in 1958.

From Australia a copy was sent to me with the request to announce and discuss it in *Clarion*, and to do so as soon as possible with a view to the resumption of society meetings. I gladly comply with that request, for the Canons of Dort are a confessional form dear to my heart, and every instrument towards a better understanding of that confession is to be welcomed.

It will not be expected of me that I give my opinion about the contents of the original work: that was done many years ago already. All I wish to say something about is the translation.

To start with, I will mention the points in favour of the translation.

In the first place, I am happy that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ has disappeared from the title. Personally, I am opposed to using the Lord's Name in the title of a book. Thus I must commend the Australian brethren for simply putting *The Bride's Treasure* as the title of the book. That is a great improvement.

Secondly, I noticed a serious effort to stay as closely to the Dutch original as possible so as not to introduce any thought alien to the original authors. When one has set oneself such a goal, one does not make it any easier for oneself, and especially not with a view to the specific "post-liberation language" which becomes evi-

## Remarks on "Prophecy Today . . ." — Cont. from page 542.

Calvin's exegesis does not have the final say in the matter. E.g., it is enlightening to see Prof. Holwerda make the proper use of Calvin in his "dictaten." And even B. Holwerda's exegesis is not the decisive instance. Those called to follow him in Kampen and Hamilton have to render account of what it does say in the text by careful, methodical exegesis, time and again, all the days of their lives.

(To be continued)

H.M. OHMANN

dent quite frequently in the terms used and the forming of sentences. Oftentimes we find specific expressions which actually can be fully understood only by those who are well-acquainted with the whole struggle before, during, and after the Liberation of 1944. The translator(s) tried valiantly to render the book into such English as may be considered to follow the Dutch original very faithfully.

That has its drawbacks. I do not claim that I could have done a much better job, but I found the translation very stilted, discovered many Dutchisms, and am of the opinion that the translation was produced with too much help from dictionaries. Frankly, I do not think that the translation as such is good English. I'll try to prove that too.

It will be understood that I did not compare the *whole* work with its original. Spot-checking revealed the general nature of the translation and more than once I came to the conclusion that the translation was sloppy. Further, I do not understand why the original division into paragraphs was not followed. Oftentimes, all of a sudden, without demonstrable reason, the original paragraphs are broken up into three or four separate paragraphs. Thus the unity of a passage sometimes does not appear sufficiently.

In order to prove the correctness of my remarks, here follow a few examples which I jotted down.

"Diepste motieven" should not be translated as "profoundest motives" but as "deepest motives." "Heresy made her first open attack" should have read "its first open attack." On page 39: "its apparent orthodoxy" should have been "its seeming orthodoxy." The words "worden hier ingewijden" should have been translated as "become *the* initiated." Page 40: "Gij laat Uw plan niet varen" is incorrectly translated as "Thy plan does not change." Page 41: "de een in deze wereld" is not the same as "the one person of this world." Page 56: "does confession of her faith" should have read "makes profession of her faith." Page 57: "de Catechismus sluit zich hier aan" is not "the Catechism harks back," but "the Catechism concurs here with" or "joins with." "At most" should be "at *the* most." Page 70: "It makes responsible and liable." Liable

to what? In my opinion that should have read "responsible and accountable." Page 108: "Wie die troost recht wil leren keenen" is not the same as: "But he who will rightly know that comfort." It should have read, "But whoever wishes to learn to know that comfort rightly . . ." Page 111: "God verlost the verkorenen niet *ganselijk*" is not correctly rendered by "God does not deliver the elect from the body of sin." God certainly does, although not "wholly." Page 121: "Vette letters" is not the same as "big letters" but should have read "bold print." And the "titelblad" is not the same as "Flyleaf" (ask my bookbinder). The term is "Title page." Page 122: "en zolang the kerk kerk is . . ." should have been translated "and as long as the Church remains Church . . ." and not, as it now reads, "And while the Church is Church."

I gave in the above passage only a small part of what I wrote down when reading quite a few pages for the sake of comparison.

I certainly know that translating is not everyone's job, and I repeat that I commend the Australian brethren for their effort and initiative. But when such a book is considered for translation, when it is printed, and when the societies are invited to use it for their work, then one may expect that the greatest care is given to the correctness of translation and that such a translation is examined and corrected by experts. I am no expert by far, but I am certain that no expert was consulted. And if he was, he was no expert.

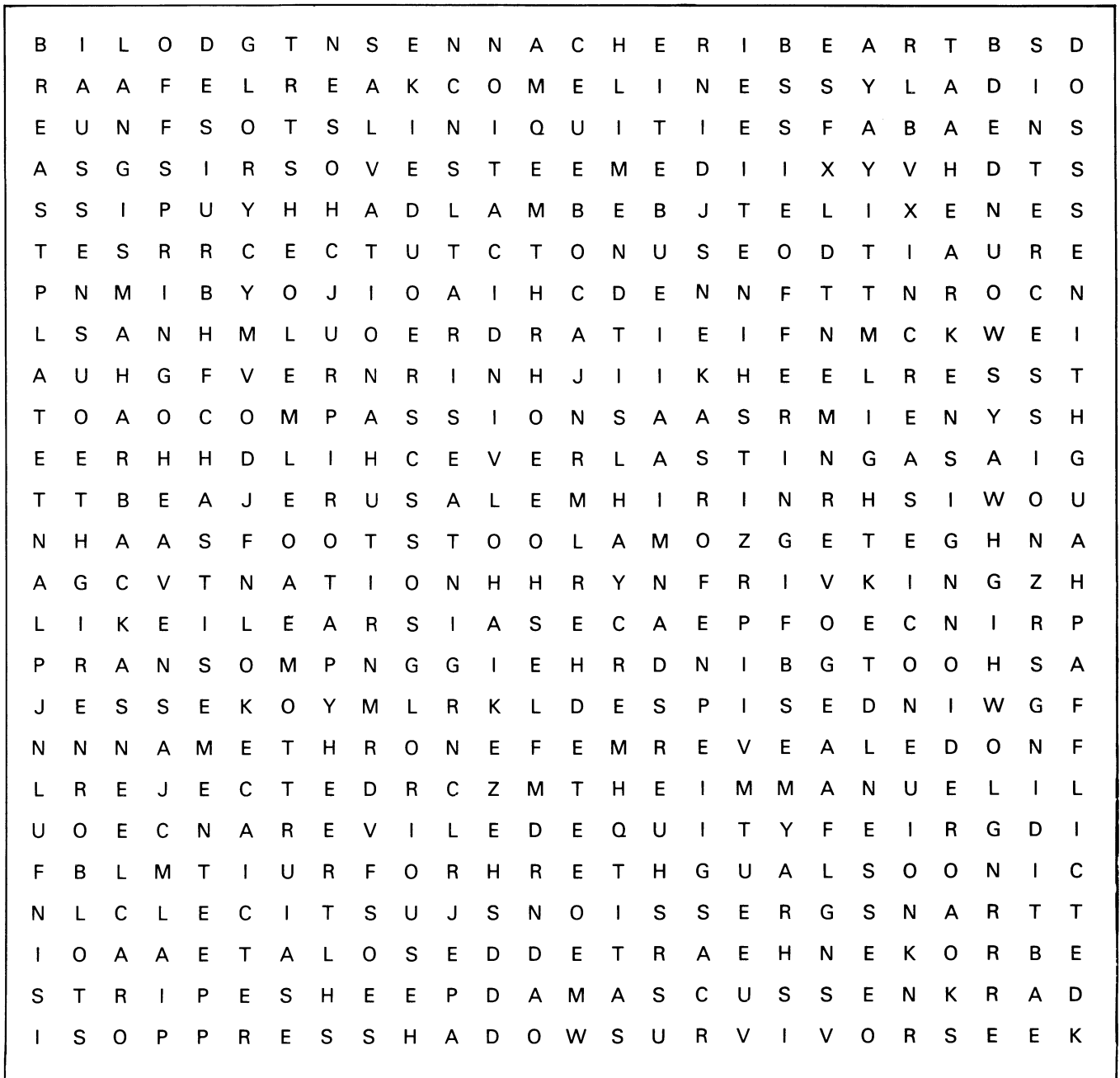
Should our societies use this book? Most certainly, although I myself have always found the chapter on the First Head of Doctrine more a collection of exclamations than an explanation. Let our societies study the Canons and let them use this book. But preferably let someone have the Dutch original with him so that, in cases of doubt, that original can be consulted.

I hope that the present edition will be sold out soon and that, when a second printing is needed, the translation will be revised thoroughly so that we get a precise rendition in correct English. We all can only gain by that.

The address in Canada where you can order this book is Premier Printing, well-known among us. I do not know the price in Canada, but it will be easy for those interested to get that information.

vO

# Word Search Puzzle — ISAIAH



Abraham	bruised	desolate	glorious	intercession	light	ransom	sheep	transgressions
afflicted		despised	glory	Isaiah	low	recompense	Sheol	
Amoz	chastisement	ear	government	Israel	mercy	Redeemer	shine	vindication
arise	child	ensign	grief			rejected	shoot	
Assyria	chosen	equity	haughtiness	Jacob	name	remnant	signal	wounded
	comeliness	esteemed	hearken	Jerusalem	nation	revealed	sinful	
Babylon	comfort	everlasting	heavens	Jesse	offering	righteousness	slaughter	yoke
back	compassion	exalt	heritage	joy	offspring	rod	stripes	
bear	counselor	exile	Hezekiah	Judah	oppress	root	sun	Zion
bind			highway	justice	oracle		survivors	
blots	Damascus	flesh				salvation		
borne	darkness	footstool		king		seek	testify	
breastplate	David	forsaken	Immanuel		plant	Sennacherib	throne	
brokenhearted	deliverance	fruit	increase	lamb	Prince of Peace	shadow	tidings	W. AIKEMA

# our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Are you curious who won our Cartoon Contest?

Today I'll let you know.

First let me thank all the Busy Beavers who sat down with their magic markers, pencil crayons, and pencils to make cartoons for us!

You should have seen all the funny creatures that popped out of Busy Beaver letters!

There were funny animals, monsters, a witch, policemen, and more!

I promise I will let you see different ones. You'll enjoy them, just as I did.

And now that our contest is over don't let that stop you from drawing and sending in your pictures, Busy Beavers. We all like to see them. So keep them coming!

Now let's congratulate our winners: Busy Beaver *Clarinda Meints* (Senior division) and *Les Haan* (Junior division) with an honourable mention going to *Annette Haan!* Congratulations to you all, and keep up the good work!

\*\*\*

Also congratulations to our Busy Beavers who celebrate a December birthday. Here's hoping you all have a really good time with your family and friends. May the Lord bless and keep you all in the year ahead. Trust and obey!

Bryan Jongbloed	Dec. 2	Linda Oostdijk	Dec. 14
Pieter Nyenhuis	5	Denise Van Amerongen	15
Martin VanderWel	5	Elaine Bisschop	16
Yolanda Jongma	6	Jacqueline Kobes	17
Alinda Kuik	6	Margaret Eelhart	18
Glenn Leffers	7	Walter Van Grootheest	19
Bernard VanSpronsen	7	Case Hoff	20
Loretta Dam	8	Clarinda Meints	21
Wilma De Vos	8	Peter de Witt	23
Gordon Van Egmond	8	Jacky Nyenhuis	26
John Bos	10	Betty Ann VanderMeulen	28
Edith Hofsink	10	David Neinhuis	29
Cynthia Oosterveld	10	Mirjam VanderBruggen	29
Sharon Koerselman	11	Miriam Bosma	30
Tania Werkman	11	Louis Dykstra	30
Wendy Endeman	12	Christina Oosterhoff	31
Jasper Harlaar	12		

\*\*\*

Busy Beaver *Margo Hofsink* has a poem with a riddle for you!

*Can You Guess?*

I lived first in a little house

And lived there very well.

I thought the world was small and round

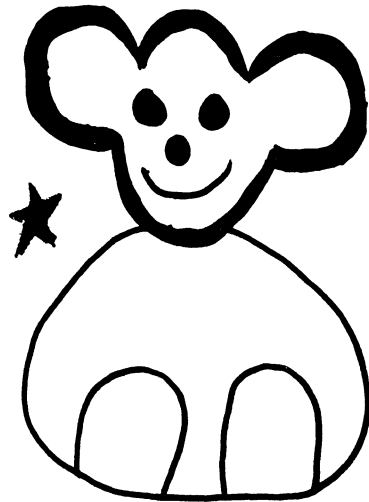
And made of pale blue shell.

I lived next in a little nest

Nor needed any other

I thought the world was made of straw

And brooded by my mother!



Cartoon by Busy Beaver  
*Clarinda Meints*



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Sheryl Boes*. We are happy to have you join us. And we hope you'll enjoy being a Busy Beaver and joining in all our Busy Beaver activities! I see you're a good puzzler already. Keep up the good work!

And a big welcome to you, too, *Gordon Van Egmond*. Thanks for your well-illustrated letter! Will you write and tell us a little more about yourself, Gordon? And maybe you'll include a picture or two?

Thanks for the big fat letter, *Jane Meints*. I see you've been very busy! Good for you. Did you enjoy your holiday, Jane? What did you do? Is your cousin Michael all better and home again?

Hello, *Cynthia Oosterveld*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thanks for your entry in our Contest. Bye for now. Write again soon!

\*\*\*

### QUIZ TIME

### MATCH ME

Each of the persons named in List A has a brother in List B. Can you pair them off correctly?

#### LIST A

1. Joseph
2. Moses
3. Cain
4. Jacob
5. Hophni
6. Peter
7. David
8. James
9. Mahlon
10. Shem
11. Alexander
12. Herod

#### LIST B

- a. Aaron
- b. Abel
- c. Andrew
- d. Benjamin
- e. Chilion
- f. Eliab
- g. Esau
- h. Japheth
- i. John
- j. Philip
- k. Phinehas
- l. Rufus