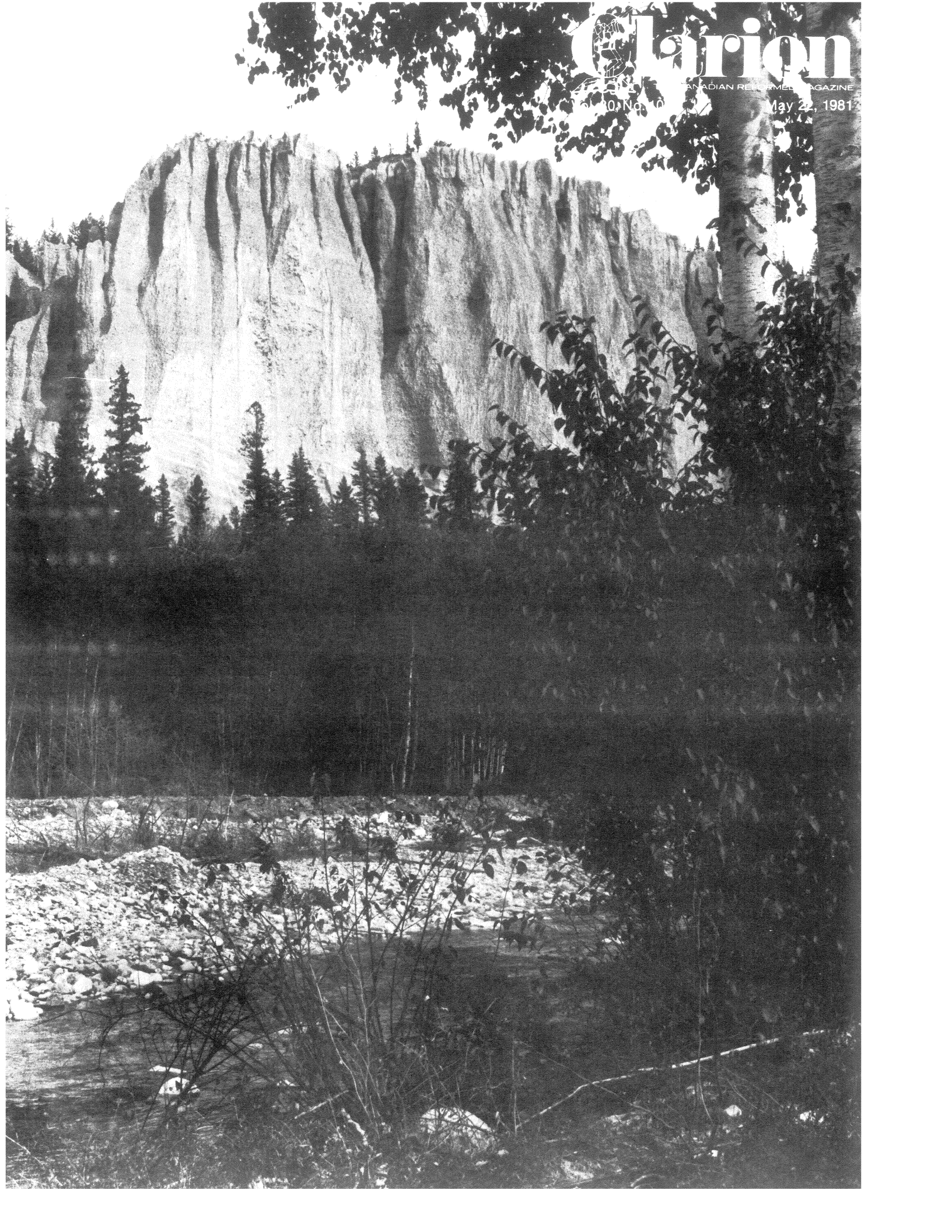


Clarion

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Respect for Synods

My editorials about General Synod Smithville 1980 of the Canadian Reformed Churches evoked some reaction. Some readers wondered whether my criticism would not undermine synodical decisions and the respect that our broadest assemblies deserve. Besides these general remarks I received a specific letter from the Rev. J. de Jong of London, Ontario, concerning the translation and interpretation of the first sentence of Article 9 of our Belgic Confession (see *Clarion*, April 10, 1981). The matter is worth dealing with in another editorial rather than in the cramped space of Letters-to-the-Editor.

First something about those general remarks. I was glad to hear them, for it gives evidence that *both* elements of Article 31 of our Church Order are alive and well in our churches. This article states that whatever may be agreed upon by majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order. The last clause is a safeguard against hierarchism in the Church of Christ. We may not consider councils, decrees, or statutes as of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all (Article 7, Belgic Confession). When ecclesiastical decisions do not agree with the infallible rule of Holy Scripture, we should reject them with all our hearts. The Church Order is the mutual regulation for the life of the churches within our confederation, and, because it expresses our basic agreement, its articles are mentioned in Article 31. They are a subordinate norm for all ecclesiastical decisions. Especially our older readers know how important this Article 31 was in the struggle against hierarchism in the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. Our sister churches were even called after this Article 31, because they had appealed to the right within the confederation not to consider settled and binding the doctrinal pronouncements and church political statements and actions in 1942-1944 that deviated from God's Word and the Reformed Church Order. It is not impossible that the necessary battle against hierarchism in the past would make some of us suspicious or over-critical with respect to all synodical actions and decisions. Church history shows us many examples of our reaction.

It is, therefore, good to be reminded of the other, and even primary, element in Article 31. Ecclesiastical decisions shall be considered settled and binding. This rule safeguards against independentism that forgets to acknowledge the communion within the Church of Christ. Individualism and a desire of false autonomy break up the unity and harmony in and between the local congregations. I like the Dutch saying, "Lieve(r) koekjes worden in de kerk niet gebakken." One cannot expect "rather cookies" in the church. If it is not proved to conflict with Holy Scripture or the Church Order, a decision is to be considered settled and binding, even if I personally would have preferred another decision.

Concretely speaking, I think that the Psalms and Hymns should be printed in the form in which General Synod 1980 has accepted them, and that the other part of the *Book of Praise* should be reprinted in the old version. An insertion can be added in which the liturgical forms are published according to the decision of General Synod. They have now been accepted for provisional and tentative use in the churches. These forms should be tried out in the life situation of the congregations. Liturgical forms cannot be tested only in a study room or at a consistory meeting. If a consistory has decided to test these forms by using them in the worship services, I will read them, although I have my own opinion about certain phrases. Let us not forget that synodical decisions are no laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked. Synod decided "thankfully to adopt the Psalms and Hymn Sections, with the understanding that room is to be left for changes, deletions and additions in future editions." If this is already said about the Psalms and Hymns, change is surely possible in the liturgical forms that have only been accepted for provisional and tentative use. Critical remarks about synodical suggestions concerning these forms do not undermine respect for ecclesiastical assemblies but are based on it. They are meant to serve the churches, and why should we be less critical when we discuss suggestions, actions, or decisions of our own church assemblies than we use to be with respect to others?

In the meantime I read a part of a report of the standing committee for the revision of the church book in our Dutch sister churches. The Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Canons of Dordt have now been modernized as far as language is concerned. It reminded me of the fact that Synod Smithville broke up our Committee on Translation and Revision of the Confessional and Liturgical Forms, but forgot to charge any of the new Committees to deal with the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. Such oversight will cause delay. In the Dutch report to the Synod of Arnhem we read: "Gebleken is dat incidentele en haastige veranderingen tijdens bespreking op de generale synode bij nader inzien vaak niet passen in het geheel. Zij vallen dikwijls uit de stijl en de toon van het totaal." Fragmentary and hasty changes which are made during discussions at a general synod often do not match with the overall style and approach of committee work. I thought, "Tout comme chez nous!" — although in The Netherlands standing committees have the privilege of the floor at general synods. It shows that general synods should be careful not to (re)do the work of committees. Only in important cases may a general synod use its right to make changes in the work of its standing committees. It goes without saying that a general synod is the responsible agency in adopting revised confessional and liturgical forms. J. FABER

Again Article 9 B.C.

As our readers probably remember, we compared the first sentence in Article 9 of our Belgic Confession in the present version, the draft of the standing committee, and the suggestion in the Acts of Synod Smithville 1980. Let me refresh your memory and place beside one another the present English text and the proposal of the deputies:

All this we know as well
from the testimonies of
Holy Writ
as from their operations,

and chiefly by those

we feel in ourselves.

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.

I defended that this sentence, inserted in the 1566 revision of the Confession, is nothing but an introduction that shows the division of material in this article. Because the second part of Article 9 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 or effects of Holy Scriptures. It speaks of the effects, operations, or actions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Further, the second part of Article 9 mentions the operations of the three Persons *towards* us. Therefore we may not press the preposition “*in*” and should certainly not change the expression to “*within* ourselves” as the church of London and Synod Smithville proposed. In summary, we discussed two issues:

- a. the insertion of the words “of the three Persons” instead of “their”;
- b. the rendering of “those (operations) we feel in ourselves” by “those actions towards us.”

As far as the first point is concerned, I defended the position that 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.” Now that I have the occasion to come back to this point, I would like to restore a printing error. In the list of Vonk, etc., I mentioned first of all the Latin text of our Confession of Faith, skilfully made up by Festus Hommius and published in the Acts of Dordt (1620). Although this Latin text is not an authentic text of our Belgic Confession — authentic are the Dutch and the French texts — it is of great value, because it was composed by a renowned Latinist who, moreover, functioned as clerk of Synod. Well, the Latin text speaks clearly of these Persons, also in the first sentence. Report 33 of the Christian Reformed Synod 1979 and Synod Smithville 1980 of the Canadian Reformed Churches are mistaken in this respect. The word “their” in the present text does not refer to the testimonies of Holy Scripture but to the three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The churches will do well to make this point clear in the upcoming revision.

With regard to the second point, I received an interesting letter from the Rev. J. de Jong of London, Ontario. It reads as follows:

Esteemed brother:

I read the recent editorial “Subjectivism in Article 9 of the Belgic Confession?” with interest, partly because of the references made to the submission of the Church at London. Since these matters are now being put into public discussion, perhaps I may be permitted to make some brief remarks concerning the editorial, particularly as it concerns London’s submission. In this way, our intentions might become a little clearer.

We obviously did make an error in quoting Article 9 as reading “feel within ourselves” rather than “feel in ourselves,” and we thank you for pointing this out. It was not, however, our intention to propose a change in the present text. In fact, we attempted to argue that, if there is no pressing reason to change the text, it ought to be left as it is. This is the approach London took with regard to all the proposed changes.

Since Synod Coaldale asked for a faithful rendering of the original text in an up-to-date and correct translation, London expected emendations to be made only on the grounds of language and style. Other churches could reasonably have been expected to feel the same way. Since the deputies took the text of the Synod of Dort to be the authentic text, we naturally expected that deviations from this text would only be made on philological grounds. We certainly had no idea that the deputies saw the possibility of a subjectivist misunderstanding in the present text of Article 9, Belgic Confession and that they considered this possibility great enough to alter the text. The Churches had no reason to expect changes of this type. I think you will agree that these type of changes, i.e. changes based on dogmatic considerations, in effect exceed the mandate of Synod Coaldale. In these cases, I feel it would have been more correct for the deputies to give the reasons for making the change in their report to Synod, rather than to expect Synod to ask for a verbal explanation of the proposal of the deputies.

With regard to the change that London was writing about, the editorial has not convinced me that the proposal of the deputies is an improvement of the present text. Did not the Synod of Dort ward off the subjectivist misunderstanding when they changed “in ons bevinden” to “in ons gevoelen”? Changing “feel in ourselves” to “towards us” not only removes stylistic variation from the article, but may also open the door to an *objectivist* misunderstanding that is greater than the subjectivist misunderstanding that the deputies are trying to ward off. Besides, I wonder if the English preposition covers the sense of the Dutch accurately enough.

In short, London’s point was that changes should be kept to a minimum, and only be made with great care and caution, in order to do full justice to the original text. That applies not only to this change, but to all changes, and all parties making them. This kind of an approach might just save a lot of work and trouble in the future.

Yours in Christ,
J. DeJong

Let me first of all express my appreciation for the work

done by the church at London and other churches — I remember Barrhead, Calgary, Cloverdale, Smithers, and Smithville — in checking the proposed revised Confessional and Liturgical Forms. Although theologians have their place within the churches, the confession and the liturgy belong to the congregations. My critical remarks about some suggestions should not discourage anyone. The standing committees are only helped by a flood of letters, and everyone who compares the first draft with later proposals will see how much input has come from those churches. Let us keep up this good work; the text of our confessional and liturgical forms is worth discussing thoroughly.

Rev. de Jong touches the point of a new translation or a change based on dogmatic considerations. The deputies have tried to keep this in mind. In their report to Synod sent to all churches, they drew attention to emendations in Art. 1, 4, 10, and 15 of the Belgic Confession and asked to consult the corresponding sister churches about these points. The remarkable thing is that the churches and synod hardly reacted to these emendations and that nobody disapproved of them. The deputies in our Dutch sister churches have experienced the same: One cannot give a new translation without noticing certain flaws or ambiguities in the present text. If you give your house a new coat of paint, you discover that somewhere a nail is missing and a board came loose. Would you not repair it? Further, the demarcation line between translation, interpretation, and emendation is not always clear. Was it an emendation or an interpretation or simply a translation when Hommius wrote about the three Persons?

Especially because Rev. de Jong writes about the translation or rendering of the preposition “in,” I was reminded of an intriguing parallel in Bible translation. We read in the King James Version the words that it pleased God “to reveal his Son in me” (Gal. 1:16). This translation is very literal; the Greek has the preposition “in.” But a dependable exegete like H.N. Ridderbos (New International Commentary) rightly remarks: “It does not mean to say that the revelation consisted solely of an internal experience. According to all the data, it also had an external-objective side As we see it, too much emphasis ought not to be placed on the internal character of the revelation and *to me*, or simple *me*, is preferable to *in me* as a translation.” The RSV follows the same reasoning. And nobody can deny that this is a matter of translation and exegesis. Nobody may accuse H.N. Ridderbos or the RSV of an arbitrary emendation.

Dutch is no Greek. But we have in the Dutch language a similar range of possibilities in the use of prepositions. Moreover, a language develops and the hues of words sometimes change. I read an interesting section in C. Vonk, *De Voorzeide Leer* III A, p. 252, and print it in the original Dutch language:

We weten dit alles zowel dank zij de bewijzen der Schrift als dank zij de werken van die personen en voornamelijk dank zij die, welke wie bij ons waarnemen.” Die laatste woorden zou men ook mogen vertalen door “die wij in ons gevoelen.” Maar ten eerste kan men hier het woord “gevoelen” tegenwoordig beter achterwege laten, omdat het in de ruime zin van “waarnemen,” gelijk het blijkt de Latijnse vertaling van Hommius, bedoeld moet zijn, tegenwoordig zelden meer gebruikt wordt; en evenzo kan men do woorden “in ons” tegenwoordig beter vervangen door “bij ons,” omdat ons tegenwoordige geslacht zulke woorden als “in ons” ook niet meer gewoon is op te

vatten in de brede zin van “bij en omtrent en jegens en in en aan en over ons,” maar ze voortdurend verenigt tot dat, wat in het binnenste eens mensen en dan nog weer zeer bepaald in z’n gevoel, gebeurt. Tot die enge betekenis nu mag men blijkens de geschiedenis van art. 9 zich hier geenszins beperken.

Vonk, therefore, takes the verb “feel” as “observe,” in agreement with Hommius’ Latin translation. And he replaces “*in ourselves*” and choose for “*at ourselves*” or “*with ourselves*,” because the present generation no longer reads them in the broad sense of “at and in reference to and toward and in and upon and over us.” Nowadays people are inclined to narrow those words down to that which happens in the innermost part of man and especially in his feelings or sentiment.

If I may be a bit nasty for a moment, I would say that the very fact that a whole consistory, including its minister, and sixteen members of a Synod, including eight ministers, transform “in” to “*within ourselves*” corroborates Vonk’s remark. Also my references to F.J. Los and Report 33 (see *Clarion*, April 10, 1981) make clear that a subjectivist misunderstanding exists.

The Rev. J. de Jong is of the opinion that changing “in ourselves” to “towards us” may open the door to an *objectivist* misunderstanding that is greater than the *subjectivist* misunderstanding that the deputies are trying to ward off. I fail to see the validity of his remark. We now already confess in the second part of Article 9: Moreover, we must observe the particular offices and operations of these three persons *towards* us. The Father is called our Creator, by His power; the Son is our Saviour and Redeemer, by His blood; the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier, by His dwelling in our hearts. Do we have there a door open to an *objectivist* misunderstanding? Can anyone give an example from the more than four hundred years of our confession’s existence? “Towards us” indicates a relation and closes the door to objectivism. Further, in what respect would an *objectivist* misunderstanding be greater than a *subjectivist* one?

I appreciate this discussion very much, for things should become clear. What does a minister tell his catechism students when he explains the first sentence of Article 9? I always refer to the Holy Scripture; it speaks in a twofold manner; there are separate Scripture proofs and there is the continual teaching of Holy Writ in its totality. The Bible shows us the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There is work in reference to us; there is our creation, our redemption, and our sanctification. There is God’s work *within* us — especially the sanctification — but it is not God’s only action and it is not even God’s first action. His first actions are outside of us; they are for us but not immediately within us. I cannot summarize it better than in the words of the draft that speaks of the respective actions of the three Persons and especially those *toward* us. I would not even object to an emendation as C. Vonk proposed: All this we know from the Word, namely, not only from a series of separate proof texts 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 (perceive) with (or at) ourselves. This is the way in which I always interpreted the opening sentence in Article 9. We can leave it in the present state, but why should we not use the opportunity and strive for better understanding?

If Rev. J. de Jong wants to continue the discussion, he is quite welcome.

J. FABER

Quebec Wants Levesque

"We are not an accident"

— Rene Levesque

The Quebec provincial election, held on April 13th, 1981, gave the ruling Parti Quebecois a stunning victory over the Liberal opposition party led by Claude Ryan. The P.Q. win was all the more impressive because at the beginning of the campaign it seemed a foregone conclusion to all political observers that the Liberals would easily win this election. Consider the facts that the P.Q. had lost the sovereignty association referendum 60% to 40% and had lost all of the eleven by-elections since it was first elected in 1976. Two public opinion polls held during the campaign had helped to prepare us for the possibility that Levesque might even win this election.

As it was, the Parti Quebecois won a crushing victory. Levesque's party won eighty seats in the 122-seat house, giving them an almost two-thirds majority. The Liberal Party took the other forty-two seats in the house that had twelve more seats added for this election. The Union Nationale, who won eleven seats in 1976, lost all of their remaining seats.

It will never be known exactly what caused the massive win for the P.Q., but it was certainly the result of a number of contributing factors. First of all, there was Rene Levesque's personal popularity and the general opinion that he ran a far more effective campaign than Claude Ryan did. Then there was a high level of voter satisfaction about the type of government the P.Q. had given Quebec. Some of the popular legislation that was brought in by the Levesque government includes:

- Bill 101, the language legislation that aims to make Quebec completely French, rather than bilingual;
- elimination of provincial sales tax on clothing, furniture, and shoes;
- partial no-fault auto insurance;
- controls on fund raising and spending by political parties.

Also despite the huge three billion deficit provincial budget, Levesque made a lot of expensive campaign promises, the most interesting of

which was a promise to give young couples \$10,000 towards the purchase of a home, providing they agree to have at least three children after moving in. You must admit this is a novel idea. It buys the votes of the young people and at the same time it does something about Quebec's declining birth rate; maybe Rene can achieve something the pope can't do!

Another contributing factor to the Liberal defeat was the unpopularity of Prime Minister Trudeau's constitutional plans in Quebec. Ryan has certainly made it known that he does not agree with Trudeau in his stand on "Unilateral Patriation." Yet, being a liberal and a fellow-Quebecer, Claude Ryan was sometimes forced to defend his Prime Minister, giving Levesque a chance to call him a lackey of Trudeau, and that hurt!

It is also generally assumed that the behind-the-scenes support of the eight premiers opposing Trudeau's constitutional package has greatly helped the re-election of the P.Q. All four of the Western premiers said after the election that the re-election of the Levesque government was "another reason to rejoice."

Of course, last but not least, it should be mentioned that one of the main reasons for his re-election must have been Levesque's successful reassurances to the electorate that he would not hold another separation referendum during his new term.

Where does Quebec go from here? Rene Levesque is right when he said after the election that the results had proven that the election of his party had not been an accident in 1976. The P.Q. had come to power then on a platform of independence for Quebec, and Mr. Levesque has never disavowed his separatist leanings. They have merely been put on the back burner for the time being, and they will surely come to the fore again sooner or later. It is still: *Maitres chez nous*" (Masters in our own house). The seven other premiers opposing Trudeau's constitutional plans differ greatly from Levesque. The seven want a strong federal state, Canada, consisting of strong parts, the provinces. The P.Q., however, wants a different and sovereign Quebec and will continue

to strive for it, although it will play it low-key for the time being.

It is ironical that Prime Minister Trudeau who has worked hard to keep Quebec in Canada is also partly to blame for the P.Q. victory through his policy of confrontation with the provinces.

It is a great comfort that we may know that the Lord reigns over all, no matter what the future may bring. May He guide the provincial governments and the federal government to rule in accordance with His will. May He also keep our country united from sea to sea.

A.C. LENGKEEK



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Ascension

When our Lord Jesus Christ was taken up into the heavens to receive and occupy the throne, two angels spoke a message to the disciples. They said: "This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven." The angels, as messengers of God, gave an *explanation* of God's *work* of salvation in the ascension of Christ.

We see constantly in the history of salvation that God's work and God's word are given together. It is often so that God first gives His Word in which He tells beforehand what work of salvation He is going to do for His people. The LORD announced the redemption out of Egypt as well as His giving the promised land to Israel through the prophetic service of Moses. The LORD also announced the return of the people out of the Babylonian captivity to the promised land under King Cyrus through His prophet Isaiah (45:1ff.). And in the prophecies of Isaiah we find that this fact — that the LORD announces His works of salvation long or shortly before He makes them come to pass — must convince the people that the LORD is the only true God, while the idols of the nations are but a piece of wood, or some silver or gold.

But the LORD not only shows Himself the true and faithful God in announcing His works of salvation (and of wrath) beforehand and then making them come to pass. When He does one of His great (beforehand announced) works, He also accompanies it with His proclaiming and explaining words. Here, too, we can refer to the exodus and also to the great wonder of the establishing of the covenant at Mount Sinai. Moses told the people all that was happening.

That the words of God accompany His work is very evident in the life of Christ Jesus. When He was born, according to the promises in the Old Testament, there were the heavenly messengers to announce and explain that birth to the shepherds, and through them to the people. When Christ rose from the dead again angels proclaimed and explained that fact full of salvation to the women, and via them to the disciples. How can sinful and so often

blinded people know what God is doing, unless God Himself tells and explains to them His deeds in His word? For us as creatures, and even more so as sinners, work and word of God must go together. We cannot understand the one (work) without the other (word).

The same gracious care of adding the word to His deed we see in the fact that the angels are present as servants of God and of King Jesus when they explain God's work of bringing His Son, our Lord, to the heavenly throne. They speak about what is happening: this Jesus has now been taken up to heaven. And they speak about the future: He shall come back in the same way as you saw Him go.

We learn here, in the first place, that Christ's going to the heavenly throne will be followed by a return to the earth. The ascension is only a beginning of His work in exaltation. Further, we learn that the way in which He went and will return is very important: the same way. What this way was and will be is told us in verse 9: "And a cloud took Him up out of their sight." I added to the translation of the RSV the word "up," for this shows better what the Greek text says. It is not so that, when Christ Jesus went up to heaven, a cloud came in between Him and the eyes of the disciples so that they soon could no longer see Him go up. That cloud did not have an intercepting function. That cloud came to function as a vehicle. Like the fiery wagon brought the prophet Elijah up to heaven, so the cloud took Christ up. He went with the cloud. And it is in that way, on the cloud, or clouds, that He shall return.

That is the message of the angels. And it is a very significant message. Before His death Christ Himself spoke about His return on the clouds. Addressing the disciples in His teachings about the "last things," Christ said that after the tribulation His sign will appear in heaven and that then "all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30). And later, when He stood on trial before the high priest and the Jewish council and had testified that He was the Christ, He added:

"But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64).

The first part of this last text refers to Psalm 110, where David prophesies about His Son Who will be king and priest and will be placed at the right hand of God. He is the great King-Priest of God. Ascension is ascension to the royal and divine throne in heaven. This is even more clear from the second part of this word of Christ about His coming as the Son of man on the clouds. For this part refers to Daniel 7:13, 14, which the high priest and the Jewish council must have understood very well. They knew the Scriptures!!

In this chapter we read first how Daniel, in his night visions, saw four beasts, four devouring monsters, four world powers, in their rebellion against God. They are instruments of darkness. And God will judge them. Daniel saw God like an Ancient of Days come as Judge, while books were opened. And the fourth beast was slain and destroyed. And then we read that, in his visions, Daniel saw that "with the clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of man, and He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed" (verses 13, 14).

A cloud took Christ Jesus up to heaven. Daniel's prophecy is fulfilled in Christ's ascension on the cloud. In that same way, on the clouds, He will come back as the King of glory. And in between that going and coming He has all power, all dominion, in heaven and on earth. His kingdom shall not be destroyed. God placed Jesus Christ, the Son of man, our brother, on the heavenly throne, there to rule until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet (Ps. 110). His dominion shall remain. The gates of hell shall not destroy His church, but shall be destroyed themselves, fully in the end, by Him, when He comes on the clouds. See also Rev. 1:7 and 14:14-16.

Now we understand the joy of the disciples when they returned from the Mount of Olives after Christ Jesus was taken up from them. They understood God's work in the ascension of their Lord. His ascension was the guarantee of the victory of salvation, and of the defeat of the powers of

press review

A PRESBYTERIAN PLAN TO "JOIN AND RECEIVE"

Some issues ago (*Clarion*, April 10), when I wrote about a merger plan between two large liberal Presbyterian denominations, the UPCUSA and the PCUS, I promised to give a Press Review also about efforts that are made to bring three conservative Presbyterian churches together. These three churches are the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) with about 80,000 members; the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES) with around 21,000 members; and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) with a little more than 11,000 members. The efforts started when the PCA sent out invitations to join them to other Presbyterian members of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Churches (NAPARC). (The Christian Reformed Church is also a member of this organization, but did not get such an invitation. This is probably due to the fact that, as Reformed Churches originating from The Netherlands, they have a different structure of church government.) *The Presbyterian Journal* of April 29, 1981, gives us lots of information about the plan for unity.

This plan of union is called the plan to "join and receive," because the invitation means that the other churches simply join the PCA and that the PCA simply receives and

takes up the other denominations. The RPCES, at its General Synod last year, reacted positively. As far as I remember, the General Assembly of the OPC did not really deal with the matter. The reader knows that the largest of the three, the PCA, is also the youngest: since 1974. Its churches are found very much in the East, especially the Southeast of the USA. Meetings between the committees of the PCA and the RPCES have been held since the middle of last year. Since the beginning of this year, the Committee for Inter-church Relations of the OPC joined the discussions. Some years ago the OPC and the RPCES have had merger talks which had no positive result because of objections especially on the side of the OPC to millennialist ideas (Millennium = the Thousand-Year Reign of Christ in an earthly Jerusalem) in the RPCES.

The Committees of the three churches have made a plan and sent a Report to the ninth PCA General Assembly to be held during the week of June 15-19 in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; and Recommendations for the 159th General Synod of the RPCES to be convened at Lookout Mountain, Tenn., May 22-28; and for the 48th General Assembly of the OPC which will come together in Beaver Falls, Pa., May 28-June 4. The Recommendations are more of a technical nature, about what to do regarding the boards and agencies of the

RPCES and the committees and agencies of the OPC when these churches join the PCA. From the Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Inter-Church Relations of the PCA as it appeared in *The Presbyterian Journal* I now pass on the following:

With gladness and gratitude to God we report that two sister denominations, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES), by action of the Synod, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), by action of its Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-church Relations, have answered our invitation, by expressing a sincere desire to pursue the possibility of a "joining and receiving" which will bring the three denominations into organizational unity under the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America. Further, we have discovered that these churches are fully committed to the Westminster Standards and Presbyterian polity. Though the representatives of each of the three denominations readily confess to various weaknesses and failures in their denominations, this committee believes that we are truly one in our commitment to obey Jesus Christ, the King and Head of His Church, who governs us by His Word and Spirit.

It is further reported that the three committees, at their last meeting together, came to a joint statement. I will quote the whole "joint statement," except for the introductory paragraph. It reads:

With joy and thankfulness to the Lord of the Church we recognize that our churches have a common and sincere commitment to the inerrant Word of God and to the Westminster Standards as faithfully expressing the system of truth taught in Holy Scripture. Further, we recognize that our churches are Presbyterian in their order and practice. But above all, we find clear evidence that each of our churches desire to be faithful to our primary standard, the Bible, and to our secondary standards as true to the Bible. We acknowledge our weaknesses and failures but we are one in commitment to obey the Lord Jesus Christ in His rule over us through His Word and Spirit.

We recognize, however, that due in part to differences of historical development, there are differences among us as to how our common Presbyterian convictions are applied in practice. We have given careful attention to those that have been referred to us, and have provided a comparison of similarities and differences that we have discussed. No doubt there are variations of practice that have little or no theological significance but would require mutual forbearance and understanding during a period of adjustment in the augmented church. It is also true that there are differences of emphasis

darkness and evil. Their Lord received all dominion. In that faith they could be workers and sufferers in Christ's coming Kingdom, in His service.

It can seem as if the powers of evil are stronger in our days and are defeating the power of Christ. But that is not so. For even when also in our days the soldiers of Christ, old and young, suffer under the powers of evil, those soldiers go on in the ongoing battle of faith; and in faith, in the power of Christ, they overcome

the powers of darkness. Through the Holy Spirit of Christ they sacrifice their lives and everything for Christ, rather than deny Him. Be then not afraid. The enemy can kill only the body. He cannot touch your true life. That is hid with Christ in God. God's work in the ascension of Christ is a feast for the church. Rejoice and be glad. Your Lord has all dominion on this earth, O church. Go on with Him to the great victory, faithful in His service.
J. GEERTSEMA

among our churches that are to be found within each of them as well as between them; some of these have their roots deep in the history of Presbyterianism.

It is apparent to us that, just as within our churches there has been a deep and continuing desire to be constantly reforming ourselves in conformity to the Word of God, so too in the augmented Presbyterian Church in America this commitment would be not only continued but heightened by the reception of the other churches. These churches whose ministry would be joined with that of the Presbyterian Church in America would be called upon to follow the faith and order of the church that they enter; the Presbytery . . . [I guess that a line has fallen out here, J.G.] that they enter; the Presbyterian Church in America, on the other hand, would further strengthen its life and witness by welcoming the insights and experience represented by the entering churches and seeking to profit from differences in striving for a more perfect Biblical faith and practice.

In receiving these denominations, the Presbyterian Church in America recognizes the history of the respective denominations as part of her total history and receives their historical documents as valuable and significant material which will be used in the perfecting of the Church.

We, therefore, as committees of our churches, recognize that unity of faith and practice which our churches have through the grace of God. This unity must draw us together as the body of Christ and enable us to remove the barriers that would prevent us from full communion of life and love in an undivided church. We also recognize our need for the grace of the Spirit and the love of Christ as we seek to reconcile differences and remove practical barriers. We therefore do severally and jointly:

- 1) Commend to our respective churches that we become one in organization in accordance with the invitation of the Presbyterian Church in America;
- 2) Urge upon our respective churches the necessity of resolving in the thus-augmented church the differences among us, and others that may rise, in kindness and forthrightness begotten of love, with the determination that by the grace of the Spirit of God through the teaching of His Word we shall "all come in unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto . . . the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

And further we, as committees of our respective churches, do severally and jointly agree that the above committees of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, shall recommend to their respective major assemblies in 1981 that the necessary constitutional actions be taken to

begin the process required to join the Presbyterian Church in America in accordance with its invitation; that the above-named committee of the Presbyterian Church in America will, if the invitation is accepted by either or both of the other churches, recommend to the General Assembly that the acceptance(s) be approved, that the procedures stated elsewhere be followed for the incorporation of the several agencies of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, into the Presbyterian Church in America; that out of respect for these churches' integrity the approval of their acceptance of the invitation shall be understood to honor such commitments as the several churches may have, and to continue the ministries presently conducted by the Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, subject to the review of the permanent committees and the approval of subsequent General Assemblies, and that the incorporation of agencies shall endeavor to provide for the just treatment of those who may not be able, for reasons of conscience, to participate in the acceptance of the invitation.

Above I have given almost the whole joint statement of the three committees, even though there are and remain questions that ask for an answer. I would like to know what the differences are between the three churches. A document listing and discussing the differences has been made up and was sent to the ministers and elders in the three churches. But, as far as I know, it has not been made public. Nevertheless, I thought it of value to give the reader the whole statement, since it is an historical document.

In an Editorial in the same issue of *The Presbyterian Journal*, the Rev. G. Aiken Tayler writes that he is of the opinion that the three churches (and also the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, a member of NAPARC too, which did not positively react to the invitation of the PCA) should certainly become one now in the way of the proposed plan. Says he:

Much has been said pro and con about the proposal to cut the Gordian Knot of interminable union negotiations and bring together the denominations by having them all accept the existing constitution of the PCA and, in effect, together become an enlarged PCA.

There are some in the older denominations who are loath to surrender cherished elements of heritage and tradition. We wish they could see the opportunity as one of contributing to a yet-unformed heritage and tradition. With all its Southern "flavor," the PCA

still is in the process of struggling to achieve an identity of its own which will encompass the broad sweep of its constituent elements — from massive cathedrals to inner-city ethnic house-churches . . .

Our endorsement and support is given because we believe the PCA needs the maturity, the wisdom, the leadership — the Christian stamanship represented by the other denominations. Together, and with committee structures, presbytery representation and Assembly composition adjusted to the size and dimensions of the larger church, we believe a Reformed denomination of truly significant proportions could unfurl its banners before the watching world.

He concludes with the wish that the vote on the plan will be taken this year, and not be postponed.

What will the outcome of the recommendations and proposals be? I am very curious. It is clear that not all are in favor. There is hesitation. Let us wait and see. It always has been our principle that churches that are truly one in confession and church polity should unite. It was a good thing that in 1892 the churches of the Secession (1834) and of the Doleantie (1886) united on the basis that they had and adhered to the same confession (the Three Forms of Unity) and the same Church Order (the Church Order of Dordt); it was in obedience to the command of Christ that they all be one. And the fact that there were differences between the men of the Secession and Kuyper and other leaders of the Doleantie did not form an impediment for the union, because not private opinions but the confession was the basis for the union. Although later some ideas of Dr. A. Kuyper were made into binding doctrine and became the cause of the Liberation, that did not afterwards undo the fact that the union in 1892 was right.

However, when the editor says that the young PCA still needs to find its identity, I shall refrain from further comment at this moment. I hope to keep the readers of *Clarion* informed about further developments, about the decisions at the General Assemblies and the General Synod of the three churches, which are to meet this month. But I do wish we had information about the differences between the three churches, and this especially because of our relation with the OPC. That is also the reason why the reaction to the recommendations at the upcoming General Assembly of the OPC is of particular interest to us.

J. GEERTSEMA

Anniversary Celebration: Selles



On Monday, April 20th, most of the ministers and professors were assembled at the residence of Prof. and Mrs. L. Selles who celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary. It was good to meet each other and together to rejoice because of this blessing given to a brother and sister who spent most of their life as a ministerial couple in Canada, of which the last twelve years in the service of all the churches.

After the "celebration" at the Selles residence, a reception was held in the Cornerstone Church of Hamilton. It did not take long for the basement to fill up with brothers and sisters who had come from far and near to offer their congratulations and to share the gratitude and happiness of the Selles family.

Although there was no "official character" to the reception, there were a few speakers who could make

themselves heard. Words of appreciation were spoken and received in gratitude.

The first speaker was the Rev. J. Mulder, who spoke as vice-president of the Board of Governors. He praised the humble and obedient way in which Prof. Selles gave his exegesis of the New Testament as the Word of God. He also mentioned the sacrifices that the Selles family had made for the immigrant churches by leaving Voorburg in the fifties. He ended his speech expressing the hope that Prof. Selles would teach until the prescribed retirement age of 71.

The Rev. J. Geertsema, minister of the church at Chatham, pictured Rev. and Mrs. Selles as father and mother of the congregation in Chatham which became the mother of the church at Watford and the grandmother of the church at London.

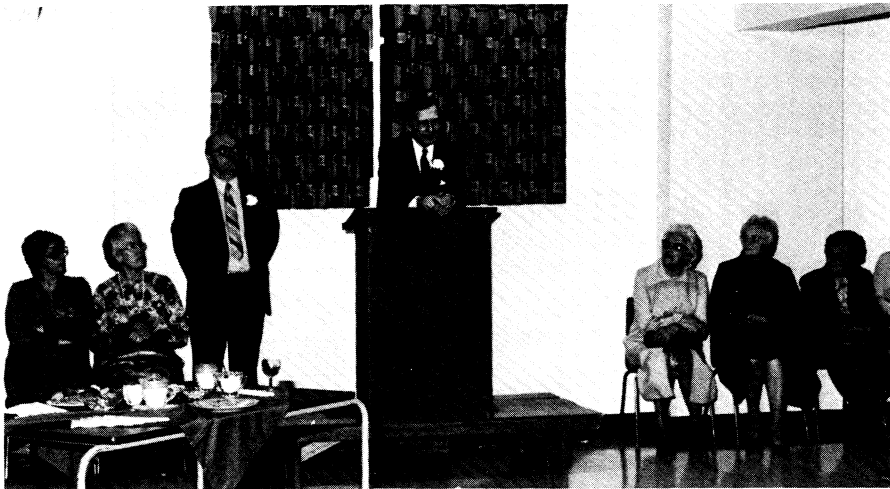
Br. M. van Grootheest spoke on behalf of the Board of Trustees and showed himself a business man among the present and future theologians. He shortly and succinctly expressed the feelings of admiration which Prof. and Mrs. Selles had obtained among the church members especially through their work for the young people.

The Rev. W. Huizinga spoke on behalf of the church at Hamilton. He mentioned the work done for Catechism classes in the period of the vacancy of that home church of the Theological College.

Mr. Eric Kampen told some memorable things of the life in the College community and extended to Prof. and Mrs. Selles the congratulations of the students.

Last but not least, Prof. Selles expressed thanks for the attention paid to his anniversary. He looked back on the 40 years of his ministry and the two liberations he had to go through. He reminded us of the abundant grace of God manifest in the resurrection of Christ and proclaimed in the text of his inaugural sermon, John 5:24. He strongly urged ministers and students to proclaim the mercy and grace of God.

At the end we sang together the doxology, "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow."



Prof. Selles thanking everyone.



Rev. Mulder speaking on behalf of the Board of Governors.



Part of the crowd, with well wishers coming from as far as Irian Jaya.

PRESS RELEASE

of the CLASSIS CONTRACTA Ontario-South, held April 28, 1981 in Hamilton, Ontario.

1. On behalf of the convening Church at Hamilton, Rev. W. Huizinga opens the meeting by reading from II Timothy 2. He leads in prayer and speaks a word of welcome to the delegates. Rev. Huizinga explains the reason for the convening of this Classis contracta: to approve the release of the Prof. Drs. H.M. Ohmann who has accepted a call to De Gereformeerde Kerk at Dokkum, The Netherlands, in order to take up his position as Professor of Old Testament studies at the Theologische Hogeschool, Broederweg 15, Kampen. In connection with the date of the Friesian Classis Dokkum, approval of this release cannot wait until the scheduled June Classis Ontario-South.

2. *Constitution.* After the credentials have been examined, Classis is constituted. Delegates are present from the Churches at Hamilton, Lincoln, and Smithville. Rev. M. Werkman is appointed as chairman; Rev. W. Huizinga as clerk; and Rev. Cl. Stam as assessor.

3. *Release of Prof. Drs. H.M. Ohmann.* Classis is presented with the documents pertaining to this release. Since all the necessary documents are available in good order, Classis decides to approve the release of Prof. Drs. H.M. Ohmann as minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton and grants him a most honourable discharge from his services to the Churches in Classis Ontario-South. The release is effective per June 1, 1981, D.V.

A classical document to this effect has been drawn up and is signed. The chairman expresses the gratitude of Classis for the service of Prof. Drs. H.M. Ohmann in the midst of the Churches and notes that Prof. Ohmann will be well-remembered for his work.

4. The Acts are read and adopted.

5. The Press Release is read and approved.

6. The chairman, Rev. M. Werkman, leads in thanksgiving and closes the meeting.

For Classis Ontario-South,
CL. STAM, assessor h.t.

OUR COVER

*Hoodooos at Dutch Creek, B.C.
Photo courtesy of Tourism
B.C.*



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.

NEW YORK

The American Bible Society (ABS), possessor of the world's largest collection of Bibles and related biblical documents, reports that at the end of 1980 the library contained nearly 39,500 volumes in 1,615 languages.

Dr. Ivan Nothdurft, an officer of the Society, said this represented an increase of twenty-four new languages in the Scripture collection, some with such exotic names as Mixteco and Silacayopan, Pangutaran and Samo-Kubo.

Recent figures reveal, however, that more than 80 million people representing 2,000 languages and dialects still do not have at least one portion of Scripture available to them in their own languages.

"We are urgently trying to meet a deadline to translate and publish Scriptures for new readers in all of the major languages by 1985, including a full range of portions (one complete book of the Bible) and selections. This will enable the readers to move toward the use of common language translations," said ABS general secretary Alice Ball. (TB)

* * *

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA (EP)

Refugees from Albania who recently managed to escape across the border to Yugoslavia, have told the German Evangelical Alliance Information Service that there has been a new wave of arrests of Christians, with the aim of eliminating the last remains of religious belief in the country.

In communist Albania, which in 1976 described itself as the "first officially atheist country in the world," every kind of religious activity has

been strictly forbidden since 1957. Nearly all 2,000 churches and mosques in the country were either torn down or have been in use since then as offices, restaurants or warehouses. Only a handful were preserved as "historic monuments."

According to the refugees, religion continues to have an influence on the life of the Albanians, in spite of all the prohibitions. But any religious activity has to take place "in the underground." (Cm)

* * *

UPPSALA, SWEDEN (EP)

Opponents of the ordination of women in the (Lutheran) Church of Sweden are considering the establishment of a separate synod within the church, partly to express a unified

theological viewpoint in the state church.

Bishop Bertil Gartner of Gothenburg says a separate synod would be able to work for a "re-awakening of the church" and for a theological position they consider more faithful to historic Christianity. Opposition to women's ordination would be only one stand of the group.

According to the church's information service, one reason for discussion of a new synod is the group's fear that the government may act to disqualify pastors and ordinands who declare their opposition to women's ordination. The Swedish government, which legislates for the church, has already made ordination of women an official policy; there are about 400 female priests. (Cm) vO

Taxpayer Charges Income Tax Ruling Threatens Christian Day Schools

A Revenue Canada income tax ruling poses a serious threat to Christian day schools, according to Lyle McBurney, executive director of the Ontario Association of Alternative and Independent Schools.

He has launched a court appeal against that department's treatment of his 1976 and 1977 income tax returns. Revenue Canada refused to recognize as deductible gifts most of his donations to two Ottawa Christian day schools.

McBurney, who then lived in Ottawa, gave \$5,000 to the schools which are registered as charitable institutions and which provide provincially-recognized primary and secondary education. Revenue Canada contended that, since four of McBurney's children were enrolled in the schools, most of his contributions did not qualify as deductible gifts.

The only portion which tax officials permitted as deductions was that which they deemed to be for "religious" education as distinct from "secular" education.

Describing the ruling as "ludicrous," McBurney pointed out that taxpayers who send their children to Christian and other independent day schools must pay full provincial education taxes to finance a public school system from which their children derive no advantage. But, he adds, that in the past they could at least claim the major portion of those donations as legitimate income tax deductions.

The Revenue Canada ruling changes that. "Now we are expected to pay full education taxes, pay for our children's education in recognized schools whose curriculum meets provincial standards, and then have most of our donations disallowed as tax deductions," McBurney maintains.

He added that he objected to having government bureaucrats define what was "religious" and what was "secular." "All education stems from people's basic beliefs, be they Christian or other," he contends. He is persuaded that it is impossible to divide education into such compartments.

McBurney suggests that Revenue Canada's ruling arbitrarily restricts the meaning and scope of religious schooling to the time spent on devotional exercises, courses that deal with church history, reading of scripture, or a few programs that treat religion as a subject.

The stakes in the case are high. "It is no exaggeration to say that the existence of a large number of those Christian and other independent schools is threatened if this policy continues," he warns. The burden falls most heavily on parents in Ontario, he points out, because that province gives no share of education taxes to independent schools.

He estimates that the federal government could collect an additional fifty million dollars annually by the changed ruling.

"It is intolerable that Revenue Canada moves in such a high-handed way that the effect is to remove the basic right of Canadians to select the kind of education their children will receive," he says.

The Committee for Justice and Liberty, a national citizens' public justice movement, has lent its support and counsel to McBurney. Gerald Vandezande, the committee's director of public relations, maintains that the case involves basic human rights.

McBurney's lawyers have moved to lodge the appeal at the Federal Court of Canada, Trial Division. It may be some months before the case goes to trial.

news medley

Of only two couples I know that we have to extend our congratulations to on the occasion of their wedding anniversary. That is brother and sister A. Bergsma of Carman, Manitoba, and brother and sister H. Van Bostelen of Smithers.

As for the first couple: they were married on May 27, 1936, and came to Canada in the early years of immigration after the second world war. I mentioned with their fortieth anniversary that they went to the Houston area, and there set up a small sawmill. These days of the small operators have disappeared in that region, but even before that already the Bergsma family moved to Carman to start farming there. Although especially brother Bergsma's health has not always been what we would have liked to see, the Lord yet has spared them for so many years for each other, for their children and their grandchildren. Our congratulations on this occasion.

In Smithers brother and sister H. Van Bostelen will celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary on that same day. They live in Smithers, B.C., and are still enjoying good health, even though brother Van Bostelen's eyesight is deteriorating. They, too, belong to the early immigrants and came to Nobleford, Alberta. Since 1965 they have been living in Smithers. Half a century is quite a time when you put it that way. It sounds far more than fifty years, and thus we are the more reminded of the mercies and grace of our God. That mercy and that grace is acknowledged by the celebrating couple, and we add our congratulations to the many they undoubtedly will receive on this occasion.

As we are in Smithers anyway, we might as well mention that the address of the Church has changed. I do not mean the address to which mail for the Smithers Church has to be sent, but the street number. It is now 3626 - 15th Avenue. Perhaps it will facilitate finding the building if you go to Smithers for holidays. Change it in your Yearbook!

The Rev. VanderWel expresses his admiration for the manner in which the publication of the Acts of Synod was taken care of. "The publication of the Acts looks neat. It must have been quite a job for our colleague in Cloverdale to put this all together. Let us now also take the trouble to read and take note of what this last General Synod of our Churches has been doing."

I hope, between brackets, that indeed it was the "last" synod, for that would mean that history has come to a close. However, I think that the word "latest" would have been better. But apart from that, I wholeheartedly agree with those words. As our readers know, I have some criticism on some of the decisions, and in one case I expressed that criticism already. Let no one, however, draw the conclusion that I do not appreciate the work the brethren did there in Smithville or that I think that all they did was twiddle with their thumbs. I know from experience that being a member of synod means even so many weeks of hard work; I also know from experience that making everything ready for printing is no sinecure. Thus I add my words of appreciation to those of my Abbotsford colleague. Insofar as I have read the Acts I can say that much work was done. I hope to pay some atten-

tion to what I consider a few pet-ideas which have crept in, but that can wait.

I also agree with Rev. VanderWel that the best reward we can give to the brethren who worked there is that we examine their work thoroughly and honour our promises made in the federation.

We can expect the "ratification-fever" to get hold of some brethren within the Churches. For that reason it is good to pass on to you what Rev. Stam wrote about that in the *Family Post* of Smithville. I wrote so often about it that it is good also to hear someone else and to pass on what he writes about it. I agree with that. That it is necessary to do so may be evident from what I read in one Consistory report: For the next meeting some articles are to be studied "for ratification." Pretty soon we will read in various Consistory reports: "Articles 1 through fifty of the Acts of Synod are ratified." What is meant by that? Does that mean that only now they are binding on that particular Church? It seems that some think so; but they are completely wrong. However, let me pass on what Rev. Stam wrote.

The question has at times been raised, "What exactly must a consistory DO with these Acts of major assemblies?" Some have been of the opinion that the decisions of major assemblies are BINDING only after the consistory has RATIFIED them, i.e., after the consistory has officially approved of these decisions. But that is not the case. In Article 31 of our Church Order we read that whatever has been decided upon by a majority vote (at the assemblies) shall be considered settled and BINDING. The decisions of synods are indeed DECISIONS, and not just a matter of advice which every consistory is at liberty to accept or reject. There is only one "if" and that is: the decision is binding UNLESS it is proven to be against the Scriptures and/or the adopted order of the Church.

What is then the task of the consistory with respect to the Acts of a Synod? I think . . . that this task is two-fold. The consistory is first to EXAMINE the Acts to see whether indeed everything was done in accordance with God's Word and the adopted Church Order. This examination (Dutch: "toetsing") pertains to ALL the Acts of Synod, but especially to those which have to be carried out locally. That is the second task: see to the correct EXECUTION of the decisions of Synod. The consistory is bound to do so, unless solid Scriptural grounds to the contrary are presented. We are therefore to take the decisions of synod very seriously, and bring into practice as soon as possible the decisions of Synod. It is certainly not evidence of a serious approach when decisions are examined and implemented a few years AFTER the Synod has taken place.

If after duly having examined the Acts, a consistory concludes that it cannot implement certain decisions, this must be made known with good reasons to the congregation and presented to the next General Synod. One cannot simply lay aside synodical decisions and forget about them; they must be implemented or appealed. It is in this way that we take our Synods seriously, as we have agreed as Churches.

Thus far the quotation. I said that I agree with what Rev. Stam wrote. This agreement does not apply to each and every expression. Without making an article out of it, I wish to state that I do not believe that Article 31, Church Order, speaks about decisions of broader assemblies *in general*, but only about cases of *appeal*. Thus I disagree when Article 31, Church Order, is quoted to show thereby

that decisions of major assemblies are to be considered settled and binding. However, I wrote about that before as well.

Further, quite a few words could be written about the point of "appealing" decisions of a general synod. We should be careful with the word "appeal." I think that we could simply speak about "proposals" to change decisions of a previous general synod. You cannot "appeal" from the one general synod to the other.

And in the third place: of course, decisions of broader assemblies are *decisions*. But that is not the point here. The point is whether decisions of broader assemblies are binding on the Churches. Whether such a decision is a pronouncement or an advice is irrelevant. Sometimes I am inclined to say that a broader assembly cannot do anything *but* advise the Churches. However, that does not make one bit of difference as for the binding character. An advice of a broader assembly is *never* something which you can take or leave. The nature of Church Federation and the agreement made — which agreement has been laid down in the Church Order — brings with it that we are faithful to our promises. We have agreed upon the task and the jurisdiction (not "authority"!!!!) of broader assemblies. Then it is a matter of faithfulness to our agreement that we accept decisions, advice, or whatever you wish to call it; we do so on the conditions we have agreed upon. But when we discover, with our examination, that the broader assembly has been faithful to the agreement, the decision or advice does not *become* binding on us by our conclusion; it was binding from the very beginning.

The intention is very good, but I wonder whether the Consistory of Carman can indeed execute its decision: "Acts of Synod 1980 will be studied by the Consistory members. If there is anything that should need our special attention, it can be discussed at the next consistory meeting." Unless the brethren meet every two or three months, I am afraid they won't have been ready by that next meeting.

Yes, we were in the Fraser Valley, I remember.

The official opening of the Langley Church building was set for the beginning of May. Perhaps it was the middle of May before the happy occasion was there. I am looking forward to the *Clarion* issue in which we shall read a report on that.

The Surrey Consistory explains why five names were presented to the Congregation from which to choose two brethren for an office. It was an unusual situation which occasioned that. Yet the same was the case with the election for another office. "How did this come about? When casting the ballots it appeared in both cases (for elder as well as for deacon) that two brethren had an equal number of votes. With the second casting of ballots both again received an equal number of votes. Rather than taking a decision by lot or taking the elder of the two Council decided to let the congregation make the decision when the election takes place." Something new, isn't it?

Starting in May, one family of the congregation became "responsible, each Sunday, for hosting any guests or strangers who do not have a place to visit. After the church service, the minister or duty elder will introduce the visitors to the host family of that Sunday." You may recall that I mentioned the intention to do so some time ago.

As for the visa of the missionaries, not much new can be reported. Rev. and Mrs. Meijer were to leave on furlough, but that was cancelled. "In a letter to the Mis-



1931 — 1981

Nicolaas Bronsema and Hilda Te Bos were united in marriage on June 3, 1931 in the Gereformeerde Kerk of Zuidwolde (gem. Bedum), The Netherlands.

For fifteen years br. and sr. Bronsema operated their own bakery and grocery store; at first in Siddenburen and later in the city of Groningen.

In December of 1952 the Bronsema family emigrated to the United States and settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Br. and sr. Bronsema are charter members of the American Reformed Church which started as a house congregation in May of 1953, under the supervision and pastoral care of the Canadian Reformed Church at Chatham. On September 25, 1955 the American Reformed Church was instituted. Br. Bronsema served in its consistory for a period of six years and was the bookkeeper of the church for twelve-and-a-half years. He retired from his position at Hekman Bakeries in June 1967.

*They are still living in Grand Rapids near their children and grandchildren. Br. Bronsema enjoys working in his garden in the spring and summer time, and likes to paint pictures during the cold weather, although he also keeps quite busy helping his ailing wife, who still enjoys knitting and making things, especially for the school sales. Also, they enjoy listening to the tapes of the *Luisterpost*.*

sion Board, Rev. Meijer wrote that their leaving under the present circumstances, without a permanent visa, would interrupt their visa application. They could of course leave and come back as tourists but they would no longer have the rights and privileges they have now as applicants for visa. They would find themselves under the provision of the Foreigners' Law introduced in 1980. Under this law conversion of tourist visa to permanent visa is very unlikely. Of course the application made by Revs. Meijer and Boersema were initiated before the enactment of this new law."

May the Lord move the hearts of those in authority and thus oppose the kingdom of Satan.

As general news from the Western Front we mention that a Ministers' Conference is scheduled for May 20/21. It will, again, be held in Calgary which seems to be more or less central for all participants. The Ministers' Workshop for Ontario is scheduled for Monday, June 1st. Of both meetings you may expect a report to be published, as was done the other times.

Proceeding to Alberta, we quote from the Neerlandia School bulletin the following passage. "Some parents have requested that the school rules (each student has a copy) be enforced by using disciplinary measures like the strap. From now on students who are throwing snowballs (iceballs) or other objects will receive the strap, depending on the discretion of the teacher." I was puzzled when I read that. No, I was not puzzled by the request of the parents, for I think it is an excellent request. I was wondering what was meant by that "depending on the discretion of the teacher." Does that mean: whether the teacher can distinguish snowballs from iceballs? Or whether the teacher can find out who threw it? Finally I thought, "Perhaps they mean *at the discretion* of the teacher" and therein my mind found rest.

Yes, and then Edmonton. Quite a few things could be quoted from the bulletin, for there is much activity there and many plans are being conceived.

First regarding a name. I hope I can keep Northeast and Southwest apart and do not mix the news from these two congregations up. As soon as they have a name, things will be different, I presume.

Southwest received suggestions for a name for the Church. It was decided "to present the following names to be voted on at the April 24 congregational meeting: (1) Immanuel (2) Prince of Peace." I do not have anything to do with it, but I hope that "Immanuel" was chosen, since "Prince of Peace" might give the impression that it is a Lutheran Church building that is so named. It would be something different within our circles, and it would not matter all that much, but confusion might result. We'll learn what has been decided upon.

Further we read, "Council was unanimous in its decision to make recommendation to the congregation about building our own church building." At the Congregational meeting some proposals were to be put forward. "Proposal to purchase land for the construction of a new church building suitable for the congregation. Proposal to build as soon as possible the building presented as per plan."

I would be tempted to quote extensively about the financial aspects of this matter, but shall confine myself to telling you that the purchase of the minimum land "necessary for a suitable church building within the present City Limits would cost the minimum of \$236,000, or the maximum of \$370,000, depending on the area where the land is located. E.g. the asking price for a three-acre parcel a few blocks from the Manse is \$500,000. Ridiculous? Yes, but it is still a fact." The school society has been approached to sell a three-acre parcel of land. "The average price for this parcel based on three appraisals, is \$40,166. The School Board has given tentative agreement to the sale at this price, subject to membership approval."

The type of building such as Carman and Langley have appears most appealing and practical. The total cost? About \$500,000. However, we read, if we wait for another year it might well be \$100,000 more. We are living in strange times, aren't we?

This price tag "does not include any type of organ. However, the plan is designed for a pipe organ (over the pulpit). N.B. A good pipe organ will outlast any electronic organ 5 to 1. (You may challenge this, if you wish — I have been told it is actually at least 10 to 1 — Ed.)"

Rests to tell that also the Northeast Congregation has asked for names for the Church. They don't have the problem of trying to find a parcel of land, for they have retained the existing Church building.

Our journey leads us via Winnipeg. "Since the school debts are quite high and there is a Committee in The Netherlands which will alleviate the need of Reformed Institutions of Learning, it was decided now to approach the Committee personally . . . to find out if Winnipeg would qualify for such aid."

Now we go to Ontario.

The Guelph consistory received a communication from an organ company "concerning particulars regarding possible addition to the organ . . . this will be passed on to several members who have been asked to start a fund-raising venture."

The Ebenezer, Burlington Consistory tells us the following. "It was moved to have the deacons pay for the needy students for 1981 @ \$2.00 per confessing member, the amount for which we are assessed. Adopted." Here, too, I am puzzled. I always thought that what we have agreed upon regarding support for needy students was a task of the *Church*, in the line of "that the Ministry of the Gospel and the Schools be maintained." How, then, can it be decided that the *deacons* shall pay this? Apparently I still have a lot to learn. Unless, of course, the thoughts go into the direction of what sometimes was found in olden days: there were "Church-deacons" who took care of the finances of the Church, and there were "Needy-deacons" who took care of the needy. The former brought the minister his salary and the latter went with the necessary support to the needy brothers and sisters. But I haven't heard anything in that vein from the Ebenezer Congregation.

Professor H.M. Ohmann delivered his last lecture at our College on May 1st. Thereby he concluded a labour of ten years. It is always a sad thing when you do something for the last time. That applies to a professor who gives his last lecture as well as to a minister who delivers his last sermon to a specific congregation. I am glad that I did not have to do it all that often, I can tell you!

The Chatham bulletin tells us something about the development of the mission endeavours of the Hamilton Church, in cooperation with the Churches of Ontario South. I am not going to copy the whole piece which Rev. Geertsema wrote, but pass on a few particulars.

There has been quite a bit of correspondence with the missionaries in Brazil, sent out by the Church at Surrey: the Revs. Boersema and Meijer as well as with the sending church and the Rev. VanSprosen, the former missionary. The workers in Brazil hope and advise to look for a mission field quite close to theirs and recommend a place about the size of São José da Coroa Grande where Rev. Boersema works, as you know, and about three quarters of an hour drive away from them, on the way to Receife, the capital of the province . . . It is wise to choose a place that is not too far from the others, so that cooperation is well possible and gives also a basis for a good, functioning federation in the future.

Herewith we have reached the end of our news. The holidays are drawing closer, and the activities in the midst of the congregations become fewer as far as society-life is concerned. I wish you all much strength with the preparation of your holidays: use the time well.

To my regret, I have not been able to write the chat on books and records as I said the other time I might do. Perhaps there is an opportunity to write such a little piece in one of the coming fourteen days.

Hope to meet you again, same place, same time of the day.

vO

Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, and Today, and Forever

Smithers, B.C. 1956 — 1981 25 Years

April 15, 1956, was a festive occasion for the brothers and sisters in Smithers when the Canadian Reformed Church at Smithers was instituted and they became independent from the Church at Houston. And it was a festive occasion again for all of us on April 15, 1981, when we came together in the beautifully decorated church building to give thanks to the Lord Who gathered His Church twenty-five years ago in Smithers and Who has preserved and defended her since.

Br. D. Onderwater, MC for the evening, opened the evening and asked us to sing Psalm 27:1 and 6, and led us in a thanksgiving prayer. For

Scripture reading he had chosen Hebrews 12 verse 22 to chapter 13 verse 8.

In his opening address he welcomed everybody, and he informed us that, although there were no special guests who undertook the journey to the most northern church in Canada, except the delegates from the neighbouring church at Houston, many special wishes and congratulations had been received which would be dealt with later in the evening. He pointed out that this was an evening of celebration but definitely not for what we have accomplished — although that should not be forgotten — but foremost for what Jesus Christ



Br. J. Penninga delivering his address.

has done for us, He Who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

He then gave the floor to br. J. Penninga who addressed us on the subject: Why institute a Church in Smithers. In thankfulness he remembered how he, by God's grace, was present twenty-five years ago when the Church was instituted. He noticed that today there are no longer very many churches which can be called "true Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ," and he continued: Jesus Christ knew how to take care of His Church and He gave us rules to go by. From the days of Seth, when they began to call on the name of the Lord, through Old and New Testaments, God's people came together as Church to worship Him. Christ wants us to come together; we need each other and have to strengthen each other by Word and Sacrament. The preaching of the true Gospel, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercising of church discipline institutes the true Church, and this was the reason why we started a Church in Smithers twenty-five years ago. The Holy Spirit wanted us to do this, to help Him to rule His Kingdom here in Smithers. Now we have had twenty-five years of the preaching of the Word; if we do not keep Him as our Saviour and Guide, and keep His commandments, He will take the Church away. There is a rich blessing in keeping His commandments: He will give us the crown of life. Let us



The Choir,
"Praise the Lord."

therefore be faithful until He comes back to rule the heavens and the earth.

Br. Penninga then reminded us of the Liberation in Holland and how the Christian Reformed Church refused contact with those (Prof. Schilder, among others) who came to the U.S. and Canada out of the Liberated Churches; how up till today they still keep contact with the Synodical Churches and refuse the out-stretched hand of the Canadian Reformed Churches. He urged the Young People to take note and study the Church history, e.g. in *Inheritance Preserved*, to be aware of what happened and to find answers to our existence. To keep His commandments and to keep His rules will be the basis for the future. The Angel of the Lord says, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." At the end of his address he asked us to sing Psalm 89:1 and 3: "I will extol Thee, Lord, Thy mercies I will praise . . ."

From our neighbours, the Church



Oldtimers in the social get-together.



Rev. C. Van Spronsen accepts the new RSV pulpit Bible.

at Houston, Rev. G.H. Visscher brought us congratulations in a very humoristic way. He reminded us that in the past twenty-five years Smithers's gain of members was Houston's loss, and now he was supposed to congratulate us with that fact. However, faith told us to establish another faithful Church nearby, and actually Houston was not losing members but gaining a daughter. He expressed the wish that the harmony between the two Churches in the valley may increase, because, after all, we are "mother and daughter." He also had figured out that at present the tables are turned, and Smithers is losing members to Houston. In a more serious tone he expressed the hope that both Churches, by the grace of God, will grow to the honour of the Lord. On behalf of the Houston Societies, and as an old member of the Smithers Church, br. Ralph Fenema extended congratulations and best wishes.

Although we would have loved to have more delegates in our midst, we were very surprised to hear from br. Moeliker that from almost every Church in the federation congratulations on our anniversary had reached us in the far West, acknowledging the bond which exists in the federation of our Canadian Reformed Churches. Not for every Church did the distance

seem to be the problem. Some seemed to have the difficulty that every consistory member wanted to be delegated and, to prevent disunity in the Church, the decision was taken to send congratulations by letter. Also several former members of the Congregation had taken time to send us their best wishes even from as far away as Burlington and Smithville. Of course, it was impossible to read all the messages. However, an exception was made for our former minister, Rev. P. Kingma, and the former counsellor of the Church, Rev. M. VanBeveren. Rev. VanRietschoten surprised us with a message by telephone and a written message in our Anniversary Book.

The Choir, "Praise the Lord," under the direction of br. D. Boersema, scored a great success when it sang for us "In steadfast faith I stand," "Ambrosiaanse Lofzang," and "The Lord is my Shepherd." The double applause they reaped showed how much it was appreciated.

Then br. D. Onderwater, in a lighter vein, gave us a humorous review of the first five years after the Church was instituted in his "Historical Reflection." Many of the older brothers and sisters (then twenty-five years younger) must have asked themselves: "Did we really do that, say that, or did it really happen that way?" But it did. Br. Hofstede

who was caretaker at that time confirmed it in the Dutch language.

Together we sang Psalm 127 the verses 1, 2, and 3, and then the choir of the Girls' Club, "Talitha," under the direction of Mrs. M. van Veldhuizen, sang a few numbers for us. How beautiful sounded the number "Yesterday, today, and forever Jesus is the same." Many an eye must have cast a glance at the written text above the pulpit. Also the other numbers were very much appreciated.

When br. A. VanderGaag Sr. related to us "How they built the first church" he did not say that they did anything wrong, but suddenly the lights went off and we experienced a B.C. Hydro power outage which only seemed to be enjoyed by the younger generation. For a while it became a candlelight celebration in which br. VanderGaag managed to give us the history of the church building.

After the power was restored, it was interesting to hear from the treasurer, br. Geo. J. Hofsink, how much could be done with pre-inflated money in the days when a collection netted \$4.67.

Then it was time for the Ladies' Society, Ladies' Auxiliary, Young People's Societies, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, School Board, and students of the School to extend their best wishes and congratulations. This was done with a beautiful poem, a nice skit, or a well-prepared speech, together with the presentation of some beautiful presents to the Chairman of the Consistory. It was heartwarming to hear from the chairman of the School Board that the news had just arrived that the appointed teacher had accepted his position on the staff and the vacancy was filled — another reason for great thankfulness that evening.

With all the commotion upstairs, we had not noticed the telephone ringing downstairs, but a moment later we were presented with congratulations and God's blessing for the future from Mrs. H.A. Stel and family. How much that was appreciated.

The combined adult and girls choirs sang Psalm 118: "O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good. His mercy endureth forever" followed by some more numbers by the adult choir, all of which was tremendously enjoyed by the audience.

A point which was not mentioned on the agenda was the presentation of some nice tokens of appreciation to the three members of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Booklet



The oldest member, sr. A. Stad, for the Dutch Study Club.

Committee who compiled the history of the Church of Smithers in word and picture, and put it together in a beautiful book made available for all the members of the Church and other interested persons.

The evening drew to an end, but not before two forgotten societies had brought their messages on behalf of the Men's Society and the Dutch Study Club by the mouth of the two oldest members of the Congregation: br. H. Van Bostelen and Sr. A. Stad 81 and 82 years of age, respectively.

In his closing remarks Rev. C. Vanspronsen reminded us that this commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of our Church is a very happy occasion, although in itself it was sad that twenty-five years ago a new church had to be instituted because the existing one had become unfaithful and still is today. Also the fact that very few have joined the Church, which has to be a light on a mountain, is no reason to celebrate, and the passing away of some church members were sorrowful events. But the Lord has been very merciful to us: the Gospel has been preached and the sacraments have been administered; and for that reason we must rejoice in the Lord. All the good things came from our God; all the sins and smudges were our doings. Let us rejoice in the faithfulness of our God and Father, and continue our work in

thankfulness. We have learned from the past; we do not know what the future holds; but God in His mercy will continue to guide us.

Happy he whose help the God is,
whose dominion shall not cease,
Jacob's God, the LORD so faithful,
Who made heaven, earth and seas,
and all creatures of the deep,
Who forever faith shall keep.

He as yet thanked everybody who in any way contributed, but especially the Anniversary Committee, which had organized this beautiful evening.

After the official part of the evening was closed with the singing of Psalm 146 and thanksgiving, everybody was invited to a social get-together. Refreshments were served and one had the opportunity for an informal celebration and renewal of old friendships. It had been a wonderful evening which will be remembered by all of us.

In reflecting upon this evening and the preceding twenty-five years we confess: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever, and with that knowledge the Church at Smithers enters the future.

A.H. LUBBERS

Church News

A NEW NAME!

Immanuel Canadian Reformed
Church of Edmonton

is the name of the church at Edmonton Southwest, one of the two churches resulting from the split of the Canadian Reformed Church of Edmonton, effective April 1, 1981.

CALLED to Orangeville, Ont.:

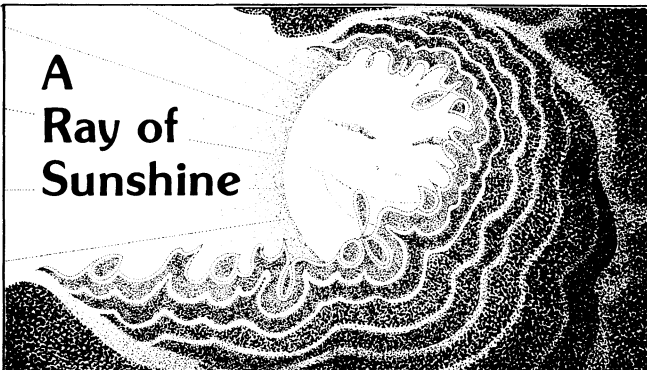
REV. J. GEERTSEMA

of Chatham, Ont.

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

A farewell reception for Prof. and Mrs. H.M. Ohmann, offered by the Theological College, will be held on, D.V., Friday, May 29, between 8:00 and 10:00 p.m. in the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church in Hamilton.

A Ray of Sunshine



POEM

NIET, DAT IK HET GEGREPEN HEB

Ik wou zo graag, dat ik wat troost kon geven
aan mensen in hun troosteloos bestaan;
Ik wou, dat 'k een beschermend kleed kon weven
voor hen, die onbeschermd door 't leven gaan.
Ik wou, dat ik wat vreugde kon verspreiden,
wat licht voor ieder, die in 't donker gaat;
Ik wou, dat 'k dwalenden terug kon leiden
tot waar het Kruishout op de heuvel staat;
Ik wou, dat ik wat beters had dan woorden,
wat méér, dan slechts een hulpeloos gebaar;
Ik wou, dat alle mensen, die mij hoorden
het konden merken: Christus leeft in haar;
Ik wou, dat ik de fouten, die ik maakte,
waardoor ik anderen heb zeer gedaan,
of het geluk, waarnaar mijn naaste haakte
vernietigd heb, of in de weg gestaan,
bedekken kon door vurige gebeden,
en dat ik alle tijd, die 'k heb verknoeid
terugkreeg, om die beter te besteden,
zoals een bloem soms op een puinhoop groeit.
— Maar elke dag moet 'k machteloos belijden:
Ik deed het wéér niet goed - 'k schoot weer te kort.
Toch geef ik het niet op. 'k Zal blijven strijden
toldat het onvolkomene volkomen wordt.

Taken from:
"Een boom in de wind"
by Nel Benschop

A thought for today:

"Be careful how you live; you may be the only Bible
some people read."

* * * * *

On our birthday calendar we have:

JOAN KOERSELMAN
c/o "Rehoboth,"
Box 1089,
Stony Plain, Alberta

Joan has moved to "Rehoboth," a Christian home for
the mentally handicapped. She works in the greenhouse and
in the workshops. She usually comes home for long week-
ends and on holidays. Her 24th birthday will be on June
17th, the Lord willing. In previous years Joan has greatly en-
joyed the cards she received, and this year again she is look-
ing forward to many birthday greetings.

* * * * *

BEVERLY BREUKELMAN
Box 6566,
Coaldale, Alberta T0K 0L0

The Lord willing, Beverly will celebrate her 19th birth-
day on June 30th. She has finished school and has been
working at a training centre. It did her a lot of good. Beverly's
hobbies are cooking and baking.

Brothers and sisters, shall we surprise our young sisters
with many good wishes for their birthdays? Our rays of sun-
shine should spread to Alberta this time.

* * * * *

We received a thank you note in our mailbox as follows:

"I would like to thank everyone who sent cards and dropped
in to visit me. It was a very enjoyable day with both friends and
family. It was a day not easily forgotten."

JIM VANDER HEIDEN
Smithville, Ontario

Send you requests (with the permission of the person in-
volved) to:

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

The Christian

Religious life does have its own content and independent value. It remains the center, the heart from which all the Christian's thoughts and acts proceed, by which they are animated and given the warmth of life. There, in fellowship with God, he is strengthened for his labors and girds himself for the battle. But that mysterious life of fellowship with God is not the whole of life. The prayer chamber is the inner room, although it is not the whole house in which he lives and functions. Spiritual life does not exclude family and social life, business and politics, art and science. It is distinct from these; it is also of much greater value, but it does not stand irreconcilably opposed to it. Rather it is the power that enables us to faithfully fulfill our earthly calling, stamping all of life as service to God. The Kingdom of God is, to be sure, like a pearl more precious than the whole world, but it is also like a heaven that leavens the entire dough. Faith isn't only the way of salvation, it also involves overcoming the world.

The Christian, as he is drawn in Scripture and as he speaks in the Heidelberg Catechism, stands and works in this conviction. Reconciled with God, he is also reconciled with all things. Because in the Father of Christ he confesses the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, he cannot be small-hearted and constricted in his affections. For God Himself so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. And this Son came to earth not to condemn the world but to save it. In His cross heaven and earth are reconciled. Under Him all things shall be gathered together with Him as Head.

From *THE CERTAINTY OF FAITH*, by Herman Bavinck, Chapter 4, Conclusion, Published by Paideia/Premier

our little magazine

Busy Beaver *Jackie Nyenhuis* sent in a poem for you (quite) a while ago. Here it is. You'll like it.

The Mite

There once was a mite
Who loved to bite.
He asked if 't was right
to be bitten by a mite in a fight at night!

QUIZ TIME

And Busy Beaver *Brenda De Boer* has a word search puzzle for you!

MY HOLIDAYS

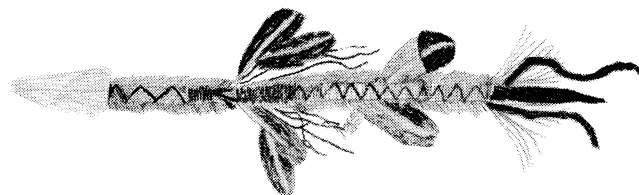
Hello, Busy Beavers,
How are you all doing?
Are you enjoying baseball and riding your bikes and all sorts of other "spring things to do"?
Have you sent in your entry for our "Guessing Contest" of April 25?
Or can't you guess why that hybrid creature is called a "Horelaffant"?
What do you think?
Take a very close look!
Maybe someone else in your family can give you a clue!

* * * * *

Now before we say anything else, let's wish all the Busy Beavers who celebrate a June birthday a very, very happy day with their family and friends. Many happy returns, Busy Beavers! And may the Lord bless and keep you also in the year ahead.

Henry Dekker	June 1	Jacob Jongs	June 20
Diane de Witt	2	Catherine Smouter	20
Gerrilynn Huizinga	3	Debbie Medemblik	21
Marcelle Lindhout	3	Joyce Dalhuizen	21
Arlene Buist	6	Marianne Bergsma	22
Rosalinde Moeliker	7	Joyce De Gelder	23
Carina Ploeger	10	Lynda Van Middelkoop	24
Calvin Lodder	11	Karen Gay Barendregt	26
Julia Huttema	12	Pauline Lodder	26
Jason Klaver	13	Miriam Vanderwerf	26
Pauline Leffers	14	Cathy Dalhuizen	28
Linda Van Dyk	14	Debbie De Boer	28
Cheryl Hansma	17	Harold Jansen	28
Cheryl Boes	20		

* * * * *



Indian Spear

by Busy Beaver *John-Herbert Kobes*

I thought you'd all like a look at John-Herbert's picture. Maybe he (or one of the other Busy Beavers) will tell us something about this kind of Indian weapon and its decorations. I'm curious, aren't you?

- | | | |
|---------|------------|-------------|
| ahoy | come | toy |
| bill | crybaby | wade |
| ball | chicken | wheelbarrow |
| book | sombreros | bone |
| baby | shy | kitten |
| bicycle | snowmobile | lit |
| boo | ten | lamb |
| one | wren | lantern |
| pigs | cat | mew |
| row | duck | motorcycle |
| snow | geese | nets |
| mother | goats | boy |
| bee | hit | leak |
| bull | hello | key |
| bat | hen | oats |
| cry | tricycle | wheel |

Busy Beaver *Margo Hofsink* has an unscrambling quiz for you. She called it:

COMPOUND WORDS

1. gppnie _____
2. klwcoark _____
3. wmnasno _____
4. fpeaecisrl _____
5. aplniera _____
6. botlsiaai _____
7. ostpanm _____
8. sttaee _____
9. owdwnlsili _____
10. ncepliasac _____
11. yttboao _____
12. splapueaec _____
13. sshroea _____
14. slhseael _____
15. hncllpaiu _____
16. tterope _____
17. stsnue _____
18. atdosloto _____
19. lcabborack _____
20. owalsinb _____

(Answers next time!)



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Sandra Onderwater*. We are happy to have you join us. I see you know what it is to be a Busy Beaver! Thanks for the quiz. Would you please let me know, Sandra, when your birthday comes?

Hello, *Gwen Van Esch*. Are you getting used to your new home in Guelph? And your new school? There are quite a few Busy Beavers in your school, I would think! I wish you lots of success making friends, Gwen.

Thank you very much for your contribution to the Birthday Fund *John-Herbert Kobes*! Also, thanks for your letter. I did laugh about the part telling about school! You're right about signs of spring, John-Herbert. How is "Tony" coming along?

Did you have a good holiday from school, *Helena Onderwater*? And pretty soon the long holidays will be here! Sounds to me as if you're looking forward to it. Thanks for the riddles and the puzzle, Helena.

Thanks for the quiz you sent us, *Pauline Lodder*. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing it. Write again soon. Bye for now.

Hello, *Anne Kottelenberg*. It was nice to hear from you again. Have you entered our Guessing Contest in the April 25 issue of Our Little Magazine?

Sounds to me as if your birthday was different *Erica Blom*! Anyway, I'm glad you had a good time. Thanks for your very nice quiz. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will enjoy it.

Hello, *Brian Jongbloed*. It was nice to hear from you again, too. And I'm happy to see you join in our activities. This contest was finished, but did you try our Guessing Contest yet?

Thanks very much for your poem and quiz, *Kimberley Vandooren*. I see you're a real Busy Beaver. Keep up the good work! Bye for now. Write again soon.

That's it for this time, Busy Beavers!
Keep busy!
Remember our Contest!

Love from your
Aunt Betty

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say Rejoice.
Philippians 4:4

With this expression of happiness in our hearts we hope, D.V., to celebrate the 25th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents:

PETER KONING
and

TINA KONING (nee Bruinsma)

on May 24, 1981.

Their thankful children:

Peter and Wendy Koning
Debbie and Shea
Eric Koning
Herb Koning
Bernie Koning
Joanne Koning

5517 Romanwood Crescent,
Burlington, Ontario L7L 3N2.

1956 — May 30 — 1981

With thankfulness to the Lord, we hope to celebrate the 25th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents:

HENDRIK VERSTEEG
and

FENNECHIEN AALTJE VERSTEEG (nee Dallinga)

Their thankful children and grandchildren:

Guelph, Ont.: Hank and Jackie
Jaclyn, Daryl

Lethbridge, Alta.: Ina
Linda
Guelph, Ont.: Wayne
Bonnie
Kelly
Juliette

27 Aberdeen, Guelph, Ontario N1H 2N1.