

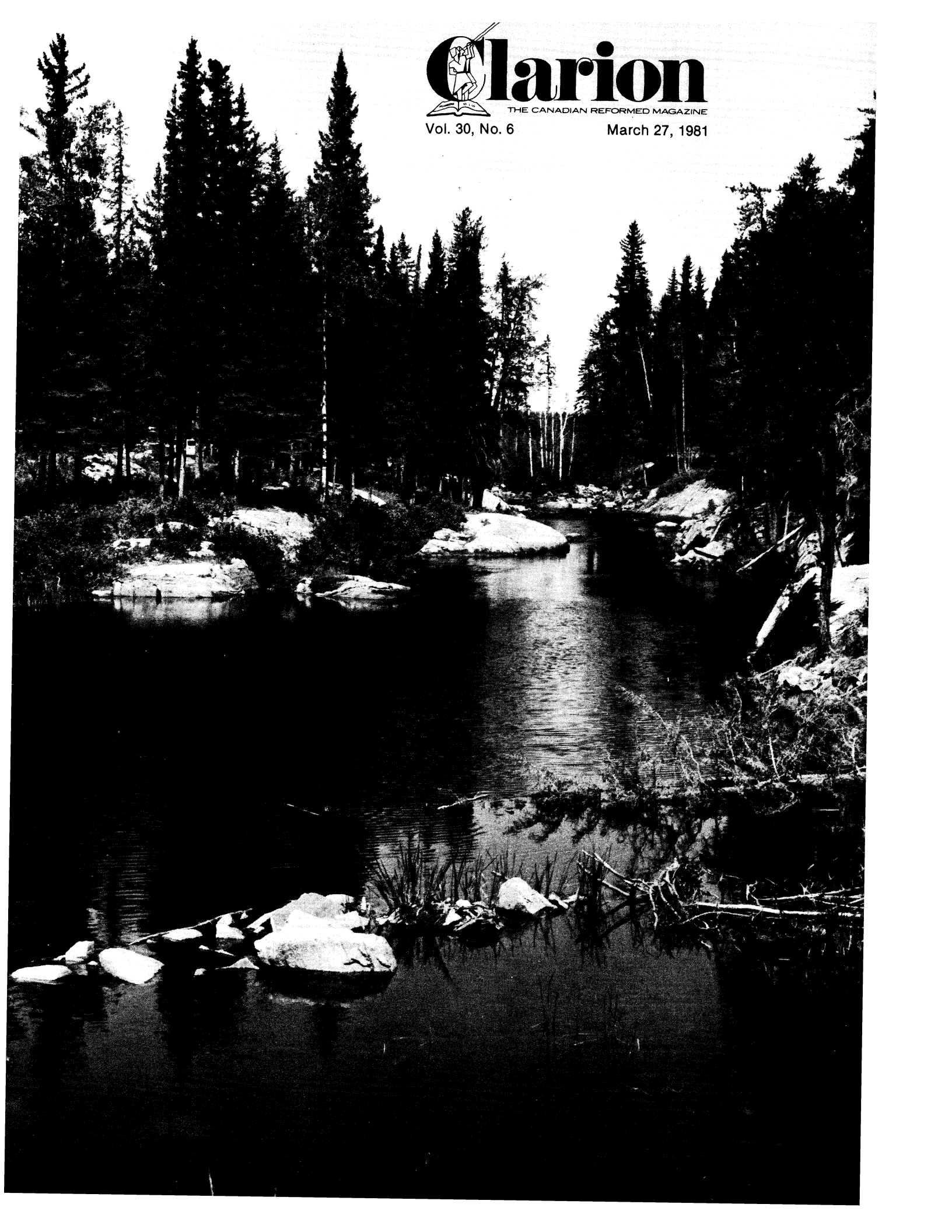


Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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Smithville Revisited

Our previous issue showed that the discussion of the decisions taken by the General Synod Smithville 1980 of the Canadian Reformed Churches has begun. In a frank manner the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene criticized the fact that he as secretary of the Committee on Church Book had never received the request from Synod that the committee meet with the Advisory Committee of Synod to explain why certain hymns were deleted, certain tunes dropped, and others were inserted. He chose his words carefully and assured his readers that there was not a trace of personal insult or wounded pride in what he said. I believe him wholeheartedly and can simply add that similar criticism is heard among the members of the Committee on Translation Heidelberg Catechism, the Committee on Translation and Revision Confessional and Liturgical Forms, the Committee on Bible Translations, and the Faculty of the Theological College, to mention only a few.

But before I shock my readers with more criticism on the latest synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, I would like to express my thankfulness for the work that has been done by the delegates from East and West and mid Canada during those strenuous weeks from November 4 till December 5, 1980. One must have been a member of a General Synod himself to realize what amount of energy and time is spent, what psychic power in moments of tension is required, and how heavy the weight can be when far-reaching decisions have to be taken in responsibility to God and His Church. We may also think of personal sacrifices and of the difficulties for the wives and the families of the delegates, who for more than one month were completely absorbed by reports and their observations, considerations and recommendations.

Synod Smithville 1980 will certainly be remembered as the synod that appointed the Rev. C. Van Dam, M.Th., professor of Old Testament, and the Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene, M.Th., lecturer in ecclesiology. The decisions that do not require much discussion and that seem to be routine matters are often of lasting significance for the life of the Churches.

When this has been said and the work done by the brothers who were delegated to Synod Smithville has been duly and sincerely acknowledged, we must, nevertheless, observe that some results of their strenuous labour and zeal give evidence of a certain powerlessness. I think of the fact that in the case of an appeal against a decision of the Regional Synod in Western Canada several motions were defeated, also the amended proposal of the advisory committee, and finally a motion was adopted that does not give any consideration (see Press Release, *Clarion*, Jan. 16, 1981). Could one of the causes of a certain powerlessness be that we have a structural problem in our general synods and that our Churches do not use their manpower and monies wisely?

We now come back to the complaint of the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene with respect to the Committee Church Book and we broaden the scope to encompass some other committees. In the past, committees of the Canadian Reformed Churches were almost never invited to attend the discussion of their reports in a general synod.

The Canadian Reformed Churches also never followed the custom in the Dutch sister-Churches to invite the professors of the Theological College as advisers. The reason why committees were almost never invited can easily be explained. In the first decades since 1954, almost all ministers who were delegated to general synod were members of committees. There was a direct personal union between synods and committees. Undoubtedly, the thriftiness of immigrants will have played a role too. Our synods are held alternately either in Ontario or in the more Western regions of Canada. Who can blame our immigrant Churches that they did not invite any committee member to attend part of their general synods? As far as the professors are concerned, the Canadian Reformed Churches are rightly afraid that theological experts will lord it over the Churches and, therefore, there has never been a proposal to elevate the professors to the position of regular advisers of a general synod. Let me immediately repeat that I firmly believe that the Churches should maintain this policy. The only exception is that the Faculty should be invited to advise in matters that directly concern the training for the ministry. I still think that it was wrong that Synod Coaldale 1977 dealt with proposals to change the admission requirements of the Theological College about which the Faculty had not even been informed. I also regard it an omission that the latest General Synod 1980 did not invite the Faculty to be present during the reception of the newly-appointed Professor of Old Testament. Hamilton is close to Smithville; no costs were involved, and it would have simply been a matter of style among brothers. Two members of the Faculty — the principal and the departing professor — redressed the situation somewhat. They made use of their personal rights as members of a Canadian Reformed Church to attend this public session. They even addressed Synod and the Rev. C. VanDam on this joyful occasion. Nevertheless, Synod itself should have officially invited the Faculty to be represented at these historic moments of appointment and reception.

There were other issues that are of importance for the future of our Theological College: should we seek a fourth full-time professor and, if so, in which disciplines? And should we maintain the possibility for persons above the age of 30 years who lack a B.A. degree to submit to an admission exam? Synod Smithville accepted a proposal to abandon this possibility and this time it was a proposal that had been endorsed by the Board of Governors and the Faculty. Nevertheless, it would have been in style if the Faculty had received the privilege of the floor during the discussions. Almost all governors were members of Synod anyway, but the Faculty was not represented.

The Churches could have saved years if the Committee for Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism had been heard during Synod Toronto 1974. Now a member of the Advisory Committee of Synod Smithville 1980 personally and privately made contact by telephone in order to verify with one of the deputies whether a certain proposal would be appropriate to ensure that the work can be reorganized and finished. But such important matters

should not be left up to haphazard personal initiatives. Moreover, personal advice is uncontrolled; the Churches should prefer public statements of deputies who have received the privilege of the floor during the debate in a general synod. We should make it a standing rule for our general synods that, if a committee is not represented at all among the delegates to a synod, at least one member of such committee will be invited to attend the discussions of the report. Such rule would prevent disappointment and frustration and in the long run even save the Churches some money.

Our readers know that I am interested in the discussions with respect to the reports of the Committee on Translation and Revision of the Confessional and Liturgical Forms. This Committee had expressed its willingness "to give further information on its submission through one or two of its members on the floor of Synod." It is completely clear that this Committee could not put in writing all discussions and arguments around the thousands of interesting details in the translation of creeds and confessions, nor could it have mentioned all considerations concerning the revision of our liturgical forms and prayers.

As far as the creeds and confessions are concerned the work was not yet finished. A newly translated text of the Apostles' Creed, of Articles 1-23 of the Belgic Confession, and of Chapters 1-5 of the Canons of Dordt had been sent to the Churches. Several Churches had reacted and the committee had weighed their proposals and suggestions. At the last moment some Churches sent some remarks directly to the Synod of Smithville; e.g., two Churches proposed some changes in the newly translated text of Articles 1-23 of the Belgic Confession. Instead of simply referring these remarks and proposals to the Committee to be appointed in order to finish the work, the Advisory Committee of Synod and Synod Smithville itself discussed these remarks and proposals and decided to pass on certain suggested emendations. In my opinion, this was a wrong procedure. The very Churches that were too late for the Committee now received special Synodical treatment that must have taken many hours of discussion. Their remarks found their way into several pages of the Acts and the result is that the Committee after Synod has to redo the work, often wondering about the strange opinions that are voiced in the considerations of Synod. Let us see what happened and let us begin with the newly translated text of the *Apostles' Creed*.

The Committee had written in its last report of October 30, 1980:

The Committee draws your attention to the fact that it reconsidered the text of the Apostles' Creed in light of the remarks made by the Churches and of the recently received work result of the International Consultation on the English Text of the Apostles' Creed. If the submitted text meets with your initial approval it will be proper to inform the sister-Churches abroad. This is especially important for the clause: "He descended into the realm of death." The same holds for the slight emendation in the text of the Belgic Confession, Art. 1, 4, 10, 15.

To me it is clear that the Committee did not want an immediate decision about the important text of the Apostles' Creed. It wanted to use the coming three years for reconsideration — also in the light of the recently published International English text of this ecumenical creed — and for consultation with our sister-Churches abroad. Now that, e.g., the International Consultation

uses the clause, "He descended to the *dead*," and in our Dutch sister-Churches a discussion is taking place about the question whether the descent into *hell* should not have another place in the Apostles' Creed, should our Canadian Reformed Churches not have waited before accepting a new translation? Now the Synod, *without consulting the Committee*, did not initially approve "realm of death" for discussion with the sister-Churches. On the other hand, it also made other changes in the proposed translation — "*the Catholic church*" again became "*a holy catholic church*," alas — and accepted this hastily-changed new translation for use in the worship services of the Canadian Reformed Churches (see next page). The translation is quite conservative; the familiar word "hell" is maintained and, therefore, the new text will not be too controversial. Nevertheless, I deplore the decision now already to accept a specific version. We could have approved a text initially; in the meantime we could continue to observe the international development and consult and possibly even influence our sister-Churches abroad. The action of Synod Smithville 1980 with respect to the Apostles' Creed seems to me premature and restrictive.

As far as I can discover from the Acts, Synod Smithville did not make any statement about the emendations in Articles 1, 10 and 15 of the *Belgic Confession* and did not charge the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to draw the attention of our sister-Churches to these proposed emendations. As our readers possibly remember, the Committee proposed not to mention the letter to the Hebrews among the letters of the apostle Paul (Art. 4), to replace some texts in Art. 10 by other and better Scripture proofs for the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to return to the text of 1561 in one passage of Art. 15 that speaks about the relation of original sin and baptism. These are slight emendations, but, nevertheless, not unimportant. In the opinion of the Committee they cannot be realized without consultation with our sister-Churches. I know that in our rules for correspondence we only promised "to *inform* each other concerning changes of/or additions to the Confession, Church Order and Liturgical Forms, while the corresponding Churches pledge to express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable." Nevertheless, when the confession is at stake, our Committee wanted to have the sister-Churches abroad involved as soon as possible — and rightly so — and again it wanted to use the coming three years for this consultation. I now fear that even a finished new translation of the Belgic Confession with these material emendations cannot be definitely adopted by the Synod of Cloverdale 1983 and that we have to postpone such acceptance at least till 1986. Would this oversight have happened if a member of the Committee had been invited to Synod Smithville 1980 and had given "further information on its submission . . . on the floor of Synod"?

Similar remarks could be made with respect to the *Liturgical Forms*. A Committee is now charged to have the adopted and linguistically corrected Liturgical Forms published either separately or with the adopted Psalm and Hymn sections of the *Book of Praise* as soon as possible in 1981 for provisional use in the Churches. The Churches will soon use the new liturgical forms. It is, therefore, important and interesting to see what Synod — without consulting its Committee — decided to change in these forms. But let me leave this for a following issue, *Deo Volente*.

J. FABER

Once More: Church and Communion of Saints

A Reply to Rev. D. de Jong

With great interest I read the reply of Rev. D. de Jong (*Clarion*, Vol. 30, No. 2) to my articles re "The Confession concerning the Church." With him I express the wish (found in the *Calgary Tower*) that "a Christian discussion, based on serious study of Scripture and Confessions" may follow for the benefit of all.

A good, Christian discussion may be polemic without becoming personalistic. I do not mind Rev. D. de Jong's protest against my alleged "misquoting" from his sermons, for misquoting in itself is possible, but I do object to the inference that such "misquoting" was intentional and deliberate. I am not conducting a witch-hunt; I attempted to weigh Rev.

de Jong's stated views honestly and carefully. Rev. de Jong may feel that I was quite unscholarly in my treatise of the material and that I exhibited a great lack of knowledge of Scripture, Confession, and Schilder (in that order), but it could also be that the manner in which he expressed *his* views merits the same qualifications. From the Press Release of Synod Smithville I gleaned that there was reason to consider the views as expressed in these sermons "contradictory and confusing," and I am still confused even after studying Rev. de Jong's reply. Hopefully, in time everything will become clear to everybody.

I need not respond to all the things Rev. de Jong wrote in his reply.

Highly interested readers can obtain the said sermons, read the pertinent passages of the late Dr. Schilder, and judge for themselves. Let me point to a number of things.

QUITE A MESS?

I maintain that when K. Schilder, referring to the Church, wrote the words "quite a mess" (he was quoting someone else, even), he was not speaking at all about the "unfinished state" of the Church, but to the unwillingness of people to exercise and experience the true communion of the Church. He was writing specifically about the "wil tot gemeenschap," the desire for communion. This desire or will is so often lacking, and if the Church "depended" on *our* feelings and experiences, nothing would come of it. We make a "mess" out of things, but God's gathering of the Church (though not yet finished) is not "messy" at all! Is it not true also here that our God is not a God of confusion . . . ?

Now Rev. de Jong claims that I "maltreated" his words by connecting the words "unfinished" and "under construction" with the epithet "mess." I based my statement not merely on the quote from Schilder given on page 11 of de Jong's sermons, but also on what can be found on page 7 of those sermons, "For we confess that the Son of God *gathers, defends and preserves* a Church, *from the beginning to the end of the world*. Here we clearly confess that the church is still under construction, and is not finished yet: three verbs are used in the present tense. When you are on a construction site, e.g., where an apartment building is constructed, you will quite often notice that it is *quite a mess* there." Was it so wrong of me to conclude from these words that since the Church is still under construction it is *therefore* "quite a mess" according to my colleague? The readers may judge for themselves; if I maltreated Rev. D. de Jong's words, I apologize.

THE INTERPRETATION OF ARTICLE 28 B.C.

I am not convinced of the correctness of Rev. D. de Jong's interpretation of Art. 28 of the Belgic Confession. Rev. de Jong wants us to believe that Art. 28 speaks of people who *are* already members of the true Church and "as members" they must do the things mentioned in Art. 28, e.g., serve to the edification of the brethren, etc. The question arises, "How

Text of the Apostles' Creed Adopted by General Synod Smithville 1980

- I. I believe in God the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
- II. I believe in Jesus Christ,
His only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
He descended into hell.
On the third day He arose from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.
- III. I believe in the Holy Spirit;
I believe a holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

can someone be called to *join himself* to the true Church if he already *is* a member of that Church?" I read the article as it stands: we are called (a) to join and unite ourselves with the true Church and then (b) "as *mutual* members of the same body" (now having joined and united ourselves with it) to do all the things further specified. We are also not allowed "to separate" ourselves from this true Church. If we do not join this Church or separate ourselves from it, can we then be called *members*? I get the impression that my colleague sees it this way: whether we have joined or not, we are and remain members of the Church, though he will maintain that everyone must join. Perhaps we could say that all believers "belong to" the Church (in the sense of "behoren tot," i.e., are under the *obligation* to join), but can we call them "cooperative and constructive members of the Church" until they have actually joined?

A point in question was whether we should speak of "communion of saints" with those who do not join us in true worship in the unity of the true faith. Rev. D. de Jong did not appreciate my quotation from the late Rev. G. Visee, for the said minister "was not the only authoritative teacher in 1949." That is true; let me therefore quote from Rev. D. de Jong's own translation of K. Schilder (whom Rev. de Jong must consider an authority since his sermons are nothing but quotations from Schilder): "The communion of saints is a property of the Church, is characteristic for the Church. When you join the true Church, it can rightly be said that *in doing so* [emphasis mine, Cl.S.] you exercise the communion of saints. To practice the communion of the Church is in itself to practice the communion of saints" (K. Schilder, *De Kerk*, II, p. 381; sermons, p. 19). Would it, conversely, not be so (according to our authority, K. Schilder) that when we refuse to join the true Church, we *break* (i.e., do not exercise or practice) the communion of saints?

Rev. de Jong could have quoted even more. On page 382 we read, "Christ from His side gathers the Church, declares with authority that . . . outside of her there is no salvation, and, *because this is so*, everyone is bound to join himself to the true Church, maintaining her communion."

What is meant by "the true Church"? Is that not explained further in Article 29? Perhaps the

issue is not so much the "communion of saints," but an underlying matter: What do we understand by the *true Church*? In his sermons (pp. 9 and 10) Rev. de Jong says: not an invisible Church. I agree wholeheartedly. But *where* is, then (e.g., in Calgary), that *true Church*, that true Church "where all things are managed according to the pure Word of God" (Art. 29), and to which all men "are bound to join themselves" (Art. 28)? Where is that Church which is the "communion of saints"? If Rev. de Jong clarified this, perhaps my confusion would be removed.

I repeat my question, "Is a believer by that very fact a member of the *true Church*?" As far as I can understand it (but perhaps I'm somewhat simplistic) a believer must *join himself* to the true Church and *thus as a member* exercise the communion of saints.

SCHILDER MISQUOTED?

Did I misquote K. Schilder when I suggested that he wrote "it is possible that someone believes but (yet) is not a member of His true Church"? Let me explain how I came to this statement.

Schilder was writing about the fact that God continually "gathers" or "brings together" believers. That work is not completed today. Therefore we can say, Schilder writes, "that this continuous work of gathering — which takes place throughout all the centuries until the end of history — brings together *all* believers." That is (as I understand Schilder): the end-result will be that *all* believers are *together*, under one roof. Then Schilder adds, "Do not bring in the objection that there are still many who for a time abstain from all Church-gatherings here on earth, or who are straying away, or who spend themselves in all kinds of sects, or even are still in the grip of the false Church. Does God not bring them home when they die?" (*De Kerk*, III, p. 249). He adds further, "The deathbeds of God's children, also of the 'bad' ('stoute') children [i.e., the ones who do not act according to God's command to join themselves to the true Church, Cl.S.], are infallible divine acts of Church-gathering; in one moment everything then turns out well, also the actual living under the church-roof" ("het *gaan* wonen onder het kerkdak").

So, God will and does gather all who must be saved, and one day this bringing-together will be completed. *That's the one side*. The believers are

all being gathered in the unity of the true faith, and, because of the certainty and infallibility of this gathering work of God, we can say this unity is a *fact*. Schilder refers to Art. 27 in this respect. But now *the other side of the coin*. This gathering work of God is unoverseeable for us. We are bound to the revealed *norms*, and we must obey them, letting ourselves be gathered, joining ourselves to the *true Church*. We may not comfort ourselves merely with the *given* unity contained in Christ's infallible work of gathering, but must diligently obey Christ's command to be one, "in the village, in the city where we have been put by God." If we do not *stress* this aspect, according to Schilder, then we inadvertently still come to speaking about an invisible Church.

This concrete joining the *true*



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Church, locally where I live, is demanded in Art. 28. This act of joining is indeed exercising and practising the communion of saints, living under one "church-roof," listening to the one preaching, partaking of the same sacraments, and submitting to the same discipline.

So I conclude that as believers we can be members of Christ (taken up in His divine gathering-work) but not be members of His *true* Church where He gathers it locally in the unity of faith. I stressed (as did K. Schilder) the *normative* aspect. The Church of Art. 27 (holy and catholic) is being gathered *locally* by Christ ("wheresoever God has established it," Art. 28) in the unity of true faith, according to His norms. There is the communion of saints, for there the members are "constructive and cooperative." My formulations may not have been as clear as they should have, but did I really not understand K. Schilder?

Perhaps I may also put it a bit differently. Are those who are taken up in Christ's gathering-work (*congregatio*) already members of the assembly (*coetus*) of which Art. 28 speaks? And does Art. 28, then, not speak of the *obligation* to submit to the gathering-work of Christ (*congregatio*) by joining the true assembly (*coetus*)? And is the maintaining (Schilder: "conserveren") of the "communion of saints" not a matter of joining this assembly of *coetus*? In Art. 29 we read that "the body and *communion* of the *true* Church must be distinguished from all sects that call themselves the Church." Does this have any bearing on our subject?

I think that I understood Schilder quite well when I concluded what I did. Every "believer" is not a member of the *true* Church in the sense of our confession. Although one may be taken up in the *congregatio* (Art. 27) and in that sense the unity is a *fact*, such believers, by not being members of the *true* Church where God has established it in their own place, do not exercise the communion of saints. We do not all live under the same "roof," and that is precisely the

calling which comes to us in Art. 28 of the Belgic Confession.

WHAT ABOUT THE SCHOOLS?

I readily admit that in his quoted *sermons* Rev. D. de Jong did not mention cooperation in schools and other organizations. I did not quite say that either. I tried to point out that in this line of reasoning lies the *basis* for such cooperation.

Whoever is no "stranger in Jerusalem" *knows* quite well that especially the matter of Reformed education was (and is) a definitely related issue here. Rev. de Jong will agree: sermons are (to be) dated, not timeless. His sermons were published in April 1972. The matter of the Church, the communion of saints, and the *school* was elaborately discussed by Rev. D. de Jong in the *Edmonton City Guide* from August-December 1970.

There we read Rev. D. de Jong's remarks that: "Is it true that the Church (Canadian Reformed Church) *is* the communion of saints? Where does the confession say this? Where do we find this in the Bible? From Lord's Day 21 it is very clear that the equation of Church and communion of saints is wrong. The Church and the communion of saints is not the same, but the communion of saints follows from the Church-gathering activity of the Son of God" (*Guide*, Sept. 12, 1970).

What is the purpose of these remarks of Rev. de Jong? The conclusion must follow from this that because there are believers outside the Canadian Reformed Churches and there *is* communion with them (we *are* all members of the true Church, aren't we?) we can (must?) work together in the *school*, despite all obstacles, etc. What *else* was the entire discussion about in those articles, which were a reaction to what was written by a member of the Canadian Reformed School Society of Edmonton? And are not the same *principles* at stake in the sermons of 1972?

In 1972 Rev. de Jong writes (as he did in Dec. 1970) that the Church and the communion of saints are "closely connected" (sermons, p. 18), and he then proceeds to give the quote from Schilder that *joining* the true Church is exercising the communion of saints. I wonder, does Schilder not say *more* than de Jong? At the end of his second sermon, however, we read that we should not *deny* the communion of saints with the other believers who do not go with us, but should *practice* the com-



Professor Dr. K. Schilder.

munion of saints with them by employing our gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and salvation of the other members (sermons, pp. 30, 31). In the *City Guide* of December 12, 1970, we read, "How about the communion of saints, when we propagate a Canadian Reformed School and condemn the cooperation with the existing Christian Schools, but we give handouts instead of offerings?"

It should be evident to the readers that, although Rev. D. de Jong in his quoted sermons did not mention the schools *expressis verbis*, the underlying matter is unmistakably there. I did not need "to bring in things" in order to fortify any position; these things are realities.

Even today in 1981 the matter of the *schools* still occupies Rev. D. de Jong's mind. In the *Calgary Tower* of July 1980 he wrote an article entitled "Contradictions" and deduces (again from Schilder!) that to demand that all children be sent to our "own" school is *sectarian*. Rev. de Jong does not divulge his exact source here. In an article to which he does refer (*Om Woord en Kerk*, II, p. 229), we find that Schilder also writes the following, "But to us, God says, do what I *command* you. Go out, go out of Babel, says the Bible, and build your *own* house on its *own* foundation. But if we stay in the line of this [above-mentioned] argumentation [namely, stay in a school which is deformed, C.I.S.], then we can find any house good, if one can read to us a program of principles. Of the idea of the leaven, which permeates everything — also the school — nothing is

OUR COVER

Manitoba Scenery. (Photo Courtesy Manitoba Government, Department of Industry and Commerce.)

left then." Our own house with its own foundation, also pertaining to the school; I add these words so that Schilder will not be "misquoted" either. We should also remember that Schilder wrote these words in 1923, long before the Liberation. The same Schilder also felt *after* the Liberation that the schism in the Church would have consequences for cooperation in the *schools*, for in 1947 he wrote, "We will come to stand before the question how confessional faithfulness can be combined with all kinds of political and social symbiosis [= living together]" (Year Review, 1947). We stand before this question also *today*.

But Rev. de Jong says that it would be *sectarian* to demand that all Canadian Reformed children go to a Canadian Reformed School. Apparently, K. Schilder already said so in 1923! *Calvinist Contact* was so keen as to pick this up, but also neglected to do full justice to Rev. de Jong, for he had added in a second footnote, "In order to avoid misunderstanding, let me add that my writing this article does not mean that I would be against the opening of Canadian Reformed Schools when and where there is good reason for it." Perhaps my colleague will send a flaming protest also to *Calvinist Contact* (if he has not already done so), seeing that an important element has been "overlooked" and that, subsequently, he has been "misquoted."

And I would ask, "*When* and *where* is there good reason for the opening of Canadian Reformed Schools?" If we could define this accurately, perhaps another problem would be solved, and we could even *close* some of our existing (and struggling) Canadian Reformed Schools. Why keep them if there is no good reason? In Smithville, recently, a Christian high school was opened; should we here in Smithville now stop sending our teenagers to far-away Guido de Brès High School in Hamilton?

I CORINTHIANS

Did I read I Corinthians 1:2 in connection with I Corinthians 12:21? Rev. D. de Jong seems to think I didn't. Ursinus did, apparently, and his authority is much greater than, let's say, G. Visee's.

In I Corinthians 12:21, I maintained in my articles, the apostle Paul speaks of the communion of saints in the *local* Church at Corinth; see also verse 27, "Now you are the body of

Christ, and members in particular." This is one of the texts referred to in Lord's Day 21, Q. 55. But what about I Corinthians 1:2, where Paul writes, "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, *with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours*" (emphasis mine, Cl.S.). From this text it must be quite clear that the "communion of saints" cannot be restricted to the "local Church" but must include all believers *everywhere*. How could I have overlooked this, for this text is a clear warning against all exclusivism and sectarianism!

I have always taken these words simply to mean: there is a Church at Corinth (Paul is writing to them specifically), but they share their heritage of faith with others. There are also saints in other *places*, who "call upon the Name of the Lord," i.e., who also assemble together as Church in holy worship. There is the Church at Corinth, but there are also sister-Churches. There is even a federation of Churches, all united in Christ, who walks in their midst (Revelation 1:12 ff.). Is this not set against the background of the Corinthians' tendency to boast of the gifts they have received? Among the "saints" the Corinthians do not occupy any special place, for what goes for others, goes for them as well (I Corinthians 11:16; I Corinthians 14:33). By "saints" Paul here first denotes the Church at Corinth, but he does not exclude the other saints elsewhere who with the Corinthians are united in the one true faith. Perhaps this exegesis is too simple for more advanced scholars, but I cannot, at this time, make it any more complicated.

IN SUMMARY

Let me summarize all the above as follows. I believe that the term "the communion of saints" should be reserved for "the body and the communion of the true Church" (Art. 29) which church is evident by adhering to the given *norms*. Thereby I do not wish to say that "others" (who have not joined this true Church) are not taken up in Christ's gathering-work, as believers, but I do say that they do not exercise the communion of saints until they join themselves to this Church, "whosoever God has established it" (Art. 28). They are certainly not "constructive and cooperative" with Christ in this respect. I am also convinced that if we are not really united in worship, there is no

lasting basis for cooperation in such an important venture as the education of our children. We do not *begin* to practice the communion of saints in the *school*, but in the *Church*. The Christian School is a result of the communion of saints, and not a step towards (hopefully) higher levels of communion. And this is not merely a hassle over words.

This is my sincere and simple opinion, and I repeat it at the risk of being called simplistic, sectarian, and ignorant. Rev. D. de Jong's indignation is surpassed by my sadness that after all these years we are still not one in the struggle for Reformed education, our own school with its own basis; the struggle to keep the three-fold cord intact: the Church, the home, and the school.

Rev. D. de Jong's last words were intended as a comfort: there will always be a Church, composed of believers. As if that, too, is not my comfort! God's purpose will be accomplished, no doubt. The question remains whether *we* will be faithful in the execution of *our* task.

I now gladly leave this discussion to others in the knowledge that I have not been as clear as I would have liked to be and have not answered all the questions. Perhaps others can be of greater help.

CL. STAM

Church News

CALLED by Surrey, B.C.:

REV. J. VISSCHER

of Cloverdale, B.C.

* * *

**40th Anniversary
Prof. L. Selles**

On Monday, April 20, 1981, the Lord willing, Prof. L. Selles will celebrate his 40th Anniversary in the ministry of the gospel. The Theological College offers to consistories and members of the Canadian Reformed Churches the opportunity to meet Prof. and Mrs. Selles at an "Open House" reception to be held in the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church, 353 Stone Church Road E., Hamilton, Ontario, on Monday, April 20, 1981, between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m.

press review

What follows here is an article that appeared in *Verdict* of August 1980. I asked and received permission from Verdict Publications to take it over in *Clarion*. We are thankful for this permission.

This article, this "Table Talk," gives us the insight that, in principle, there is not much difference between the days of Luther and our days. Our days are days of change and turmoil. So were the days of Luther. We are confronted with lots of sects and sectarian, wild ideas. And so were they in the days of Luther.

Besides, an article like this gives us a picture of the man Luther. "Table Talks" means exactly what the words say: talks at the table. When Luther and his companions had their meals, they also held conversations. And what we have here is one of those conversations. And I can only say: enjoy your "meal." Here it is:

J. GEERTSEMA

"Table Talk No. 4"

"Recorded" by Åge Rendalen

Caspar Heydrich often had supper with us in the fall of 1543. He liked to take every opportunity he had to inquire about theological problems. "Dr. Luther," he would say between mouthfuls, "what does Scripture really say about this or that problem?" This particular evening he broached the subject of the 1290 days in the book of Daniel.

"I haven't got the faintest idea," the Doctor answered. "And besides, it would be much more profitable to spend our time understanding the basic truths of the New Testament rather than rushing into mysteries that have not been opened to us."

"Certainly, Doctor, certainly. I fully agree. The only reason I brought it up was a conversation I had yesterday with a follower of Conradus Weiss. They seem to make a lot of this prophecy."

"Conradus Weiss!" Luther turned red with rage and nearly choked on a piece of bread. "Heaven have mercy on Germany. We swim in prophets and visionaries, the one worse than the other. I wish that I had met your dreamer friend. I would have leveled him to the ground with a good dose of Wittenberg exegesis. Conradus Weiss! How can they believe the man?"

"That is what I said to him, too; but then he began thumbing through the Bible in such a way that I was rather lost, and I had real trouble proving him wrong. I was embarrassed, so I took the liberty to invite him over to meet with you, Doctor, Tuesday of next week at our regular supper-time get-together." Here Caspar looked sheepishly at Luther.

"You did what!" Dr. Luther roared. "The Bible says you should not fellowship with people that teach heresy. You should not even ask them or allow them to cross your doorstep, and here you . . ." He caught his word when he saw Caspar turn rather green. "Well, I suppose we can let him come this one time, Caspar, but never again. Don't ever do that again. A spokesman for Conradus Weiss in Dr. Luther's house! Don't you see how they can use this to put out all kinds of tales about us? Soon the people of Germany will hear that Dr. Luther was run over by a Weiss preacher, totally incapable of answering him — that is, unless we can knock him off his feet with the gospel so that he will not be tempted to gloat over our ignorance of the 1290 days."

For the rest of the evening Caspar was filled with gloom. Luther tried to cheer him up, but without result.

Next Tuesday the Doctor's house was buzzing with talk in anticipation of the Weiss preacher. "Racketeers, spiritual bootleggers," Luther called them. "Trying to pawn off the secretions of their stinking stills as the pure wine of God's salvation! People ought to know better, but they soak up the stuff like August pumpkins. And soon they are bursting to spill their seedy pulp over the first fool they meet. How long, O Lord, how long?"

When the Weiss preacher had not come by supper-time, Luther told us to go ahead and eat. He had already made up his mind that the Weiss preacher was not to eat with us anyway. Halfway through the meal he arrived. Caspar ran to the door to usher the preacher in.

"This way, Mister. We are all waiting for you here, just dying to tell you about God's free grace. You do realize, don't you, that even man's best efforts . . ."

"Cut it out, Caspar," Luther boomed from the head of the table. "Stranger, tell us who you are. There is a chair for you over by the fireplace."

The preacher looked different than we had expected. He was tall and stately,

and moved with a spirit of certainty that bordered on cockiness. "My name is Daniel Weissager, professor of theology at Weiss Seminary in Engstadt, Bavaria." He sat down with a slight bow.

"I understand," Luther began, "that Brother Heydrich invited you to meet with me so that I might straighten you out. Well, I can't promise you that I shall be able to do that. As you know, Mr. Weissager . . ."

"Uh, Dr. Weissager."

"What was that?"

"I said, Dr. Weissager."

"Well, as I was saying, Mr. Weissager," Luther continued. "I can't do miracles. Against foolishness even the gods fight in vain."

"Quite true, Doctor. Quite true." The shadow of a smile haunted Weissager's face for a second.

"What did you mean by that remark?"

"I only concurred with your judgment of the situation, Doctor."

"Well, Mister, I have always said that you don't argue with a madman. You just throw the devil out of him."

"Quite right, Sir. On that score we agree."

Luther had decidedly set his mind against the man. Under that cultured surface he knew there must be a bottomless morass of abominable heresy, and the only reason Luther let him stay was in order to try to expose him. "Let us hear what you have to say," Luther said.

Daniel Weissager decided to ignore Luther's hostility. He stood up and began.

"It all started with a Bavarian farmer and wine grower, Gabriel Grassmann. In the year 1500 he discovered that the 1290 days of Daniel's prophecy would expire in 1520 and that that would be the end of the world. With this vision in his head he travelled through the Bavarian backwoods with the message of the Lord. A mighty fervor attended his preaching. God confirmed the message with celestial signs. In 1501 the birds suddenly stopped singing for a whole hour on the twenty-fourth of June while a comet streaked the evening sky over Engstadt. After this, Brother Grassmann understood that June 24 would be the termination point of the 1520 prophecy.

"As time approached 1520, the entire religious world rejected the Holy Spirit by turning against the revival. But the grace of God did not leave the world entirely in darkness. Five hundred valiant Bavarian farmers and wood-cutters separated from the wicked Babylon of organized religion and assembled on June 23, 1520 in Brother Grassmann's wine cellar to await the end of the world.

"For two days they stayed in the cellar and nothing happened. All they could hear were the jeers of the wicked outside the cellar and the sobs of the disappointed inside. But then their eyes were suddenly opened to light

hidden from the beginning of the world. Brother Grassmann himself saw the light first. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he announced to the desperate company that the end of the world had come, but not in the way they had expected. It was the end of the world in the sense that sin had now been done away with — had come to an end, if you please. When they crawled out of the cellar on the morning of the twenty-fifth, they”

“Did you say they arrived at this understanding after spending two days in a wine cellar?” Luther interrupted.

“Yes, it took two days before the light dawned. But as I was saying, when they crawled out of the cellar on the morning of the twenty-fifth, they possessed a holiness which could not be marred by the mockings of the synagogue of satan. The flame of holiness had flushed their cheeks, and they realized God had not failed them. From then until the expiration of the 1335-day prophecy, they were to devote themselves to the proclamation of God’s end-of-the-world holiness — His eschatological holiness, as we call it at the Seminary — a Seminary, by the way, which has been built on the very site where Brother Grassmann’s wine cellar stood. In fact, had not Scripture itself prophesied their experience? ‘Sweet in the mouth and bitter in the stomach.’”

“Sounds like a drunken riot to me,” Luther muttered to himself.

“I beg your pardon?”

“Go ahead and finish your story.”

“Well, ever since that glorious day, June 24, 1520, God has been fashioning sinless people from Bavaria and the regions around.”

“I haven’t seen any,” Luther interjected curtly.

“Such wonders cannot be seen with the natural eye, Doctor. Of course they do not appear to be sinless and holy to the wicked. If you had had the June 24 experience, you too would have learned to see in a new way.”

“I have indeed experienced your June 24 holiness, and I know that it affects your eyesight dramatically — your whole disposition, for that matter. Still I say it is no good.”

At this I think we at the table were as much taken back as Daniel Weissager.

“The June 24 experience, Doctor? Allow me to be skeptical.”

“Yes, Sir. I can still remember it vividly. Friedrich Graussen and I went through it back in 1505.”

“The June 24, 1520 experience? That is impossible, Doctor. This experience has only been bestowed after that date.”

“Weren’t we talking about the wine-cellar incident, Mr. Weissager? Well, Friedrich and I were novices in our Augustinian monastery back then. One night, while enjoying a glass of wine down in the wine cellar, we got locked in. The cellar was cold, and the only

way to keep warm was to draw heat from the liquid furnaces with which the cellar was well furnished. Believe me, we kept warm and, I should add, holy. I have never felt such holiness before or after as I experienced that night. Both Friedrich and I felt like saints and began calling each other St. Friedrich and St. Martin.” Here Luther began laughing so hard that he sent his beer mug flying from the table into Caspar’s lap by accident. “Sweet in the mouth, yes Sir. But the tragedy was that it did not last that long. It became bitter in our stomach. Soon our holiness made a hasty exit, and the breakfast crew which found us next morning had to watch not to step in it when they carried us to our cells. Since then I have had a grudge against wine and quick holiness.”

Weissager looked as if he did not know what to say. He was both puzzled and irritated. “Dr. Luther, you seem bent on ridiculing my faith. I can’t see what drunkenness has to do with end-of-the-world holiness.”

“Precisely, my good man. That’s just what I can’t understand. The holiness that I go for is given by the Holy Spirit, not alcoholic spirit.”

“Dr. Luther! To hell with that drunkenness of yours! Do not dodge the darts of the Spirit. I adjure you to tell me whether you have reached sinlessness. Have you truly experienced the end-of-the-world of sin in your relationship with heaven?” His face was red.

“Yes, my good man.” Luther’s face beamed with mischief. “Certainly, Sir. I have literally experienced the end-of-the-world. Believe it or not, I have suffered death because of my sin. Now, however, things are different. For the last forty years my life has been so perfect that not even God has been able to find a fault with me. Now, Mister, can that be said of you?”

“Dr. Luther, we have never made a point of our holiness and publicly boasted of it. We have never made such foolish and sweeping claims as that. We are erring human beings. We can now only claim relative perfection. Just as the world did not fully end on June 24, 1520, so sin has not fully ended either. And now you say that you’re so perfect that God Himself can’t find a fault with it! Really, Doctor, I came here in good faith.”

“But it is true, Mister. That is the secret of my ministry. Surely you have heard about the Easter experience? One Friday night almost exactly 1500 years ago I was nailed to a cross and died under the thunderbolts of God’s wrath. But that is not all. The following Sunday I”

“Really, Dr. Luther, this is ridiculous! Do I understand you to claim that you are Jesus Christ? Maybe I should fall down and worship before you?”

“Worship me? A sinful bag of German flesh! Dr. Luther, the Saviour of the world, what a thought!” The tone of mischief had not entirely left him.

“Bag of sinful flesh, Sir?” Weissager grabbed hold of Luther’s last remark. “If my senses did not entirely fail me a minute ago, I thought I heard you boast about a holiness so truly marvelous that God Himself would not be able to exceed it?”

“Yes, that is right. God cannot exceed it, because it is the very holiness of God himself. Don’t you know, my good man, that the most fundamental truth in the universe is that God has joined man to the Saviour in such a way that in His eyes their holiness is indistinguishable? That Easter Friday God equated the Saviour with humanity. He let the end of the world, with its wrath and judgment, roll over sinful humanity in the person of His Son. A whole world died that night. But on the following Sunday morning God raided hell of all its captives in the resurrection of Christ and conferred His own sinlessness and eternal life upon them. Yes Sir, God joined sinful man to His perfect Son by the equation mark of suffering. Seeing us, he sees only the image of His Son perfectly reflected.”

Weissager had not enjoyed Luther’s exegetical excursus. “A nice story, yes, but it is not as simple as that. What about *real* holiness? What about a true end-of-the-world righteousness like that of June 24?”

“Shut up about that riot in the wine cellar! First, you have already admitted that when your people sobered up and got rid of their hangover, they recognized that they were as sinful as ever. So what is really left of the 1520 experience? Words, that’s all. Second, a much more glorious experience than your midsummer night’s dream has been a reality for 1500 years. Why should people crawl into a Bavarian wine cellar to receive a fraction, if anything, of a gift which has been available for a millennium and a half? Third, you couldn’t prove your wine-cellar theology if you beat your Bible with a bottle of Bavarian wine for a thousand years.”

“That is simply not true, Doctor. Surely you have read the prophecy of the 1290 days in the book of Daniel? ‘From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1290 days.’ You must be aware of the fact that in the year 230 of our Lord, Ardashir, the Persian prince, overthrew the Parthian Arsacides and established the Sassanid Empire, which in turn led to a revival of Zoroastrianism. That was the setting up of the abomination. Now, if we go 1290 years from that date — a day in prophecy, of course, is a year in history — we arrive at the year 1520. Of all years, 1520! The very year the saints met in Brother Grassmann’s cellar. This is one of the greatest prophetic fulfillments in all history.”

“This is a travesty of reason and theological madness,” Luther fumed. “Apparently you people know nothing about hermeneutics!”

"That is right," Weissager replied stiffly. "We have made it a point to stay away from such theology. We simply take the Bible as it reads and leave herma - herma . . ."

"Hermeneutics."

"... hermeneutics to others. Just look at the evidence, Doctor. Do you think that God just happened to amuse Himself with mathematics in order to perplex us? No, Doctor, the 230-1520 prophecy is built on the inspired Word, buttressed by history and substantiated by personal experience. If you cannot see the truth of this prophecy, I suggest you take a look at the preceding verse in the book of Daniel: 'None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.' It would be interesting to hear your reaction to that, Doctor."

"And I would like to ask you if you have forgotten that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. I have never worried that I do not understand the obscurities of the Old Testament so long as I can bask in the light of the gospel."

"I should feel somewhat more restrained than you in downgrading the Old Testament, Sir. We also believe the gospel. Of course we do. At times we even devote whole sermons to it. The June 24 experience, however, is a higher truth. In fact, we exist by this truth alone. If we had to give up 1520, we would lose our right to exist. This experience alone can justify our existence."

"To hell with all that rubbish!" Luther rose from the table and began moving toward the door. "The only thing that can justify your existence is the gospel. Both our individual and collective existence are grounded in the free grace of God. Any person or any movement has a right to exist by the confession of faith. Even you people have a right to exist if you preach and believe the gospel. You don't need to cling to that ridiculous wine-cellar incident in Bavaria to be accepted by God." Luther opened the door. His time was spent.

"I suppose I should have expected this from the very beginning," Weissager said as he momentarily turned in the door. "It all proves how right we have been in claiming that, apart from the glorious June 24 light, the world is enveloped in Babylonian darkness. It takes faith and revelation to understand that Christ became King of the universe just twenty-three years ago and that sin no longer reigns. Only the eye of faith will acknowledge that the world was reborn in a Bavarian wine cellar. I should not have expected you to grasp such advanced truth, Doctor." His voice was a mixture of sadness and bitterness.

"You are so right, my good man," Luther replied as he was closing the door after him. "You should not have expected that." ■

Canada's Constitutional Problems — Our Concern?

Canadian parliamentarians began what is perhaps the most important debate in the history of this country on February 17, 1981. In the past few weeks, they have been discussing the resolution that will be going to England soon (the government hopes) to be passed by the Parliament there.

No doubt, everyone has heard something about these matters over the past number of months. Perhaps some of you have tried to follow the various shifts in the debates and followed the peregrinations of the government as it sought to get its proposals accepted. Some may have given up already and decided that it was just too complicated for them or it wasn't all that important to them anyway.

My premise is that the issue *is* and *should be* of deep concern to us as Canadians but also (especially?) as Christians. It is not my intention to give a historical review of the whole process of constitutional development in Canada (although it is both interesting and important — see articles by A.C. Lengkeek), but to try to get at some of the fundamental issues which are at stake here and to try to convince you that: "Yes, indeed, it *is* our concern!"

It is highly significant that Mr. Trudeau is making the establishing of the Constitution in Canada his priority in his last months or years as Prime Minister of this country. For he wants to make sure that the social and political changes that he has brought about over the last thirteen years are firmly entrenched in the new constitution so that they are beyond the reach of the Parliament of Canada and the provinces (except through a very difficult process).

The whole constitutional situation cannot be divorced from the basic thrust of the Trudeau philosophy — that of "radical socialism." That he *is* a socialist he has said himself in his own writings (going back to the early 50's). Over the years he has tried in various ways to change the nature of this country and change the direction of society towards one which is founded on the principles of socialism which are, at base, revolutionary principles. In this he has been

very consistent, though his tactics (strategy) may appear to have been very pragmatic (thus confusing many who looked only at the surface). That he is very determined can be seen in the way he is pushing ahead with his plans in spite of a great deal of opposition from many quarters. Where he has appeared conciliatory, it has only been to further his political or ideological ends. On the basis of the *process* only, we could have much criticism and could point to the fact that the government has misrepresented its position at various points and has engaged in very Machiavellian tactics which led, for example, to the breakdown of the Constitutional Conference last summer. The less than subtle threats to Britain to go along with whatever resolution was presented to the United Kingdom parliament are also reprehensible and not a fair presentation of the obligations which that body has. Are we really "colonials" because Britain still has certain obligations concerning the BNA Act and its amendment which we ourselves asked her to keep according to the Statute of Westminster (1931)? Is it an affront to our "national pride" to have to go to the British parliament for amending purposes? Or are these just emotional arguments designed to get unthinking Canadians on Trudeau's side?

Let us pay particular attention to the proposed entrenchment of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the new constitution. It is closely related to his views on federalism and his socio-political philosophy. Let me give you a few quotes from Trudeau himself:

"Federalism must be welcomed as a valuable tool . . . from which the seed of radicalism can slowly spread" (1961).

"I am not in a frantic hurry to change the constitution simply because I am in a frantic hurry to change reality" (1965).

Trudeau has attacked socialists of the NDP type as being too dogmatic. They should employ a varied strategy: "I should like to see socialists feeling free to espouse whatever political trends or to use whatever constitutional tools happen to fit each particular problem at each particular

Continued on page 123.

A Contribution to the Discussion

In our Canadian Reformed circles much has been written and spoken lately about the Church. It might therefore be interesting and timely to read what Dr. K. Schilder had to say about Lord's Day 21, question 54. He preached one of his sermons on this topic on September 8, 1935. From the context we may deduce that it was in Delfshaven. The sermon is entitled: "The Unity of Christ's Body, the Church." — The first part of this three-part sermon deals with "The relation of Church and time." It is in this part of his sermon that K.S. develops an unforgettable metaphor, and he does this in his characteristic, rich-textured, and lucid style. Here follows an attempt to convey the extended metaphor in the English language. One hopes that neither the passage of forty-five years, nor the vehicle of a different language will detract from the clarity of Schilder's thought. The words emphasized correspond to those in the original.

R. KOAT

Let's just imagine there would be only one man in the whole world who could build a ship, and let's further imagine that only *one* ship would ever be built during the existence of the world. The construction of it would start at the beginning of the world and would not be completed until the last day. Imagine, too, that on the very first day of the shipbuilding your own mental faculty would be as clouded as Adam's was. Try to imagine now that the ship was not destined to navigate your canals but would be removed into a different universe, and that next our world would perish. What then? I could say *nothing* (sensible) about that ship, unless the man who built it is telling me with absolute authority: "This is what it's going to be like, and you'd better believe me because you can't check and figure it out anyway."

I should like you to consider that idea today, because it is actually that very idea we are all so much in need of — if we are to steer a proper course through all the present day church concepts. If it is true that I can't know a thing about that ship (there being only *one* shipbuilder who

is taking the whole span of world history to build it), then I can't know a thing either about the church, because there is only *one* ship of the church. There are not a hundred churches; there are not even two churches. I believe: a holy catholic Christian Church. If there is, therefore, only *one* church, I can't go and compare two churches and then arrive at the idea that the sum of their attributes would be the real church. There is only *one* church.

Neither can I say this: "I shall be able to know the church by studying one specific aspect of her." Just think again about that ship. Suppose there is only *one* shipbuilder and only *one* ship that is not yet ready, and suppose that I have no conception at all of a ship. Suppose again that I some day were to take a look at the ship that is being built. I could then say in my ignorance: "I really understand what it's all about. There is a lot of hammering going on and I see rusty-coloured iron; so, a ship is a thing that makes a great deal of noise and looks rusty, and now I know all there is to know about that ship."

All of you would then say: "You fool, that is nonsense. You can only get to know it when it's ready. On a day when the builder is still at work, it would be foolishness to draw from that chaos some conclusion about the *true being* of the ship."

It is therefore just as foolish to say today (while the Son of God is still busy and the church is not yet ready): "I do understand the church; through observation I've arrived at a general impression about the church, and now — on the basis of that observation, on the basis of what I have seen — I am able to talk ever so learnedly about the church." God scorns all that idle talk, because we cannot say today: "that is the church." Whoever does that will become hopelessly mixed up. That's what the *Jews* were doing. They were saying: "We understand the church very well. We are the people of the church." Indeed, so they were! They also said: "We are the people of the church, and so we understand everything. The church is a thing that belongs to only *one people*. It's a

strong *national* church, something separate, and the rest are nothing but barbarians. So, keep the barbarians away because the church must be kept pure."

On account of that view they nailed Christ, the king of the Church, onto the cross. That had to happen; the result was perfectly logical once a person has the authority to equate whatever is being *observed* about the church on a certain day, with the *exact identity* of the church. On the basis of God's Word, however, you yourselves know well enough that whatever did happen on a certain date to the church of the old dispensation — in the life of David, Abraham, Isaiah, or the Ethiopian — could not *stay* that way. The shipbuilder had something else in mind. It was His intention to go and presently call the *Gentiles* — or to put it more precisely — He did not call the Gentiles to the church, but brought the church to the Gentiles and said: "During a certain time I am busy confining the church to only *one* people. But during another time I am going to extend her over the entire world."

In the same manner that you are now saying in *retrospect*: "The church cannot be described from the point of view of the Old Testament alone," in like manner you should stand in fear of crucifying Christ anew. Once and for all: you'll have to stop describing the church on the basis of what you observe on a certain day. Whoever starts describing the church in that fashion and so starts constructing a church concept, is contradicting the fact that the shipbuilder of the *one and only* ship must say first: "Look, this is what I have put on *paper* and that is the way it's in my mind. Once the storms break loose, your whole neat theory will have become null and void."

That is the reason you should never judge the church by a *certain appearance*. That is why you shouldn't study the church of Luther's days and say: "Now I've got it down pat." To find out what is really Christian about Isaiah and Luther and the Bushmen and the citizens of Delfshaven, I should have the *Word* of Christ. Only on that foundation can my church concept be built. And I am obliged to practise that in all its serious consequences, because the fact that I may know all this is nothing but grace.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ K. Schilder, *Preken*, III (Goes, 1935), 209-211.

news medley

Yes, yes.

Hold your breath.

Before the previous news medley was printed I had already discovered (all by myself even!) that the name "tremulant" is a very proper name for a stop on a pipe organ, also in Canada. I hasten to inform our readers about this discovery in order to prevent misunderstanding and, perhaps, a flood of mail and phone-calls. I get a sufficient quantity of mail as is, and the phone-calls are also so numerous as to justify the very possession of two sets. This week I played an organ in one of our sister-churches, and saw that there, too, the tremulant was prominently marked. I even used it, although I hate the ever-vibrating sounds that come from electronic instruments. If only those who play those things would cut out the vibration, I might be reconciled to the use of them where no pipe organ is available; otherwise I would prefer a harmonium or piano. But enough about that, for I could be accused of riding a well-known horse.

Now, I have been rapped over the knuckles by a dear colleague of mine for *not* criticizing. That doesn't happen every day. More often I am told that I should not criticize than that I am castigated for keeping silent. Perhaps it was his intention that I should live up to my reputation and not lose my name among the church people. In any case, I appear not to have done what was expected of me and what, according to my colleague, I should have done so as to treat goose and gander alike. (The imagery is not mine, but his; this for a good understanding.)

The colleague I mean is the Rev. Cl. Stam. He writes in the *Family Post* of Smithville about my failure to criticize statements made and information given by the Rev. D. deJong in the *Calgary Tower*. What those statements and information are will become clear from Rev. Stam's article. I had better give you that first; then I'll make some remarks about what he writes at my address.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL SCENE:

"Whatever happened to *closed* session?"

You may recall that the last Synod (Smithville) decided to deal with the appeal of the church at Neerlandia against the preaching of Rev. D. deJong of Calgary in *closed* session. Actually it was "closed-closed" session, for not even office-bearers from our churches were allowed to attend. Completely closed doors; top-secret stuff, said Synod Smithville.

I remember that I protested against this procedure, and even asked that my protest be recorded in the *Acts*. The matter of Neerlandia had been dealt with in *open* session all the way up to Regional Synod, and why now all of a sudden in closed session? Even in the matter of Rev. C. Olij (which was not of a doctrinal nature) office-bearers were allowed to sit in and listen to the discussions. Now suddenly the area was off-limits to any spectator or auditor. Another reason for this closed-closed session was that the delegates (especially the elders) would not feel "cramped in their style" and could speak out freely. From the actual discussions which followed, I feel, it was rather for the benefit of the ministers who could now speak their mind without having to contend with public reaction.

Whatever the case may be, at the conclusion of the discussion, I remember, the delegates were admonished not to speak out on what had transpired throughout the closed session. Only the decisions would be publicized in the *Acts*; the discussions and procedures were to remain covered in darkness, otherwise the whole purpose of "closed session" would be lost.

It was therefore quite a surprise for me when I read remarks of Rev. D. deJong in the *Calgary Tower* of December 14, 1980 (barely a week after the closing of Synod) concerning the decisions regarding the appeal of Neerlandia. Rev. deJong "unofficially" (as he admits) tells the congregation of the decisions taken, and then *adds*, "Synod did not adduce any grounds or considerations to its decision, which was taken with a *majority of one vote*, after several other motions were rejected" (emphasis mine, Cl. S.).

My first thought was, "Now *who* broke the Synodical code of honour and told Rev. D. deJong these things?" I thought that we were supposed to be tight-lipped about what exactly had been done, but I suppose that rule only exists for a select few. I also wondered why the Synodical "informant" did not warn Rev. D. deJong not to make the *vote* public, or, if he had done so, why Rev. deJong did not heed this warning.

Actually, this rendering is not even complete. The "majority" does not reflect the real majority of Synod because of the many abstentions. A substantial portion of the delegates did abstain from the voting for various reasons, mostly because they did not agree with the whole procedure. You will not take it ill of me that I "divulge" this additional information.

Something else comes to mind. When Rev. M. Werkman, writing in the *Family Post* about the Synod of Coaldale regarding the OPC, mentioned the final *vote* in a discussion which took place during an *open* session, he was severely blasted by the Rev. W.W.J. vanOene in *Clarion* (Vol. 26, p. 542). Rev. vanOene then wrote, "There is an element in his [Rev. Werkman's, Cl. S.] remarks which I condemn. He informs the readers of the bulletin that the decision was made with fourteen in favour and two against. What in the world does that have to do with the issue? Are we determining the value of decisions by the number of members in favour?" Rev. vanOene continues, "I do not hesitate to call it most *improper* to ask how many were in favour and how many were against or, if such a question is not asked, to volunteer such unasked-for information. If one wishes to sow discord, then this is one of the best ways to achieve that."

At the time, I found Rev. vanOene's reaction rather strong. Recording and publishing the vote (as a true reflection of the discussion) has been a practice in our Dutch sister-churches for years, and what harm does it do when the matter is settled in an *open* session to which the public is invited? Why only make it known when a decision is taken *unanimously*? Or do we try to give the appearance that all is well even when such is *not* the case? But with a *closed* session the matter might indeed be different. I had expected that Rev. vanOene (if he gets the *Calgary Tower*) would react in even *stronger* terms on this occasion. Is what is good for the goose not also good for the gander? Is making known the vote of a closed session (contrasted with the publishing of a vote taken in an *open* session) not "sowing discord"? Perhaps such a reaction might yet come, for, in all fairness, the same measuring-stick

which was applied to Rev. M. Werkman should also be laid over the efforts of Rev. D. deJong.

In retrospect, I am glad that I protested against this "closed-closed session" idea. To me such type of sessions comes closer to church politics than church polity. Now that the "cover" has been blown, I feel somewhat freer to speak about it.

Cl. S.

In reply, I wish to state at the beginning that I agree with Rev. Stam's profound disapproval of closed-closed sessions, of passing on information from those closed-closed sessions, information part of which is not relevant at all, and of the publication of such information in bulletins for the information of the Congregation. I still stand fully behind what I wrote in 1977 and, *mutatis mutandis*, I could repeat the very same words in the present case.

I must, however, request my brother to bear a few things in mind.

In the first place: In 1977 I knew exactly what had been decided and how things went, for I was there; in 1980 I was almost totally in the dark about what was going on, how things were going, and so on. Until I see a trustworthy report on the proceedings of Synod or read the Acts, I do not know what Synod decided precisely in the case of Neerlandia's appeal. I did read something in the Press Release, but that is all. How am I to know whether the Rev. D. deJong was to be informed or not about the proceedings and about the number of votes for or against? I did not even have any information about "open" sessions, let alone about "closed" sessions, not to mention at all the "closed-closed" sessions. And then stick my neck into the noose without knowing enough? No thank you. The brethren and sisters know me sufficiently to be aware that I am not afraid at all to stick my neck out. I wished more colleagues were willing to do so; perhaps we would get some more and some-more-up-to-date copy for our paper. Rev. Stam is not afraid to stick his neck out either, but he, as well as I, do so only when we know what we are talking about.

One of my complaints about what was done at Smithville fall 1980 is that we hardly ever heard a thing. That is not only my complaint, it is the general complaint among the church people here and in the West. Rev. Stam knows that I have asked some colleagues who were members of Synod 1980, "Please, please, write reports for our people; let them hear what is going on!" What did we get? Nothing, plain nothing. And *if* anyone would wish to appeal to the practice in our Netherlands sister churches, let him then take an example from the extensive reports on synodical procedures which appear in *De Reformatie*. Then, at least, we learn what is going on. Now we are still in the dark as to by far the larger part of the decisions of Synod Smithville 1980.

I still do not know what Synod decided to tell Rev. D. deJong about its decision. He may have heard it unofficially, but it could very well have been that an "official" decision was communicated to him "unofficially" because, being personally involved, he, of course, was very eager to learn the outcome as soon as possible. Now I understand differently from Rev. Stam's words in the *Family Post*. If Rev. Stam's recollection is correct, I fully support his criticism of the synodical procedure and of the fact that the Rev. D. deJong revealed these things to the Congregation; and I am (again) calling it improper.

There is another aspect to which I wish to pay some attention in this context. That is the fact that a minister was so personally involved in this appeal that he may



1936 - 1981

Kornelis Sikkema and Swaantje Kapinga were united in marriage on April 30, 1936, in Uithuizen, Groningen, The Netherlands.

For twenty years Mr. Sikkema operated his own business as a "Molenaar," first with a windmill which was later converted to electrical power.

In September 1956 the Sikkema family emigrated to Brazil where he was employed by the Dutch colony to sell their dairy products, and also to build up their own dairy farm.

In January 1965 they again emigrated; this time to Canada. They settled in the Fergus area where Mr. Sikkema was manager at a sow and hog farm until his retirement.

Mr. and Mrs. Sikkema are now living in the town of Fergus among their four children and twenty-three grandchildren. They are enjoying their retirement and are both in excellent health.



have felt that his position within the Churches was at stake. Those of you who have followed my medleys from the beginning can testify to the fact that I have never attacked a person, that I have never drawn anyone's character into the picture, that I have never differentiated between brethren and brethren but criticized *actions and decisions* irrespective of with whom I found them, whether "friend or foe." (Please don't take these words literally; just understand the expression as denoting impartiality!) The fact that I hesitated to make any remarks about Rev. D. deJong's words in the *Calgary Tower* — which I do get, by the way — was caused by the very same consideration which kept me from writing about Orangeville during the past couple of years.

A last remark: I do not agree with Rev. Stam when he says that the outcome of the vote truly reflects the discussion. Such a conclusion would be too naive, I am convinced. And that not-mentioning the number of votes for or against could be construed as an effort to give the

impression that everything is smooth and that there are no differences of opinion, is a conclusion which cannot be drawn when it is the *custom* not to mention that number. Our forefathers sometimes had the custom of taking two votes: the one to determine what the decision was to be; the second one to make it unanimous. And I still defend very strongly that a decision is a decision, whether taken with the smallest possible majority of votes or unanimously. Not the number in favour decides, but the arguments.

Do you agree that it is about time for us to start our "regular" part?

Let us begin with some personal facts.

The Smithville bulletin tells us, "Rev. H. Scholten informed me that he would be in the hospital for a few days this week for examination and check-ups. May everything be found in satisfactory order." We do hope so too.

It is not often that I mention a wedding in this column. At the moment I do not recall ever having done so. This time will be an exception, since it concerns a minister. On March 13, the Rev. P. DeBoer entered into the holy marriage state with Miss J. Kingma, the bride's father officiating, of course. Our congratulations!

Although I usually go only by written sources, I may pass on what the Rev. Mulder told us at the Classis which was held on March 12, concerning young Joshua Vegter. According to the Rev. Mulder, Joshua received a clean bill of health at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, and this means that sr. Vegter may return soon to the mission field to rejoin the rest of the family. We are thankful for this result and wish her a good trip back.

We may as well stay in Ontario for a little while.

In Watford it was necessary, "due to poor attendance of the older Sunday School Class," to terminate that class. "The pre-school class will be continued."

Close to Watford we find Lincoln. London's Consistory will consider purchasing a speaker system for the auditorium and nursery. "We will be able to use some of the audio equipment we already have."

London's Consistory also made a decision regarding the use of a Bible translation. "The Consistory is more and more convinced that we should move towards adoption of the RSV for the sake of unity in church life, and also for the sake of clarity in the instruction and exposition of the Scriptures. However, we would like to place the matter before the congregation, to see if we can clear up whatever objections there may be to the use of this translation. I think that if we are aware of some of the 'problem texts' in this translation, and perhaps keep a list of them handy, we can no longer have *insurmountable* objections to the use of the RSV, and should follow the Synodical decision."

We move on to Guelph. "The minister will receive his own parking space. This will be properly designated. The matter of 'completing the organ' will be discussed at a future meeting. The possibility of an Organ Fund will be looked into."

The Brampton Consistory decided to make some improvements to and around the church building, and even considers expansion of the meeting facilities. That is indeed necessary.

That concludes our news from Ontario. We therefore make the jump all the way to Neerlandia. For the completion of the additions to the school building — for which an estimated \$30,000 is needed — a drive was held, and an amount of almost \$20,000 was collected or pledged. No wonder that the brethren are thankful.

In some respects, however, it is a big question whether the expenses are worth the result. Listen: "The bathroom and shower rooms still remain unfinished, and the possibility exists that it might remain this way until the turn of the century, because this generation just isn't prepared to take showers under the supervision of teachers. Maybe the next generation will think of something a bit more acceptable. O well, at least we might receive a little praise that we bore the future in mind."

Our trip brings us to Edmonton next.

There the brotherhood is approaching the moment of separation, splitting with the result that there will be two churches instead of one. That brings all sorts of extra activity with it, as we can also learn from the *City Guide*. One thing may be mentioned with gratitude: that everything is done in harmony. There will be some, of course, who do not agree with what is being done or with the manner in which it is done, but Rev. De Bruin writes about the harmony with gratitude.

The Calling Committee is gathering information, but it has been decided to wait with extending a call till after the split has become effective. That is a wise decision, for the whole Congregation should not decide what minister the new church shall call. That will be up to the latter alone.

The Consistory also discussed membership in a secular trade union. From that I quote the following.

3. The matter of membership in anti-Christian labour unions and organizations was discussed. It was decided that the Consistory should continue to give pastoral care, instructions, and admonishment to those of our members who have gone astray in this regard and point out to them the need for repentance. The concern was also expressed that the continued bad examples of some of our older members will affect the conduct of some of the younger generation who are also weak in faith.

The need for continued education by both Pastor and Elders [are elders no pastors? vO] was stressed, so that all the members should put their trust in Christ alone, and not in all kinds of humanistic institutions. It was further restated that membership in such (above) organizations is not compatible with church membership and that all our members should be taught to make a conscientious choice between serving Jesus Christ and the world. The individual Elders were encouraged to be faithful regarding the above, so that all of our members may be called and encouraged to faith, trust, and obedience to the Head of the Church.

A big hurrah for Abbotsford! "The possibility of giving more information in the Short Report will be considered." Other churches: Follow suit!

The Abbotsford Committee of Administration was "charged to proceed with the building of an annex along the lines of the blueprints which have been shown at the congregational meeting."

This is then to be the end of this medley. It was a little longer than usual, but it gives our readers some extra reading material and some extra thoughts to ponder.

I just remember that I have not said anything yet about the honourable invitation which Dr. Faber received to lecture at Westminster Seminary during the first semester of the academic year 1981-82. That is an honourable invitation indeed, and it shows that the few lectures which our brother gave at Westminster some years ago made the people there wish for more. Such an invitation also enhances the standing of our College and

proves that it is not a Bible School but an institution where scholarly work is being done and where the students receive a thoroughly scientific training.

Before the invitation was accepted and before even the approval of the Board of Governors was asked, a *series lectionum* had been designed which ensures that the students will receive whatever they have a right to during the coming academic year and also that they will not be unduly burdened in the one semester while coming short in the other. As many hours have been switched to the first semester as will be needed by Dr. Faber to teach all his courses in the second semester.

From a few brethren I heard the remark that they did not like such an arrangement now that the relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is in discussion. I can understand such a reaction, but can also state as my conviction that these two matters are totally unrelated. As far as I know, the Westminster Theological Seminary is *not* an institution belonging to the Orthodox Presby-

terian Church, but an independent institute. And even if it did belong to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the invitation extended to our Principal would still be a totally unrelated, purely academic matter.

I mention these things, because the remarks which I heard may be found with others as well, and then their questions are answered at the same time.

Dr. Faber will have to prepare himself for those lectures, as everyone understands. Yet there is also an element of relaxation in it, as I see it. We cannot afford to give our professors a "sabbatical," that is, a year's leave of absence which they can use for study purposes. We cannot afford that financially but we cannot afford it as far as manpower is concerned either. Thus it is nice that in this manner some compensation for such a sabbatical can be achieved.

And now I am going to close for sure.

Till next time, the Lord willing.

vO

Canada's Constitutional Problems

— Continued from page 118

time." He viewed federalism as the means to implant "radicalism in different parts of Canada . . . in different fashions." Trudeau is determined to reform the Constitution in terms of entrenching his accomplishments in a new Constitution. In unilaterally moving to repatriate* the Constitution and to entrench a Charter of Rights, "The floodgate is wide open to radically change both Parliament, the courts and the whole Canadian society, including the BNA Act" (Bom, *Trudeau's Canada*, p. 75). His plan is to entrench values which are compatible with his humanistic "new society" at the expense of the Parliament. He himself has said in the past that a "constitutional Bill of Rights would modify even further the concept of parliamentary sovereignty in Canada" (*Federalism and the French Canadians*). That is something John Diefenbaker would not have lauded. In fact, the Supreme Court has already recognized that the 1960 Bill of Rights is part of our constitutional laws. This Trudeau does not appear to accept. Parliament's power would be reduced and that of the Supreme Court increased (a body appointed by the federal government and not subject to the popular will).

Trudeau wants to entrench equality of language rights as well as equality in the economic realm. He wants industrial democracy. "The erroneous, liberal idea of property helped to emancipate the bourgeoisie but is now hampering the march towards economic democracy." Thus, leave out property rights in the new constitution (supposedly done to satisfy the NDP).

These examples should serve to illustrate that the debate going on right now is no mere discussion about certain legal and technical questions to straighten out a remnant of colonialism, but involves, rather, some fundamental questions about the future of our parliamentary system and the changed direction of the country in the Trudeau years. For that reason, we, as members of the Church of Christ, ought to be concerned; for the social philosophy of the government is revolutionary in orientation and therefore contrary to the Word of God.

Trudeau is authoritarian in his thinking as well as in his relations with others (in his own party, for example). This characteristic is well-illustrated in a recent Trudeau biography by Richard Gwyn, *Northern Magus*. Such tendencies — to place such a high value on man's rationality — are dangerous, especially in men who are called to be governing authorities (Rom. 13:1). Rom. 13:4 shows to the rulers themselves and to the subjects what a ruler is: "He is God's servant for your good." And: "He does not bear the sword in vain: he is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer." But Trudeau seems to deny that rulers have much to do with the divine laws when they give their rules for the society of the nation over which they rule. He has said in the past (in connection with the broadening of the grounds for divorce) that he "separates sin from crime." He certainly seemed to imply that there is only "crime" when man-made (government-made) laws are violated. We can't expect from Trudeau that he will uphold Christian principles in a so-called "just society," nor protect

those who want to live and to be judged according to those Christian principles. We should not underestimate the influence which such a leader can have on the thinking and life-style of the younger generation and the future generations if there is not a national awakening in a positive, Christian direction.

On the matter of authority Trudeau has written the following in his *Approaches to Politics*, p. 31: "Human societies are always free to decide what form of authority they will adopt, and who will exercise it. And it really is men, who have the responsibility of taking these decisions — not God, Providence or Nature. In the last analysis, any given authority exists only because men consent to obey it. In this sense, what exists is not so much the authority as the obedience." So then, there is no reference or accountability to God.

Such are the views and practices of our Prime Minister whom we must respect in his office. That does not take away our responsibility in a free society to test his words and actions against the norms of Scripture and Confession. We must be alert, informed, and, above all, prayerful. We may be comforted, too, that the final "caravan of history" is moving in the direction of the *Civitas Dei* (City of God), that the real "revolution" is Christianity, the coming and return of the Lord of History. Let us echo the words of our newly-revised National Anthem, "God keep our land."

H.J. LUDWIG
Winnipeg

* I use "repatriate" here because the original act was first drafted in Canada and then submitted to the U.K. Parliament for enactment into law.



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.

PHILADELPHIA (RNS)

The highest judicial body of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. let stand a local presbytery decision to admit a minister who declined to state without qualification that Jesus Christ is God.

In the declaration of its decision, the high court said it rules not so much on the orthodoxy of Mr. Kase-man's theology, but on whether the presbytery had acted reasonably in determining that the minister's answers were "within the acceptable range of interpretation" of doctrine in the church's "Book of Confessions."

The heart of the issue in this case, the court said, was the "inherent powers of the presbytery" to decide such issues for itself. The high court commissioners said they had no power to overrule a presbytery except "for the most extraordinary reasons." (CN)

Apparently the open denial of the Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ or at least the refusal to state unconditionally that He is the true Son of God, co-substantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is no "extraordinary reason" to declare that a presbytery erred in admitting such a person into the ministry. On the ground of technicalities the true doctrine is denied and its undermining condoned.

* * *

TORONTO (RNS)

The editor of the Presbyterian Church of Canada's official magazine predicts that the church will lose about 20 ministers and as many congregations before 1990 because of disputes over women's ordination.

The Rev. James R. Dickey, editor

of the *Record*, made that forecast in a lead editorial of the magazine's January issue.

At the same time, the church has commissioned a special task force to try to double the denominational membership in that same nine-year period. The year 1990 is the limit beyond which the church will no longer tolerate objections to its policy of ordaining women clergy. (CN)

* * *

The church must pay for a platform used by the pope on his 1979 visit to Philadelphia, a federal appeals court has ruled. The Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court decision that the Archdiocese of Philadelphia must reimburse the city \$204,569 — the cost of a platform used by John Paul II to celebrate Mass. The appeals court declared, in a 2-to-1 decision, that it was unconstitutional for the city to absorb the cost of the platform's construction. (CT)

* * *

Argentina's military government has abolished a decree that banned Jehovah's Witnesses from the country, it was announced recently. President Jorge Rafael Videla, who is to step down next month (under guidelines set by the junta when it took power in a coup four years ago), announced the decree early in his term. That action touched off protests and charges of religious discrimination by the junta. (CT)

* * *

A Council of Evangelical Christians has been formed in Yugoslavia. One hundred persons — including 50 pastors from seven denominations — met at the end of last year at Novi Sad to bring the interdenominational, cooperative grouping into being. The Protestant community makes up only about 1 percent of Yugoslavia's 22.4 million population (the majority are Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Muslim, in that order). But in spite of that minority status, Protestants until now had shown little inclination to work together. A visit and messages by British Anglican clergyman John Stott last April prodded evangelicals to take a step toward unity. The new council represents most of the nation's Protestant denominations. A coordinating committee was formed to establish contact with the rest. (CT)

* * *

Refugee placement has dropped off now that the plight of refugees

from Southeast Asia is gone from the headlines. But the need to find homes for them has not diminished. World Relief Refugee Services has fallen behind its goal — agreed upon with the U.S. Department of State — of placing 835 refugees a month. The average for the months of last August, September, and October was only 533. T. Grady Mangham, WR vice-president for refugee services, points out that service opportunities passed up by believers will be picked up by other agencies that are not prepared to provide an evangelical witness. (CT)

* * *

Justice minister Jean Chretien has been told by the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada that lotteries are immoral.

In a recent letter to the federal justice minister, the Council's committee for contact with government (CCG) stated that "lotteries are an immoral and completely inappropriate means for our Canadian governments (provincial and federal) to raise revenues, regardless of the intended use of the monies."

The CCG declares further that advertising themes used to promote these lotteries are "immoral in their characterization of life expectations respecting the Canadian good life and the relationships between the use of human resources and society's rewards for human endeavours.

False expectations of potential financial security, reward or well-being are cultivated by the lottery advertisements and play upon citizens' insecurities.

"Citizens are seriously misled if they view participation in lotteries as creative, purposeful or meaningful options for life planning or growth," the letter to Mr. Chretien said. (CC)

* * *

WESTMINSTER (ANP)

Divorce, getting married again, and marrying a divorced person may no longer be an impediment for admission into the ministry. That's what the Synod of the Anglican Church in England decided at its meeting in Westminster in the end of February.

The Synod postponed till its meeting in July a decision about the question whether divorced persons may re-marry in Church. (ND)

* * *

RICHMOND, VA (EP)

A Southern Baptist missionary family in Ethiopia and a Theological

Education by Extension team in Tanzania were detained briefly by government authorities in early February. Lynn and Suzanne Groce of Missouri and Florida, their three children and three Ethiopians with them were detained in the Minjir district east of their home in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, after they entered a vacant mission house without clear permission to do so. They were released the next day. In Tanzania, five missionaries and a Tanzania Baptist were surrounded February 11 by 25 Tanzanian soldiers

when they went to an air strip near Masasi to return to Dar es Salaam after teaching TEE courses for several days. They were released four to five hours later. (CC)

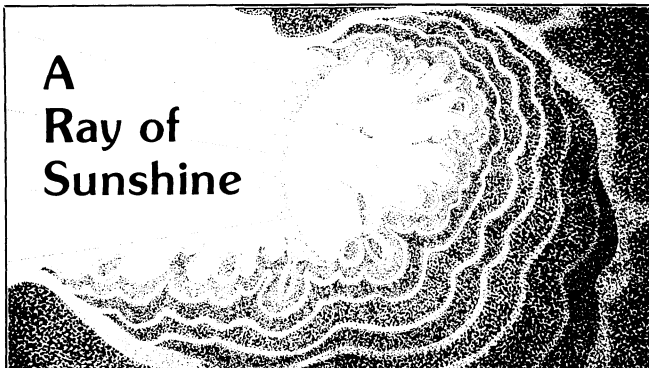
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LONDON (EWNS)

Agitator, the journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, carries an article praising atheist work in the Kirovograd region. The journal states that

the broad network of "atheist" clubs has been established throughout the region in factories, schools, institutes of higher education, cultural museums, and on collective farms. Special tribute is paid to the work of the atheist club in a tractor parts factory. There are frequent lectures on atheism. Visiting scientists inform the workers of the basic aims of the atheistic upbringing and give advice on methods in furthering atheistic work. (CC)

vO



**A
Ray of
Sunshine**

Although the Law of God contains a perfect rule of conduct admirably arranged, it has seemed proper to our divine Master to train His people by a more accurate method, to the rule which is enjoyed in the Law; and the leading principle in the method is, that it is the duty of believers to present their "bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Hence He draws the exhortation: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." The great point, then, is, that we are consecrated and dedicated to God, and therefore should not henceforth think, speak, design, or act, without a view to His glory. What He has made sacred cannot, without signal insult to Him, be applied profane use. But if we are not our own, but the Lord's, it is plain both what error is to be shunned, and to what end the actions of our lives ought to be directed. We are not our own; therefore, neither is our own reason or will to rule our acts and counsels. We are not our own, therefore let us not make it our end to seek what may be agreeable to our carnal nature. We are not our own; therefore, as far as possible, let us forget ourselves and the things that are ours. On the other hand, we are God's; let us, therefore, live and die to Him (Romans 14:8). We are God's; therefore, let His wisdom and will pre- side over all our actions. We are God's; to Him, then, as the only legitimate end, let every part of our life be directed . . . Let this, then, be the first step, to abandon ourselves, and devote the whole energy of our minds to the service of God. By service, I mean not only that which consists in verbal obedience, but that by which the mind, divested of its own carnal feelings, implicitly obeys the call of the Spirit of God.

Calvin's Institutes
Volume II, Chapter 1

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

(Romans 12:2)

* * * * *

A thought to ponder:

"The real purpose of our existence is not to make a living, but to make a life — a worthy, well-rounded, useful life."

* * * * *

From Mrs. Breukelman we received the following note: "We would like to thank all those who sent our children, Beverly, Alan, and Christine cards for their birthdays. We are very thankful for the many cards our children received. The cards were put in albums and we enjoy going through them. They are very colourful. It also reminds us of all the parents, grandparents, and also the children, who made the cards themselves. One family sends the children cards at regular intervals. Thank you very much! We are very grateful!"

* * * * *

We have received a request from a Toronto Church member concerning one member of that congregation. Cora is about thirty years old. She had to be transferred to a different "Home," and lives away from friends and relatives now. It would do her good to receive love from the "Family." Her address is:

Miss Cora Schoonhoven,
Mental Health Centre,
968 Drawer,
Penetanguishene, Ontario

Please send your requests to:

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

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers!

Do you have spring fever?
Not yet?
Or maybe you've had it already?
Here is a poem telling how one Busy Beaver feels about spring.

Spring Rain

It is almost spring.
Rain is a thing
That comes down in torrents
So it almost looks like currents!
But what I think about spring,
It is a wonderful thing!

by Busy Beaver *Christina Oosterhoff*
I'm sure we all agree with Christina, don't you?

* * *

Doesn't time go fast? Here we are with birthday wishes for the Busy Beavers celebrating an April birthday — a real spring birthday! Here's hoping you all have a very happy and thankful day celebrating with your family and friends. May the Lord bless and guide you all also in the year ahead.

Audrey Van Veldhuizen	April 1	Geoffrey Hoogstra	April 16
Karen Wiegers	1	Annette Bosscher	17
Rose Barendregt	2	Lisa Lodder	18
Kenneth Wendt	3	Christine Riemersma	19
Denise Dijkstra	4	Emma Bosma	22
Evelyn Hamoen	5	Annette Haan	22
Yvonne Selles	5	Betty Bouwers	24
Meta Bosscher	5	Carl Dorgeloos	25
Marion Overbeek	6	Adrian Hamoen	25
Tanya Jansen	6	Karen Stam	25
Gerald Van Woudenberg	8	Henrietta Vink	26
Anthony Tenhage	9	Melina Veldkamp	27
Erica Blom	10	Christine Vis	28
Carolyn Stieva	12	Ria Hofsink	29
Richard Slaa	12	Ralph Van Eerden	29
	14		

Carolyn Kok, the birthday wishes are also for you. But we still don't know what day to list you under! Please write and tell me.



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Harry Van Egmond*. We hope you'll really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Do you help out in the greenhouses, too? And how is your dog? Will you write and tell me your birthday, please, Harry? That way we can include you in the birthday list.

Hello, *Christina Oosterhoff*. It's nice to hear from

you again. Thanks for the nice spring poem. What did you do during the holidays, Christina?

Thanks for the BOOK LOOK, *Cynthia Oosterveld*. Do you read a lot of mysteries, or do you like to read other books, too? How did you enjoy your holidays? Bye for now. Write again soon!

You mean to keep the Busy Beavers very busy, I see, *Sheryl Boes*! And a very good spring puzzle it is. Thanks for writing. Have you been busy watching for robins, *Sheryl*? And did you enjoy your holiday?

QUIZ TIME

Here are the answers to last time's quizzes, Busy Beavers. How did you do?

Bible Alphabet Quiz

Abraham, Beelzebub, Cain, Darius, Elijah, fishers, Gideon, Holy Place, Ishmael, Jonah, Kings, Lion's Den, Mary, Naomi, Obed, Peter, Queen of Sheba, Rachel, Sarah, Titus, Uzziah, Virgin, Woman, Artaxerxes, yesterday, Zacharias.

Match the Words

1. bedroom; 2. lampshade; 3. bird cage; 4. woodpecker; 5. hanging plant; 6. playpen; 7. rocking chair; 8. coffee cup; 9. horse hoof; 10. light switch.

"April showers
Bring May flowers"

We had a spring rain poem, so now we can have a spring flower word search puzzle. Do your best! (Puzzle on next page.)

Aster	Fuchsia	Trillium
Begonia	Gladiolus	Tulip
Bloodroot	Gloxinia	Violet
Bluebonnet	Goldenrod	Zinnia
Bunchberry	Hepatica	
Chicory	Hollyhocks	
Chrysanthemum	Hyacinth	
Cockscomb	Iris	
Columbine	Lily	
Cosmos	Marigold	
Creamcup	Ocotillo	
Crocus	Petunia	
Cyclamen	Phlox	
Daffodil	Poinsettia	
Dahlia	Poppy	
Daisy	Rose	
Delphinium	Saguaro	from Busy Beaver
Forsythia	Snapdragon	<i>Sheryl Boes</i>

Are you all remembering our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT? It needs a boost, Busy Beavers!

Busy Beaver *Gwen Van Esch* sent in a poem that fits in fine right here!

Well, there's nothing more to say.
I must be on my way.
I have to say good-bye
With a grunt and a sigh.
See you next time we write.
Have a blessed day — and good night!

With love from your
AUNT BETTY