

Clarion

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Dutch Form for Holy Supper

In the previous issue I promised to come back to the report of the standing committee for the revision of the church book in our Dutch sister churches. It will be good to take note of one another's efforts and arguments. Arnhem 1981 will busy itself with the same or similar matters as Smithville 1980.

One of these points is the use of a modern Bible translation as the basis of the linguistic revision of creeds, confessions, and liturgical forms. The deputies had been instructed to study the question whether it is necessary to correct certain quotations from the new translation of the Netherlands Bible Society. Especially Dr. J. Van Bruggen had brought forward two texts in which the new translation differs in a significant manner from the *Statenvertaling* (which may be compared to our King James Version), i.e. Acts 20:28 in the Form for Ordination of Ministers and Missionaries and I Corinthians 11:24 and 29 in the Form for the Lord's Supper. One of these texts, I Corinthians 11:24, also functioned in the discussion at our latest General Synod of Smithville, and it deserves our special attention.

What is the case? In the KJV we read, "Take, eat: this is my body, which is *broken* for you," while the RSV translates, "This is my body which is for you." The same difference exists between the *Statenvertaling* and the Dutch Bible Society translation. Dr. Van Bruggen is a fervent defender of the *Statenvertaling* in this respect. He is of the opinion that its reading is supported by almost all manuscripts and that the words are important for the liturgy: "het breken van het brood blijkt tekenwaarde te hebben en te zien op het lijden en sterven van Christus." The breaking of the bread appears to have signifying or symbolic value; it is a sign of the suffering and death of Christ.

I do not know whether these remarks of Dr. Van Bruggen — made in 1978 — influenced our Synod Smithville 1980. It is remarkable that we read in Article 136 of the Acts that the following motion, duly seconded, was adopted: "To retain in the words spoken at the communion, the words 'broken' and 'poured out,' instead of the word 'given.'" Synod Smithville did not give any consideration or argument for this decision and it is, therefore, impossible to discern what is behind Synod's deviation from the RSV translation in I Corinthians 11 and from the proposal of the Standing Committee in our Canadian Reformed Churches.

What do our Dutch brothers say? Well, the Dutch Standing Committee in its report to Arnhem 1981 does not enter into a debate with Dr. Van Bruggen about the question whether the missing word(s) had a place in the original text. They refer to the didactic part of the Form in which the words are paraphrased "(I) nourish and refresh your hungry and thirsty souls with my crucified body and shed blood to everlasting life, as certainly as to each one of you this bread is *broken* before your eyes and this cup is given to you, and you eat and drink these with your mouth in remembrance of Me." The Dutch deputies do not deem it necessary to correct the new translation according to the *Statenvertaling*. And if it is not necessary,

it is not desirable either. "Overall elders wordt de Nieuwe Vertaling gevolgd. Dan is het goed deze gedragslijn ook in de vermelde teksten te volgen, zodat verschillen in lezing van de Schrift én van de Liturgische formulieren tijdens de eredienst worden vermeden." If you follow a new translation, you should do it consistently, in order to avoid differences in the reading of Holy Scripture *and* of the liturgical forms during the worship service.

I think that this opinion of the Dutch deputies is sound and that it is wise to strive for consistency in the use of a Bible translation. The reader will understand that I am not too happy with the motion that our Synod Smithville rather rashly adopted. Did traditionalism have an impact here? The same question arises when we read in Acts Smithville Article 136, "Although the RSV uses the word 'participatiën' in I Corinthians 10, the old rendition 'communion' (indicated also in a footnote) is preferable." Again, the reader does not hear *why* it is preferable. Simply because it is old?

Now that I speak about the Form for the Lord's Supper, I think that our readers will be interested in the way in which the Dutch standing committee handled the list of offensive sins. Synod Groningen-Zuid 1978 instructed the committee to study the question, "of het 'zondarenregister' in het avondmaalsformulier gehandhaafd dient te blijven en zo ja, in welke vorm." Ought the list of sinners to be preserved and, if so, in what manner? It is clear that the committee itself is not much in favour of preserving the list. They make the following remarks: A register of sinners always has the implicit danger of selection. Why do we mention the one sin and not the other? Will some sinners not feel themselves scot-free because they have not been mentioned? Do the sins that are mentioned in the old Form not remind us of the established church ("de volkskerk") which in those days of insufficient discipline and supervision needed such a list of offensive sinners in order to exclude them from the Lord's Supper?

Nevertheless, the deputies have tried to find a solution in which the list is not eliminated but modernized and improved. Because our older brothers and sisters enjoy reading some Dutch in our magazine, we will publish separately this proposed register of unrepentant sinners. If you remember what I wrote after the decision of Smithville 1980 to introduce into the list "those who live common-law or practice homosexuality; all who abuse alcohol or drugs, etc., etc.," you will understand that I would rather follow the example of our Dutch brothers. The church of Burlington-East remarked that in our age of licentiousness and declining morals a list is valuable as a testimony before the world and a preaching to the members of the church. It will be content, I hope, with a proposal similar to that in the Dutch report. Others will then not be annoyed by what they now experience as a catalogue of sensational sins that runs the danger of arbitrariness and legalism.

There are two other interesting points in the Forms for the Lord's Supper. The first concerns the "bread and wine illustration" of the mutual brotherly love. You

remember the passage in our old Form:

Besides, that by this same Spirit we also should be united as members of one body in true brotherly love, as the apostle says: Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread. *For as out of many grains one meal is ground and one bread baked, and out of many berries, pressed together, one wine and drink flows and mixes together*, so shall we all who by true faith are incorporated in Christ be all together one body, through brotherly love, for Christ our dear Saviour's sake, Who before has so exceedingly loved us, and show this towards one another, not only in words but also in deeds [Emphasis mine, J.F.].

The Standing Committee of our Dutch sister churches proposes to erase this illustration and to read the whole passage differently. They argue as follows: The word "For" at the beginning suggests an exegesis or explanation of the preceding text. But *Paul* says in I Corinthians 10 that we who are many, are one body, for we all *partake* of the one bread (that bread is distributed). But the grains and grapes illustration suggests that we are *formed into* one bread and one wine. Paul did not think of the process of transformation of grains and grapes but of the act of participation of the one bread and the one cup. The deputies acknowledge that the illustration is very ancient. They call it one of the many allegories in the early Christian church that are no simple explanations of biblical data but speculations. They do not deny the truth and beauty of those illustrations. Only these images do not explain the meaning of Scripture. It is *eis-egesis*, no exegesis. ("geen uitleg- maar inlegkunde"). One could propose to leave out the word "For" and to place Paul's words and the grains and grapes illustration *beside* one another. But the Dutch deputies are of the opinion that this is still confusing. "De niet aanwezige verbinding in betekenis wordt toch gelegd en leidt gemakkeilijk de aandacht van Paulus' woorden af." People will always make a connection between Paul's words and this new image. The bread and wine illustration distracts the attention. Therefore, the Dutch deputies propose to Synod Arnhem to delete the grains and grapes image completely.

I paraphrased this part of the Report (pp. 73 and 74) almost literally, for I was always fascinated by the illustration in our Form for the Lord's Supper and I would love to maintain it. Let me try to make a case for this beloved passage.

First of all, I would like to have more information. The Report speaks in general terms about the early Christian and medieval church. But does the illustration not go back already to the *Didachè*, the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, an early Christian treatise from the beginning of the second century? Our new Hymn section makes us sing in Hymn 46:

As grain, once scattered on the hillsides,
Was in the broken bread made one,
So from all lands Thy Church be gathered
Into Thy kingdom by Thy Son.

"From *Didachè*, c. 110," I read in the annotation, and how thrilled I was, when for the first time I sang with the congregation of Christ those ancient words. Is this not a beautiful illustration of the catholicity of the Christian Church? Catholicity and unity are closely connected. In the Form for the Lord's Supper we stress especially this union by the one and the same Spirit.

"But," I hear someone mutter, "what about the charge of *eis-egesis* ("inlegkunde")? "My counter question is: Does the Form really want to give an explanation

of Paul's text, or is it a simple addition? Our Canadian deputies deleted the word "For" and rendered the passage as follows (Acts Smithville, p. 160):

Fellowship By the same Spirit we are also united in true I Cor. 10:17 brotherly love as members of one body. For the Apostle Paul says, *Because there is one bread we who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread*. As one bread is baked out of many grains and one wine is pressed out of many grapes, so we all, incorporated in Christ by faith, are together one body. For the sake of Christ Who so exceedingly loved us first, we shall now love one another, and shall show this towards one another, not just in words, but also in deeds.

Our Canadian Reformed Churches should not follow the Dutch proposal in this respect. A minister sometimes uses an illustration or image in a sermon that is not Scriptural in the sense that you find it literally or even remotely in the Bible. But *non-Scriptural* does not mean *un-Scriptural*.

In Article 34 of the Confession of Faith, that deals with Holy Baptism, we speak about the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God "Who is our Red Sea, through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, that is, the devil, and to enter into the spiritual land of Canaan." I do not read any proposal to change this language of the Confession, and I am thankful for that. But could the Dutch deputies not also say of this Article that it gives speculations ("bespiegelingen") and allegories? Again, we have here very ancient Christian metaphors; we should not discard them. The catholicity of the church of all ages is dear to us, and do those illustrations and images not enrich us?

The second interesting topic is a memorandum of Dr. C. Trimp about the function of the Lord's Prayer in the Forms for the Lord's Supper. But this is a topic in itself, and my space is filled. Let us hope that we will find a new opportunity later to discuss these matters. They are interesting and not unimportant for the life of the worshipping congregation. In the meantime, I hope that our Dutch sister churches will not diminish or impoverish an element of our catholic heritage.

J. FABER

Zondaren-register in het Avondmaalsformulier

Wij noemen de volgende zondaars:

- allen die niet op de HERE alleen willen vertrouwen of Hem op eigenwillige manier vereren;
- allen die de naam van de HERE door vloeken of op andere wijze misbruiken;
- allen die de kerkdiensten niet trouw bezoeken en de verkondiging van het Woord of de heiligheid van de sacramenten minachten;
- allen die aan hun ouders of andere gezagsdragers ongehoorzaam zijn;
- allen die zich aan menselijk leven vergripen of haat koesteren tegen hun naaste en zich niet met hem willen verzoenen;
- allen die, getrouwd of ongetrouwd, hun lichaam niet rein bewaren;
- allen die hebzuchtig of verkwistend een werelds leven leiden;
- alle leugenaars en roddelaars;
- kortom, allen die zich in hun woord en wandel als ongelovigen gedragen.

A Farewell Reception

For the second time within a few weeks we travelled to Hamilton for a reception. This time it was for a farewell reception held for the Ohmanns.

On May 29, many brethren and sisters came to Hamilton's church building to bid farewell to our professor of Old Testament and his wife who both occupied a large place within our community. It was a "standing reception" even though some chairs were available for those who wished to stay a little longer. We saw brethren and sisters from many places in Ontario, and even some visitors from British Columbia who made use of the opportunity to shake hands with Prof. and Mrs. Ohmann.

There were also some speeches and presentations. The flow of well-wishers was sometimes stopped to give an opportunity for representatives of organizations and bodies to be heard by all.

One of those representatives was Mr. H. Feenstra. He had not been officially appointed, for the group which he represented no longer existed: it was the group of those who undertook a journey to Israel, there to be guided and instructed under the leadership of Prof. Ohmann. The tour would never have been such a success if Prof. Ohmann had not been there, Mr. Feenstra said; and as a reminder of that pleasant trip he offered two enlargements of photographs taken during that tour. The one showed Prof. Ohmann, complete with skull-cap, standing between two Israelis at the Wailing Wall, reciting from the Book of Psalms. The other picture showed him sitting high and dry between the two humps of a camel. If you have trouble with gasoline purchases or other hazards connected with driving, you can always use one of these instruments, Mr. Feenstra said: it does not need any gasoline or oil; just a little bit of water once in a while will do.

Prof. Ohmann was grateful for the hints, but doubted whether it would keep him free from trouble, since he was going "to a country where you need a permit for almost everything," he said.

Another speaker was Rev. W. Huizinga who spoke on behalf of the Hamilton Church. He gratefully recalled all the work that both Prof.

Ohmann and Mrs. Ohmann did in the midst of the Congregation, and presented them with a farewell present. Rev. Huizinga recalled that the first time they met was at a Classis Ontario South, where both of them were examined: Rev. Huizinga in a peremptory examination, Prof. Ohmann in a colloquium, required for ministers who come from sister churches abroad.

Rev. VanBeveren spoke on behalf of the Board of Governors and



Prof. Ohmann

reminded on the first meeting with Prof. Ohmann: that was at the Synod of New Westminster 1971, which appointed Rev. Ohmann as professor of Old Testament in the place of the late Prof. F. Kouwenhoven. He thanked Prof. Ohmann for the work done at the College and for the faithfulness with which he did it, adding the wish that the labours in Kampen may be blest for the benefit of the sister churches. At the same time he expressed the wish that Prof. Ohmann's presence in Kampen may strengthen the bond between our two institutions.

On behalf of the students Mr. Clarence Bouwman spoke. As can be expected of students, they knew very well how to imitate the professor and

we got a sample of a lecture and of the manner in which questions were answered by the departing professor. It was good. However, words alone were not sufficient. On behalf of the students Mr. Bouwman presented Prof. and Mrs. Ohmann with a pen-and-ink drawing of the College building, something which was greatly appreciated.

Mr. A. Hordyk addressed Prof. and Mrs. Ohmann on behalf of the Board of Trustees, and thanked him for the cooperation which was received also from them during the years they have been here. It was his wish that Prof. and Mrs. Ohmann may have been content with the manner in which the Board of Trustees has taken care of their temporal needs.

Dr. J. Faber spoke on behalf of the Faculty. Recalling the various professors of Old Testament who served at the Theological College in Kampen, he saw the most similarity between Prof. Ohmann and Prof. Maarten Noordtzijs. He thanked Prof. Ohmann for all he has done in Hamilton during these past ten years and for the cooperation that existed within the Faculty.

Prof. Ohmann himself was the last speaker of the evening. It was not easy for him to find the right words, he said, nor to say farewell to the brothers and sisters whom he and his wife had learned to know in this past decade. When he came to Canada, he had to switch from the specialization in the languages of the Middle East and India to the specific study of the Hebrew language and the exegesis of the Old Testament. The beauty and riches of the revelation of our God had become dearer and dearer to his heart through this study. He realized that everything was done with many shortcomings and much weakness, and was thankful for what he had been able to do, with the constant assistance of Mrs. Ohmann. Their expectation was from the Lord also for the time ahead, in which the brotherhood in Canada will be remembered continually.

Our readers will understand that much more was said, but the above lines were written to give you a brief resume of what went on.

The Rev. G. VanDooren led us in thanksgiving.

vO

press review

INFLATION IS A MORAL PROBLEM

In *The Outlook* of May 1981, I read an interesting article on inflation. It is also a warning. The author is the editor, the Rev. Peter De Jong. He starts with some quotations:

Corroborating the point of this article is an editorial by Marvin Stone on the concluding page of the March 23, 1981, *U.S. News and World Report*, entitled "A Nation of Thieves?" Mr. Stone quotes the observation of William M. Werber, retired business executive, that "economists are on the wrong track in treating inflation as an economic problem. He says: 'Inflation is more a basic moral issue than one of economics. And it all begins with the moral corruption in government.'

"Werber insists that inflation cannot be controlled by controlling the money supply. He says: 'You could raise the interest rate to 40 percent, but this would not get the job done.'

"The only way we are going to get a handle on ballooning prices is through a complete change in national attitudes. And this change must begin with government. When our leadership is honest, intelligent, frugal, fair and acts indiscriminately, with guts, you'll see some changes. Until then, it makes no difference how you manipulate money.'

"Economists surely will quarrel with Werber's prescription for halting inflation. But it is hard to quarrel with his plea for more honesty — from the government on down."

The above was boxed in. After that, the Rev. De Jong writes:

Herman Kahn, introduced by *U.S. News and World Report* (Dec. 2, 1974, p. 53) as "a noted analyst of world affairs" and "an authority on national trends," was being interviewed regarding his opinions on the state of the economy. Asked for suggestions to deal with the baffling problem of inflation, Mr. Kahn prescribed "first and foremost" "that the Government doesn't spend more than it has available. Any government that does so — except in very special circumstances — ought to be thought of as immoral. We've got to turn this whole fight against easy deficits and inflation into a moral issue, not just a matter of some economists' or politician's calculations. The economists think it's dumb to look at such things in terms of moral issues — as a matter of theology — but it's the only realistic way to balance the many pressures and inducements to lax behaviour and unrealistic estimates."

The Rev. De Jong comments that it is gratifying that a business consultant says that the whole current economic situation, with inflation running away, is first of all a moral problem and not an economic one. He also shows a parallel situation in history that is very interesting and serves as a warning:

Some years ago in a university course, we had to study a number of books that attempted to analyze the French Revolution [1789, J.G.]. Among them was Alfred Cobban's analysis of the financial crisis in the old monarchy which he saw helping to bring on the revolution (*A History of Modern France*, Vol. 1). The author pointed out that the nobility who had power in the old regime insisted that the successive finance ministers continue deficit financing rather than curtail expenses and raise taxes. This policy pushed the nation into bankruptcy, and in that chaotic situation the revolutionary leaders found their opportunity to seize control. This financial policy was, of course, a matter of economics, but it was not *merely* economics.

When people refuse to pay their bills or to tolerate equitable taxes, they reveal their moral degeneracy. And the chaos that overtakes them ought to be seen by Christians, at least, as the kind of judgment that God brings, also in an economic way, on breaking His laws.

That is now exactly the truth. I wholeheartedly agree. Christ Jesus is Redeemer not only for the soul, but also for this earthly, created life. And He redeems life by delivering it from sin and by placing it again in the service of God under His laws, economic and political life certainly included.

Another example from history is given:

In more recent history it is likely that few people in this part of the world realize the role of currency inflation in the National collapse and the Communist take-over of mainland China. When we arrived there in 1947 (as CRC missionaries) one paid about \$10,000 for a hamburger or a hot dog. And those dollars had at one time been worth one third of ours In the summer of 1948 we paid \$3,000,000 for a silver teaspoon, for by that time the exchange rate had reached \$12,000,000 Chinese to \$1 U.S. How much this financial collapse contributed to the political take-over may be difficult to determine, but of its importance in influencing the course of events there can be little doubt

As all of us are increasingly troubled

by the economic crisis which is beginning to claim first place in our concern, must we not as Christians see and speak of it in moral and religious rather than only in economic terms?

Further, a comparison is made between the "prodigal son," who first wasted his fathers goods and finally was left with nothing, and our wasting our energy and other resources. I will not say that there is not much wasting in our western society. But we should not exaggerate either. But it is true:

We will have to face our responsibility to God Who brings us to account for everything we do with what He has entrusted to us When we habitually live beyond our means, when we become so accustomed to deficits that we borrow with no intention of repaying, whether we do that as individuals or collectively as a country, can we ex-



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pect to escape the economic punishments with which God repays theft and other misuse of His gifts? . . . As these economic judgments overtake us, are we going to listen to Him, mend our ways, and seek to move others and our nation to do the same?

With this question the article is concluded. I would like to add a few remarks. That mending of our ways, would that not include that we listen to the prophecies of, e.g., Malachi? The LORD did not bless Israel in those days, because the people were seeking themselves instead of the LORD and His service. Are we not more and more materialistic in our thinking and desires so that first we ourselves must have everything we want to have, and then, afterwards, if there is still something left, we also give for church and mission and school, and so on?

And how many of our young people follow the pattern they notice with older ones? Their priorities in life are not in the right place, according to the Bible: first we ourselves, then the Lord.

Also many of our young people leave school before they have finished the last grade. They do not want to study. Money and a car and all kinds of other things come first. And driving around. Wasting gas and time. In many cases their earnings are good, but their money disappears almost as soon as it has come in. Payments have to be made for this and for that. Almost all the money is needed for enjoying their young life. This is the way it may be from age 16 or 17 to age 24 or older sometimes. Then a girl friend comes along, and the desire to get married. But our young man, who could have had a number of thousands of dollars in the bank, has nothing — or almost nothing. It is all spent. And, because our young man left school too soon, so that he learned no skills or trade, or did not get an education at a college or university, he cannot do anything either. He has nothing and he is nothing, for he wasted his money and his time. He did not realize that having nothing and being nothing is not a good basis for married life later. His marriage starts with debts; and the line of living continues: no contribution for church and mission and school, and so on, for there is nothing.

But, when this happens to young people, who have to learn to act and live in a responsible way when young, but did not do so, who is to blame? Are they or are the parents? Do we as parents teach the youth to accept

responsibilities? With word and with deed? If parents do not show: first God and then we ourselves, we cannot expect our children to give a good example. If grandparents do not show the way, will their grandchildren go that way?

It is true, also the government gives a bad example in spending more, much more, than comes in. Year after year there is a deficit. And inflation must help in financing the deficits. That is the impression I get. But I am not an economist. Anyway, also our Liberal government under Mr. Trudeau is spending and spending and causes the deficits to grow. And people are not aware that Karl Marx, the father of Communism, already more than a century ago said that increasing inflation is one of the

means of breaking the capitalist world and making it ripe for revolution, for a communist take-over in such a chaotic situation. Is the Canadian nation on the alert? Or do also Canadians like the fact that the government spends so much money? For them? Is it not so that a nation gets what it wants? Whether good or bad?

Do we still believe that keeping God's commandments, also in political and social and economic life, is a basis for building up? Indeed, are we as Christians, in the first place, willing to live in the obedience of faith and to mend our ways? We, that is old and young, parents and children? Are we willing to learn to accept our Christian responsibilities as a joy, in the service of the LORD and His Kingdom?
J. GEERTSEMA

Hamilton District Women's Societies Annual Meeting

On the evening of April 23, 1981, the Women's Societies of the Hamilton, Ontario, district held their annual meeting. The two societies of Lincoln were the hostesses this year. We came together in the basement of the Lincoln church building.

The president of the society "Hannah," Mrs. A. Vandenhaak, opened the meeting and asked us to sing Psalm 19:1 and 6. She then read for us Psalm 22, opened the meeting with prayer, and spoke a few words of welcome. She informed us that due to the foggy weather most of the ladies from the Hamilton societies were unable to attend. Still, quite a few made it through the mist, coming all the way from Dunnville, Smithville, Lincoln, and Burlington, East and West. The minutes of last year were also fog-bound.

The topic of discussion for the evening was the book of Job. An introduction on the subject was prepared by Mrs. L. Vandergriendt, a member of the society "Faith and Obedience."

Mrs. Vandergriendt then read her essay. The author of the book of Job is unknown. Part of the book is prose, but most of it is written in poetry, and it is comparable to Proverbs. Job's name means "Persecuted"; although most likely not an Israelite, he was a true believer.

After listening to this informative essay several questions were asked. We discussed whether our suffering is testing of faith or tempting by Satan, and whether Job's suffering

was comparable to the temptation of Jesus in the desert. We concluded that Job was not tempted but tested through his faith, whereas Jesus was tempted in the desert, and Satan wanted to destroy Jesus. Job also knew about the coming of Christ when he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." At the close of the discussion we sang Psalm 36:2.

During intermission coffee and cake were served, and we all had the opportunity to meet various friends and relatives.

On re-opening we sang our League song. Following this, Mrs. R. Oosterhoff read an article out of the September 1979 issue of the magazine *Outlook* entitled "What is your talent?" This article stated that everyone of us has been given certain talents or gifts. This does not necessarily mean that these talents consist of extraordinary gifts. There are many things we can do for each other in smaller ways in the service of the Lord. A brief discussion was held on this.

After the singing of Psalm 118:1 and 2, Mrs. P. Heemskerk read a story out of a very old Dutch newspaper. Another coffee break was held, and we counted 129 sisters. Our closing song was Psalm 103:1 and 8. Mrs. Vandergriendt led us in a prayer of thanksgiving, and the president adjourned the meeting.

MRS. P. HEEMSKERK
Secretary, Women's Society
"Hannah" of Lincoln

EVANGELISM:

A Scriptural Demand!

This is a speech given at a congregational meeting in Smithers, March 21, 1981. The text is slightly revised and adapted for publication.

It is actually strange that evangelism has been so much of a step-child in the Churches for so many years. Often it still is: if we see how much we are willing to do in other fields, mostly to *preserve* the heritage, what we do to *proclaim* this heritage to others seems very little. One wonders how in this respect we compare to the early Churches. True, the situation may be totally different but so are the means at our disposal today. When you read the New Testament you receive the strong impression that the early Churches considered evangelism an *essential part of being Church*.

First of all, let it be clear what we mean by evangelism. The word itself simply means "bringing the good message," that is, proclaiming the Gospel. We apply this term especially when the Church proclaims this good message to those who are not members of the Church. Evangelism is perhaps a better term than home-mission, because it at the same time qualifies *what* you are going, or what your mission is: you are bringing the evangel, the Gospel! You come with GOOD NEWS in this world, in sharp contrast with all the bad news and darkness there is in the world.

Evangelism is God-centered

There is reason for concern when members of the Church wonder whether evangelism is a task of the Church. Have they really tasted some of the depth of the riches, wisdom and knowledge of God in sending Jesus Christ into this world because he loved the world, and seeks the salvation of the sinner and not his death?

Evangelism is not just based on a text here and there, not just on Matthew 28:19, the so-called "great commission," but it is the natural outflow of all of God's revelation. God is the universal God, the supreme Sovereign, Creator of all that is on this earth. Now when it has pleased God to save a number of people from destruction, and when God says that

it will be those who upon hearing the Gospel believe the same, then those who *have* heard can not keep quiet! They are going to share this good news with their fellow-creatures.

God has to be proclaimed as King, as the One who deserves to be worshipped and glorified by ALL people. GOD's honour is at stake! We are not just after the salvation of some souls, but evangelism is God-centered! God's children are going to speak up for God's sake, for the honour of His Name, whether others will hear or refuse to hear.

A Motivated Church

When in the New Testament they were so active in evangelism, they did not just base it on a text. You never hear them refer to Matthew 28:19, for example, but the message they received motivated them: they simply had to evangelize after being evangelized! As Peter himself said: "For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). Even when after the death of Stephen the Church is scattered about, this only multiplies and intensifies their evangelizing effort: "Now these who were scattered went about preaching the Word." (Acts 8:20). No, there was no doubt about the fact that the Church had a strong urge to evangelize.

Let us now see what actually motivated these early Churches. There is an interesting book by Michael Green, called *Evangelism in the Early Church*¹ which is worthwhile reading for anyone who wants to know more about this subject. I am also passing on some of the things I gleaned from this book. He speaks of mainly *three motives* in the early Church: the sense of gratitude, of responsibility, and of concern. Allow me to elaborate on these.

Sense of Gratitude

The early Christians were overwhelmed by the experience of receiving God's love in Jesus Christ. It simply dominated their whole lives: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). It is that love of God that motivated them to love one

another and reach out to others. Think also of I John 4.

Evangelism is not only founded on a specific commandment of Christ, but on what Christ Himself *is* to us: it is the Spirit of Christ in us! The divine love and compassion for people gone astray must be declared and proclaimed in this world: we owe that first of all to God! What better way is there to show our gratitude and what it means to us? If a child receives a beautiful, precious present but doesn't talk about it to anyone, nor shows it to anyone, you wonder whether he appreciates it, right? How much the more should this apply to us, especially since this beautiful present is not only for us but for everyone who *hears and believes!*

So Peter also says: "Be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you" (I Peter 3:15). It was not only the task of the apostles to do so, but they tell all believers to be their followers: after all, "we cannot but speak of the things we have seen and heard."

Sense of Responsibility

Besides the sense of gratitude, also the sense of responsibility motivated the early Churches. They had to live lives consistent with their profession, and Jesus also said: "for I always do what is pleasing to Him" (John 8:29). Paul incites the believers to do the same, namely, "to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10). That is our responsibility also over against others: "Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Cor. 5:11). This also includes the Gentiles: "But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the message fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it" (II Tim. 4:17). Yes, Paul even speaks of a necessity: "For if I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16).

Sense of Concern

A third motive which comes to the foreground for the evangelizing effort in the early Church appears to be a sense of concern. There are only two ways for all men, the way of life and the way of death. You are either on one or the other; there is no in-between, and for this reason we should also have a deep concern for all those who are not on the way of life. "For

Continued on page 250.

Reflections

By P. Jongeling. Translated by John DeVos.

Lenin the prophet

In 1923 Lenin published an outline on the expectations for the future of communism. The words he wrote had a ring of prophecy:

First we shall lay our hands on Eastern Europe, then on the masses of Asia and finally we shall include the United States of America, that last bastion of Capitalism. We need not fight for it; it will fall in our lap like an overripe fruit.

We must assure ourselves of the cooperation of teachers and lecturers at schools and universities, of freethinking preachers, pacifists and world reformers, and so plant in the minds of capitalist youth an attitude which will make them forever refrain from participating in a bloody conflict with the case of communism.

What was the Status Quo?

When the father of the Soviet Union penned down these optimistic expectations, unfolding his strategy for a communistic world hegemony, the chances of success did not look impressive.

In Eastern Europe — Lenin's first target — Moscow had lost control over Finland and the Baltic States, as well as Poland. By the end of the first world war nationalistic and anticommunistic regimes had come to power in these nations.

As a result of the war, the following revolution, the civil war and the passive resistance of farmers and intellectuals, an untenable economic situation had come about. In 1921 a terrible famine ensued, directly affecting some forty-three million people. Hunger riots broke out all over. The Soviet system was shaking on its foundations. Lenin was forced to announce a new economic policy in 1921, abolishing the requisitioning of grain and allowing the farmers, after delivery of a part of their crops, to sell the balance on the open market at the best price possible. The ruble was stabilized and all restrictions were lifted. People had to pay again for public services such as transit and mail. Utilities such as water, gas and electricity were no longer free either.

State-run industries became autonomous and private enterprise was again allowed.

In short: Private initiative and the profit-motive, according to the communist doctrine the most accursed abomination, were engaged to save the Soviet ship of state from sinking. And it worked. Improvements came about in the Soviet Union. In Western Europe and America these measures were regarded as a first step on the road back to a moderate capitalistic system. However, no second step followed.

Within a year from the introduction of the New Economic Program (NEP) a beginning was made with its very dismantling.

Lenin considered the NEP a step backward, a necessary preparation for two steps forward. And these steps forward were made with strides of iron strength, sparing nothing and nobody. In the year 1923 therefore, the state of affairs in the Soviet Union did in no way resemble a paradise.

Moscow's Great Victory

Now, less than sixty years later, we must admit with a certain sense of uneasiness that the communist strategy has to a great extent been successful. But it was with different means than Lenin envisaged. It did most certainly involve a lot of armed conflict.

We may also notice that the man who has greatly enhanced the advance of communism was . . . Adolf Hitler! He was the one who triggered the second world war. By so doing, he gave Moscow the opportunity to swallow up the Baltic states, the Polish Ukraine and Moldavia and to turn Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria into Soviet dominated vassal states. The second great opportunity arose with the bloody civil war in China, which ended in total victory for the Chinese communists.

Ideological Warfare

Thus the world of capitalism did

not, as Lenin expected, fall into communist hands like an overripe fruit; the achievements required a great amount of shooting.

But on the other side, one must not underestimate the impact of the long distance weapon: Ideology!

The number of followers of the Marxist doctrine of salvation runs into millions across the world. One third of the world population lives under communist rule. In the still free world "fifth columns" are operating practically everywhere to undermine the public resistance against the teachings and the military threat from Moscow. It is true that even communism is subject to deterioration. Communism has been named "the god that failed." Very little has come true of all the rosy expectations. The glowing promises were fulfilled with nothing but bitterness. It is highly likely that there are fewer genuinely convinced communists in the communistic countries than in the free world. Behind the iron curtain the real truth became known: the spiritual oppression, the brutal power, the social inequality, worse than in the Western world.

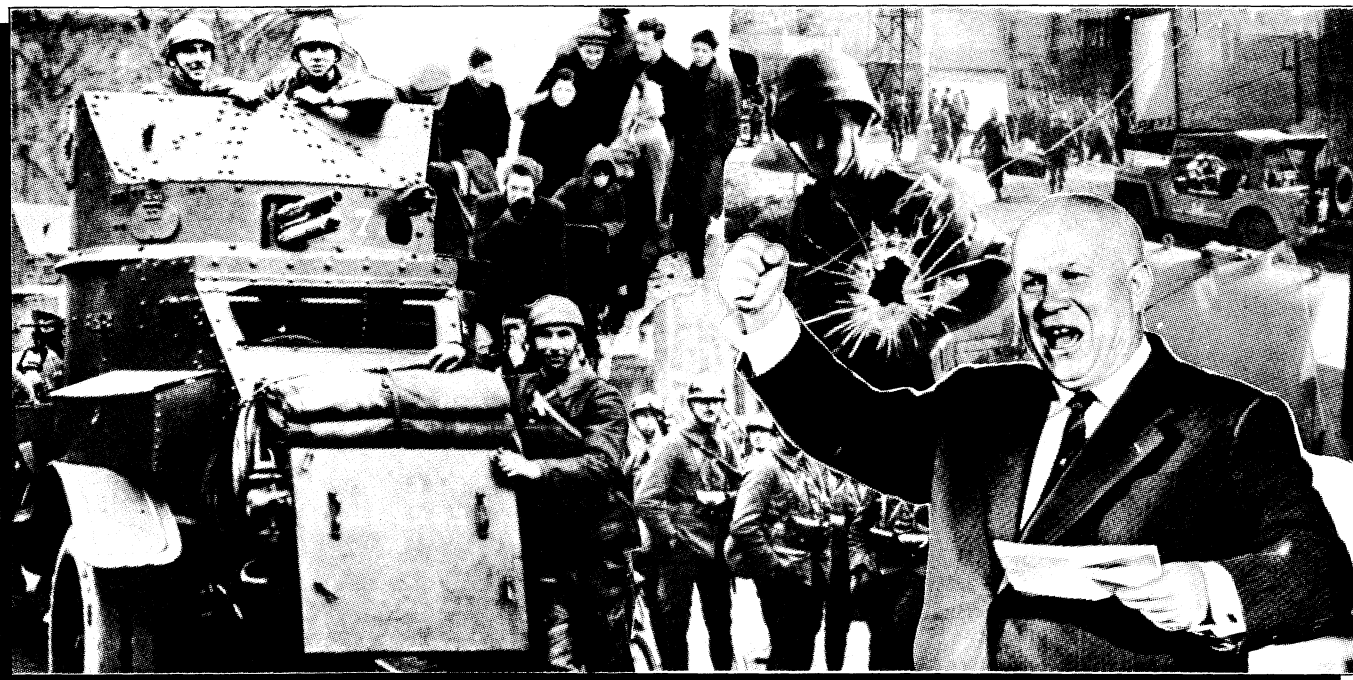
Sometimes communism must — like in 1921 — forced by necessity, retreat slightly. Khrushchev had to do that a few times in his days with his agricultural policy. Farmers were then given the freedom to cultivate their own little patch of land and to sell the crop on the free market. But it was always a very small step, forced upon them by circumstances and it was always made undone as soon as possible.

Presently there are no longer the massive purgings and frequent exilings which took place under Stalin, but the work camps still exist and the production of that forced labour force adds no mean contribution to the Soviet economy . . .

The world under communist rule does undoubtedly know many "radishes," red on the outside, white on the inside. But who dares to openly oppose the red regime?

At the moment the only ones doing that are the Poles, known for their reckless bravery and stubborn resistance. The opposition started there in the labour movement but it has now also affected different chapters of the Polish communist party, where reforms are demanded which are irreconcilable with communism.

Moscow, presently experiencing



more trouble in Afghanistan than it cares to admit, is now facing a decision of enormous importance. Not to intervene would have the result that the Polish example be followed elsewhere, thus touching the very roots of communism itself. But on the other hand, military intervention would drastically increase world tensions and it would be a disastrous setback on the road towards renewed acceptance of peaceful coexistence between East and West.

Military Supremacy

So the Soviet bloc does have its troubles and setbacks. Yet, we should never underestimate the power of this empire. In the weapons race it has taken a considerable lead.

That fact is not amazing. In totalitarian states one need hardly worry about the wishes and preferences of the peoples. The regime decides how much shall be spent on the equipment of warfare, it decides on the manpower of warfare by prescribing the length of the draft and it decides which additions shall be made to the nuclear arsenal. Since the inception of the Soviet state all emphasis has been placed on the development of heavy industry, which is to a great extent of military character. The lighter industry, producing more consumer goods, was never given the same chance. Production of weapons always had top priority.

In the field of conventional weaponry they soon were the leaders.

Recent developments, leading to the installation of the SS 20 rockets, each with three nuclear warheads, have given them the lead also in the field of atomic weaponry. . . . The democratic Western nations show a different attitude. Every increase in the military effort is received with public lamentations and protest. After all, every penny spent for defense will reduce for the Western people the luxury and the prosperity to which they feel entitled.

Pacifism, the objection against all weapons, and more so against nuclear war material has become a strong influence in America and especially in Western Europe. Moscow will do everything within its power to encourage this attitude.

One could almost hear Lenin repeat today: "We must assure ourselves of the cooperation of teachers and lecturers at schools and universities, of freethinking preachers, pacifists and world reformers, and so plant in the minds of capitalist youth an attitude which will make them forever refrain from participating in a bloody conflict with the case of communism." Lenin's strategy, although not totally successful in every detail, has had a most frightening level of achievement.

The Only Weapon

Also against this communist revolution there is at bottom only one effective weapon: The Gospel. It is the Gospel that makes us discern Marxism as a fraudulent counter-

Gospel, an apple-of-Sodom; attractive and appealing on the outside, but poisonous and inedible on the inside. Wherever the Gospel of Christ is still a power in the life of state and nation, wherever the law of God is still recognized as authoritative for all of life, there communism has little chance. But as these Christian foundations are more and more removed from public life, there these opportunities increase by leaps and bounds. James Reston was right when he remarked in *New York Times* that the decay of family life, which in America became particularly more manifest during the last decade, has done more to weaken the nation than the debacles of Vietnam and Iran.

The West is still free. It knows precisely the communist intentions: "The red international shall conquer the earth of tomorrow."

Khrushchev, during his visit to America proclaimed: "We shall bury you!" Ideological propaganda and a massive military effort work together and reinforce each other. But millions in the Western world have closed their eyes to such dangers. Millions have decided not to get excited and to go on happily and carefree with the labour of sawing through the very limb on which our whole society rests.

A day of dreadful awakening may come when the West realizes what it has done and what it has neglected to do.

But then it will be too late.



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.

KAMPEN

On Friday, May 15, 1981, the academic year at the Theological College was concluded with an assembly which at the same time meant the end of the work which Prof. H.J. Schilder had been doing at the College for twenty-eight years. The assembly was attended not only by the professors, lecturers, and students, but also by the Board of Governors, the Board of Trustees and the Board of the Association of Reformed Ministers.

Prof. Schilder spoke about Psalm 131 and elaborated on the place which this Psalm has had in the

history of the College and of the Churches.

Prof. Trimp spoke on behalf of the Senate and recalled that Prof. Schilder did not look forward to occupying the chair of Old Testament. He brought a sacrifice when accepting the mandate and leaving the Church at Utrecht.

Mr. H.P. Dam, chairman of the Students' Association, recalled some of the lectures given by Prof. Schilder and the characteristic manner in which he did it, which was unique. He presented the departing professor with a book containing articles which the latter wrote during his Utrecht period.

The chairman of the Association of Reformed Ministers, the Rev. B. van Zuijlekom, spoke on behalf of former students. He presented Prof. Schilder with an "envelope-with-contents."

Another book was presented, containing meditations written by Prof. Schilder, with the title *Ik Kom Thuis* ("I Come Home").

Prof. Schilder will continue the work until Prof. Ohmann can take over. (ND)

* * *

The fight over biblical inerrancy that has been boiling in the Southern Baptist Convention has taken on new partisan overtones with the an-

and women. Everyone was to witness and to evangelize, and many must have been involved! Read the book of Acts, for example, from this angle and you will see that the tremendous spread and outreach of the Church was not only the result of the work of a few apostles but of all the Christians, by their word and deed. It is also worthwhile to note how actively the women were involved in this. Think of Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla, the four daughters of Philip, the women of Berea and Thessalonica, and see how many women Paul greets as fellow labourers in Romans 16: Eight of the twenty-six people mentioned!

That this work of evangelism was an activity wherein all Christians were involved, we also see reflected in the methods which were employed. We hope to deal with that in Part 2 of this series.

C. VAN SPRONSEN

¹ Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970.

nouncement that Abner V. McCall, president of Baylor University in Waco, Texas, will challenge Bailey Smith for the presidency of the 13.6 million member denomination. The SBC president is traditionally unopposed for election to a second one-year term, but moderates are unhappy because they believe Smith, elected last year, has put too many "fundamentalists" on convention committees. (CT)

* * *

Theologically liberal denominations are biased toward the extreme left and are promoting views contrary to those held by most local churches, charged a new group of conservative theologians and intellectuals. The Institute on Religion and Democracy, formed to give grassroots churches the other perspective, singled out the National Council of Churches as funding and publicizing in such a way as to contribute to a leftist revolution in El Salvador. United Methodist evangelist and institute director Edmund W. Robb said the liberal churches' support of Salvadorian antigovernment factions is a "new form of cultural imperialism imposed by U.S. church groups" and they "will no longer go unchallenged." The institute's organizing members include evangelical theologian Carl F.H. Henry, Catholic professor James V. Schall, and journalists Richard Neuhaus and Michael Novak, among others. (CT)

* * *

PHILADELPHIA (RNS)

There is no incompatibility between being a Christian and a communist, says a United Methodist pastor here who recently took part in a 12-day conference on Christianity and Marxism in Rome. Upon returning to his pastorate at Calvary United Methodist Church here, the Rev. Arthur Brandenburg declared that Americans must overcome "our simpleminded anti-communism or we will be cut off from many of our most courageous and pioneering brothers and sisters in the faith." In a brief interview in the newsletter of the Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia, Mr. Brandenburg said, "Americans must realize it is possible to be both a devoted Christian and Marxist and even a member of the Communist Party." (CN)

No comment . . .

* * *

MINNEAPOLIS (RNS)

Christians and Jews need to

EVANGELISM 1

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the Son of man came to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10), and the Lord is "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (II Pet. 3:9) and that they come to the knowledge of the truth. Paul was willing to give his life for it (Acts 20:19-24)!

In this connection we may also think of what we read in Ezekiel about the responsibility of the watchmen when they do not announce the pending judgment and do not declare the will of God: they are also responsible! In the New Testament we are called ambassadors for Christ. Would the responsibility of them be less than that of watchmen? Paul knew himself to be under obligation to all people, both to Greeks and barbarians (Rom. 1:14ff.).

Paul does not limit this obligation to his own special calling, but he sets himself as an example for the whole congregation: all are to participate, elders and other members, men

Chat on Books

As promised, we are going to have a chat on books this time.

In its "Twin Brooks Series," Baker Book House has provided a reprint of the 1898 translation of Dr. Abraham Kuyper's *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*. It was not a translation of the complete work and thus the reprint contains only the translation of "the first fifty-three pages of Vol. I, of the original, and Vol. II entire."

Since this is a reprint, and the value of Kuyper's *Encyclopedia* is well-known, I confine myself to informing you of the reprint, the price of which is \$12.95 (American).

* * *

Also from Baker Book House comes another volume of Dr. William Hendriksen's *New Testament Commentary*, namely, on the first eight

chapters of the letter to the Romans. The American price is \$14.95.

A commentary does not lend itself too well for a general review. An adequate judgment about one can be formed only via regular use. In connection with a few texts for which I consulted Dr. Hendriksen's book, I had some disappointing experiences. It was my impression that the author sometimes brings too much theology into his explanation.

Speaking about 1:19, he mentions "general revelation in nature, history and conscience." Why that "conscience"? Is there a "general revelation" in the "conscience" of people? Dr. Hendriksen refers to 2:14, with which text he writes that God "equipped him [i.e. the heathen, vO] with a sense of right and wrong." What do we have here? Do we get the theory of the "inborn ideas" back?

INTERNATIONAL

— *Continued from page 250.*

clean up the images they have of each other, speakers emphasized at a major inter-faith conference here and in St. Paul. But does that mean they will have to be less faithful to their own traditions? That question emerged as a sensitive issue at the conference, which had the theme, "How Do Christians and Jews Teach About Each Other?" "I keep hearing that I must deny my faith or I will be anti-Semitic," an evangelical Christian minister complained at a conference workshop. At the closing session of the conference, Rabbi Irving Greenberg dealt with the problem and maintained that "Christians did not need to be less Christian or Jews less Jewish" in working for understanding. But he said they must be open to self-criticism and self-renewal and "build up mutual images of affirmation." "Each group in faithfulness to tradition will have to solve this question," he said.

BUT

PARIS (RNS)

The grand rabbi of France, in an apparent rebuke to the new Roman Catholic archbishop of Paris, has called the idea of a "Jewish-Christian religion" one of the spiritual dangers facing French Jewry. Rabbi Rene Sirat, on the occasion of his installa-

tion as head of France's 650,000 Jews, listed Jewish-Christian relations among seven dangers facing "our community." (CN)

and he has a clearer view of the situation than all those who wish to promote the "dialogue."

* * *

MIAMI (RNS)

Family discipline and the religious faith of the mother are the keys to keeping children off drugs and out of trouble. That's the finding of a recent study by the Rev. Sean O'Sullivan, criminal justice and drug abuse aide for the Catholic archdiocese of Miami. "Discipline in a family cuts the chances of drug addiction in half," reported the priest who studied 284 families in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, N.Y., for his doctorate in sociology and social work at Columbia University. He believes the findings are valid for any large Urban area. Discipline was determined on the basis of whether the children had a time to be home at night, did school homework, had rules about watching television, smoked or drank, were given limits on dating, or allowed to have companions disapproved by their parents. (CN) vO

"By nature," we read further, "— that is without prompting or guidance from any written code, therefore in a sense spontaneously — a Gentile will at times do certain things required by God's law." What does "by nature" mean? I miss a thorough explanation of that term here. Does it indeed mean "spontaneously"? I don't believe so, but would rather follow Dr. D. Holwerda who translates here "indeed" or "actually."

In this connection I am also convinced that Dr. Hendriksen did not differentiate sufficiently between "law" and "work of the law," i.e. that which is *practically* required by the law.

Another objection I have is the too restricted understanding of "law." With 2:12, Dr. Hendriksen writes, "That by using the word 'law' the apostle is thinking especially of the Pentateuch, even more precisely, of the law of the Ten Commandments, is clear from verses 21, 22."

My question is, "Was the boasting of the Jews a boasting about having the 'Ten Commandments'?" They indeed "bragged about the law," v. 23, but did they brag about the "Ten Commandments"? Again I say, "I don't believe that." Their boast was about being God's people, having God's Word, having the service of reconciliation. I think that this point was neglected too much in the exegesis; besides, what should have been taken more into consideration is that Paul speaks about the law as *it had become in the Jewish thinking and theology*. If that had been done, we would not have seen a statement like "Even though the Gentile does not have the law as originally written on tablets of stone (Ex. 24:12) . . ." Psalm 147:19, 20 speaks clearly about more than the "Ten Commandments."

Another text where I would rather follow Dr. D. Holwerda than Dr. W. Hendriksen is 4:2.

Dr. Hendriksen translates, "For if Abraham was justified on the basis of works, he has something to boast about, but from God's point of view he has no reason to boast."

I beg to disagree with Dr. Hendriksen's translation of the proposition *pros* (with accusative). It clearly means that Abraham would have had something to boast about "with God," or "towards God." "From God's point of view" does not seem to be a permissible translation. The point is that Abraham would have been able to come to God and stand before God's countenance with

Continued on page 254.

news medley

The previous *Clarion* informed us of two wedding anniversaries which should be mentioned in our column. The one is a fiftieth anniversary, the other a fortieth.

To start with the fiftieth anniversary: it is the one of brother and sister K. Flokstra of Smithville. Let me add that it is Kornelis Flokstra, such in distinction from another Flokstra with the same initial. We had a particular way of keeping the two apart when referring to them, but I shall not betray that secret. The two K. Flokstra's are some twenty-six hundred miles apart anyway.

However, let me convey our heartfelt congratulations on this occasion and express the wish that the Lord will continue to bless you and make you fruitful for the cause of His kingdom.

It was at one of the General Synods in Carman that brother Flokstra was present. He and another brother — already with the Lord for many years — could not get used to the real Canadian meals that were served at the place where we met and ate. Thanks to the hospitality of quite a few Carman families, the two brethren managed to get a solid "Dutch" meal at least once a day. And when we asked where they had been during lunch time or dinner time, the reply was, "We did some family-visiting." They brought quite a few family visits during those weeks, but I do not think that they intruded upon the office of the Carman elders when doing that. Humour has its legitimate place in the life of a Christian.

The couple that celebrate their fortieth wedding anniversary are brother and sister L. Hopman of Dunnville, Ontario. That will be on July 4th (the Flokstra's celebration was on May 29th), and to them we extend our heartfelt congratulations as well. Although I do not know the celebrating couple, I do know some of their children and the place where they came from (Spakenburg) reminds me of the weekend when I had to be there to conduct the services on September 9, 1945. I do not recall the name of the family where I stayed, but one thing stands out in my memory: Hardly had I entered the home and divested myself of superfluous clothing and suitcase, when a big plate with thick pieces of fried eel was placed in front of me. Being a lover of fish anyway, I seldom had a one-course meal which I enjoyed more than that one. Fortunately, it was not yet an "in-thing" to be concerned about one's line, otherwise I might have had some qualms about indulging so wholeheartedly in this pleasant pastime. The other thing I remember from that weekend was the size of the church building: if I am not mistaken it could hold no fewer than 1,800 worshippers, and as far as I recall, it was full.

Anyway: congratulations.

Congratulations are also in place for a Church, namely, the Church at Langley which, finally, could dedicate their own church building on May 14. From what the Rev. VanderBoom writes in the *Church News* and from what I heard from him personally the conclusion may be drawn that the Langley Congregation is very happy with and thankful for this gift from the Lord. Once the organ is completed, there will be little left to be desired.

As for organs, this week I received a letter from The Netherlands in which I was told that apparently in

England not a few congregations are selling the pipe-organ which they have: dwindling attendance and high cost of upkeep seem to bring those congregations to the decision to sell their pipe-organ for a ridiculously low price. Recently such an organ was installed somewhere in The Netherlands. I doubt whether it would be feasible for one of us to look for a solution in this direction: climatic differences (dry winters) might have an adverse effect on the various components. Enough trouble was encountered already when an organ was brought from the west coast to the prairies! In many instances furniture brought from The Netherlands had to be discarded or taken apart and re-glued completely due to the climatic differences. Anyway, I have mentioned it.

To stay in Langley for a minute: "With the incoming mail is a letter from a family of the congregation suggesting a name for the new church building. It is decided, however, to uphold a decision taken previously: no name will be added to the words 'Canadian Reformed Church.'"

Continuing with buildings: the Chilliwack Consistory report tells us that the Committee of Administration reported but "in view of this report and the opinions expressed at the meeting of the Consistory with the Congregation, it is decided not to proceed with the sale and relocation of the manse at this time."

At the Abbotsford Consistory meeting, "it was decided that we will use the Revised Standard Version in the church services as of January 1, 1982. This decision was based on the recommendation of the General Synod."

Cloverdale's Consistory occupied itself with a different matter. "A proposal for further studies by the minister is extensively discussed and approved. The details will be passed on to the congregation if and when admission requirements have been met."

That "if and when" in the above sentence does not refer — I am convinced — to the capacities and knowledge of the minister, but are the result of the fact that a degree obtained from our own College is not generally recognized. Years ago the Rev. VanderBoom and myself tried to be registered for post-graduate studies at Union College at the UBC, but they did not recognize our degree from the Theologische Hoogeschool in Kampen. Thanks to the persistent efforts of the brethren Kouwenhoven and VanDooren, that degree was recognized by the Toronto School of Theology. When once, at Emmanuel College in Toronto, I met the former Registrar of Union College (who had strongly opposed our application), I had to chuckle secretly; he did not recognize me but I did recognize him and I felt the urge to tell him that both former applicants were fully received for what they were worth according to their degree from Kampen; but I did not do so: I greeted him politely and went my way. I hope that Rev. Visscher will succeed in his plans.

As for general Valley news: the Young People's Societies were to have a Study Weekend in May, at which the Rev. J. Visscher was to introduce, "Have You Been Born Again?" and Mr. J. Hendricks "Man, in the Image of God?" The Women's League Day is scheduled for June 23rd. In the morning the book of Ecclesiastes will be the topic for discussion.

We move on to Alberta. From that province we have to mention something only about the Immanuel Church in Edmonton (that is the South-West Congregation).

As will be known, they are going to erect a church building on a property purchased from the School society. "Some minor changes were made in the floor plan of the proposed new church building." I shall not mention

those changes insofar as they were described in *The City Guide*, for they would make as little sense to you as they do to me, as we do not have the floorplan before us.

Some people like to go to garage sales, others won't skip an auction sale if they can help it. Knowing what's going on in the world of wrecking will also yield considerable fruit at times. Some of those qualities must have resulted in the following: One brother "has been able to 'line up' quite a bit of good used material for our new church building, e.g. enough solid oak courtroom benches (pews) to fill the balcony and an assortment of about 50 solid oak doors with frames and hardware (various sizes). The architect will endeavour to incorporate these into the plans." The trouble with second-hand stuff and then with "various sizes" is that you so soon get a hodge-podge and that it oftentimes costs more in time and money than if the items had been purchased new at a uniform size. Perhaps, however, they have a very skilful architect, and equally skilful builders.

As target date for the start of the building process the first week in July is mentioned. Too bad they have included a balcony.

A last item from Immanuel Edmonton: the Consistory decided to set the mileage compensation for office-bearers at 20¢ per kilometer. The every-rising gasoline costs and the costs of repairs and so on make that look like a very reasonable compensation. I hope that every office-bearer does send in his statement to the treasurer at regular intervals. One should not be penalized for being an office-bearer by having to pay for the cost of family visiting, attendance at Consistory meetings, etc. from one's own pocket. When all office-bearers do send in their statement, the ones who say, "I don't need it and I don't want it," can always return the amount to the Church in one way or another; but when all office-bearers do it, those who do need it and keep it won't have to feel embarrassed or greedy.

I do not know what prompted the Winnipeg Consistory to meet with the Building Committee and with the School Board "to discuss the financial planning together with the Consistory since both are so closely related. It was decided to make one financial package for borrowing purposes, but the church and the school will each pay on the basis of their borrowings. In due time an agreement will be drawn up between the church and school as to their rights and responsibilities."

I say right away that I don't know all the aspects involved; I also know that the properties of Church and School are adjacent and, perhaps, partly in common use. It may be therefore that I misjudge the situation, but I see in this whole arrangement a possible source of much trouble and discord in the future. However closely the work of the Church and of the School Society may be related, they are two separate bodies and should be kept separate. I have never seen any good come from an identification of the two or of a connection as close as appears to be proposed in the above decision. Co-ownership would be the cause of much unnecessary trouble; and if they were separate in their dealings with banks and other financial institutions, I don't understand why they now wish to bring everything into one lump sum, proceeding separately only in administrative respect. I can understand it when a person says, "I wish to consolidate my debts and bring it all together into one sum, borrowed from a single creditor: that makes it easier to keep track of payments and in this way I have to think only of one thing." But the sense of making "one financial package for borrowing purposes" when two different bodies are

involved escapes me. On the other hand, I foresee trouble. Even though all church members may be members of the School Society, yet the two are distinct and should remain distinct. We should not, via an agreement between Church and School, *compel* all church members to cooperate in School matters.

Enough about that. We travel on to Ontario.

We spoke of buildings and building plans. The Brampton Consistory also discussed the point of building an addition to the church building. "A building permit may be difficult to obtain." That difficulty is caused by the size of the property, if I understand it well. Maybe it will not even be possible at all to add to the existing facilities.

The Consistory discussed the purchase of a parsonage at the same time, but no decision has been made regarding that either.

Our journey ends this time in Burlington.

"From the Ebenezer Planning Committee: an interim report was received with maps for three different possibilities for a third church in Burlington. The committee has discussed this with Burlington West in several meetings. A final report on all the aspects of this matter will be available in two weeks and will be dealt with at the next consistory meeting with the deacons."

That was from the Burlington East bulletin. The West bulletin mentions that the discussion of the committee report was discussed and that the discussion is continued.

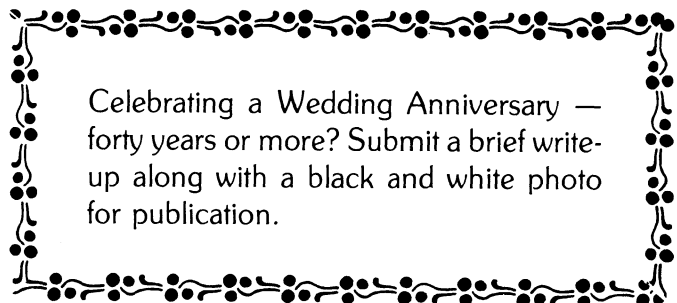
Thus not much news can be passed on.

I have been thinking about that splitting of two churches into three and I have come to the conclusion that it is not advisable. I think that it is too artificial. When a Church grows so much that it becomes too large to be taken care of by one minister, and when the growth causes the members to ask, "Who was that sitting beside me at the Lord's table?" then the splitting of that one Church into two Churches is to be preferred. That would be a "natural" thing to do. Glueing two parts of two different Churches together and forging them into one Church is somewhat artificial, in my opinion. And the two Burlingtons have been living a separate life for so many years that they have grown apart. No, they have not grown apart as far as the unity of faith is concerned; but that will be clear to everyone. You know what I mean. It would take years before part of the one Church and part of the other Church have grown into one Church even though organizationally they may be one as soon as the institution has taken place. I see much advantage in splitting a Church into two autonomous Churches: then the members simply continue together and there is nothing artificial in that.

Think about it, will you?

With that I leave you till next time, the Lord willing.

vO



BOOKS — *Continued from page 251.* something to boast of; but that is *not* the case.

Dr. D. Holwerda, whom I mentioned, understands “but not” as an interjection. “Then Abraham would have had something to boast of — but (he has) not! — before God.” That appeals far more to me and appears to be correct, doing justice to every element.

As I said in the beginning, I paid special attention to these few texts, because I consulted Dr. Hendriksen’s commentary on these then. That my remarks in some respects had to be of a critical nature does not take away my appreciation for the work presented in this volume.

To the one belongs writing a commentary; to the other scrutinizing and — where necessary — criticizing it to show that the former’s work is taken seriously.

* * *

For a change we go to another publisher. The G.R. Welch Company of Burlington, Ontario, published a book by Dr. Theodore Plantinga with the title *Reading the Bible as History*. The price is \$4.95.

As the title may already indicate, it is the author’s thesis that Scripture gives us real history. That becomes even clearer from the following passage: “The Bible is not a history textbook in any modern, twentieth century sense, but our salvation depends on the history it relates. That’s why we must be thoroughly familiar with that history. Without such familiarity the *nonhistorical* passages will not reveal their full meaning to us either,” p. 7. And we can equally wholeheartedly endorse the clear statement “The history recorded in Scripture is *our* history,” p. 101.

Over against the many pseudo-scientific works which try to undermine the trustworthiness of Scripture this booklet of 110 pages shows that we lose everything if we do not hold on to that historical trustworthiness, and for this we are grateful.

I deplore it that the author is caught in a theology which proved to be so disastrous in the past. I am referring to the theology regarding the covenant. Those who are familiar with the notorious pronouncements issued by the Synod of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands in 1942 will easily recognize that covenant-theology in the following passage: “Abraham’s descendants were included in it — but not all of them. Isaac was chosen and Ishmael re-

jected; Jacob was chosen and Esau rejected,” p. 15. The same thought we find where Christ our Redeemer is called “covenant head of God’s elect,” p. 59.

It is beyond me how the word “witnesses” of Hebrews 12:1 can be understood as “the many created spirits that the Bible points to as agents in our history,” p. 21, whereas it clearly refers back to the people mentioned in chapter 11 and their being witnesses of God’s faithfulness, whereby they urge us to hold out to the end.

“Heaven and earth,” p. 23, is the term by which Israel pointed to what we call the universe, and thus I cannot go along with what is said about “heaven.”

Sometimes the explanation is too “psychological,” as e.g. when it is said that David *assumed* that the LORD had sent Shimei and therefore forbade to hurt the man, while the fact that he let Shimei go later on is ascribed to David being “in a generous mood after his victory,” p. 61.

I do not believe that Saul “was violating the distinction between the offices of priest and king, a distinction established by the *Lord*, p. 70. Saul’s sin was not that he *sacrificed*, but that he did not *wait for Samuel*.”

In spite of these flaws, it is a booklet for which I am grateful.

* * *

From the Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, comes *Trailblazer from the Brethren* by Elizabeth Suderman Klassen. The subtitle of the book is “The Story of Johann Claassen, a Leader in the Early Mennonite Brethren Church.” Not only was Claassen a leader, he was in fact the founder of the Mennonite Brethren Church. The trailblazing refers not only to his efforts to provide new land for the Mennonites that were either excommunicated or that left their church because they were convinced that true spirituality and true piety and joy in the Lord were lacking, but also to his endeavours to establish the Mennonite Brethren Church.

This book is an historical biography. I call it that because it describes more than only the life of Johann Claassen. It gives us an insight into the origins of the Mennonite Brethren Church; it provides us with information about conditions in nineteenth century Russia and the difficult conditions under which the followers of Menno Simons lived as they were merely tolerated as a

separate group, being forbidden to “proselytize.” Add to that the opposition from the side of the church which they left, and you can have a vague idea about the difficulties which Claassen faced. What makes the biography valuable most of all, in my opinion, is that it clearly describes the frame of mind in which Johann did everything, his convictions which carried him through. Although they differ partly from ours, it is good to learn about them and to see what dedication can achieve.

* * *

John Calvin is still worth being listened to. Personally I benefit from his commentaries with the preparation of sermons. Of course, the one time one gets more benefit out of them than the other time, but I am convinced that every minister should consult them with his sermon work.

Baker Book House reprinted a 1950 edition of some of Calvin’s sermons. Originally published under the title *The Deity of Christ*, the collection of sermons now bears the title *Sermons on the Saving Work of Christ*.

The selection begins with a sermon on the Deity of Jesus Christ, followed by one on the nativity of Jesus Christ. The following section contains sermons on the passion and resurrection of the Lord; then come sermons on His ascension, while the concluding part contains sermons on Pentecost and the return of Christ.

No one will expect me to discuss Calvin’s sermons here. That’s why a simple announcement of the appearing of the above book will suffice.

The price is \$7.95 (American, of course).

* * *

We stay with Calvin for a while.

Also from Baker Book House comes a volume under the title *John Calvin’s Sermons on the Ten Commandments*. Editor and Translator is Benjamin W. Farley, and a foreword was written by the late Ford Lewis Battles. The 326 page book bears a price-tag of \$12.95 (American).

That is not much for a hardcover book with contents such as this one has. Paperbacks are not my favourite and especially not when it concerns books which are well worth being consulted regularly or being valued in one’s library. For that reason I am happy that the present work appeared in hardcover.

What we find is not only the sermons which Calvin delivered on the Ten Words; we also receive an exten-

sive Introduction which deals with the historical background of these sermons. Besides, in footnotes we find much historical information and comparative material which are very helpful for anyone who wishes to study Calvin's life and work more in depth.

Some preachers seem to think that the "actuality" of the preaching is to be sought and shown in all sorts of quotations from newspapers and periodicals. Sometimes one does not have to subscribe to any newspaper: after the Sunday sermons one knows all the news, for it was all mentioned from the pulpit. And that is then supposed to be "actual" or, perhaps, "existential" preaching.

If one should look for something like that with Calvin, he will be disappointed. Yet the above book shows — proves, I should say — that Calvin's preaching was truly "actual" preaching, that is: taking into account the things that happened and applying the Word of God very concretely. The people to whom he preached knew what he was referring to; yet he did it in such a manner that it kept its meaning and relevance for all times. Both from the Introduction and from the footnotes this becomes very clear.

Subject Index and Scripture Index further enhance the above work's usefulness.

* * *

The last booklet about Calvin (for this time) is *This Was John Calvin*, a 1981 reprint of a 1959 biography of Calvin by Thea B. Van Halsema. This book comes from Baker Book House as well and is available for \$3.95.

The author is well-known and this biography of John Calvin is well-written, simple and yet thorough. It reads well and gives a good picture of Calvin's life and struggles.

* * *

We already had another book from the G.R. Welch Company Limited of Burlington, Ontario; let us add another one: *Hopeless? Never!* by Mary Golbeck with Irene Burk Harrell. This hardcover book of 147 pages sells for \$10.95.

What is that "Hopeless"? And what is that "Never"?

The "Hopeless?" refers to women prisoners; the "Never!" refers to efforts to reach those prisoners with the Word of God which, in many instances, are "successful." I said, "In many instances," for the author does state that there are "hopeless" cases. Thus the word "never" is too

strong, but that can be "forgiven" when we read how she, a chaplain in a women's prison in Goochland, Virginia, did succeed in reaching the hearts of several prisoners and leading them in the way to true "rehabilitation."

This book is refreshing in that it does not give stories of sudden conversions but describes patient labour and frustrating experiences, but also how genuine interest and true kindness and compassion in many cases break through the hard shell to reach the heart.

* * *

On Wings of Love by Lee Roddy is a publication of Thomas Nelson Publishers. Price \$3.95. "It is the thrilling story of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) and the pioneer pilots who share the risks and commitment of this revolutionary venture," the publisher tells us. "It is the story of strong men and women who display the courage of their calling despite hazardous technological failure, political upheaval, and natural calamity."

This paperback indeed tells us about the oftentimes valiant efforts of the pilots and their support staff, efforts which are of immense value to the work of the missionaries in various countries, as we ourselves know from our missionaries in Irian Jaya. We read of the dedication to their work displayed by the pilots, of the support which they receive from their families and from people in their home-country.

Personally I find the style of the book too chronicle-like. Perhaps that cannot be avoided when experiences of several people are narrated instead of the work and labours of just one man, but that is about the only remark I wish to make about the set-up of the book. Is it written so that we indeed have a "thrilling story"? No. Does it tell us about an important work in the service of the Lord? Yes.

* * *

The last book I should like to say a few things about is *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament*, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers of Nashville, Tennessee; price \$16.95.

Insofar as I have used this book I am happy with it. It can be used also by persons who have very little, or perhaps even those who have no knowledge of the Hebrew language.

This work "describes over five hundred of the most important Hebrew terms arranged by their Eng-

lish equivalents." In the back we find an alphabetical list of the English words whose Hebrew equivalent is explained in the columns, and we come to a far higher number than five hundred. The reason for that is that also related words are taken into account.

The book gives the Hebrew words transliterated, then the same word in Hebrew characters, followed by a translation. Then we find various texts mentioned in which the different shades of the word occur. Sometimes we also get the transliterated words which the Greek translation of the Old Testament used to render the Hebrew original.

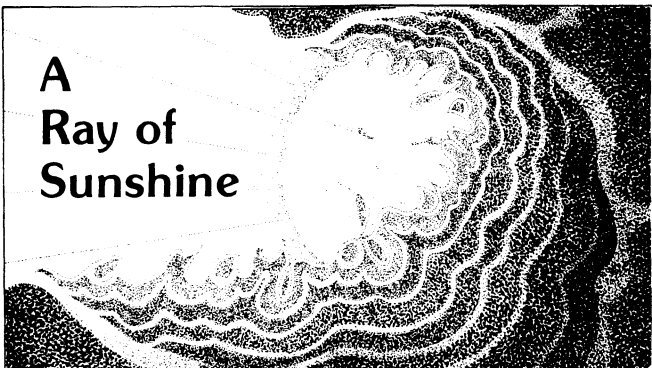
Editors of the Dictionary are Drs. Merrill F. Unger and William White Jr. The former is professor emeritus of Semitics and Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary; the latter is a specialist in biblical languages and the history of science.

In general the authors refrain from what might be called "exegesis," and they confine themselves to the explanation of words and terms. Sometimes, however, they venture into the field of further explanation. One point at which I discovered such an "explanation" with which I disagree is what is found on page 415. There the meaning of the word "sword" is discussed. We are told that the same word can also mean other cutting implements, e.g. chisel. The following remark is made about the Lord's prohibition to build an altar of hewn stones: "The fact that a 'sword,' an implement of death, would be used to cut the stone for an altar, the instrument of life, explains why this action would profane the altar." The same explanation is given with the word "altar" p. 5. Here the authors and contributors have not taken into account the anti-Canaanite tenor of that provision. The Canaanite cultus was sexually-oriented, being a nature-religion, and it was that background which is to be seen behind the above mentioned prohibition. Besides, calling the altar an "instrument of life" is somewhat forced, I think, seeing that the blood was poured out at the foot of the altar and that the sacrificial animal was burned on it, anyway the fat. It may be an instrument by means of which life is obtained, but then always via death. An altar as such is always more connected with death than with life.

Much work has gone into this volume; much benefit can be derived from it.

vO

A Ray of Sunshine



The following quotation is taken from *THE WONDERS OF CREATION*, by Alfred M. Rehwinkel.

“Man was created a rational being, endowed with intelligence. This means that man was endowed with the faculty of reason and the ability to learn. Man is not like the animal, limited by instinct to a fixed pattern of life; he can benefit by past experience and direct his course of action accordingly. He is free to select a course of action, weigh the consequences of his choice, and act accordingly. But this implies other aspects of the mind, such as the faculties of perception, understanding, judgment and above all, the faculty of memory.

“Memory is a mystery and a wonder beyond all understanding. Memory implies the ability to retain a past experience within the nervous system, recall it, and recognize it as an experience that we have had perhaps many years before. The vocabulary we use to communicate with one another, the ability to recognize those whom we have seen or met before, the ability to recognize a specific odour, sound, or touch, and even our habits of life are all dependent upon this mysterious faculty of memory. Memory is basic for all mental life. Without it, life could not be a unit. We could live only in the light of each moment, and the past would be as though it had never been. There would be no learning, no knowledge of anything, no possibility of thought or speech, no meaning of any kind. Everything that happens would be as new and strange to us as if it had never happened before. Personality, morality and character would be impossible. Man could know neither God nor man.

“It has been said that all other abilities of the mind borrow from memory their beauty and perfection. In a very real sense, it is true that all other faculties of the soul are useless without memory. Of what profit are all our wisdom, our reading, our studying if we are unable to preserve what knowledge we have acquired? Memory makes rich the mind by preserving all that results from our studying and learning. Without memory the soul of man would be a poor, destitute, naked being, with an everlasting blank spread over it except for the fleeting ideas of the present moment.

“It may be safely said that memory is the basis of all knowledge, that without it neither science nor art is possible. This being true, the more a man remembers, the greater is his amount of knowledge, and the greater his foundation for further study and research. Our memory makes it possible for us to contemplate the goodness and the blessings of our God, thus prompting us to sing with the poet:

*“All the hosts of earth and heaven
Wheresoe’r I turn mine eye,
For my benefit are given,
That they may my needs supply.
All that’s living, all that’s growing,
On the heights or in the woods,
In the vales or in the floods,
God is for my good bestowing.
All things have their little day
God’s great love abides for aye.”*



Arlene’s 1980 school picture.

From Arlene DeWit’s mother we received the following note: “We would like to thank everyone who sent Arlene cards, presents, and money for her birthday. She received 67 cards. Arlene is now working in a work shop, where she makes plastic flowers for wedding cars. Every other week she receives private lessons, and in the near future she hopes to receive speech therapy also.” Thank you, brothers and sisters, for making this a happy birthday which she was able to celebrate with the whole family for the whole week, on account of your thoughtfulness.

* * * * *

Several mothers have mentioned that someone sends cards on a regular basis. This special sister has recently celebrated her own birthday (May 5th). I have been requested to publish her name and address so that we all will be able to send her our best wishes and appreciation. Mrs. Scholtens, I hope that you will receive many cards, as tokens of thanks!

Her address is as follows:

MRS. P. SCHOLTENS
914 Gorton Avenue,
Burlington, Ontario L7T 1G3

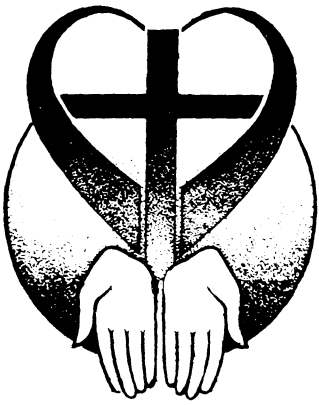
* * * * *

For the month of July we have one brother on our Calendar. He hopes to celebrate his 20th birthday on July 29th. Jim does not receive many visitors, as he lives far away from the communion of saints, but his family usually celebrates this important day with him. Jim lives in a home for the mentally handicapped. Shall we remember Jim and send him many birthday wishes, brothers and sisters? Jim loves colourful pictures and cards.

JIM WANDERS
P.O. Box 1000,
Orillia, Ontario L3V 6L2

Send your requests to:

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



Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund

The Executive Committee felt that readers might appreciate an overview of what C.R.W.R.F. is doing — in addition to the annual report which local congregations receive at the end of every year. Therefore we pass on to you, in edited form, the Secretarial Report of C.R.W.R.F. Executive Committee for the May 8, 1981, General Meeting in Burlington, Ontario.

1. Report on Children's home in Achego, Kenya:

The Lord willing, this summer will mark the end of the second year that our home has been in operation. Case histories and pictures of all 40 children have been received. The monthly amount now needed to support these 40 children is 9,450 Kenyan Shillings, which presently works out to *Can. \$1,560/month*. The Executive Committee has correspondence on a regular basis with Mrs. Rookmaker, Secretary of "Foundation Save a Child" (Stichting Redt Een Kind) in Holland, and all seems to be running smoothly at our home in Achego.

2. Report on Health Care Unit, Busan, Korea:

Our clinic first opened its doors to the poor in a slum area in Busan more than two years ago. We are presently sending U.S. \$700/month to help pay for salaries of two nurses and their supplies. We continue to have good communication with Dr. Young Hoon Park, director of this Unit and two other units run by the Busan Gospel Hospital in Korea.

3. Canadian Reformed World Relief — West:

Edmonton, with supporting churches of Carman, Calgary, Neerlandia, and Winnipeg, is now supporting 7 children in Achego. We have regular correspondence with them and certainly appreciate their assistance!

4. Support from Canadian Reformed School Societies:

John Calvin School in Burlington and Timothy School in Hamilton send us their collections from the children

on a regular basis. John Calvin School in Smithville has also supported a child at our home for a period of one year.

Out West, other schools have inquired about supporting children in our home.

C.R.W.R.F. is very happy to see our children taking an active interest in this relief work.

5. Re: Registered Charitable Organization:

Our final papers concerning our registration number were received and signed at the April Executive Committee meeting. Our number (0588517-47-14) is now available, and it was decided at this meeting to put a \$10 minimum on the issuing of receipts. Individual gifts may be given through your local church collections or may be sent directly to C.R.W.R.F.

6. Re: Slide and Film Evenings:

London, Burlington-West, and Lincoln scheduled evenings for this past season. We also were happy to have the opportunity at a school assembly to convey to the Guido de Brès High School students the work of C.R.W.R.F. Mr. Harry Alkema and Mr. Eric Kampen have been busily working together on a program for these evenings. New slides were made from pictures in our Annual Report from the Health Care Unit in Korea. The Executive Committee hopes to obtain more slides from our other projects.

Any congregations interested in having a slide/film presentation this fall should contact the Executive Committee through their local committees (this applies to Ontario only — sorry).

7. Re: Committee News Bulletins:

Committee News Bulletins were sent out in January and April to all local committees. These Bulletins contained four reports which could be published together with any additional information of interest to the

local congregation, in the local church bulletins. We plan to continue to inform you of our work and the need in the world through these short monthly reports. Occasional *Clarion* articles will also serve this purpose.

8. Somalia:

Considering the tremendous need in Somalia, the East African nation now harbouring more refugees than any other in the world, we decided to send \$2,000.00 from the surplus special gifts have provided, over and above the "cushion" needed to meet our regular commitments in Kenya and Korea. The situation in Somalia is extremely serious, demanding further attention. Future news bulletins and a *Clarion* article will keep you informed on the situation there.

9. Conclusion:

Since our General Meeting last fall, C.R.W.R.F. has experienced a healthy increase in support for our work. We should note that the total income for 1980 was almost *twice* the amount of income for 1979. There is great cause for thankfulness to our Father in heaven when we see that our hopes and prayers for expansion last year already have become a reality this year.

What we do is still very little, especially when one looks at the staggering need in the world today, though we know the Lord can use that mite to work great results. Yet . . . there are thousands of other hungry, sick, and malnourished children who could be cared for if we had more homes like Achego, more clinics like in Busan. Let us all remember the work of C.R.W.R.F. in our daily prayers, and let us couple our prayer with gifts from the abundance the Lord has graciously blessed us with. C.R.W.R.F.'s slogan at one time was "a loaf of bread a week" and congregation members were asked to donate that small amount to help the hungry of the world. That was when bread cost 25¢. Now we are lucky to get 1/3 of a loaf for that price. Yet our total giving, though improving, still comes to less than 25¢ per communicant member. Let us metaphorically tighten our belts a little (most of us don't even know what it is to have to do that literally!) and cheerfully give "a loaf of bread a week," so that, in the power of His might, C.R.W.R.F. may continue to reach those in need.

From the Executive Committee of the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund
P.O. Box 793,
Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Y7.

Books

Simon J. Kistemaker, *The Gospels in Current Study*, Second Edition, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House). Reviewed by L. Selles.

Dr. Kistemaker is professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary at Jackson, Mississippi, U.S.A. In 1972, he wrote a book on recent developments in New Testament Gospel study. It is a soft-cover publication of modest size (170 pp.). The purpose of the book was to give a survey of recent developments and to offer a critical evaluation. The author had in mind preachers, students, and interested non-theologians who cannot keep up in their reading with the latest publications in New Testament studies but should know what is going on, and, if they are theologians, should have their appetites whetted for an excursion in the source material of this book.

The book was so well received that a second edition was published in 1980. This new edition is for the greater part a reprint of the first one. The difference is that under the heading "INTERPRETATION" a short chapter was added. This concluding chapter is actually an extension of the chapter on HERMENEUTICS. I assume that for practical reasons of publication it has been printed separately.

The strength of the book lies in its limitation: limitation in the number of books which are summarized, discussed, and evaluated; and limitation in the way this is done: clearcut, short, and to the point. It makes for enjoyable reading and brings the book within the grasp of non-theologians with a keen theological interest.

As to the contents, the book covers the main points in New Testament studies. It has an opening chapter on MANUSCRIPTS. With the exception of the finds of papyri with New Testament texts which brought us two centuries closer to the time of the writing of the original books, no discussion of the other manuscript material of the New Testament is offered. The author acquaints his readers with the so-called Gospel of Thomas, discovered in Egypt in 1946. It turned out not to be a real gospel but a collection of canonical and alleged sayings and parables of Jesus steeped in a gnostic sauce. The Dead Sea Scrolls brought to the surface in 1947 are also shortly discussed and their sig-

nificance for New Testament studies pointed out.

In the next two chapters an idea is given of what is called "lower criticism," consisting in the study of the Greek text of the New Testament with its various variants, and so-called "higher criticism" which leads to a discussion of Literary Criticism, Source Criticism, Form Criticism, Redaction Criticism, and Audience Criticism, covering the nature of the New Testament writings, their sources, their composition, edition, and the influence of the audience on the form of the speeches and sayings of the Lord Jesus. I put it all under "higher criticism" because the scholars who occupy themselves with these various kinds of criticism proceed from the view that the New Testament is not the authoritative Word of God, though words of God and of the Lord Jesus may be found in it. The New Testament, as we have it in its present form and contents, is, in their opinion, a creation of the believing congregation and of the theologians who acted as gospel editors.

This whole field of criticisms with which not everyone is that well acquainted opens up through the reading of Kistemaker's book and might stimulate pastors and students to dig somewhat deeper and to familiarize themselves, in so far as that is not the case yet, with some of the works of Bultmann, Bornkamm, Marxsen, Conzelmann, the leading scholars in the study of these criticisms. These authors found such a following in Europe and North America that present-day theology is permeated with their ideas.

Hermeneutics, studying the principles for interpretation, and New Hermeneutics, which is a matter of exegesis itself, are names which are heard and read over and over again but which, in spite of that, are not always rightly understood. Dr. Kistemaker helps with his exposition to get a better idea about them. In his concluding chapter he adds a number of principles which should be observed in the interpretation of Scripture.

Introduced by a chapter on preliminary questions regarding the birth of the Gospels, the canonical points of author, time, addressees, characteristics, and goals of the four Gospels are discussed. The attractive part of this discussion is that the

views of the particular author who did extensive work on each of the gospels are summarized and tested.

Finally, a taste is given of what is called New Testament theology when the author presents a survey of recent writings on the names "Son of Man," "Son of God" and on interpretations of the Resurrection followed by an evaluation in the light of Scripture.

It will be clear from what I wrote that I would like to encourage everyone who can handle a publication like the one under review to take and read for him(her)self.

A couple of critical remarks in conclusion. On p. 21, bottom, and p. 22 we read that in the RSV "the last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel have been put in small print in a footnote . . ." and that "the whole passage concerning the woman caught in adultery (the first eleven verses of John 8) . . . has been relegated to a footnote in small print." I can hardly imagine that it would have escaped the attention of the author that this is no longer the case in the second edition of the RSV. In all probability Kistemaker's first edition was not checked on this point.

As the form critics, and the redaction critics for that matter, do not respect the Bible as the inspired Word of God, I feel that it is hard or rather impossible to express in any way "our appreciation" to the form critic and redaction critic. What we could learn from them has been taught us in a scriptural way by soundly Reformed scholarship (pp. 49 and 57). I wonder whether "the modern trend of looking at the evangelist as a theologian has much in favor" (p. 58), and whether it is true that "the writers of the Gospels do work with the gospel tradition theologically . . ." and "work out certain theological themes . . ." (*ibid*). Dr. Kistemaker also speaks of the "theology of Matthew" (p. 102), the theological purpose of Mark (p. 110), and "Luke as a theologian" (p. 118). Is it not better to leave them evangelists who record the glad tidings according to the goal which they set for their writing? To say that Matthew "had a hand in the early formation of the Gospel" (p. 97, cf. p. 100) sounds form critical in terminology though it is not meant to be so materially. Finally, the statement that Paul "received the apostolic tradition from Peter" (p. 93) derives more from Gal. 1:18 than the text says. Needless to say, the critical remarks I made do not diminish my appreciation for the work of Dr. Kistemaker. The price of the book is \$6.95.

“Are Music – Technical Matters Ecclesiastical Matters?”

When the undersigned want to bring some points of the Acts Smithville 1980 to the attention of our readers, and do so under this heading, the following points should be kept in mind. We both were members of the Committee for the *Book of Praise* for twenty-five years, but this Committee no longer exists since it completed its mandate. The fact that we two write this does, therefore, not mean that we represent a faction of that old Committee that “passed away.” We make these remarks mostly because we were the ones who more specifically paid attention to the musical aspect of our *Book of Praise*. It should also be kept in mind that Synod 1980 in Art. 122, *Acts*, pp. 85, 86, took decisions on musical matters that were brought to its attention, but *not* (anyway not by far all) to the attention of that old Committee that submitted all its recommendations plus appendices to Synod. In other words, Synod decided on these matters without calling us to ask us for our opinion. Another member of that old Committee has already called the attention of the readers to a similar attitude of Synod with regard to the *rhythmings*; we concern ourselves with the *music*.

The readers will understand that we were unpleasantly surprised when we read the *Acts*, Art. 122: the adoption of “considerations 4, a-m, to be incorporated in the definitive *Book of Praise*. We even doubt (see our question at the head of this article) whether such matters are “ecclesiastical matters” in the sense of Church Order, Art. 30. A major assembly is supposed to deal only with ecclesiastical matters. True, previous synods have expressed wishes with regard to music: for example, that we should retain the Genevan tunes, and that for Hymns tunes should be chosen that are suitable for congregational singing. But to our knowledge this is the first synod that has made pronouncements of a music-technical character, and — what could be expected — made its mistakes, even when Synod gave in to certain wishes of some organists (with due respect for the brethren).

After these introductory remarks, we now go into some detail. We do so, because we hope that, when the second print of the defini-

tive *Book of Praise* will become necessary (i.e. when the “second part” — Forms, Creeds, etc. — are all adopted and can be incorporated), there will be room for some changes yet. We see, alas, no way to incorporate some of our suggestions in the *Book of Praise* that will now be published. We quote from *Acts*, pp. 85 and 86:

a) “*An alternate melody for Hymn 1 is desirable, since there are still complaints about the existing one as being ‘too gregorian.’*” First, we are at a loss what “too gregorian” might mean! Music is “gregorian” or it is not. Further, we doubt if the membership has objection against this tune because it is “too gregorian.” How many would know what that means? We suspect that the objection comes from those who have never really tried to learn and sing this tune, which was called by a musical expert “an excellent vehicle for the Credo.” But, assuming that the tune is “gregorian,” it would fit perfectly in our book together with the Psalms: “the Genevan tunes are written in the same old church modes as the Gregorian church music” (see for proofs HASPER, *Calvijn's Beginselen van de Zang in de Eredienst*, pp. 634-640. We are not opposed to another tune, if a better one could be found, but protest against rejection of the present tune on the grounds mentioned by synod.

b) “*There should be consistency in the use of rests at the end of musical lines.*” Although this remark is made under the heading “Hymn Section,” it seems to refer more to the Psalms. But even if meant for both Psalms and Hymns, did Synod overlook that it also decided that the music (for the Psalms — and possibly some Hymns) should be printed after the model of *Het Liedboek der Kerken*? Did the source from which Synod took this consideration know that in Appendix IIB, the final draft for the music was submitted to synod and that in that final draft there is consistency as to the rests, in keeping with those in the Psalms of *Het Liedboek*?

c) *The first note in Hymn 9 should be ¼ instead of ½ note.* In the already-mentioned Appendix IIB, we returned to the original half note, as is found, for example, in *The B.B.C.*

Hymn Book and *Het Liedboek der Kerken*. That, again, is “in the style of the Genevan tunes” which also start with a half note. We are therefore of the opinion that Synod did the wrong thing by adopting this consideration.

d) [This d) deals with the contents of two hymns and thus we refrain from commenting on it.] Only two remarks: 1. by removing Hymn 8, without providing a replacement, the numbering of all following hymns is changed and this will cause trouble in the use of the four-part music that has been published (and is still available at the old address!). 2. Of Hymn 10 only three stanzas will be kept. However, now that that beautiful old Dutch tune for Hymn 37 (Ick wil my gaen vertroosten) has to be replaced in Hymn 37, we would urge that it be used for the (shortened) Hymn 10, for which it fits wonderfully; much better than the present tune. We hope the new Committee will make a note of this.

e) “*In Hymn 25 one note should be added in the 5th and 7th bar to make the tune to fit all stanzas.*” We had some problem with that “bar,” but assumed that Synod meant “line.” Indeed, the singing of “Jerusalem” may be a bit hard, but the line is short and the token (—) that is added shows how it can be sung. One cannot just “add to” or “detract from” existing tunes without doing damage to the character of the whole; thus music-technically we would reject this suggestion.

f) “*In Hymn 37 the melody does not fit the text Another tune should be found.*” As said sub d), we suggest to use this tune for Hymn 10; we agree with Synod in this respect: “not fitting for Hymn 37.” Originally, we had a different tune for this number. One of us is added to the new Committee as musical advisor, and he already has five or six suggestions for Hymn 37.

g) “*Hymn 38 should be sung on the melody of old Hymn 53, since many complaints are voiced and the tune has an unresolved ending.*” We must believe, but have trouble believing, that “many complaints are voiced.” The ending of the tune is solemn and fits the wording. In addition, this tune ends in the *tonica*, and

OUR COVER

Statue of the Ox drawn Red River Cart. Photo courtesy of Province of Manitoba, Department of Tourism.

therefore the statement that it has an unresolved ending is not based on solid musical evidence. We are afraid that it is based more on the personal preference of some. It should be left as it is. Moreover: taking the tune of old Hymn 53 for this number would result in a duplication, see sub h.

h) "Hymn 39 should not be sung on the proposed tune (in Appendix IIB) but on the one used in the present Hymn Section." Here Synod takes a completely different attitude, if we may say so. The switch, in the final draft (IIB), was made by the Committee because of the requests we had received to reinstate the well-liked old Hymn 53 tune.

i) "Hymn 48 can better be sung on the setting of old Hymn 54 in the blue edition." "Setting" should be: "notation." It was thought better to restore this tune to its original beauty, as found, for example in *Het Liedboek der Kerken*, and other hymnals. A little bit attention to the notation, and a "try" once or twice before the service, and the congregation will easily learn to sing it the original way.

j) "Hymn 55, the word 'John's' should be replaced by 'our.'" Although we would refrain from the wording, in this case we want to support the decision of the whole old Committee, for the simple reason that not we, but John, saw the heavens opened.

k) "Hymn 64 should be deleted and be replaced by old Hymn 29." We must agree that both melodies are

weak, and, looking back, we now think we should have accepted the advice of the Australian brethren: "drop it, we do not need it."

l) "Hymn 2 should be replaced by old Hymn 46." Again: we do not speak about the rhymings; yet we want to state first that, indeed, the old rhyming is easier to sing here and there, because the language seems, to us, more fluent. Synod should, however, have listened — as we have done — to the expert judgment that there are flaws in the English of old Hymn 46.

m) "The Author" or Precursor"? No comment, although both translations of Heb. 12 are found in various translations. We have the idea that, if "forerunner" would have fitted in the rhyming (the same as "precursor"), this criticism would not have been heard.

* * *

Thus far our suggestions re Synod's actions in this respect. While we made them, we were well aware that there will never be a perfect *Book of Praise*. There is always room for improvement, till the end of this age. Possibly there will be opportunity in these and other respects to make improvements when also the "second part" (Creeds, Forms, etc.) can be published in one binding with the Psalms and Hymns.

With love for the noble cause of the *Book of Praise*,

M.M. DEGROOT
G. VANDOOREN

PRESS RELEASE

of the Guido de Bres High School Regional Board meeting held on April 20, 1981.

In the absence of the chairman, Mr. H. Aasman, our vice-chairman, Mr. G. Gritter, called the meeting to order and requested the meeting to sing Hymn 22:1. Following the reading of a portion of Luke 24, Mr. Gritter led in opening prayer.

In her principal's report Dr. Oosterhoff mentioned the very worthwhile contributions made by the Ladies' Auxiliary. A new photocopier was leased for about \$1,000, while library, track fund and various departments in the school also benefitted. The commencement exercises had been discussed with the senior students and there will be a graduation dinner in the school auditorium. The commencement exercises will be held in the church building.

The Education Committee recommendation to hire Mrs. Marcia Vandenbos as a part-time Phys. Ed. teacher was approved by the board. Mr. M. Vanderveelde and Mr. A. Hartman have reached the end of their terms on the Education Committee. Nominations for these vacancies will be presented at the next board meeting.

Our treasurer, Mr. H.F. Stoffels, was unable to attend the meeting. He had sent a written report which indicated that the expenses for the last nine months were generally within budget. However, the bank balance was very low and local treasurers were urged to speed up collections.

After the singing of Hymn 22:3 and closing prayer by Mr. J. Hutten, the meeting was adjourned.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD
J. BOOT, Secretary

Psalm 135

1. Hal - le - lu - jah, praise God's name. O
you ser - vants, sing his laud, Praise his
great - ness, voice his fame In the glo -
- rious house of God, Him in all the earth
re - nowned. Let his courts with praise re - sound!

God is good and high His throne;
Sing His name and steadfast grace.
Jacob took He for His own,

Israel is His chosen race.
For I know the LORD is great,
Far above all gods in state.

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OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

BOERS, Arend Johan, geboren te Den Haag op 24 juli 1916, naar Canada vertrokken op 24 maart 1954.

BOOTS, Carolina Johanna, geboren te Amsterdam op 20 januari 1937, naar Canada vertrokken in 1971.

COLTON, F.B. laatstbekende adres te Belleville, Ontario.

DIJKSTRA, Sietze, geboren te Smalingerland op 3 april 1916, naar Canada vertrokken in 1954.

VAN HALDEREN, Paulus Johannes Pieter, geboren op 30 maart 1944, naar Canada vertrokken in 1958.

DOMANSKY-KETZ, Johanna, geboren op 7 maart 1927 te Rotterdam, laatstbekende adres te Winnipeg, Manitoba.

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

Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Editor:

Allow me to respond to br. Hank Veenema's letter (*Clarion* of 1981-03-13) and also add some notes to Rev. Van Dooren's article. (*Clarion* of 1980-11-01.)

1. Coming from an Afrikaans background, the use of "thee" and "thou," along with the antiquated grammatical forms "hast," "wilt," "art," etc. bothered us a lot when English became our language of worship about 3½ years ago. I can, however, see br. Veenema's concern, because he probably grew up with the "gij" of the Statenvertaling, which is comparable to the "thou" used in the KJV and the RSV.

2. When the Bible was translated into Afrikaans, it was completed in 1933. The archaic "gy" was not used, "U" is used throughout. (Example: Psalm 23:4b: want U is met my: u stok en u staf dié ver troos my.) Capital letters for the addressing forms, and lower case letters for the possessive form. This was done because the originators' idea to translate the Bible into Afrikaans was: to make the Word of God available to the coloured population in the then Cape Colony. In those days — the 1870's — they did not understand the Dutch of the Statenvertaling anymore. It has always been that way: the Bible has to be made known to people in their own language. It was this same idea which led to the Gothic and Latin translations of the fourth century, it was the same when work on the Statenvertaling and King James Version was carried out.

3. I read somewhere that "ghij" was chosen for the Statenvertaling because of the influence of the Flemish delegates, who were the more educated and radical representatives at the Synod of Dordrecht and the translation committees. Half a century before, Marnix van St. Aldegonde had always proposed the word "Du," which is more personal and intimate, like the German. I think that previous Dutch translations like the Bible of *Deux Aes* (1574?) had been using "Du." The word "gij" is even used in colloquial speech in Flemish today, like the Mennonites (and Quakers) address each other with thee and thou. Shakespeare did the same, but that was almost 400 years ago!

4. Synod Smithville 1980 has approved the modernization of the language of the liturgical forms, for use in the definite edition of the *Book of Praise*. One of the committee reports calls this "an attempt . . . to find modern equivalents for archaic or obsolete words and expressions." However, these updated forms still have all the "thee's" and "thou's" in the prayer parts. Our new psalm rhymings, also approved by the Synod, also use "thee" and "thou," even in Psalm 2, where the RSV uses "you" throughout. Plus all the "bringest," "shieldest," etc. grammar, whenever the Lord is addressed. Are we

not now faced with some anomaly? Forms in fresh, modern English and prayers and psalms with antiquated language?

5. I am afraid that we are now going some steps backward. We are perpetuating the use of archaic forms, and creating a discrepancy between colloquial speech and "church/religious/prayer" speech. Are we not creating a situation which might seem to be untenable in only a few years' time? Rev. Van Dooren mentioned, and I agree with him, that this is a period of transition. Our definite *Book of Praise* will then already be obsolete before its publication. What about our youth? They will only hear these words in church. Last year a candidate admitted to me that he uses "You" and "yours" in private prayers and in the family circle, but he does not dare do so in the public worship service. Why this difference?

6. Do the reasons for keeping "thee" and "thou" really serve the purpose? Do we imitate the world and surroundings if we address the Lord with "You"? Do we under-estimate the Holiness and Greatness of our God if we do not use "Thee" and "Thou"? This is what br. Veenema thinks will happen. Do we not rather inhibit our witnessing to the world by creating a special language, or perpetuating an archaic form, ununderstandable to our neighbours and our own young people? This is what the Roman Catholic Church did: with "Church language": First only Greek was used, and even Jerome was ostracized for daring to translate the

"original" into that "common" language — Latin. Later, they kept using this same Vulgata (people's Bible) to the detriment of the laity, who did not understand it, even to the present century, thereby hindering the work of the Holy Spirit. Let this not be said of us; language changes through the centuries, and we should keep up with it, to serve the Lord the better.

7. It is true, God is holy and great, and we are inclined to underestimate His holiness. But we should not create more distance than there is; an Old Testamentical situation, with the curtain in the tabernacle and temple. Then we may forget that this curtain was torn in two, from top to bottom, we may forget that we may have confidence in calling upon God our Father, with childlike reverence and trust because Christ died for us (Lord's Day 46). The Lord wants us to pray to Him as *children*.

8. As English does not have a third form of address, like the Dutch "jij," "u," and "gij," let us therefore use "You" with a capital letter, to distinguish. I note that the NIV has not done this.

NOTE: I completed this draft before receiving *Clarion* of 1981-04-24. After reading the letter by the Thamesville Men's Society I would indeed address the Queen, a judge, a cabinet minister as "you." I agree with br. Metzlar's logical reasoning. By the way — what does the Frisian Bible say?

I may close by mentioning that at least two of our ministers "speak thus," and in at least two Churches in Alberta. As this is "where the action is," maybe the "period of transition" will advance from here, the Lord willing.

Yours truly,
JACOB A. DE RAADT

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