

Clarion

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Subjectivism in Article 9 of the Belgic Confession?

Every cloud has a silver lining. Synod Smithville 1980 and its advisory committees, generally speaking, did not regard it necessary to consult with deputies of the previous synod. The recommendations and decisions are now open to more criticism but a *public* discussion has its advantages. More members of the Canadian Reformed Churches may now become involved and it is always interesting to deal with detail points of the new translation of our confessional and liturgical Forms.

Let us begin with an issue concerning our Confession of Faith commonly known as the Belgic Confession. There is one important passage in Article 9 about which the Synod made a statement and a recommendation. We first place beside one another the present English text and the proposed new version of the deputies.

The proof of the foregoing article of the trinity of
Persons in one God
(present version)

All this we know as well from the testimonies of Holy Writ as from their operations, and chiefly by those we feel in ourselves.

Scripture proof to this doctrine
(draft of deputies)

All this we know both from the testimonies of Holy Scripture and from the respective actions of the three Persons and especially those towards us.

The Church of London, Ontario, expressed as its opinion that the change of "feel within ourselves" to "towards us" may be defended from a dogmatic point of view but is not necessary according to Scripture. What did the Synod of Smithville do? It considered the following: "The translation 'feel within ourselves' in Article IX is in accordance with the *textus receptus*. The Committee has not given reasons for the change in the expression 'towards us.' There is a notable change from 'the testimonies of Holy Writ' to 'the three Persons.'" On this basis the Synod decided to pass on to the Committee the following suggested emendation:

To render the beginning of Article IX as follows, "All this we know from the testimonies of Holy Scripture as well as their effects, primarily from those which we feel within us."

Let me immediately make the remark that both the Church of London and Synod Smithville quoted Article 9 in a not completely accurate manner. The present text does not use the proposition "*within* ourselves" but "*in* ourselves." It is only a slight difference. Nevertheless "*within*" has a more subjective shade of innerness than the simple word "*in*." The deputies had tried to steer away from a subjectivist misunderstanding by using the expression "*towards* us." We should certainly not try to correct their work in the way Synod Smithville suggests.

When I understand the few remarks in Art. 123 of the Acts of Smithville well, then Synod has a different exegesis of the first sentence of Article 9 of our Confession

of Faith. We read there about "*their* operations, and chiefly those we feel in ourselves." The question is, To what word does "their" refer? The deputies had taken it with the word "Persons" in the heading and had made their choice clear by inserting the words "the three Persons." Synod Smithville, however, considers this a notable change from "the testimonies of Holy Writ" to "the three Persons." Synod gives the impression that "their" refers to these testimonies of Holy Scripture. Therefore, Synod does not use the term "operations" as in the present version or "works" or "actions" as in the draft of the deputies, but suggests the word "effects." In an English text you would speak of the effects of Scripture proofs rather than of the effects of the three Persons. The only question is whether this was the real meaning of this sentence and, therefore, whether the exegesis of Synod Smithville is the right one.

Did the members of the Advisory Committee of Smithville study the history of the text of our Belgic Confession? I ask this question because in the last years much attention has been given to the matter of the *textus receptus* of the Belgic Confession. As our readers possibly remember, this issue was especially raised in the report 1979 of the Belgic Confession Translation Committee in the Christian Reformed Church. This report strongly defended that the 1561 deBres version should be used as the *textus receptus* for the new English translation. The remarkable and interesting thing now is that the first sentence of Art. 9 plays a not unimportant role in this report. We see, therefore, that the present discussion in our churches takes place within a broader context and that is always stimulating and enlightening.

What did Report 33 say about our topic? First of all, the Christian Reformed report gives a provisional translation of the 1559/61 Confession. Article 9 is headed "The Scriptural witness on the Trinity" and reads partly as follows:

The testimonies of Holy Scriptures
which teach us to believe in this Holy Trinity
are written in many places of the Old Testament . . . ,
Furthermore,
each of the three persons of the Trinity
has his work in reference to us:
the Father is called our Creator;
the Son is our Saviour and Redeemer by his blood;
the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier by his dwelling
in our hearts.

The beginning of this version makes it clear that Guido de Bres did not write the sentence that is in discussion. It is added in the revision of the French text in 1566, which revision had its counterpart in the Dutch edition of 1583. When we study those texts, we see that the word "their" is not in them. Let me quote the old Dutch of 1583 (it will be frustrating for some of our readers, but it will delight others):

Dit alles weten wy, so wt de getuygenissen der Heyliger Schriftuere, als oock wt de effecten ende werckingen, ende voornemelick wt de gene, die wy in ons bevinden.

The Synod of Dordrecht 1619 added the word “their” and contracted the expression “effects and/or operations” into the one word “operations.” It also used another Dutch word for “feel” (“gevoelen” instead of “bevinden”). But let me not give more minute details about the history of this new first sentence of Article 9, but let us ask the question: How has it been interpreted and evaluated?

As we could expect, Report 33 of the Christian Reformed Church does not appreciate this revision of 1566 at all. It says: “The greater optimism in the Revision concerning man is also apparent in Article 9 In the original Confession of deBres there is reference only to the testimonies of Scripture and not to a subjective ‘feeling in ourselves’; but the very first sentence in Article 9 of the Revision underscores that subjective element It is not clear, at this point, in what way the doctrine of the Trinity is known ‘chiefly’ (*principalement*) by inner feelings among the ‘operations’ of Holy Writ, but it would seem better to follow deBres and root this doctrine unambiguously in Scripture.”

A few things strike us in this approach. First of all, the Report of the Christian Reformed Church speaks about the “operations” of Holy Writ, and thus interprets the possessive pronoun “their” as referring not to the three Persons but to the testimonies of Holy Scripture. In this respect our Synod of Smithville thought in the same direction. I think that this is wrong and I hope to argue this point presently. Second, the Christian Reformed report interprets the revision as a subjectivist deviation. It acts as if the revision of 1566 spoke of two sources for our knowledge of the Trinity: Scripture *and* the inner feelings, Holy Writ *and* subjective sentiments. One would almost be inclined to compare it with the two sources of revelation in the scholastic Roman Catholic handbooks. In similar manner as Roman Catholic scholasticism dealt with Scripture *and* tradition as the two sources of revelation, so the Reformed Belgic Confession after 1566 would offer two sources of knowledge of the triune God, namely Scripture and the experience of the Christians. Report 33 would then rather follow deBres and root this doctrine unequivocally in Holy Writ alone.

It must be admitted that this interpretation and evaluation is not completely new. In 1929 F.J. Los published *Tekst en Toelichting van de Geloofsbelijdenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk* (Utrecht: Kemink). He mentioned that Van Toorenebergen was extremely pleased with the revision, because it shows that the Synod of 1566 had made progress in the rational and spiritual use of Scripture compared to the original authors of the confession. Los himself, however, was not so pleased with the new sentence in the beginning of Article 9. “In het verband past die zin niet, hij stoort den gedachtengang. Is om zijn kortheid vrij onbegrijpelijk, ja doet vragen: Welke werkingen der drie Personen leeren dat dan, en welke gevoelen wij in ons? En wekt den indruk alsof, artikel VII ten spijt, uit Schrift en ervaring de kennis Gods wordt verkregen. Mits hij goed verstaan wordt, kan de volzin desnoods gehandhaafd blijven.” Dr. F.J. Los, therefore, was of the opinion that the sentence does not fit into the context and is rather unintelligible. It raises the questions, Which operations of the three Persons teach us this doctrine and which do we feel in ourselves? It seems to contradict Art. 7, the article in which we profess the

sufficiency of Holy Scripture to be the only rule of faith. For the sentence in Art. 9 makes it appear as if we obtain the knowledge of God from Scripture *and* experience. If need may be, we could maintain this sentence but it should then be understood in the right manner.

It is about time to make up our mind. Let me immediately state that I disagree with both parties. The idea of Van Toorenebergen that 1566 shows doctrinal progress in the use of Scripture is wrong but Los and Report 33 should not accuse the revision of subjectivism either. Following the lead of C. Vonk in *De Voorzeide Leer III A* (Barendrecht; 1955), I see in the first new sentence nothing but a teaching device. De Bres had given Scripture proofs or prooftexts which he called “testimonies of Holy Writ.” In the second part of the article he had drawn the attention to the work that each of the three Persons of the Trinity does in reference to us (“envers nous”). Again, we know that work from Scripture. The Father is *called* our Creator. Where is He called our Creator? Well, in Holy Writ. The Son is our Saviour and Redeemer by His blood. Where do we learn Him in this glorious office? Well, in Scripture. The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier by His dwelling in our hearts. Again, it is God’s Word that teaches us about the Holy Spirit and our sanctification.

The revision of 1566 did not want anything else but show us in an introductory sentence the division of material that deBres had already in mind when he wrote Article 9. The introductory sentence must, therefore, be read and interpreted in the light of this division. Because the second part speaks of “the particular offices and operations of *these three persons* towards us,” the word “operations” in the first sentence does not refer to the operations of Holy Scriptures. Report 33 and the Synod of Smithville are mistaken in this respect. And because the second part of Article 9 speaks of the operations of the three persons *towards* us (Dutch: *te onswaerts*), we may not press the words “*in ourselves*” and should certainly not change them to “*within ourselves*” as the Church of London and Synod Smithville proposed. We should follow the line of Vonk, the Committee-Dankbaar, the Committee-Bremmer and the synod of Groningen-Zuid 1978 in The Netherlands and with our deputies insert the words “the three Persons” and speak of the respective operations or actions or works of the three Persons. Vonk went even further and proposed as new text:

Wij weten dit alles uit het Woord en wel: niet alleen uit een aantal losse uit de Schrift aan te halen teksten, maar ook uit de samenvatting van wat de Schrift ons leert aangaande de werken van de drie personen en voornamelijk aangaande die, welke wij bij ons waarnemen.

All this we know from the Word, namely not only from a series of separate prooftexts of Holy Scripture but also from the summary of what the Word of God teaches us concerning the works of the three persons and primarily those which we observe with or at ourselves.

Our deputies did not go as far as Vonk went in his proposal. Nevertheless, they tried to make the first sentence of Article 9 clearer than in the present version. At the same time they warded off the subjectivist misunderstanding of the present words “from their operations, and chiefly by those we feel in ourselves.” Too bad that the Synod of Smithville did not ask for an explanation of the proposal of the deputies. This Synod now suggests an emendation that is untenable and makes the text open for more subjectivist misunderstanding.

J. FABER

press review

Presbyterians in America

This Press Review is intended to give some information about certain things going on in a number of Presbyterian Churches in the United States. As you know, there are several Presbyterian denominations in the United States. The largest one is the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA). We find it mostly in the northern states. Its history starts at the beginning of the 18th century. There have been some secessions from it and some mergers. In 1861 the Presbyterian presbyteries in the southern part of the States organized separately. They were in favour of maintaining slavery, while the northern churches were in favour of abolishing it. Further, the southern churches were more conservative and the northern ones more liberal. The southern Presbyterian Church is named "Presbyterian Church in the United States" (PCUS).

Now the reader knows that in 1936 a group of churches separated from the northern Presbyterian Church under the leadership of Professor Dr. Gresham Machen. They formed the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. That secession was necessitated by increasing liberalism and intolerance for orthodoxy. That same liberalism also became more and more evident in the southern Presbyterian Church. And since 1974 many a church split off. They formed the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). This process of separation or secession from the two larger bodies is still and again going on. I shall come back to it. But, first, there is the fact that these two largest denominations, the (northern) UPCUSA and the (southern) PCUS, have been working toward a merger for some time

already. In *The Presbyterian Journal* of February 18, 1981, concerning this effort to come to a merger we read the following:

The joint committee arranging for the long-delayed vote on union between the United Presbyterian Church (UPCUSA) and the Presbyterian Church US (PCUS), has reaffirmed its intention to present the plan of union to the respective General Assemblies in 1982. It also has confirmed the controversial aspects of the long-awaited plan . . .

Among controversial provisions retained was one which requires the election of women officers in all congregations unless specific exemptions are granted by the presbyteries.

We read how a certain Dr. Lamar said:

The action of the committee, it seems to me, reflects the position that language assuring roles for women in church governance, together with an exemption provision to be administered pastorally by the presbyteries, is the best way to reconcile the current differences on the subject.

It is clear that the ordination of women in the offices is an issue here. In the UPCUSA the ordination of women is a must. That is why many congregations leave that denomination. In *The Presbyterian Journal* of February 11 the Rev. Roy Bergquist, pastor of the Riverton Heights Presbyterian Church in the Seattle presbytery of the UPCUSA, writes an article under the heading, "When It's Time To Depart." Basically, it conveys the remarks he made at a meeting of that Presbytery. Someone asked: "How did we ever get to this point of a church separating from the denomination? Somewhere we failed to communicate or to understand the seriousness of the problem." Pastor Bergquist replies:

The communication was there. We have written to the presbytery expressing our feelings on various issues. We have stood our ground on homosexuality and lesbianism. We have let our position be known as to the ordination of women elders.

A request was made to the General Assembly not to force this ordination of women elders upon the churches, and this was discussed at the presbytery.

But the General Assembly was not willing to listen.

Not only were we turned down, but a stronger action was taken, telling us that we must ordain women elders whether we liked it or not . . .

This past year the General Assembly took an action to force individual members and churches to go against their consciences. At the same time, action was taken to insure that all properties would be held as belonging to the denomination — making it impossible for any congregation to withdraw with their property.

There is a parallel here with what happened in the days of the Secession and the Doleantie in The Netherlands, as well as in the court cases about church properties in the days of the Liberation. Also then there was much fighting about the possessions, which a liberalizing, unfaithful church would not give up. Further, the author was asked how it made him feel to betray the denomination. His reply was:

I was stunned! In no way have I betrayed the denomination. If a betrayal has occurred, it is the United Presbyterian Church that has betrayed the evangelical conservative element of the denomination.

We have not changed. It is the United Presbyterian Church that has moved, not us. Let me give you a little background:

Back in the year 1923, the United Presbyterian Church was solidly true to the Word of God. In 1923 the General Assembly adopted a series of statements to be subscribed to by officers: 1) I believe the Bible to be the inspired, inerrant Word of God; 2) I believe that Jesus Christ died in my place on the cross; 3) I believe in the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; 4) I believe in the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ; 5) I believe all the miracles recorded in Scripture.

All who were ordained to the ministry had to agree to these truths.

But not all agreed in those days already. On the contrary, many disagreed. The United Presbyterian Church then already was not that "solidly true to the Word of God." The liberal movement was strong. Let us read on:

By December of that year there had been such a rebellion — originating in the seminaries — that a document was drawn up, subsequently signed by some 1,300 ministers, rejecting the position of the Assembly. Known as the Auburn Affirmation (after the headquarters of the committee which drew it up), the document said that you do not have to believe these things in order to be a Presbyterian pastor. Yet, the denomination still held to the Westminster Confession which said all of these things . . . But

OUR COVER

Spring scenery in Nova Scotia.
(Photo Courtesy of Nova Scotia Communications Information Centre.)

only a few years later, in 1936, many left under Gresham Machen and formed the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. And one of those who left, Frances Schaeffer, has said, "The generation of those who first give up Biblical inerrancy may have a warm evangelical background and real personal relationships with Jesus Christ so that they can 'live theologically' on the basis of their limited-inerrancy viewpoint. But what happens when the next generation tries to build on that foundation? I am saying that whether it takes five or fifty years, any denomination or parachurch group that forsakes inerrancy will end up shipwrecked. It is impossible to prevent the surrender of other important doctrinal teachings of the Word of God when inerrancy is gone"

Listen to what I read in the issue of *Monday Morning*, for September 8: "*Our Bible is our guide, but it is not our only, one, final answer* [author's emphasis]. If it were, it would not be necessary for the Holy Spirit to be with us always as our teacher and our guide. In the time of judgment, we will not answer to the Bible; we will answer to God."

The author does not agree with a statement like that. Neither do I. It is misleading. As if we may separate the Holy Spirit and the Bible! Christ Himself always said: "It is written." The apostles' last and basic proof of the truth of their teachings and preachings was: it is written in the prophetic Word. As so often before in the history of the church, also now again, many liberals and charismatics "use" (misuse) the Holy Spirit with His guidance, as they see it(!), to give a "religious" basis to their *own self-conceived* ideas and opinions that deviate from the Word of God that is written, in the Bible.

In the same issue of the Presbyterian Journal another issue is written about. We read:

In its second review of the case of the Rev. Mansfield M. Kaseman, the United Presbyterian (UPCUSA) Permanent Judicial Commission has upheld the minister's acceptance by the Presbytery of National Capital-Union, declaring that Mr. Kaseman's theological answers before the presbytery "were not denials of the doctrines" of the church.

Mr. Kaseman has become a controversial figure in UPCUSA circles by reason of his alleged denial of cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, including the deity of Christ.

A first appeal from his reception by the union presbytery (which includes both UPCUSA and PCUS churches) was returned by the Permanent Judicial Commission with an order that the presbytery examine Mr. Kaseman fully

Concluded the commission: "While answers to some questions may appear to be weak, or less than wholly adequate, we reaffirm the principle that we

are not to substitute our own judgment for that of the lower judicatory, which is best able to judge."

An observer of the proceedings told the *Journal* that a strong consideration appeared to be the fact that in ministerial vows a candidate is not bound by the doctrines of the church but is rather expected to be "guided by" them.

And so we have here a proof of what Dr. Schaeffer said: When the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Bible is not maintained, other doctrines of the Bible are denied as well, also about the person and the work of Christ. And when a denomination allows ministers and others to deny the inerrancy of the Bible, they also allow them to deny those other doctrines. The consequence is and must be: separate from those who are not of the church. Reform and return to obedience to the Word of God: take no part in the works of evil, the works of the devil, the lies of Satan, the false prophecy. "Come out of her, My people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues," Rev. 18:4.

Therefore, it is no wonder that we see congregation after congregation separating from the UPCUSA and the PCUS. Let me give an example here. In *The Presbyterian Journal* of March 4 it is reported that:

The separation here [Dallas, Texas, J.G.] of a prominent congregation of the Presbyterian Church US (PCUS) from the denomination has prompted quick action by the Presbytery of Grace Union to remove the congregation's leadership and begin legal action to seize the property.

In a special called meeting on February 15, the congregation of the Casa Linda Presbyterian Church voted 285 to 104, with 30 abstentions to separate from the PCUS. One week later, on February 22, some 335 members of the congregation signed a petition for another special meeting to seek admission into the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

And in the same *Journal* of March 11 we read:

By a vote of 668 to 61, the Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church here [Knoxville, Tennessee, J.G.], the largest congregation in Knoxville Presbytery (PCUS), has voted to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church US

It is anticipated that Cedar Springs will look to the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) for its future membership.

In this way of speaking of the membership of a congregation in a denomination we see the difference between the Reformed Churches and the Presbyterians: with the latter the whole denomination is the church, while the local congregations are its

members. We say that that is not correct. Every local congregation is body of Christ and fully church of Christ. And the local churches now can form a federation of churches; the name, then, is, e.g.: the Canadian Reformed Churches, and not: the Canadian Reformed Church. It might also have helped many local churches that now separate from the PCUS', in claiming and maintaining their own properties, if they would have had our form of church federation, instead of the Presbyterian organization. Then the local church is also the legal owner of its own property, and not a presbytery (that is comparable with a classis, although a presbytery is permanent,

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ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

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

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Faber
Managing Editor: W.W.J. VanOene
Co-Editors: J. Geertsema, C. Stam

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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.

ATLANTA, GA (RES NE)

A delegation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) has joined the merger talks now underway between the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES). The background of these talks is a suggestion made a year and a half ago that the PCA, the RPCES and the OPC drop traditional merger negotiations and seek to effect one church by having the RPCES and the OPC simply join the PCA on the basis of that church's existing standards. Earlier the RPCES had agreed to the viability of the invitation.

Many differences need settling, however. A position paper, giving a comparative listing of these differences, has been prepared by the Rev. Carl Bogue, PCA pastor from Akron, Ohio. Included in it are the attitudes of the denominations on such subjects as qualifications of missionaries and their support procedures; temperance; the parity of elders; church-state relations; terms of service on denominational committees; and the role of deacons and trustees. All three churches will consider this spring their further involvement in the merger plans.

TRENTON, MI (RES NE)

American Presbyterianism, which already is represented by some ten different denominations, will soon have another, according to an announcement released by the Association of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches.

In an "open letter" addressed to "all Presbyterians," the Association,

composed at this time almost entirely of congregations that have withdrawn from the United Presbyterian Church USA (UPCUSA), has announced its intent to form "a denomination which is solidly Biblical, Reformed and relevant to the times in which we live."

As reported in *The Presbyterian Journal*, unspoken but explicit in the concerns of the association, whose steering committee is headquartered in the First Presbyterian Church here, is the lukewarm if not hostile attitude of existing denominations to frankly charismatic churches and especially churches with women on their governing sessions.

The open letter refers to "a denomination which allows local church to elect its own officers, whether they be male or female — neither mandating women to serve nor forbidding them . . ."

It also refers to "a denomination which allows for all the gifts of God's Spirit to be exercised within the context of God's revealed Word under the authority of the session."

A "constituting convention" is scheduled for March 24-25 in St. Louis, Mo., according to the Rev. Calvin Gray, moderator of the steering committee and pastor of the First Church here.

MEMPHIS, TENN. (RES NE)

The Presbyterian Church US (PCUS) and the United Presbyterian Church USA (UPCUSA), after years of negotiating hope to vote to unite in 1981.

Admittedly often postponed in order to seek the most propitious time, a 1981 affirmative vote would be followed by ratification by the presbyteries of both denominations and a final consummating general assembly vote in 1982.

One of the key provisions of the plan of union would be a quota system comprising "all ages and of all ethnic minorities" as well as women to the membership of every church session and diaconate.

NEW YORK (RES NE)

Last June, the Russian Orthodox priest Dimitri Dudko, who is considered one of the foremost Christians struggling for freedom in the USSR, made a strange televised confession of anti-Soviet activities. A report from the Moscow-based Religion in Communist Dominated Areas (RCDA) sheds some light on

the strange circumstances of this confession.

Following his arrest in January 1980, Father Dudko was held in prison for two months, after which he was transferred to a hospital where he spent nearly four months under "medical" treatment. After his television confession he was transferred to a location about 40 km from Moscow where some of his "spiritual children" (Christian followers) visited him and witnessed his strange behaviour, such as greeting his guests at the door dressed in his underwear, then failing to acknowledge them and going to bed. Upon his return to Moscow he "acquired" a "secretary" who appears to be linked to the KGB.

Father Dudko's spiritual influence has made a tremendous impact within the Soviet Union and abroad. His "dynamic, frank and inspiring" sermons dealing with vital issues of the Soviet people gained him many followers, several of whom are members of the Soviet intelligentsia.

MONROVIA, CA. (RES NE)

Both in terms of personnel and finances, Protestant Missions from the United States and Canada are flourishing. According to the recently published 12th edition of the *Mission Handbook: North American Protestant Ministries Overseas*, the total number of missionaries from Canada and the United States reported in 1979, including all short-termers, was 53,494. Career missionaries numbered 35,861. The income from all agencies has exceeded one billion dollars and now stands at \$1,148 million.

C. Everett Koop, a devout and active evangelical, has been appointed deputy assistant secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and is expected to become surgeon general after passage of a bill lifting a technical ban against anyone aged over 64 years, 29 days, from holding the post.

The Philadelphia surgeon, known to his friends as "Chick," has been considered for months by the Reagan administration as a top choice for the post.

Koop holds a number of honours for his medical contribution, including the French Legion of Honour, France's highest civilian award, presented in 1980 . . . By his own admission, he is "not the most popular

PRESS REVIEW — Continued.

while a classis is not) or the denomination.

Not all separations, however, are separations in the right direction. In the *Journal* of February 25 we read some news that comes from Trenton in Michigan:

American Presbyterianism, which already is represented by some ten different denominations, will soon have another, according to an announcement released here by the Association of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches.

In an "open letter" addressed to "all Presbyterians," the association, composed at this time almost entirely of congregations that have withdrawn from the United Presbyterian Church USA (UPCUSA), has announced its intent to form "a denomination which is solidly Biblical, Reformed and relevant to the times in which we live."

Unspoken but explicit in the concerns of the association, whose steering committee is headquartered in the First Presbyterian Church here [Trenton, J.G.] is the lukewarm if not hostile attitude of existing denominations to *frankly charismatic* [italics mine, J.G.] churches and especially churches with women on their governing sessions.

The open letter refers to "a denomination which allows the local church to elect its own officers, whether they be

male or female — neither mandating women to serve not forbidding them..."

If I understand it well, then this charismatic denomination is not against women in office in the church. So women in office is not the reason for separation. The Holy Spirit leads in new ways, I suppose they claim, even when it is in conflict with the Word of the Lord, of which honest liberals have clearly admitted that it does not allow women in office in the church when we listen to its literal wording and meaning.

Our report has become long enough. In a future issue of *Clarion*, I hope to pay attention to efforts to come to a merger between the separated churches.

One Way to Get and Keep Our Schools

One thing yet I would like to take over. It comes from "the Editor's Desk" of *The Presbyterian Journal* of March 18 of this year, and it struck me. I hope it also does strike the readers of our magazine in a positive way:

Oh yes. We almost forgot. In Richmond, Ill., someone paid his tithe to the First Baptist Church with a condominium. On a "Great Day of Sharing" in behalf of the

church's Christian school, members also gave sterling silver tableware, a Honda mini-bike, five lakefront acres, several feet of copper tubing, two gold watches, 50 bushels of wheat and a 3M copying machine, among other things. The condominium, we understand, is ultra-modern, two bedroom.

With such a love and such an attitude towards church and school as both belonging to and being for the Lord, our churches and schools would not have any financial problems. Although we must not forget the two pennies of the widow either. Seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness. Let your treasure be in heaven. And the other things — food and clothing and so on — will be added also.

J. GEERTSEMA

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Please contact the clerk of
your local church if you want
to obtain a copy.

INTERNATIONAL — Continued.

physician in America." The reason is his strong prolife stand. In 1979, he and evangelical philosopher Francis Schaeffer toured American cities with a film-lecture seminar entitled "Whatever Happened to the Human Race?" which discussed the moral, ethical, and biomedical issues involved with abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, and related subjects. (CT)

* * *

The Scriptures are news in Communist Europe. Items: The Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia has obtained permission to print 100,000 copies of a recent Czech Bible translation (Protestants were allowed to print 60,000 copies in each of the last two years). Using paper and binding materials supplied by the United Bible Societies, the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate is printing 15,000 books of Psalms and 25,000 shorter Bibles this spring. There are no complete Bible commentaries in the Russian language, but the first volume in a translation of William

Barclay's commentary on the New Testament came off the press in January. Project sponsors — the Baptist World Alliance and the Mennonite Central Committee — have approached Soviet officials for permission to import the 17 volumes. (CT)

* * *

Fearing too few votes for a constitutional amendment, abortion opponents in Congress are considering a "prolife bill" instead. The legislation would leave the Constitution untouched, but legally deem human life to "exist from conception." The sponsors say abortion would then mean taking human life and could not be constitutionally protected. Critics call it "a backdoor attempt to amend the Constitution." Senator Jesse Helms and Representatives Henry Hyde and Romano Mazzoli are sponsors of the bill. The strategy behind this move is simple. The constitutional amendment requires a two-thirds majority in each house — support that doesn't exist. The new bill requires a simple majority, and sponsors believe they can achieve that. (CT)

ENSCHEDÉ (ND)

It seems that in Enschedé a careful beginning has been made to contact between the Reformed people and the Netherlands Reformed (Nederlands Gereformeerde) people.

That was brought about by a number of articles written in their respective bulletins by the Reformed minister Dr. R.H. Bremmer and the Netherlands Reformed minister drs. O. Mooiweer.

Rev. Mooiweer proposed in one of his articles to convene a combined meeting of his region (classis) Zwolle/Enschede and the Reformed classis Enschedé. That meeting was then to investigate "what possibilities exist to seek closer relations."

Dr. Bremmer then spoke about this matter with his Consistory (Enschede-East) and his local colleagues. "All those with whom I talked were in favour of contact," he writes in his bulletin. But such a combined meeting of classes did not seem to be the proper way to anyone. They rather wished to see the whole matter taken up locally.

vO

Twin Sisters Celebrate

On purpose we have waited with inserting a report on the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the institution of the Church at Fergus. It is proper, we think, that the reports from both twin sisters (Brampton and Fergus) should appear in the same issue of *Clarion*. It was on January 15, 1956, that the institution took place. In Fergus the commemoration of that fact took place on the anniversary date, in Brampton two days later. People whose birthdays are on the same day enjoy their birthdays more when they celebrate on different days.

The church building was practically filled when Fergus' minister requested the assembly to sing Psalm 48:1. That was the theme of the whole evening, as may also be evident from the reading of the following Scripture passages: Psalm 48, Psalm 122, and Rev. 21:1-5. Prayer was offered after that, followed by a welcoming address.

In that address it was pointed out that we are together to celebrate. And although we do not forget what men and women have done in these past twenty-five years, what we have

done, we are speaking in the first place about what the *Lord* has done. Glorious things are said of the Church of the Lord. Scripture is full of praise for Jerusalem. But when we ask what we have to tell the next generation (Psalm 48), the answer is clear: Tell that this is *God!* He is our God for ever and ever.

What is the reason why we love the Church? Is that because we have such a large part of our work invested in it? Why are we happy when we are invited to come and go along to the courts of the Lord? Is that because we can meet friends and relatives and have a cosy get-together? No: Because of the house of the LORD our God we shall seek the good of Jerusalem and gladly accompany the multitudes when they go there.

The reason every time is: see what the LORD has done. *He* is our guarantee and Keeper.

The apostle John saw the heavenly Jerusalem *descending* from God: it is an everyday event and occurrence; that points to the heavenly origin of the church; it also points to the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit: it is only because strength and

protection come down from heaven day and night that we are still what we are and may continue in that same way.

Those who had come from sister-churches, either as delegates or as interested members, were welcomed especially.

* * *

The singing of Psalm 89:1 and 7 followed, after which Mr. J.K. Riemersma gave us an historical review of the history during the past twenty-five years, and even from before the date of the institution.

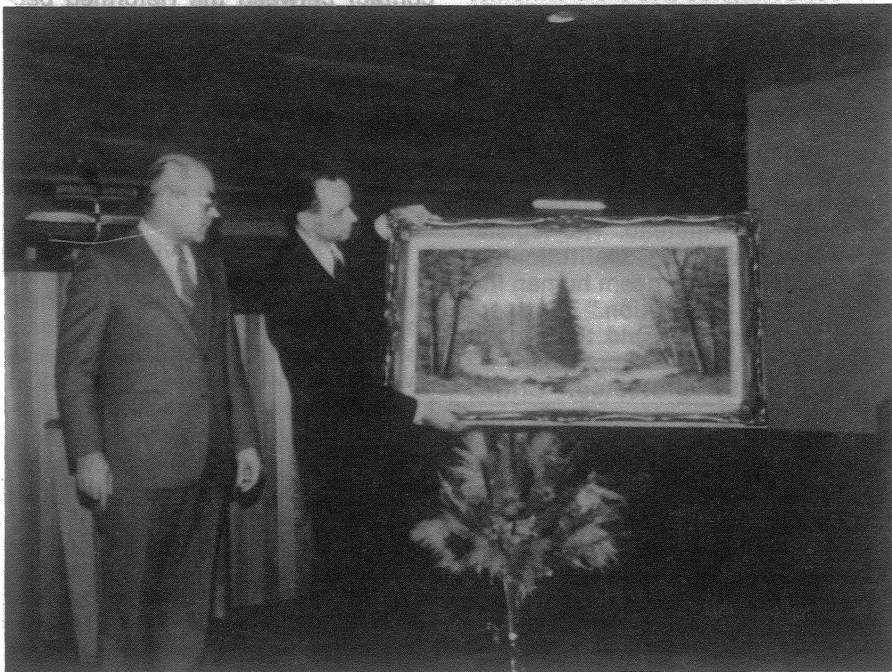
However interesting it would be to quote extensively from this review, we realize that this is only a report on the evening, not a description of the history.

Twice a request was sent to the Orangeville Consistory for permission to institute a Church at Fergus, and the second time it was granted. That was in the fall of 1955. On the date of institution the Congregation numbered 56 members, of whom 27 were communicant members. Via 100F Hall, Scout House, and basement on the property purchased in 1962, we have come to the present meeting facilities: a sufficiently large auditorium, meeting rooms, babysitting room, pipe organ, and ample parking space. Rev. Kingma was the first minister, followed by Rev. VanBeveren, who, in turn, was succeeded by Rev. VanOene. The growth of the Congregation can be seen from the need either to expand or to institute a second church (the latter course was chosen, and Guelph was instituted), and, some years later, from the enlarging of the auditorium and the addition of meeting rooms. On the date of the 25th anniversary the membership stood at 414, of whom 170 were communicant members.

* * *

The choir "Te Deum Laudamus" treated us with a few well-sung pieces which were greatly appreciated.

It was time for messages received and for delegates to speak. Both Rev. G. VanDooren and Rev. H. Scholten sent a letter since they were not



Mr. M. VanGrootheest (left) and Mr. J.K. Riemersma (holding the painting).

able to attend. From the Rev. P. Kingma a message was received via telephone, which was read. Rev. VanBeveren was present with his wife and one of his daughters, and he could speak for himself. Mr. C. Walinga reminisced on the past, and delegates from sister-churches conveyed their congratulations on behalf of the Consistories that delegated them. The delegate from Brampton was greeted especially, since we both celebrated our birthdays on that day. And the delegate from Orangeville complained about the fact that that Consistory had delegated the youngest elder, whereas via Fergus, through the institution of the Church in Guelph, Orangeville, in fact, had become a grandmother. The letters or telegrams which had been received from sister-churches were also read.

Our Young Women's Society gave an imitation of a choir practice, but when they sang "The Church's One Foundation," it appeared that the practice had paid off.

After the singing of Psalm 122:1 and 3, we listened to a musical interlude, with Mr. J.K. Riemersma at the organ and Mrs. H. Bultena on the recorder.

Our Women's Societies (or was it all the societies?) presented us with two beautiful copper vases containing dried flower-arrangements. Recently, namely, as a result of a breakdown of the heating system on a cold night, our two plants froze and gave up the ghost. What we received now was neither susceptible to colds nor artificial and should be satisfactory for everyone, including those who object to artificial flowers. There was still some money left, and this was handed over to the chairman for the purchase of items to his liking to brighten the walls in the meeting rooms.

* * *

The Women's Societies presented us with an historical tableau. The sisters that took part had sewn dresses or obtained dresses which fit the time in which those persons lived whom they represented. A commentator on the pulpit gave us further information and description. After some introductory remarks, the ladies entered one by one at intervals. They portrayed, successively: Catharina van Bora, Luther's wife; Idelette van Buren, Calvin's wife; Betsy Groen van Prinsterer, wife of the well-known statesman in The Netherlands who defended the Seceders; Christina

Continued on page 143.



100F - Hall.



Scout House.



The old parsonage.

Brampton Celebrates

1956 – 1981

"Give thanks to God rejoicing, because the LORD is good."

It was with the singing of Psalm 107:1 and 4 that the Brampton congregation and their guests started the evening of Jan. 17 to praise God for His blessings and guidance in the twenty-five years since Jan. 15, 1956, when the Brampton church was instituted.

The chairman, br. J. Kottelenberg, opened this meeting by reading Revelation 1 and leading in prayer.

For this occasion the gym of Huttonville Public School was rented, since we knew that our own church building just would not be able to hold everyone. This was a wise move, for even the large gym was almost too small for the assembly of almost 200 people.

In his opening address, the chairman especially welcomed all those from neighbouring churches.

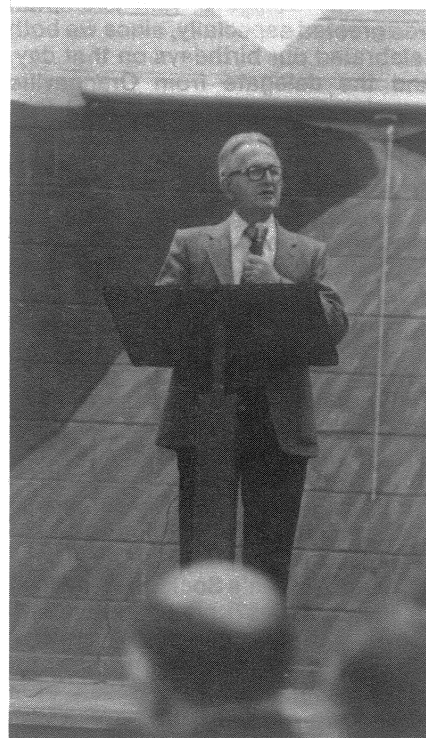
Some of them came from as far away as London and Smithville. He thanked the committee for helping to organize the evening and expressed the hope that it would be an enjoyable one for all. A former member, br. B. Nobel, who now lives in Winnipeg and therefore could not be present, was thanked for preparing the advertisement and map which was placed in the year-end issue of *Clarion*. Undoubtedly, this made it easier for our guests to locate the school.

We were thankful that the Rev. G. Van Dooren was able and willing to address us on this occasion. With interest we listened to his version of the events leading up to the institution of Brampton and Fergus, churches which were still part of Orangeville when he arrived in Canada. Since Brampton has had a minister for only about nine years out of the twenty-five, the Rev. Van Dooren preached many times in Brampton. He was always well-informed about the Brampton congregation and therefore could tell us about the happy and unhappy occurrences in our twenty-five-year history.

Prior to the choir's singing, its chairman, br. J. Wanders, gave a short history of the activities of the choir. Then the choir sang two psalms which were also sung in the first year the choir was formed: Ps. 150 by M.L. McPhail and Ps. 116 by G. Jellesma, both in Dutch. It was gratifying to see the younger members trying so hard and succeeding so well in singing in a foreign language.

Sr. C. Stieva, who represented the women's society, gave in a poetic form the history of the society: from when it started together with the men many years ago up until the present.

Br. P. Schoon did a lot of work searching through the archives and church bulletins to pick out the highlights of our church history. Attentively, we all listened as we heard familiar names being mentioned. It was almost eight years before Brampton received its first minister, Rev. D. de Jong. We again experienced the thankfulness when we received him and the sadness when he left us for



Edmonton. At that time also many families moved to other congregations or left the church.

That same thankfulness was also experienced when Rev. C. Van Dam became our second minister, seven years later. We remembered the joy of opening our own school with Toronto shortly after Rev. Van Dam left.

The young people displayed their individual talents by giving a short poem on the aims and accomplishments of the society for each letter or number in "25th Anniversary."

The choir sang two songs again: "Song of Ruth" by J. Eilers, and "Who is on the Lord's Side" by C. Roberts. The latter was a song especially fitting for the occasion and very beautifully sung.

Letters and telegrams were received from our former ministers and former members congratulating us and wishing us the Lord's blessing in the future. Representatives from five neighbouring churches also came forward to congratulate us on behalf of their respective churches. They were as follows: Rev. Mulder of



Toronto, br. K. Knol of Orangeville, br. G. Vis of Fergus, br. Harsevoort of Burlington-West, br. Smouter of Burlington-East. A letter was also received from the church at Guelph.

Elder J. Tenhage spoke a few words of thanks. He thanked all who organized the evening and participated in making the evening an enjoyable one. He then asked br. W. Sikkema of Burlington-East, one of the elders twenty-five years ago, to close the meeting with thanksgiving.

A social hour followed the official gathering. It was good to renew old acquaintances. We had a good evening together. If able to count our blessings over those twenty-five years, we can only say that the Lord did bless us exceedingly.

TWIN SISTERS

CELEBRATE — *Continued.*

Johanna Van Raalte; Pietje Baltus; Suze van Hall, wife of Anne Maurits Cornelis van Hall, the lawyer who courageously defended the Seceders before the courts and who, alas, passed away at an early age; Maartje Greijdanus; Mrs. P. Kingma, and Mrs. M. VanBeveren. Mrs. VanOene closed the row in person.

The whole presentation was very well-received, and contributed considerably to the "success" of the evening.

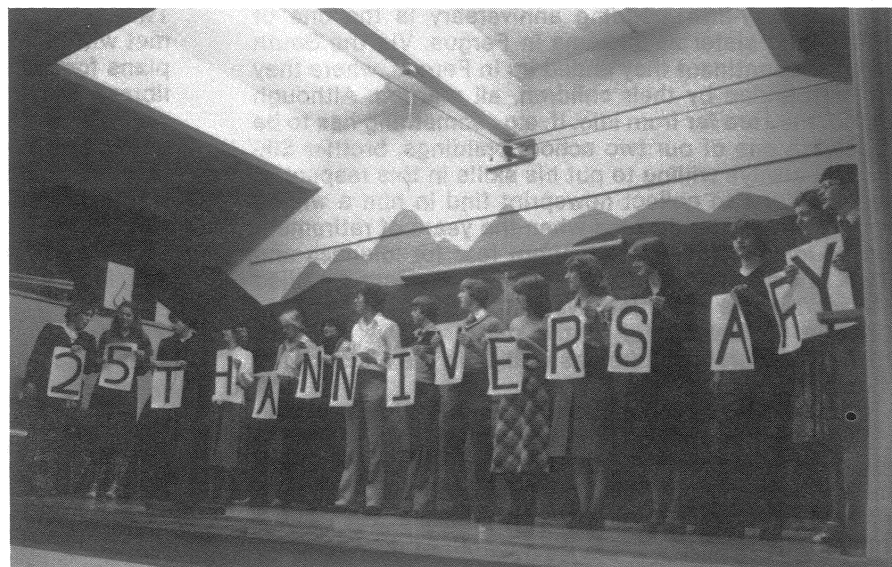
A point which was not mentioned specifically on the agenda was a presentation to Mr. J.K. Riemersma. For all twenty-five years since the institution he has faithfully accompanied the Congregational singing, sometimes alternating with others, sometimes for a long time as the only organist. On behalf of the Congregation, Mr. M. VanGrootheest presented him with a painting to show the Congregation's appreciation for the faithful service.

The singing of Psalm 150 was the second-last point of the agenda. The last point was closing with prayer and thanksgiving, for which Mr. C. Walinga, the chairman of the first Fergus Consistory, had been asked.

After that, we sang "God Save the Queen" and "O Canada," upon which a social hour followed where "old acquaintances" were renewed, and old memories recalled.

Let me conclude this report with the sentence which I find at the end of the historical review: "May our thankfulness be reflected in our lives as we continue together as the congregation of Fergus."

VO



news medley

Just recently I was thinking, "There are not many couples to be congratulated with a fortieth or forty-fifth wedding anniversary nowadays. Then *Clarion* came, and there one fortieth, one forty-fifth, and one fiftieth wedding anniversary were announced. Two of the couples I know fairly well; the third couple I know only very superficially. Let us start with the last one.

In Carman brother and sister G. Vandersluis will celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary on April 23rd. Fifty years is half a century, and when we realize that, the blessings become the more evident. It is that age at which people say — when you wish them many more years in the grace and favour of our Father — "There won't be many more years; we just receive every day gratefully out of His hand." We do wish our brother and sister precisely that, and do add the wish that there may indeed be many more days.

The forty-fifth wedding anniversary is the one of brother and sister K. Sikkema in Fergus. Via the South American continent they ended up in Fergus, where they are surrounded by their children, all married. Although retired, they are far from idle. If, e.g., something has to be painted in one of our two school buildings, brother Sikkema is always willing to put his skills in this respect to work. Actions to collect newsprint find in him a willing participant. It is a blessing when the years of retirement can be looked forward to without fear for idleness and when, once those years are there, the days can be filled with worthwhile activities. We wish them that they may continue to feel useful in the midst of the circle of children and grandchildren as well as in the midst of the Church.

Thus we have come "down" to the fortieth wedding anniversary: the one of brother and sister L. Selles, in Hamilton. What shall I say about them? Their names are well-known throughout the Churches and there is no Convocation or College Evening at which Mrs. Selles has nothing to say and to present on behalf of the Women's Savings Action. Rev. Selles was one of the first ministers coming to Canada and stayed in Chatham all those years. The choice for the chair of New Testament at the fledgling College was obvious: Rev. Selles had already given proof of ability in the field of New Testament studies, and he was chosen to fill the created vacancy. I still hear him say, however, at the Synod of Orangeville 1968, "If I cannot remain a minister of the Gospel, I won't accept the appointment." Throughout his whole ministry, Prof. Selles has displayed that pastoral concern which is still characteristic for him. And although the character of his work during the last thirteen years does not bring him into continuous direct contact with the membership, he has remained totally interested in what is going on and loves to talk with people when he is conducting a service somewhere in Ontario.

That I speak mostly about my brother and colleague in the ministry does not mean that I neglect or slight the help and support as well as the other activities of Mrs. Selles. We like teasing each other, and I shall not abuse my position as writer of the medleys by telling all sorts of things, for this is one of the few occasions when she cannot take revenge. And it would not be fair to put her at a disadvantage, at least not on this occasion.

On behalf of the membership I wish Prof. and Mrs. Selles many more years together and also express the desire that they may be enabled to continue working towards the upbuilding of the Church of Christ. I do not doubt that many will come to the reception which will be held in the Hamilton church building, as announced in *Clarion*.

We now turn our attention to the news from the churches; I mean, the *other* news from the churches.

Above I referred to the work of the Women's Savings Action; let me, therefore, continue with our sisters and their activities displayed in supporting various worthwhile causes, mainly Churches and Schools. Of both we have an example this time: The Burlington West Consistory "acknowledges the gifts of the Women's Auxiliary; carpeting in Room 5 and also several other things like new towel racks which have been donated by this fine organization." And the Smithville School Board reports, "The Ladies' Auxiliary received permission to install carpet in the classrooms. How could permission be denied when they pay for it? Even cleaning it in the future is promised if it becomes necessary."

We are not through yet with Burlington West.

Two weeks ago a few members of the congregation met with the librarians of various societies to initiate plans for the establishing of a central congregational library. Such a library would benefit the societies as well as the entire congregation in that it would eliminate unnecessary duplication of books and be able to cover a broader range of subjects. Many details will have to be worked out by the library committee (yet to be appointed) and between them and the societies. Another meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18.

We are not through with Smithville either.

"This week," the Rev. Stam writes, "(and part of next week) I hope to be in The Netherlands in order to make necessary arrangements for our forthcoming leave of absence. Among other things, housing and study-programming need to be discussed." For those among our readers for whom it is a dark saying what I quoted from the March 15 *Family Post*, it be said that the Consistory of Smithville gave the Rev. Stam a year's leave of absence to go to The Netherlands to continue his studies. The family won't leave before the beginning of the summer, I understand. It is the first time that I hear of a minister receiving leave of absence for other purposes than for finishing writing a thesis. For a minister it is nice when a Consistory can do that, and I think that not a few among our ministers wished they had received such an opportunity. What I don't understand, however, is the fact that Smithville dares to come to Classis South with the request for pulpit supply. If a Consistory thinks that it can let their minister go for a whole year, they should not put part of that burden on the sister-Churches. That is my opinion.

The Orangeville Consistory decided to change the term of office for the elders from four years to three years. This decision will take effect after May 1981. That it will take effect after May 1981 is because new office-bearers will have been ordained by then, and it is never wise to change horses in midstream.

We don't have much other news from either Ontario or Manitoba or British Columbia. That leaves us Alberta. There the activity is found nowadays anyway, isn't it?

The day draws closer on which Edmonton will have grown into two Churches. Even before these lines have reached you it will have become a fact. Are you interested

in knowing how many members each Church will have? At a Consistory meeting a few requests were dealt with from members who for various reasons asked for permission to belong to the "other" Church once the split has become effective. Some requests were granted, others were denied. The final outcome was that the one Church (NE) numbers 349 whereas the other church (SW) numbers 347. Isn't that fair?

Most of our particulars from Alberta come from Calgary this time. It seems that Calgary's minister is getting younger instead of older. That's what I concluded from the following passage, "Recently I joined the Friday night swimming in Mount Royal. There were 11 Canadian Reformed young people, myself included and 5 other people in the pool."

Another piece of personal information is the following. "At the University of Calgary I received permission to take part in graduate studies, leading to a Master of Arts degree (Religious Studies). This is on the ground of my study-record at the Theological College in Kampen, and work done last year." It is about time we see a different kind of hood when we look at the gowned personalities.

Calgary is also considering changes in liturgy. They will be discussed at a Congregational meeting after the discussion within the Consistory has been completed. It is all very provisional, and nothing may come of the various elements which are mentioned or suggested. There are some among them which I applaud; there are others of which I am somewhat scared since it seems to me to go into the direction of that which we can find all around us, whereby the specific character of the Reformed worship may be endangered. I know that antiquity should not be considered to be on a level with the Word of God, but I also know that the liturgy as we have it has been in use for many, many years and decades, if not centuries. I am convinced that there must be good reason for changes. Thus I make my remarks as a contribution to the discussion, hoping that they may be useful in coming to a good, well-considered, truly Reformed conclusion.

The first proposed change is one with which I wholeheartedly agree. "The first change is to have announcements, which are not part of the worship service, made *before* the Votum and Salutation." We don't have that (yet) but I would be all in favour of following that suggestion. When, on the eve of Synod Smithville, I conducted the service there, I liked it very much that I had to make the announcements before the Votum. The Congregation was still seated. After that the invitation to rise was given. I did that with these words, "Let us now all rise before the Lord." As our readers may know, I don't like the words, "Lift up your hearts to the Lord," for what is actually meant is, "Will you please rise?" Then we should say that and not something else. When the announcements are made before the votum, it becomes clear that they are not part of the service. The only exception I could think of would be the announcements regarding ordination of office-bearers and in matters of discipline.

I am less enthusiastic about another suggestion, "Such announcements could be accompanied by a welcome to visitors. If a visiting minister leads the service, the serving elder would do this and also introduce the minister." The latter part seems to me more like introducing a speaker at a meeting. And for whom is the minister to be introduced? In what manner? Do members of the Churches who take an active interest in all affairs of the Churches not know the ministers in our midst? I do not think that following this suggestion would emphasize

the Reformed character of the worship service, nor even the character of the worship service as such.

Another element may be new for Calgary, it is something which we have had for a long time and not only we; it is also customary in other Churches: "A second change would be to have the response of the congregation to the Salutation not first interrupted by announcing the song. It is on the board and will be sung right after the salutation."

Another suggestion is to change the place of having the Apostles' Creed read or sung during the services in the afternoon. The Apostles' Creed is a "response of the people to God's Word. For that reason this receives a different place. It was felt that a better place would be after the sermon."

"We added a few more points for discussion, namely a suggestion to sing some psalms in turns; to say as congregation 'Amen' after prayers; to have the Scripture reading in the P.M. service done by someone else than the minister."

Are we getting the institute of "voorlezer" back? If that is the case, there would be no objection. If not, I fear that such practice would detract from the Reformed character of the service for which the Congregation comes together "to learn God's Word" which is preached by one called for that specific task.

Bear in mind, dear readers, that the above points are only thoughts that come up, suggestions that were made, and no decisions by the Consistory or firm indications of the direction into which the Consistory wishes to move. We should not be afraid of searching for new ways and means by which we can make everything in our church life more meaningful. Not every change is to be disapproved of. On the other hand, we should watch out that we do not let ourselves be influenced by what we find round about us and see to it that we maintain the Reformed character of the coming together as a Congregation: it is not a meeting of likeminded souls nor a gathering together to edify one another; it is the meeting of God's people with their God, a listening to His voice, a learning anew what the Spirit says to the Church.

We'll keep you posted.

From the Calgary bulletin we also learn the following. "Letter Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey regarding a national mission news advising us of their decision not to go ahead with this, due to high costs and other reasons." I don't want to say something about it every time I read a few lines dedicated to it, but I still cannot understand why in The Netherlands *seven* "sending Churches" plus their mission aid societies can have *one* periodical informing the brotherhood of the things concerning the mission and why here in Canada *two* "sending Churches" cannot have that. If Toronto can have a printed *Mission News* and when that, apparently, is not too expensive for them, would the cost become prohibitive if Toronto and Surrey (and Hamilton) cooperated in this? Sorry, I still can't see it and without mentioning it every time will keep working towards one periodical.

A last item from Calgary's *Calgary Tower*. "From correspondence with the X. family in Indonesia it became clear that they have started to hold meetings every Sunday with about 20 people from two compounds where they live, to listen to God's Word." May it be blest.

P.S. I did not forget my geography. When you read in the previous medley "Close to Watford we find Lincoln," you should not blame me for that; my copy had "London" instead of "Lincoln." Maybe someone in Winnipeg is more interested in Lincoln than in London?

vO

Which Way Blows the Wind ⁽²⁾

Let us now turn to the covenant child or adult who may not have the normal intelligence and is slow in most respects; the *mentally retarded* child or adult.

In almost every congregation there has been or presently is a person whom people classify as mentally retarded. When people encounter a mentally retarded person, they often look at him as if he is dangerous because he looks funny. He might have too big a tongue that continually can be seen. The face may be proportioned differently than that of the average person. Sometimes the person may stare at you for a long time causing you to feel very uncomfortable. Mental retardation is just what the label indicates. It is a slowing of the mental development in comparison to the development of the average individual. Mentally retarded children and adults are harmless with respect to their desire to kill people. We usually classify the mentally retarded into three separate categories: the educable, trainable, and severely/profoundly retarded.

The educable retarded child can be very similar to the learning-disabled child or person. He may have perceptual deficits; he may be easily distracted. He cannot retain information that is not very meaningful to him. He learns best by much practice and then review again after awhile. An educable mentally retarded person can be extremely sociable and also desirous of acceptance by others. He may know, however, that there is something different about him or that he is slower. If he goes to school, he starts out more slowly than the rest of the class and will progress more slowly than the rest causing him to fall further and further behind. Thus he may end up at least 40% slower than the rest at the end. This does not mean that it definitely will be so for all individuals. No. With an appropriate program and materials, they may be just like a low-average person. Mental retardation is not always an incurable, chronic illness. The mentally retarded need as many opportunities in life as we can give them; their world is fairly restricted as it is, and therefore the opportuni-

ties may not be as prevalent. They do have their niche in the world, their tasks to be carried out as formulated in God's plan.

The trainable retarded are even slower in their pick-up of information. They will develop at a rate of one-fourth to one-half of that of the average child or person. Most often, schooling that can be followed by an educable retarded child is too high in quality and abstraction for the trainable individual. He needs much more training in self-care and in developing independency. By the time he is grown-up, the person may be very slow in walking, may do one thing for a very long time, will probably like television a lot, but, above all, have a general attitude of cheerfulness if the environment is positive towards him.

What happens at home to the mentally retarded? What do the parents have to cope with?

First, parents have to be ready for any upset or out-of-routine thing from their child. He may suddenly drop his fork noisily onto his plate while a discussion is going on. He may have a sudden temper outburst causing attention to be drawn towards him in a negative way. He may not wish to get out of bed in the morning and go to work due to something that had happened the day before — something he didn't like. Or he may suddenly take off, out of the door, and onto the middle of the road, causing his mother to be greatly distraught.

Parents may also have too high expectations of their child. The child can only do a certain amount at a time as he develops in school. We cannot expect a trainable mentally retarded person to have a high-ranking job, nor an educable mentally retarded person to go to college. Parents have to be aware of this. Furthermore, they should, on the other hand, not have too little expectations either. The child may have language, speech, physical/motor impairments. They should help him develop better patterns so that he will be able to benefit as much as his potential will allow.

As mentioned earlier, mentally retarded people are generally slower

in their development and their reactions. Once they have something in their heads, they will not let go of the idea very easily. If they are angry, they will stay angry, because that sticks with them in their brain and continues to circulate in a vicious circle. The more one tries to fight against an individual's idea, the less the person will give in. In fact, the person will become so stubborn that there will be no way that he will adjust to reasoning for quite a long time. Therefore, the better method is to let it simmer for a while and/or try to talk the way out of that vicious circle. Parents will have to use simple illustrations to show what they mean, preferably something that he can relate to in his every-day life. It will take much time, but especially patience, on the part of the parents or whoever is involved with the mentally retarded person. Parents really have to know their limits and what a child can handle at that particular moment.

Trainable mentally retarded individuals are also very affectionate. This is especially true for adults. The same goes for severely and profoundly retarded. If you would walk into an institution with this classification of people, and the institutionalized know you a bit, they will come up to you and show you many of the things that they have acquired in the past number of months, if not years. They may show them to you again and again. They desire to have personal attention, especially as they grow older and/or may not be able to communicate with people very well. I have worked in a center for severely and profoundly mentally retarded. I would walk up to their main rooms, (since bed- and living room was one big room) and go see one or more particular people whom I had for my cases or had just happened to establish an acquaintance with. If I would go to just one of them, there would be at least six around me wanting to know whom I wanted to see, and at the same time they would show me (if they could) a comb, mirror, or maybe a quarter that they had received from a relative or for their accomplishments at work. Television was one of the greatest things to have, since they would not be able to read. (These were adults over eighteen years old.) They would watch television for hours, even though they perhaps did not know what exactly was going on in the program. No matter who they were, 98% of them were happy and content with what they had. Some even received letters from their

relatives and would show them proudly to others. Another pleasure that they had was going to the hairdresser. They would be very proud that they had had their hair waved or cut. It was a very important event for them. They were happy, even though their relatives may not have been in for years.

We may not forget or intentionally neglect the children that God may have given to Christian parents as their own. If the mentally retarded child is in an institution, the parents should still keep in contact with them by going there every two weeks or so, if at all possible, or have a relative go there as an alternate. The responsibility, however, continues to be with the parents, even though the individuals may have had to become wards of the state.

What about the severely or profoundly retarded? What about those who have to sit in a wheelchair all day in diapers although they are adults? Yes, they, too, should have the same attention and communion of saints as the average individual where possible. The mentally retarded may not be able to communicate, or even look at you while you are there. Do not let this turn you off! They may be so severely debilitated that it might take years of routine coming and going before they may recognize that something is missing if you do not come. That is also part of a Scriptural life-style. "Ye are the light of the world." This can be easily forgotten if one does not see the results. But do we have to see them? No, we don't. Maybe someone else will or maybe the results will not be seen at all. We should try to do these things in faith. Difficult? Yes. For some it may be extremely difficult; for some easier. No matter what, if the opportunity is there, try and try again.

This is one way in which office-bearers can help their brothers and sisters. It is excellent to go on a home visit, knowing that the brother and sister have children or close relatives with mental problems, large or small. There is nothing wrong with that. It is highly recommended. To get a true picture, though, it may be wise to help them in this more practical way: showing involvement, getting an idea of the amount of patience, control, and faith it takes to accomplish a seemingly endless and possibly dissatisfying task. We should remember, "More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character pro-

duces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom. 5:3-5).

Never expect too much. Big accomplishments are not for those with less potential. We should not judge according to what we can do but judge according to what the individual can do. Big things are made from little things. A little success can be a greater accomplishment than a big success. Each person has his own individual talents and abilities and will, hopefully, use them to the glory of God. That may be one of the most difficult things to see in a normal average person but may be more easily accomplished by the underdeveloped and less flexible. It is one of the great joys that we may let shine through to the parents.

Children like to compare themselves with others. If a child's friend can do well in soccer, he wants to be just like him. He motivates himself to achieve. Competition is high in every circle of people, especially if one is materialistically inclined.

Parents like to see their children grow up in a normal way. They like their child to be the very best in class. If a child has special talents he should use them appropriately.

A child is born from two healthy parents. The child does not appear to be quite normal. Or, after a few years, the child does not seem to be functioning in the same way as his brothers and sisters or the child across the street. What is the reaction of the parents?

How would you feel if your child unexpectedly fell on his head and became severely retarded? No matter how Reformed a person you are, you would be shocked! You would ask yourself and God, "Why me? This cannot be true. It's impossible that something like this would happen to our family." Consternation would fill up your life . . . for a while.

Then you may say, "Oh, if I would just have been there; or if that driver would just have swerved a bit more to the right, my child wouldn't have been hit."

To be continued.

J.W. VAN DER JAGT

Psalm 33

1. Re - joice ye in the LORD, O right - eous,
 To praise is come - ly for the up - right.
 Sing him new songs with strings and psal - tery;
 Praise him with harps and voic - es bright.
 Just - ly he has spo - ken, Truth and
 love be - to - ken All the works he willed.
 E - qui - ty he treas - ures, Earth is
 with the meas - ures Of his good - ness filled.

2. His mighty word has made the heavens, Stand in awe, and hear Him.
 Their blazing hosts are in His keep. When God spoke 'twas done;
 The waters of the sea He gathers; When He gave His orders
 In store-house rooms He hoards the deep. Earth's remotest borders
 Let the earth then fear Him, Then stood firm anon.

PRESS RELEASE

of the Classis of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Alberta and Manitoba, held Feb. 17, 1981 at Edmonton.

Preparations for the Constitution of Classis. The Chairman of the convening church, the Church at Neerlandia, invites us to sing Ps. 84:1, 6. He also reads this psalm with us after which he leads us in prayer. With a few words he welcomes both delegates and visitors. Of the latter usually a fair number turn out. The chairman then brings to our attention that two congregations in our region have several times called a minister to fill the vacancies, yet so far without the desired result. He expresses the hope that the Lord may provide for these congregations. In the meantime the delegates of the Church at Neerlandia have checked the credentials. They report that all credentials are found to be in order, and that all delegates are present as per credential.

Constitution of Classis. Classis is constituted. As executive officers for this Classis are appointed the brothers, Rev. B.J. Berends, chairman; Rev. D. deJong, clerk; Rev. J. VanRietschoten, vice-chairman. The Rev. B.J. Berends takes the chair.

Adoption of the Agenda. The agenda is adopted and contains the following items:

REPORTS

The financial report of the treasurer and the inspection report on the archives of classes are not available at this time. The treasurer and the Church at Barrhead are requested to report to the next Classis.

Audit report on the books of the classical treasurer is tabled. The books are in order.

The Committee for aid to needy churches reports that the Church at Calgary is increasingly becoming self-supporting. For this year this church requests aid to a lesser amount than last year. The amount asked for is \$3,020.00. Classis decides to grant the Church at Calgary their request and to send a letter to the deputies to that effect. Classis also discharges deputies of work done and thanks them.

By this time we have met from 8 till 10 o'clock and have good hopes that we can finish the remaining business in the morning. We decide that it is safe to adjourn and enjoy the hospitality at the homes of our Edmontonian brothers and sisters. We sing to the Lord Ps. 111:5, then the Chairman adjourns the meeting till 9 a.m. Wednesday. The morning session commences with the singing of Ps. 72:1, 9 and the reading of Col. 1:1-20.

— A delayed roll-call will later on show that all members are present. Since it is Rev. Berends first time in the chair, he is forgiven the oversight —

The Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry report that no

applications for support had been received by the Committee.

Pulpit-supply for vacant churches. From the Church at Neerlandia there is a request reading, ". . . To continue the previous arrangement for pulpit-supply until the next Classis. As it stands today, we have no official answer yet from General Synod on our appeal." Classis decides to grant the Church at Neerlandia their request with the understanding that this church take up contact with the Rev. D. deJong, as soon as possible after this church has received official communication from General Synod.

There is also a request for pulpit-supply from the Church at Barrhead. Classis decides to grant this request and draws up the following schedule, March 1, S. deBruin, Barr. 2x, Neerl. 1x; March 29, J.D. Wielenga, Barr. 1x, Neerl. 2x (L.S.); April 26, D. deJong, Barr. 2x; May 24, S. deBruin, Barr. 2x (L.S.); Neerl. 1x; June 21, J.D. Wielenga, Barr. 1x, Neerl. 2x (L.S.); July 19, D. deJong, Barr. 2x (L.S.); Aug. 16, S. deBruin, Barr. 1x, Neerl. 2x; Sept. 13, J.D. Wielenga, Barr. 1x, Neerl. 2x (L.S.); Oct. 11, D. deJong, Barr. 2x (L.S.); Nov. 8, S. deBruin, Barr. 1x, Neerl. 2x; Nov. 15, B.J. Berends, Barr. 1x, Neerl. 2x; Nov. 22, J. VanRietschoten, Barr. 2x, Neerl. 1x.

Correspondence. A letter is received from the Church at Edmonton. This church informs Classis: "It is with gratitude to the Lord that the Church at Edmonton may inform you of its decision to split the present Congregation into two independent churches on April 1, 1981. . . . There seems to be a general agreement that the above decision will be for the spiritual well-being of the whole Congregation. However, since the above decision is something entirely new for the Church at Edmonton, Council turns to you for advice as to what may be expected from Council by Classis Alberta-Manitoba regarding this development. "The Church" at Edmonton then submits detailed information to Classis as to what preparations have been made by the Church at Edmonton to come to this splitting of the Congregation.

Classis is satisfied with the information given, and decides to advise the Church at Edmonton to proceed with the splitting of the Church at Edmonton into two "newly formed sister churches" as per April 1, 1981. The consequence of this is that, the Lord willing, at the next Classis we may expect delegates from the Church at Edmonton North East and the Church at Edmonton South West.

Appointments. The convening church for next Classis is the Church at Winnipeg. This Classis is to be convened for Nov. 17, 1981, at 8 p.m. in Edmonton North East. Suggested officers for that Classis are, Rev. S. deBruin, chairman; Rev. J. VanRietschoten, clerk; Rev. B.J. Berends, vice-chairman.

The Church at Edmonton informs Classis that the *classical treasurer* brother E.C. Koning Jr. has resigned because of his moving to the province of British Columbia. Upon proposal of the Church at Edmonton Classis appoints brother A.J. Nauta as treasurer for Classis Alberta-Manitoba. Classis decides to send a letter of thanks to the outgoing and a letter of appointment to the incoming treasurer. The address of brother A.J. Nauta is, 5415 - 109 A St., Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 3C3.

As Church for Auditing the Books of the Classical Treasurer is appointed that church at Edmonton where the treasurer does not reside.

As Church for the Inspection of the Archives is appointed the Church at Barrhead.

As Church visitors are appointed the following four ministers, S. deBruin, D. deJong, J. VanRietschoten, J.D. Wielenga.

As Committee for Examinations are appointed the ministers D. deJong and J. VanRietschoten.

As examiners are appointed the ministers, D. deJong and J. VanRietschoten (sermon); J. VanRietschoten (Exegesis Old Testament and Ethics); S. deBruin (Exegesis New Testament and Deaconology); J.D. Wielenga (Knowledge of the Contents of Holy Scripture and Church Polity); Rev. B.J. Berends (Church History).

As Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry are appointed the brothers, C. Veldkamp (Edm.), S. Tuininga (Neerl.) and T. VandenBrink (Barr.).

As Committee for Aid to Needy Churches are appointed the brothers, W. Gortemaker, C. Poppe both at Wpg. and P. Groenwald at Carman.

As Delegates to Regional Synod are appointed the following ministers and elders, Ministers: B.J. Berends, D. deJong, J. VanRietschoten, Alternates: S. deBruin, J.D. Wielenga, Elders: S. Kok, L. Toet, W. Vogelzang, Alternates: E. Wierenga, A. Poppe, J. Jissink, in that order.

This Regional Synod is to be convened by the Church at Neerlandia. Time, April 1981, place, Edmonton N.E.

In the case no matters for the agenda will be received, Classis advises the Church at Neerlandia to postpone the convening of Regional Synod to Oct. 1981.*

Personal Question period is held.

Question period ad Art. 41 of the Church Order. Earlier Classis had decided to move this point of the agenda down to near the end. This was done to facilitate the visitors who were present at Classis. The Church at Carman asked advice in matters of discipline. Advice was given in closed session.

Censure according to Art. 43 of the C.O. The Chairman thankfully takes note that such censure had not been needed.

The *Acts* are read and adopted. The *Press Release* is read and approved. The ladies of Edmonton's hospitality committee are called into the meeting and receive our thanks for spoiling us.

Closing. We offer to the Lord our

thanks in singing in Ps. 92:1, 6 and in prayer. Rev. B.J. Berends leads us in the latter and then closes Classis at 12:30, just after noon.

For Classis,
J. VANRIETSCHOTEN

* The Church at N. just has sent out letters proposing the postponement of Regional Synod to Oct. 1981. JVR.

* * *

PRESS RELEASE

of the Classis Ontario South, held March 11, 1981.

1. *Opening.* On behalf of the convening church at Smithville, Rev. Cl. Stam opens the classis meeting. Psalm 34 stanzas 9 and 11 are sung. After he reads John 13:1-17, he opens the meeting with prayer. It is his hope that we do not "scrub one another's ears" but instead "wash each other's feet."

2. *Credentials.* The brothers from Watford examine the credentials. All the churches are duly represented. Some instructions are included.

3. *Constitution of Classis.* Owing to his forthcoming marriage, Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer is excused from serving the classis as assessor. Classis is constituted as follows: Chairman: Rev. M. Werkman; Clerk: Rev. J. DeJong; Assessor: Rev. W. Huizinga.

4. *Adoption of the Agenda.* The provisional agenda is adopted. The chairman speaks words of congratulation to Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer and to the Church at Watford in connection with the forthcoming marriage of Rev. DeBoer.

5. *An Appeal and a Report* from the Church at Chatham concerning the fund for needy students ad art. 19, C.O. This church appeals the decision of Classis Ont. South of May 28, 1980, art. 5B that support for a needy theological student include his family as well. Chatham wishes the support to be restricted to the student and his study needs.

A proposal to declare this appeal inadmissible, since it reacts on a decision of the Gen. Synod 1980 which has not officially reached the churches and which could not be evaluated by the churches is defeated.

After a break for a delicious lunch, the discussion is resumed.

The proposal of the Church at Chatham plus an amendment are defeated. Classis decides to continue the support as it has been given thus far.

6. *Instruction.* The Church at Smithville requests classical pulpit supply from July/81 to July/82, since this church will not have the services of an active minister for this period of time. The Church at Smithville should place this request on the table of the next classis.

7. *Question Period Ad Art. 41, C.O.* is held. The Churches at Chatham, London and Smithville request advice for matters of discipline and otherwise. Advice is given. The Church at Hamilton informs classis of a change in the borderline between the Churches at Hamilton and Lincoln (the DeWitt Road from Lake Ontario to the Niagara Escarpment).

8. *Personal Question Period* is held.

9. *Appointments.* The Church at Watford is appointed to convene the next classis to be held June 10, 1981 in London, starting at 10 a.m. The proposed moderamen are: Chairman: Rev. J. Geertsema; Clerk: Rev. M. Werkman; Assessor: Rev. J. DeJong. Rev. Cl. Stam is appointed to represent the classis at the wedding of Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer.

10. *Adoption of Acts.* These are read and adopted.

11. *Approval of Press Release* is given.

12. *Censure Ad Art. 43, C.O.* is not necessary.

13. *Closing.* The chairman speaks farewell words and then Ps. 130:3 is sung, whereafter the chairman closes the meeting with prayer.

For the classis,
W. HUIZINGA,
Assessor, h.t.

* * *

PRESS RELEASE

of the Classis Ontario-North, March 12, 1981.

1. After Christian opening, the credentials are examined and the Classis is constituted: Rev. J. Mulder, chairman; Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, clerk; Rev. W. Pouwelse, vice-chairman.

2. The agenda is established.

3. In closed session the classis deals with an appeal of a brother and a sister in Orangeville against the actions of the consistory of Orangeville. A decision is taken in this matter unanimously.

4. On behalf of the Church at Burlington-East the Rev. M. van Beveren reports, that progress has been made with respect to the archives.

5. The Church-visitations are arranged.

6. Preaching-arrangements are made as follows: Ottawa: Rev. J. Mulder: May 31; August 9; October 25; February 7. Rev. M. van Beveren: June 14; August 23; November 15; February 28. Rev. W.W.J. VanOene: June 28; September 6; December 6; March 21. Rev. R. Aasman: July 12; September 20; December 27. Rev. W. Pouwelse: July 26; October 4; January 17. Brampton: Rev. J. Mulder: May 10; January 10. Rev. W. Pouwelse: July 12. Rev. M. van Beveren: September 13. Rev. W.W.J. VanOene: November 8; May 9. Rev. R. Aasman: March 14.

7. The Church at Guelph asks the Churches to send the amount of \$2.00 per communicant member for the fund ad art. 19, C.O. (Needy Students) in due time to the treasurer of this Church.

8. In the question period ad art. 41, C.O. the Church at Orangeville asks and receives advice.

9. A request is received from the brothers C. Bouwman and R.G. Leach to set the date of the next Classis at the end of June, because they intend to ask permission to speak an edifying word in the Churches. This request is granted.

10. Preparation next Classis: Convening Church: Fergus; date Thursday, June 25, 1981; time 9 a.m.; Moderamen: Rev. R. Aasman, chairman; Rev. J. Mulder, clerk;

Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, vice-chairman.

11. No censure ad art. 43, C.O. is necessary.

12. The Acts are adopted and the Press Release is approved.

13. After thanksgiving by the Rev. J. Mulder the Classis is closed.

For the Classis,
W. POUWELSE,
Vice-Chairman e.t.

Church News

The Ninth Convocation and Twelfth Anniversary meeting of the College will be held, D.V., Friday, September 4 in Wellington Square United Church, 2121 Caroline Street, Burlington. Particulars will follow in due time.

L. SELLES,
Convener of the Committee
of Preparation.

* * *

The Faculty of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches invites students who obtain their B.A. degree or its equivalent this spring, to contact the Registrar with a view to the requirements for application.

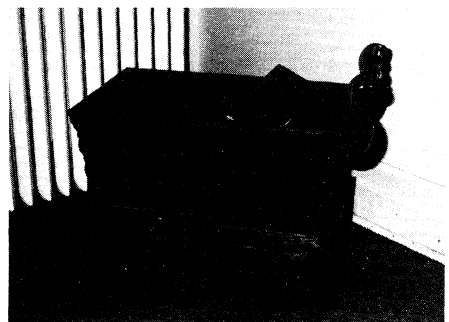
Students who graduate from high school and are considering to study theology after completion of an undergraduate program, are also requested to contact the Registrar to be advised as to the B.A. program which provides the best preparation for their future study at the College.

The Registrar, L. Selles
374 Queen Street South,
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 3T9

* * *

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

The library of the Theological College needed some boxes for book return. Br. C. Walinga of Hamilton, who used to be a wagon maker in The Netherlands, showed again his craftsmanship and skill. Here is an example of his products.



Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Mr. Editor:

It was rather surprising to me that recent letters to you by Mr. T.M. Veenendaal, a member of the Board, and Mr. E. Kampen, as chairman of the Board of the Canadian Reformed Teacher's College were fairly evasive on the issues I raised in the year-end issue of *Clarion*. Why did Mr. Veenendaal have to become personal and resort to accusations like "disturbing the true intentions" and accuse me of "the attitude of scorning attempts to establish Reformed institutions"?

It may not be known to many outside Ontario that I was chairman of a committee of the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies in Ontario responsible for the organization of the supplementary summer program of which Dr. J. Faber became the Director. The final program was presented last year. I had earlier resigned from this committee, and also as secretary of the League, because my term as Board member for our School in Burlington had expired. The twelve years of service from Board member to President was a most rewarding experience.

My heart is with any responsible effort to provide proper training for our teachers. I understand that with the arrival of Mr. Van der Ven the Teachers' College has taken a more practical approach, and that there will be a program offered for teachers who are already qualified to teach by the respective Provincial Governments. I am very pleased with this decision. The next improvement would be a better line of communication with the "grassroots." The Teachers' College needs everyone's support. I am still waiting for a meeting to be called in Burlington.

In closing, when I wrote my letter (dated October 25th, 1980) I never said I was against the Teachers' College. This letter may have erased any suggestion in that direction. I will therefore forgive Mr. Veenendaal's nasty remarks, and hope that in the future the organizers and Boards of good Reformed institutions give a little more credit to "the poor man on the street" like the undersigned.

Sincerely yours,
A.J. HORDYK

Dear Mr. Editor:

I was pleased that the editors of *Clarion* allowed A.J. Hordyk to express a dissenting opinion on the Teachers' College in the Christmas issue of *Clarion*. The reaction which followed (Mr. Veenendaal) was not unexpected, and I hope that Mr. Hordyk was able to brace himself for this kind of response. Veenendaal's disapproval of Hordyk's position is an example of the destructive way in which the Teachers' College is sometimes promoted among Canadian Reformed people. Any challenge to this "good Reformed cause" is quickly squelched by a barrage of judgemental statements which should effectively shame the opposition into silence once and for all. I have some trouble understanding how such a defense of the College can improve its stature and gain more support.

The Teachers' College is here to stay. What is not clear is whether a little bit more wisdom on the part of the guiding lights will persuade more people to contribute to the College cause without much resentment or great ambivalence. A good place to start would be for people like Veenendaal to hold their fire before taking aim at the likes of Mr. Hordyk who, in human terms, has a rather good track record in building Reformed institutions, and supporting "good Reformed causes."

H.C. VANDOOREN
Burlington, Ontario

Dear Mr. Editor:

May I have a little space to respond to your editorial "Sectarian Smithville?" in the March 13 issue of your magazine?

1. It should be made clear that my article was not, and was not intended to be, a *reaction* to Synod Smithville. I did not know that Smithville would do with the appeals I mentioned. I was not dealing with this particular Synod meeting, but only making some general observations about the Canadian Reformed Churches in general.

2. I am *very happy* about the action of Synod Smithville, and I'll be

the first to acknowledge that this action was not sectarian but catholic. That gives me joy and hope.

3. I am not a complete stranger in Jerusalem either, even in the Canadian Reformed Churches. I not only read *Clarion* and have pleasant and fruitful contact with my Canadian Reformed colleagues in Calgary and Coaldale, but I have also experienced quite a few things personally. That is why I wrote carefully as I did: "though not everywhere or in equal measure." But the fact that some people will be unhappy with Smithville's decision re the appeals, and the fact that it was very difficult to come to some kind of unanimity on the Neerlandia appeal shows that sectarianism is indeed a real threat. At least a couple of your own ministers have warned about that too.

4. The Christian Reformed Church made enough "sectarian" mistakes in the past too, with respect to the Canadian Reformed Churches. I acknowledge that and have written about it more than once.

Cordially yours,
J. TUININGA

Consulaat-Generaal Der Nederlanden CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

1 Dundas Street W.,
Suite 2106, Box nr. 2,
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z3

OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

COENDERS, Cornelis Jozef, geboren op 1 januari 1916 te Horst, naar Canada vertrokken in 1953.

HAAS, Cornelis, geboren op 3 februari 1916 te Den Haag, naar Canada vertrokken in 1960.

OWSIANICKI, Jozef, geboren op 16 januari 1916 te Polen, naar Canada vertrokken in 1951.

POELSTRA, S. laatstbekende adres te Toronto, Ontario.

RINGMA, Steven, geboren op 10 maart 1940, naar Canada vertrokken in 1965, laatstbekende adres te Beamsville, Ontario.

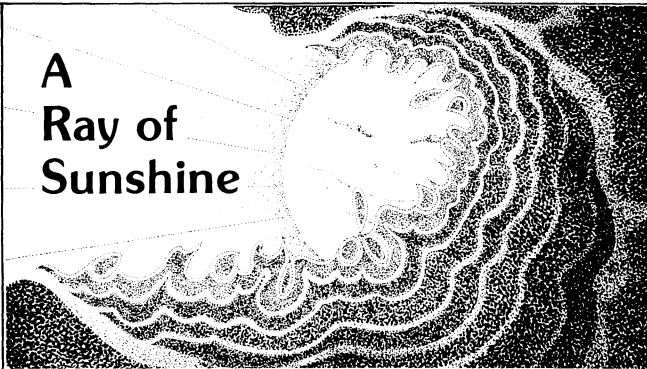
SMEELE, Pieter of Petrus, ongeveer 74 jaar oud, gehuwd met drie kinderen, naar Canada vertrokken in 1951.

TIEMESSEN, Johannes Gerardus Augustinus, geboren op 11 april 1942, naar Canada vertrokken in 1978.

UIJTENBROEK, Johannes, geboren op 12 oktober 1890 te Rotterdam, naar Canada vertrokken in 1920, laatstbekende adres te Montreal, P.Q.

De Consul-Generaal, voor deze:
MW. G. SCHNITZLER

A Ray of Sunshine



For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
Hebrews 5:12

When Calvin sent his "Institutes" to the King of France in 1536, he wrote a letter explaining why he had written the book. I quote part of this letter:

And I (Calvin) toiled at the task chiefly for the sake of my countrymen, multitudes of whom I perceived to be hungering and thirsting after Christ, while very few seemed to have been duly imbued with even the slender knowledge of him. That this was the object which I had in view is apparent from the work itself, which is written in a simple and elementary form adapted for instruction"

To us, the language Calvin is using seems very hard to understand. Our language is simpler. To clarify some hard words, I will put easier words in between brackets behind them. I would like to share with you some quotations from Calvin's "Institutes," because they contain a basic truth, which remains actual, and gives food for thought. How well do we really know ourselves?

"Self-denial has respect partly to men and partly (more especially) to God. For when Scripture enjoins us, in regard to our fellow-men, to prefer them in honour to ourselves, and sincerely labour to promote their advantage (Romans 12:10; Phil. 2:3), he gives us commands which our mind is utterly incapable of obeying until its natural feelings are suppressed, for so blindly do we all rush in the direction of self-love that everyone thinks he has a good reason for exalting himself and despising all others in comparison."

If God has bestowed on us something not to be repented of, trusting to it, we immediately become elated, and not only swell, but almost burst with pride. The vices with which we abound we both carefully conceal from others, and flatteringly represent to ourselves as minute and trivial, and maybe sometimes hug them as virtues. When the same qualities which we admire in ourselves are seen in others, even though they should be superior, we, in order that we may not be forced to yield to them, maliciously lower and carp at them; in like manner, in the case of vices (faults), not contented with severe and keen animadversion (criticism), we studiously exaggerate them. Hence the insolence with which each, as if exempted from the common lot, seeks to exalt himself above his neighbour, confidently and proudly despising others, or at least looking down upon them as his inferiors. The poor man yields to the rich, the plebeian to the noble, the servant to the master, the unlearned to the learned, and yet everyone inwardly cherishes some idea of his own superiority. Thus each flattering himself, sets up a kind of kingdom in his breast; the ar-

rogant, to satisfy themselves, pass censure on the minds and manners of other men, and when contention arises, the full venom is displayed. Many bear with them some measure of mildness so long as all things go smoothly and lovingly with them, but how few are there who, when stung and irritated, preserve the same tenor of moderation? For this there is no other remedy than to pluck up by the roots those most noxious (harmful) pests, SELF-LOVE AND A LOVE FOR VICTORY This the doctrine of scripture does. For it teaches us to remember, that the endowments which God has bestowed upon us are not our own, but His free gifts, and that those who plume (pride) themselves upon them betray their ingratitude. "Who makes thee to differ," Paul says, "and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. 4:7). Then by diligent examination of our faults, let us keep ourselves humble. Thus while nothing will remain to swell our pride, there will be much to subdue it. Again, we are enjoined, whenever we behold the gifts of God in others, so to reverence and respect the gifts, as also to honour those in whom they reside. God having been pleased to bestow honour upon them, it would ill become us to deprive them of it. Then we are told to overlook their faults, and not indeed, to encourage by flattering them, but not because of them to insult those whom we ought to regard with honour and goodwill."

In this way, with regard to all with whom we have communication, our behaviour will be not only moderate and modest, but courteous and friendly. The only way by which you can attain to true meekness, is to have your heart imbued with a humble opinion of yourself and respect for others.

* * * * *

On our birthday calendar we have:

Marinus Foekens,
Norfolk 1 South,
Southwestern Regional Centre,
Cedar Springs, Ontario

Marinus lives in a home for the mentally handicapped. Last year when he received so many cards for his birthday, the "Staff" of the home, rejoiced with him for all the attention he received. This year, the Lord willing, Marinus hopes to celebrate his 29th birthday on Easter Sunday, April 19th. Marinus loves music, babies, cards, and animals. Shall we make it a day of happiness for him, brothers and sisters?

* * * * *

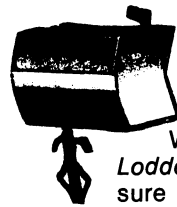
Arlene De Wit,
Barnston Island, Surrey, B.C.
V3T 4N2

Arlene lives at home, but attends school every day. She is able to see a little with one eye only. Her speech is also limited. She was very proud of all the cards she received last year. Arlene will celebrate her 20th birthday, the Lord willing, on April 23rd. Shall we make it a happy day for her again, brothers and sisters?

Send your requests, (with permission of the person involved) to:

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

our little magazine



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Nancy Lodder*. We are happy to have you join us. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver activities, Nancy. Did you have a good time on your birthday?

Congratulations on passing your music exam, *Lisa Lodder*. Keep up the good work! Thanks for the puzzle, Lisa. Is your little brother walking yet?

Hello, *Erica Blom*. It was nice to hear from you again. Did you enjoy your holiday? I see you're keeping a look out for signs of Spring. That's great.

Thanks for the pretty card and your good wishes *Jolette, Rosalinde and Arno Moeliker*. It was nice to hear from you.

You've been a real Busy Beaver, I see, *Darlene Lodder*. Thank you for a nice fat letter! Did you enjoy yourself during the holiday? What did you do? Bye for now.

Congratulations on a good report card, *Pauline Lodder*. Keep up the good work! I can see why you like to visit your cousin, Pauline. Did you have a good time on your sister's birthday? Thanks for the rhymes, Pauline.

Hello, *Karen Barendregt*. Thank you for the pretty card. It was nice to hear from you again.

Thanks for the puzzle, *Diane Smith*. I see you're keeping busy. Keep up the good work! Thanks for writing.

QUIZ TIME

Busy Beaver *Darlene Lodder* has hidden a very wise saying for us in her:

Dear Busy Beavers,

I have a kind of riddle for you today.

Which day do you think is the happier day — Christmas Day or Easter Sunday?

Do you think that's a hard riddle?

Maybe I can say it in a different way.

Then, I think, you'll know the answer right away!

Which was the happier day for the Lord Jesus — Christmas Day or Easter Sunday?

Now you know!

No, you're right, Christmas Day was not a very happy day for the Lord Jesus.

There was no room for Him in the inn.

And Herod tried to kill Him.

But Easter Sunday!

It was a Sunday of joy!

The Lord was alive again!

He had won the battle with Satan and death.

He rose victorious!

His work was finished.

He was the Lord of life.

Now He could go to His Father in heaven.

Now He could get a place ready there for all who love

Him.

What a happy, happy day Easter was for the Lord Jesus and His disciples.

And for us!

* * * * *

I thought you would like to read this stanza of the Easter hymn "Christ the Lord is Risen Today."

Love's redeeming work is done;

Alleluia!

Fought the fight, the battle won;

Alleluia!

Death in vain forbids Him rise;

Alleluia!

Christ has opened Paradise.

Alleluia!

* * * * *

BOOK LOOK!

This time we have a BOOK LOOK from Busy Beaver *Erica Blom*. She writes:

"I did get a book . . . called "The Flying Phantom."

Three boys; Tom, Carl, and Bert are out for summer vacation. They are involved in some mysteries. Someone is always by the water. Some policeman see him chase him but he is never caught. The boys meet their good friend Captain Brandenburg. Tom and his dog Scout and his friend find who the flying phantom is. They also find the place where he was always hiding. He is brought to jail and the boys are rewarded.

I find this book very exciting. I like all exciting books.

The author of the book is Piet Prins. I find all his books interesting.

CODE QUIZ

C - 15	E - 9
A - 8	L - 1
U - 6	H - 7
B - 3	V - 2
S - 10	T - 11
I - 4	R - 5
Y - 12	

3 9 1 4 9 2 9 5 10 8 5 9

11 7 9 11 5 6 1 12 5 4 15 7

Busy Beaver *Tammy Linde* has a Bible quiz where she wants you to:

FILL THE BLANKS

- Moses' mother was _____.
- Samuel's mother was _____.
- Samson's father was _____.
- David's father was _____.
- Solomon's mother was _____.
- Moses' wife was _____.
- Michal's father was _____.
- David's first wife was _____.
- Samson's wife was _____.
- Esther's husband was _____.