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# Clarion

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## Varia Nederlandica

### LORD'S PRAYER AND LORD'S SUPPER

Now that I mentioned the memorandum of Dr. C. Trimp about the function of the Lord's Prayer in the Forms for the Lord's Supper, I feel obliged to tell the whole story. It can deepen our interest in what is going on in our Dutch sister churches, and it may be useful for the consideration of the newly proposed Forms in our Canadian Reformed Churches.

The question in The Netherlands was whether the Lord's Prayer should be maintained in its present place in both Forms for the Lord's Supper (the longer and the shorter one). Dr. C. Trimp wrote an answer; he is qualified to do so as Professor of Diaconology in the Theological Seminary in Kampen (Broederweg). In his memorandum he first sketches the history of the use of the Lord's Prayer in the communion service.

Already in the beginning of the third century, in the days of Hippolyt and Tertullian, the prayer was spoken *before* the communion. It was the first prayer to be uttered by new members of the congregation after their baptism and before their first communion. In later liturgies the Lord's Prayer was often spoken by the people; it was used to prepare the people for the participation in the Supper of the Lord.

What were the motives of this liturgical custom? They may have varied. If one regards the celebration of the eucharist to be a participation by the church in the sacrifice of Christ, then the first and second petitions may have provided the motif. For the first petition one may think of John 12:28, for the second of Matt. 26:39, 42, 44. The idea, then, is that the mind of Christ is ours. The Christians should have the same disposition and intention as Christ displayed: Hallowed by Thy Name; Thy will be done. Since Tertullian the fourth petition was regarded to be the typical eucharistic petition: our daily bread is Christ Himself. Augustine pays much attention to the fifth petition, the prayer for forgiveness of sins, while the sixth petition clearly relates to Christ's words to His disciples in Gethsemane: Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation, Matt. 26:41; cf. Luke 22:40, 46. It is obvious that a strong case can be made for the use of the Lord's Prayer *before* the celebration of the Lord's Supper. I must say that I was struck by this historical exposé; it certainly makes us aware of ancient connotations in our Reformed liturgy. Dr. Trimp does not deal with the question whether the use of the Lord's Prayer as an *addition* does not do injustice to the all-encompassing and perfect character of the prayer that the Lord Jesus Christ taught us. I myself have the impression that in previous ages it was spoken by the whole congregation. Those were the days when not many people could read, and repetition of the three summaries of the Christian religion (faith, commandments, and prayer) was necessary or at least pedagogical and helpful.

The Church at Barrhead proposed to Synod Smithville 1980 to leave out of all prayers the Lord's Prayer

which was not given "to use it in its entirety as an addition to our prayer which already deals at length with the particular occasion." The Standing Committee had recommended "to make the use of the Lord's Prayer at the close of forms and prayers optional, and to leave it in the freedom of the churches to pray the Lord's Prayer in unison." Synod Smithville basically adopted this proposal and decided "to leave the use of the Lord's Prayer in the Liturgical Forms (and the manner in which this prayer is used) in the freedom of the Churches" (*Acts*, Smithville 1980, Art. 128, d2). The memorandum of Dr. Trimp convinced me that this prayer has a legitimate place before the communion, and I hope that all Canadian Reformed Churches will choose the option to maintain the use of the Lord's Prayer at least in *this* Form and in *this* place. There is something truly catholic in this ancient custom; we pray in and with the Church of all ages and all nations.

In the proposed new Abbreviated Form, the Lord's Prayer is spoken at the very end. Our Synod 1980 followed the Dutch example (*Acts*, p. 165). Several arguments, however, plead against this use of Christ's perfect prayer as a prayer of thanksgiving *after* the communion. Dr. Trimp remarks that the Lord's Prayer is no prayer of thanksgiving, but contains six petitions. In the Lord's Supper we celebrated the reconciliation to God by Christ's work of atonement. During the doxology after the communion, the congregation praised God's holy Name in reciting in their hearts the words of Psalm 103: Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your iniquity. Is it not strange, then, to pray immediately thereafter: and forgive us our debts? Moreover, the Abbreviated Form is meant for the afternoon service. Does the Lord's Prayer in this place fit into the order of an afternoon service?

Dr. Trimp's conclusion is that the Lord's Prayer ought to be kept in the long Form for the Lord's Supper and should be removed from the Abbreviated Form. It is to be replaced by a real thanksgiving prayer. The Dutch Standing Committee now submitted a proposal for such a prayer (see *Dankgebed* on p. 267). In my opinion, our following General Synod could be addressed concerning this use of the Lord's Prayer at the end of the Abbreviated Form and the feasibility of replacing it by a real prayer of thanksgiving after communion. The Dutch proposal is a good example of contemporary liturgical language. It contains an eschatological element in the prayer: that God may make us constantly look forward to the glorious coming of our Saviour who promised to drink with us of the fruit of the vine when the kingdom of God will have come. Our churches have taken up this expectation of Christ's coming both in the long Form (where the Dutch sister churches did not add it) and in the Abbreviated Form. The Dutch thanksgiving prayer after communion in the short Form is, therefore, certainly apt to be emulated by an English version in our Canadian Reformed Churches.

J. FABER

# Ananias and Sapphira

## — A Lesson

The question has been asked whether Ananias and Sapphira still were saved. Some think they were. Others think they were not. And in connection with this problem (that we create ourselves), long discussions can be held, and opinion stated and maintained over against opinion. Some think that the sin of these two people is a terrible sin, since the Bible says that they lied against the Holy Spirit and provoked Him or tested Him. Others say that sins can be and probably are forgiven.

However, does the text of Acts 5 lead us to this question regarding their being saved? Or are we rather on a completely wrong track with this question and do we miss the real lesson? I think we do. Let us see.

The story about Ananias and Sapphira is well-known. In the early church, fully ruled by the Holy Spirit, the love for God and His service, and, with it, the love and care for each other, dominated the thinking and doing of the believers. They did not seek themselves. They did not seek to build up for themselves treasures on this earth. Those who possessed land or houses sold them and brought the proceeds to the apostles so that they could distribute these means among the needy. Barnabas is mentioned, Acts 4:34-37.

This did not mean that those believers sold the house in which they were living with their family. It does not mean that they sold the land that they needed as farmers to make a living from it for themselves and

their families. This land and these houses were property in which they had invested their money. They did not really need those extra houses which they rented out. They did not really need that land for making a living. So they could miss these earthly treasures. So, they sold them and gave the money to the needy. And people spoke about it as a truly Christian deed of mercy and love. Barnabas was honoured for his deed of love.

Ananias and Sapphira heard and saw this. And they also wanted to be important and honoured in the congregation. They also had a piece of land as an investment of their money. They also sold that piece of land. But they did not bring the whole price to the apostles. Only a part. They were not really loose from their possessions on earth. In short, they were still seeking themselves: they loved their own persons, their honour and glory, and their money or possessions, more than the Lord and His congregation. And when Peter first asked Ananias, and later Sapphira, whether that money at his feet was the whole price, they answered "Yes." That was a lie. Peter characterized that lie as a lying not to men, but to the Holy Spirit, and as tempting the Holy Spirit.

When Peter calls the sin of Ananias and Sapphira lying against and tempting the Holy Spirit, we do not have to assume that they intended to do just that. Nevertheless that is what they did, intentionally or not.

Let us not put more into this sin than into many so-called little sins. Ananias and Sapphira were not honest. They lied, indeed. There was deceit in their heart. It was their greed for money and for their own glory that led them to this deceit, this lying.

However, was this sin so much worse than other sins? How often do we not commit such sins of dishonesty and lying, and so many other so-called little sins? This sin of greed for money, this sin of seeking one's own glory, this sin also of a little lie — how often do they not occur, alas, also in the church?

But if we are confronted here with sins that are so often committed, why were this man and his wife punished so severely? Why did they have to fall down, dead? Should we not all fall down and die? Yes, that is what we all deserve when we commit a "little" sin as believers. That is the lesson here. Christ teaches His Church what sin, "little" sins, are in the church.

Luke writes at the beginning of Acts 1 that he wrote his first book (the gospel of Luke) about *all that Christ Jesus began to teach and to do*. That means that in the book of Acts we read what Christ Jesus *further did and taught*. Christ Jesus is acting and teaching also in what happened with Ananias and Sapphira. Christ Jesus immediately reacts when these two people bring sin into His congregation. Sure, it is such a common sin, something that happens so often in daily life. But, because this so-called little, and so common, sin is a sin in the church of the LORD, on which the Holy Spirit was poured out, that is why this "little" sin was what it was said to be: lying against and tempting the Holy Spirit.

Christ Jesus places this example of the sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira (because of their "little," "common" sin) in the midst of the first congregation to teach a clear lesson: in My church, that I filled with the Holy Spirit, I cannot allow a place for sin. Sin in the New Testament church, any sin, is provoking the Holy Spirit. It is tempting the Spirit of God. With sin in the church the sinner says: let me put the Holy Spirit to the test, to see whether He really is the Spirit of the Holy God, and whether He really will burn sin away as a devastating wind and a destroying fire against the sinner.

In the history of the Old Testament church God had given more of such teaching examples. There was Achan, when Jericho's wall fell. He

*Continued on page 269.*

### Dankgebed kort Avondmaalsformulier

Barmhartige God en Vader, U alleen komt de dank toe, dat wij hier aan tafel van onze Here Jezus Christus mochten eten van het brood en drinken uit de drinkbeker, om te verkondigen de dood van onze Here als de enige grond van ons heil.

Wij loven U dat wij door uw Heilige Geest mochten genieten de vreugde van de gemeenschap met uw Zoon en de gemeenschap met elkaar.

Wij bidden U, geef dat wij, in ons geloof gesterkt door de viering van dit avondmaal, vruchten van dankbaarheid voortbrengen. Laten wij in heel ons leven tonen onze hartelijke liefde tot U en tot elkaar. Doe ons met volharding verwachten de wederkomst van onze Heiland, die ons beloofde de vrucht van de wijnstok met ons te drinken in uw Koninkrijk. U, Vader, zij de lof, en uw Zoon en de Heilige Geest, nu en in eeuwigheid. Amen.

## EVANGELISM:

# Every Home a Mission-Post?

## Part 2 — Methods in Evangelism

In the previous article we saw that evangelism is truly a Scriptural demand and an essential part of being Church. For the early Churches it did not seem to be a matter that needed much discussion, but they were strongly motivated. Michael Green in *Evangelism in the Early Church* lists mainly three motives: the sense of gratitude, of responsibility and of concern, and we saw how these activated the whole congregation.

### *Methods of the Early Church*

We may not expect to find in the New Testament a clear blueprint or a handbook teaching us exactly what methods we must follow in evangelism today. However, we can certainly learn much from the direction in which the Holy Spirit guided the early Christians in fulfilling their mission mandate, and we do well to examine closely how they did it and also how they did not do it.

### *Synagogues*

The most obvious place for them to evangelize was in the synagogues. These were found in most major towns and cities and were the meeting places for Jews and other God-fearing people. Further, it was the practice that anyone could stand up for a Scripture reading and explanation or exhortation. So it was logical that Christian Jews would use the synagogues as an opportunity to proclaim how the Scriptures were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, following the example of the Lord Who also spoke publicly in the synagogue.

However, we receive the impression that this never lasted for long, because the Jews as such were not receptive to the Gospel and the synagogues were soon closed for Christians, so that they were forced to turn to the Gentiles, as Paul says. This was also God's purpose, and fulfillment of the prophecies which said: "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Acts 13:46; compare Isaiah 49:6; Luke 2:32).

### *Homes-Households*

After listing some other common methods, such as open air preaching, Green comes to the conclusion that the most important method employed by the early Churches was by using the homes of believers, and of those

who showed an interest in the Gospel.

One of the most important methods of spreading the gospel in antiquity was by the use of homes. It had positive advantages: the comparatively small numbers involved made real interchange of views and informed discussion among the participants possible; there was no artificial isolation of a preacher from his hearers; there was no temptation for either the speaker or the heckler to "play to the gallery" as there was in a public place or open-air meeting. The sheer informality and relaxed atmosphere of the home, not to mention the hospitality which must often have gone with it, all helped to make this form of evangelism particularly successful.<sup>1</sup>

In the New Testament, especially in the book of Acts, we find numerous examples that homes were used, and that whole households were addressed.<sup>2</sup> We have to remember that a household in those days could include quite a number of people, and meant more than just our family. It included blood relations, slaves, clients, friends, etc. Such households became the fortresses of the Church and strongholds for the advance of evangelism. Families which were gained for the Church became like lighthouses in their community. Every home of believers was a mission-post! Throughout the towns and cities there were countless house-congregations which again attracted others to their meetings.

From this angle we can also understand better why hospitality is so often stressed. It involves quite something to have your home open for evangelism and Church-extension work. They did not only have a meeting at home but also had fellowship in having a meal together. We receive the strong impression from the New Testament and early Christian literature that these homes and households of Christians gave the real thrust to the advance of Christianity. We do not read about church buildings being put up in the early stages. Probably this was prohibited by the authorities since no public meetings were allowed, except for the Jews who had special privileges.

Yet for the cause of evangelism lack of large meeting places was no disadvantage. On the contrary, for now it was a matter of each and every one fulfilling his duty and evangeliz-

ing by word and deed, by their way of life, by their love and fellowship. It meant a total involvement of the whole congregation operating from many places throughout the towns and cities. Each Christian household was a mini-Church, a mission-post. This also helps us to understand the great impact of the early Church on the community, of course, all by God's grace and under His blessing. These people were motivated, totally involved and therefore full of the Holy Spirit!

### *Implications*

Although we may not be able to simply apply today the methods used so many years ago in a rather different cultural setting, yet some implications appear to be obvious. After all, the motivation should still be the same or even stronger since we know that all the years gone by have also brought us closer to the end.

We still need a total involvement of the congregation. We may not delegate it to an Evangelism Committee or to a minister even though they can provide much needed direction and instruction for this work. Furthermore, there are activities which we do jointly and therefore must be organized together.

Also today the homes can still play an important role and the advantages we listed in the quote from Michael Green's book still apply today. Rev. G. Van Dooren in his booklet *Get Out*<sup>3</sup> also drew our attention to these opportunities speaking about Neighbourhood Bible Groups and the need to de-centralize. There are all kinds of opportunities there but then we must be motivated and also come out of our shell! I agree with the conclusion of Green that "when men have the will to speak of their Lord, they find no shortage of ways in which to do it."<sup>4</sup>

### *Unreached Peoples*

Of course, some things were easier in those days: the Gospel of Jesus Christ was new, and every neighbourhood, every town and country was virgin territory. That indeed has changed, for which we thank the Lord. The Gospel has been preached throughout the world, and it will be very difficult to find any nation where the Gospel has not been preached, or people who have not heard something about the Bible who are within your reach. However, this does not mean that everyone has heard: in these often-Christian nations, there may be whole groups of people who are unreached. Lately the strategy of many missions has been to locate such groups.

A very helpful organization in this search for unreached peoples is MARC, "the Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center," a ministry of World Vision International.<sup>5</sup> Such unreached people can be a tribe somewhere, a certain class of people, an ethnic group within a region, sometimes even a certain occupational group, such as seamen or truckdrivers. To reach such a group one has to identify the people one is going to work with, study them and their culture, examine the needs and evaluate what knowledge of the Gospel is there, in other words: in how far are they an unreached people? You have to determine whether it is feasible to work among them, what resources are available, financially and in man-

power. In that way it can become a special ministry, directed to the special needs of such people so that you can become a Greek to the Greek and a Jew to the Jew, to use Paul's expression. That is not a matter of accommodation, but a matter of conveying God's message in terms these particular people will understand and which will hit home and reach the heart, the Lord willing.

With this concept of unreached peoples new fields can open before our eyes where we may apply what we have learned from Scriptures about evangelism. True, the situation is totally different, but at the same time we have many more means at our disposal today. In today's situation our effort will have to be more specialized and directed to certain groups, rather

than trying to reach all in a broad sweep. Each congregation can explore the opportunities in their surroundings: it may be a group of our native population, an ethnic group in a city or elsewhere, refugees, or any other specific group where the needs may be great, but focus and direct your message to those you seek to reach.

May the Lord bless our efforts so that also in this respect we may be a living Church: preserving and propagating the truth so that the Word of God may increase!

C. VAN SPRONSEN

**NOTES:**

<sup>1</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, pp. 207, 208.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 1:13ff., 12:12, 17:5, 16:15, 32-34, 18:7, 21:8, I Cor. 1:16, I Cor. 16:15, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. G. Van Dooren, *Get Out!*, Premier Printing 1973, p. 63 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Green, *op. cit.* p. 278.

<sup>5</sup> MARC, "Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center," World Vision of Canada, 6630 Turner Valley Rd., Mississauga, Ont.

**A LESSON** — *cont. from page 267.*

took some of the spoil of this city for himself. Because of it he was sentenced to death. He refused to fight God's holy war against God's enemies. Of this war of God against the Canaanites he made his own war for himself. Basically, this was the same sin as that of Ananias. But did many an Israelite in later days not commit the same sin? Did they not sin in a worse manner? Certainly. But why did Achan, then, have to die? Also in this instance God showed to His church in an example what He thought about sin, any "little" sin in the church.

These warning examples were given to the church as clearly visible tokens, precisely at the beginning of a new period with a new gift of great grace. In Achan's time God gives the promised land to Israel. The people now enter and receive the land. But God shows that in this land there cannot be a place for sin. It is the holy land for a holy people of a holy God.

And when later another new period starts in the history of the Old Testament church, when God gives King David as redeemer and ruler, when David brings the ark of God, that is the throne of the LORD, to Jerusalem, in order that God may dwell in the midst of His people, in the city of David, then Uzzah suddenly dies when he touches the ark. At the beginning of another new period, with new grace, God teaches a lesson: the holy God is going to dwell in the midst of His people, in Jerusalem. But this holy God wants to be served and worshipped in holiness, according to His law and commandment. Otherwise He still becomes a consuming fire. Sin, any


"little" sin, even with good intentions, is testing the holy God and provoking Him to anger. Having God with you is great grace. It means life. But it is very dangerous for those who live in God's holy presence to connect this being with God with sinning.

That is what Christ now teaches in the death of Ananias and Sapphira. God gave His great grace, at the beginning of another new period in the history of the church: He poured the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, upon the whole church. The congregation is temple of the Holy Spirit. He dwells in their midst. But that means that it is now very dangerous to combine being temple of the Spirit with sinning, even a "little" sin. The Holy Spirit burns such a sin away. The combination of Holy Spirit and sinning is testing and provoking the Spirit. It cannot be allowed. It leads to death.

So let us not ask: Were Ananias and Sapphira saved? Let us ask: Do we today, in the church of Christ, a temple of the Holy Spirit, allow a place for sin? Let us be aware of the seriousness of even our so-called "little" or so "common" sins in the congregation of Christ, lest we die and are condemned. God is Holy. God — that is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And the church is holy. Salvation as such should not be our concern. Our concern should be: Do we keep ourselves and the church of Christ holy for Him? Do we seek Him and His service in everything, and not ourselves in any way?

The result of this warning act of Christ Jesus was that "great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things," Acts 5:11.

J. GEERTSEMA



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# Our College

Once in a while, to my surprise, I am asked how many students we have and who they are. Surprise, because I thought that it was all said and known. It reminded me that it is time to do a write-up on the College so that everyone knows all about it again.

Let me start, then, with the number. It is nothing to brag about but is anyway considerably higher than a couple of years ago. This year we had nine students altogether, of whom five in the freshman year and four in the other years. The freshmen are the brothers C. Bosch who came from Edmonton, W. Den Hollander from Grand Rapids, J. Moesker from Fergus, W. Slomp from Hamilton, and M. Van Luik from Beamsville. The majority of these students were involved in teaching or business before they took up study once more, or did the two together at the same time. These preparatory years of renewed study led to the college admission on the basis of degrees obtained or the admission exam written. Even so, it was hard work for both students and teachers in this past academic year.

We had noticed that before, and Governors and Faculty therefore agreed wholeheartedly with the overture of the Maranatha Church at Sur-

rey to Synod Smithville, to make a qualified B.A. degree compulsory for all students who want to be admitted to the College. As you may remember, Synod Smithville decided accordingly. Synod made only one exception: He is br. G. Wieske from Armadale, Western Australia, who had already applied for the admission exam and, after having written it in Australia under the supervision of Rev. Bruning, was admitted to the College for the academic year 1981-1982. With his wife and nine children he hopes to emigrate from Australia in July and settle down in the Hamilton area. Now that I am at it, I may also mention the second student whom we expect for the new course. He is Arthur VanDelden from Edmonton who finished his B.A. study and hopes to marry before he joins us in September.

Once in a while inquiries regarding study possibilities at the College are made by Canadian students of Reformed or Presbyterian background who study in the States but can hardly manage financially. As it is not possible just to transfer from the courses at Calvin or Westminster Seminary to the ones in Hamilton, nothing came of these inquiries. The same held true for a minister from Af-

rica and for a student from Pakistan. Though we should like to reach out, it is, with the academic standards we have and want to maintain, not so easy to make it work in practice. The only way it can be done fruitfully is that such students receive their whole theological training at the College.

In the past year inquiries were made from more than one side for such full time study at the College but no applications have been received as yet. It you might wonder whether everyone with the necessary qualification can be admitted, the answer is that this can only be done with permission of the Board of Governors.

I did not forget the senior students. They are, to start with the one who is in his last study-year, in the first place br. R. Leach. With him we had hoped that he would be through by now, but serious sinus trouble during the past year impeded the progress of his studies so that he will finish somewhat later, hopefully before the end of the year. Br. C. Bouwman will begin his final year in September. If he gets his license to exhort, you will see him around in the coming months. Bros. E. Kampen and G. Nederveen will pass on to their third year of study, the Lord willing. So that looks good.

As always during the twelve years of our existence as College, so this year there was a good relationship between staff and students and between students and students, and, though the road was sometimes rough and the going tough, a good Christian mood prevailed throughout the year.

Since Synod Arnhem of the "Gereformeerde Kerken" appointed Prof. Ohmann to the Old Testament chair in Kampen, we lived under the cloud of the upcoming departure and the necessity to fill the vacancy. Things brightened once more when Synod Smithville appointed Rev. C. Van Dam as professor Old Testament. It is kind of a safe feeling to have him around since the beginning of May. Prof. Faber has in the meantime delivered six farewell speeches to Prof. Ohmann on various occasions — the last one, as he stated, during the farewell reception which the College offered Prof. and Mrs. Ohmann on May 29. The most remarkable thing of the evening was that, in spite of going through it for the sixth time, Prof. Ohmann was still all ears when his colleague received the floor once more to speak his final word of farewell. Production and absorption



*The Faculty with Prof. and Mrs. Ohmann.*

are on a high level in the College community. Prof. Ohmann delivered his final lecture in exegesis for students, staff, and one of the governors. He also led the final "chapel" meditating on Proverbs 16:1-3. The Lord be with him and Mrs. Ohmann when they move on to the old country and a new task. May He bless them and make them a blessing, as He did in their Canadian years.

Speaking of receptions offered by the College to Professors and better egos, you read the story of the reception held for my wife and me on the occasion of our double anniversary. I may use this opportunity to thank for congratulations received from all over the country. It made for good and blessed days.

Prof. Faber may not be packing yet, but he is already preparing for his guest lectureship in Philadelphia. I am sure that, when it is all over, we will hear more about it.

The secretary, Miss Ann Van Sydenborgh, divides her time and attention between her duties as administrator and the library. It keeps her going and us happy. Speaking about the library, if the plans materialize to change over to the Library of Congress system of cataloguing and to promote the accessibility of the contents of the library via electronic means, more help will be necessary and the financial assistance of the women's saving action will remain highly desirable. More on that later.

Before I close I should mention all the work which has been done inside and outside the College. Once in a while a remark could be heard from the side of visitors that, though the building was nice, it was not in all too glorious a state of repair. The Board of Trustees will have silenced these voices, for all kinds of facelifts were done. The oil furnace became a gas furnace. New storm windows, covering the entire windows, were installed; the outside was painted; the appearance inside improved. All this does not mean that a decision was made to forget about a new building. Whatever is going to happen, the renovations have increased the value of the building and offer us comfort and enjoyment.

Finally, I may mention the upcoming college evening during which Rev. Van Dam will be installed. The date is Friday, Sept. 4. If you can make it, we hope to see you there. "There" again is the Wellington Square United Church in Burlington.



*Rev. W. Huizinga presents Prof. and Mrs. Ohmann with a little "something" by which they may remember the Hamilton Congregation.*



*The Rev. M. VanBeveren addresses Prof. and Mrs. Ohmann on behalf of the Board of Governors.*



*Prof. Ohmann thanks the Hamilton Congregation for their present and for all he and Mrs. Ohmann received during the ten years of their residence there.*



*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

Prof. H.M. Ohmann will be installed as minister of the Reformed Church at Dokkum, The Netherlands, on July 19. On September 2, he will deliver his inaugural address at the Theologische Hogeschool in Kampen. (ND)

\* \* \*

#### MOSCOW

The number of abortions exceeds the number of births in the Soviet Union. That was made known by the deputy minister for Social Problems and Population, Alexandr Smirnov. He added that the Soviet Government has no intention of imposing restrictions on the number of abortions. (ND)

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A TEXAS PASTOR was briefly jailed early last month when he refused to describe to a county judge his conversation with a parishioner. Dallas-area Presbyterian pastor Ron Salfen was sentenced for contempt of court by Collin County Judge John R. Roach when Salfen refused to answer six questions during a bond hearing for a church secretary charged with possession of cocaine. He was freed hours later when his lawyer obtained a writ of habeas corpus from the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals (which was to hear the case later) on grounds the minister had been unjustly imprisoned. Salfen refused to violate minister-parishioner confidentiality, and said to do so would place him in violation of a discipline of his church. The Grace United Presbytery fully supported Salfen's action. (CT)

#### CUAPA, NICARAGUA

Thousands of pilgrims are flocking to the tiny Nicaraguan village of Cuapa, where a peasant named Bernardo Martinez claims to have seen and spoken with an apparition of the Virgin Mary. The Catholic hierarchy so far has reserved judgment. Nicaraguan Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo told a reporter the church must exercise "great prudence" in such things, but noted the Virgin Mary "has never appeared to great intellectuals and thinkers. She has always shown herself to humble people." (CT)

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ANGLICANS in Tanzania have prepared fifteen airstrips as part of an unprecedented attempt to take the Christian message to the country's most remote communities this summer. Bishop Yohana Madinda of the Diocese of Central Tanganyika says the diocese's 120 ordained clergymen and 1,500 evangelists will be flown by Mission Aviation Fellowship pilots to designated locations for evangelistic meetings. An ambitious five-year program also establishes a lay training center, regional training seminars for the evangelists, and has produced an innovative Cassette Bible School, with courses recorded in the numerous tribal languages. (CT)

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CHURCH BUILDINGS are being assaulted in Northeast India. A correspondent reports that the church in Mopaghat was burned to the ground during the night of April 4, just ten days after its construction. Four previous buildings of the same congregation have also been destroyed. The church in Lungho village was torn down at about the same time by local leaders, without opposition from the authorities. (CT)

\* \* \*

#### MINNEAPOLIS (RNS)

Hal Lindsey insists that current events are pushing the world towards the climax of history foretold by the Hebrew prophets more than 2,000 years ago.

It was the theme of his best-selling book *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which has sold more than 18 million copies in 31 languages since it came out in 1970. It was later made into a movie.

Now in another book just published, *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon*, (Bantam, \$6.95), Mr. Lindsey maintains that the 1980's

"could very well be the last decade of history as we know it."

On a visit to Minneapolis to promote his book, Mr. Lindsey said the scenario could be slowed down if the United States act to stop the spread of Soviet Communism and Soviet adventures. (CN)

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#### PHILADELPHIA (RNS)

The National Council of Churches issued a sweeping condemnation of the Reagan administration, saying its programs threatened "the vision of America as the model and embodiment of a just and humane society." (CN)

\* \* \*

#### WASHINGTON D.C.

The conservative-dominated U.S. Senate recently passed the toughest and most stringent anti-abortion provisions ever supported by Congress. The Senate, by a 52-43 vote, decided to eliminate rape and incest as grounds for an abortion under the federal Medicaid program. The government will be permitted to pay for abortions only in the case of a threat to the life of the mother.

This anti-abortion amendment, sponsored by Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, was a rider to a supplemental appropriations bill. This Helms-sponsored provision restored the language of an anti-abortion rider that already had been backed by the House. The appropriations bill now proceeds to a Senate-House conference, but final approval of the bill seems certain. (CN)

\* \* \*

#### QUITO, ECUADOR (UPI)

The Ecuadorian government has told a U.S. linguistic organization to stop teaching the Bible to Indian tribes, saying it threatens their culture.

The decree was directed at the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The institute is part of the Wycliffe Bible Translators.

The government decree said the organization's work disrupted the Indians' development along their own cultural lines. (CN)

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#### CHICAGO (AP)

Americans are now replacing their cars and spouses at about the same rate, according to a veteran Chicago lawyer who makes studies of divorce trends.

Herbert A. Glieberman cites sta-



tistics that he said shows the average duration of a marriage before a divorce is 6.6 years.

This, he says, is just slightly more than the age of the average car on the road, which is 6.2 years. In addition, cars are usually traded in for new models after only 4.6 years, he said. (CN)

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#### NEW YORK (RNS)

Nearly one-half of all married American women now work outside the home. The number of one-parent families has risen sharply and women now head about 15 percent of the families in this country.

When asked to name specific negative consequences that stem from both parents working, family members most often mention:

— Lack of guidance, supervision and discipline for children (“children run wild and get into trouble if parents don’t look after them”).

— A breakdown of the family and home (“family life seems to be falling apart”).

On the positive side, about nine in ten family members, including parents, working mothers and working fathers, believe that “when both parents work, children have to become more self-reliant and independent.” In attention, more than eight in ten family members believe that “it’s not the amount of time you spend with your children that’s important, but what you do when you spend time with them.”

On the negative side, however, majorities of family members and parents feel that when both parents work, “children are more likely to get into trouble,” and that “parents who work spoil their children to make up for not spending time with them.” (CN)

\* \* \*

#### NICARAGUA (RNS)

“This is the first revolution inspired by the Gospel and promoted by many Catholics,” says Father Peter Marchetti, S.J., of the Sandinista revolution of Nicaragua.

He calls the Nicaraguan revolution a “model of rapid social change which integrates Catholic faith and the justice sought by popular revolutions.” Nicaragua, he says, is “extremely important as a sign of hope that there is a possibility of rapid social change without falling into the excesses of a Pol Pot type of regime.” (CN)

vO

## The Future of the Revised Standard Version

For some time articles have popped up in the press under the provocative headings “UNMANNING THE HOLY BIBLE” (*Time*, Dec. 8, '80), “NCC (National Council of Churches) PROPOSES ‘NON-SEXIST’ SCRIPTURES” (*Eternity*, Feb. '81), and “THE ‘DESEXING’ OF SCRIPTURE” (*Evangelical Newsletter*, March 6, '81). These articles deal with attempts within the NCC to make an end to the over-masculine language in the translation of the Bible. A Committee of the NCC appointed a task force in 1978 with the mandate, among other things, “to review possibilities for creating a non-sexist translation within the RSV structure.” In response to the report of this task force, a second task force was appointed in 1980 to prepare a non-sexist lectionary of Bible passages which after a time of trial may lead to a non-sexist Bible translation.

Maybe you have read one or more of these or other articles on this subject. It was one of the reasons for the Church of Edmonton to overture Synod Smithville not to adopt the recommendations of the majority of the Committee for Bible Translation appointed by Synod Coaldale 1977. As Edmonton did not “base its fears on an accomplished fact but on what may happen in the future with the R.S.V.” (*Acts*, p. 78, sub 6 of considerations of advisory committee), no recommendation was made to decide accordingly.

The articles, in the meantime, created enough uncertainty and gave rise to so many questions that a letter was written to Dr. B.M. Metzger, chairman of the RSV Bible Committee. The letter is dated March 24, 1981, and reads as follows:

Dear Dr. Metzger,

In agreement with the recommendation of the Committee on Bible Translations, Synod 1980 of the Canadian Reformed Churches decided to use the Revised Standard Version for the Scripture quotations in the linguistic modernization of the Creeds and the Liturgical Forms.

After all the work done by the various committees, we were happy with this decision of Synod. We wonder, however, whether this happiness will last.

*Time Magazine* and *Eternity* informed us of the plans for a non-sexist Bible translation, based on the Revised Standard Version. If this would mean a revision of the RSV along that line — major or minor — the decision of Synod Smithville will be shortlived, and the RSV will no longer be used in the churches, since it would have lost its character of a genuine translation.

As members of the churches express this worry to us, we decided — though no longer a standing committee — to approach you and to ask what exactly we can expect with respect to the planned new edition of the RSV.

In the past you have been so kind to answer our letters. I hope that you are willing to respond once more to this inquiry and will take note of our serious concern in this matter.

Yours in His Service,  
L. SELLES

On March 27, 1981, Dr. Metzger wrote in reply:

Dear Professor Selles,

Thank you for your letter of March 24th, which arrived today. I am happy to learn that in 1980 the Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches decided to use the RSV Bible.

I can understand that, owing to the distorted reports in the news media, concern has been voiced about the RSV Bible. Let me say emphatically that the RSV Bible Committee is *not* going to tamper with references to God as Father or with Jesus as the only Son of God. We are making certain changes in regard to language about people when the Greek and Hebrew allow this — namely, where the present translation uses “man” or “men” and the original does not have a word meaning “man” or “men.” And we are sometimes translating *anthrōpos* as “persons” or something similar when such a rendering is appropriate.

The National Council of Churches will be forming a Task Force to make changes that involve “de-sexing” language about God and people for a lectionary. But this will not be called the RSV Bible, and our committee has nothing to do with that project.

I enclose a copy of a statement that I  
*Continued on page 277.*

# news medley

With the brief report on the farewell reception for the Ohmann's I forgot to mention that a telegram had come in which was read by Prof. Selles. It was from the Church at Chilliwack, British Columbia, and it read as follows: "Thankful for all you have done at the College for the Churches. Wishing you and your wife the Lord's blessing in your new position in Kampen. Canadian Reformed Church at Chilliwack, B.C." I thought it to be good to pass it on to you as yet.

Meanwhile, the Chilliwack Church as well as those in Carman and Langley are enjoying the use of their Church buildings. The Annex in Abbotsford must also near completion, although I did not read anything new about it. Or am I too optimistic? I hope to be able to see it this summer. Yes, the summer is drawing closer and then I mean not only the official beginning of summer, but the season as such. That means the season of holidays and travelling for most of us. What was it that I sometimes heard in The Netherlands? Summer is the time when one half of the population is busy receiving and entertaining the other half. It won't be all that bad, but when we see the countless number of cars and travellers at this time of the year, we would almost tend to agree with it. I hope to write another news medley before we take off, but from then on you will have to contain your curiosity for a while. Even this time there is not all that much real news, although there is a sufficient quantity to keep you occupied for a little while.

We start out West, and tell you something about the way in which they achieve things in Smithers. What I am referring to now is the preparations which are made for a Youth Camp. The brothers and sisters in the Bulkley Valley have the advantage that a couple in their midst operate a camping ground and that this camping area can be used. Now I first give you the passage from the bulletin which I wished to pass on.

So far every year a temporary shelter was put up for the Youth Camp, for which the materials were donated. The idea came up that it would be nice to have a more permanent covered kitchen and eating activity area. The L. [family operating the grounds, vO] were also interested in this and since we would also greatly benefit from this, we as Home Mission Committee pledged our support one way or another.

Well, this started the ball rolling. [One brother] drew up a nice plan and went around a number of the businesses for donations in material, labour, or otherwise, and except for a few, support came readily. At the moment about \$2,840.00 of material has been donated, and approximately \$1,700.00 worth of labour pledged. [All estimated figures.] We are still lacking about \$750.00 for vital materials, but we hope that this will come too yet. Good facilities really help to run a good camp! So in case you also want to give a hand . . . !

When I read the above I was sort of envious, for I have envisaged for many years a combined effort to achieve something like that. I realize that this building will be erected on private property. No worry, however, for the brothers and sisters have been assured that, in case the property should change hands, they will be reimbursed for the value of the building. As far as that goes it is as

good as owning the grounds personally. What I have longed for many, many years is a campground owed and operated by our societies or, preferably, by a committee set up for the purpose. Gradually the choicest spots have disappeared and we have to go farther and farther away, but it would be a tremendous thing in my opinion to have a large property which could be made into a campground with combined effort, where our people could go during the summer or for conferences and study weekends, e.g. the Fellowship of Canadian Reformed University Students and other organizations in our midst. I tried to promote such an enterprise when I was still in British Columbia; I have discussed it with many persons here in Ontario, but thus far my "dreams" have not come true. Can you understand that I am a little jealous of the brothers and sisters in Smithers? I wish them well and express the hope that it may stimulate others to do even more: have something of their own for the benefit of the whole community.

Herewith we take leave of the Bulkley Valley and of British Columbia as well, moving on to Alberta.

Edmonton is the place where the action is at the moment. The division of the Church makes the one thing lead to the other.

There is, e.g. the question of a name for the North-East Congregation. That is the Church which kept the Church building. No definite decision has been published as yet, but in two consecutive Consistory meetings a report was dealt with and I expect that we shall know soon.

The same Church is planning a drive to raise the money they have to pay to the Immanuel Church (that is South-West). "In addition to donating, some members may wish to make loans to the Church on which interest, should lenders desire it, would be paid up to a maximum of 10% per annum." That is somewhat lower than the Immanuel Consistory has in mind. They state that the maximum interest rate they will pay is 12% per annum. Further, the Immanuel Consistory "decided to instruct the Building Committee to go ahead with the building of a new Church building, as per plans, with the funds presently available, and to complete it to the point where it can be used for church services. It was decided that we should wait with the mandate for a complete facility until after the congregation has shown its readiness to sacrifice for this."

And, for the last item on this point: suggestions were made that members could borrow one or two thousand dollars, give it to the Church for building purposes, and then repay it as they have funds available.

I have always some difficulty with the question of lending money to the Church. They would be penalized if stand me: I do not disapprove of it at all if people ask interest, but I never know exactly what to think of it. On the one hand, I think that members should not be penalized for lending money to the Church. They should be penalized if they lent money interest-free whereas there are others who do not even meet their normal obligations. When I read that of a Church where 114 members could contribute, no fewer than 15 contributed nothing at all in 1980, and that from those who did contribute no fewer than 66 contributed only between 1 and 500 dollars per year — which means that a total of 81 members did not rise above the 500 level (only 15 even reached it) — then I think that anyone lending money to the Church interest-free is paying an extra amount because of the apparent unfaithfulness of others. Such would even be the case if

they asked a percentage below what they can get at financial institutions.

On the other hand, I realize that the Lord will bless such extra donation consisting of loss of interest. Such extra donation comes no doubt from people who really meet their obligations towards the maintenance of the ministry of the Gospel but whose heart is moved to help out here as well.

I know that with the above remarks I did not contribute much to a solution, but I did wish to make you share some of my thoughts — and concerns — on this point.

We return to Edmonton.

In the North-East Consistory report I read that “A letter was received from the Committee re: ‘Revision of the Church Order’ soliciting remarks from the churches concerning revision of the Church Order. This will be photocopied and distributed for further study.”

When I read that I thought, “Who has sent a letter alleging it to come from the Committee?” To my recollection our Committee has not approached the Churches at all after the conclusion of Synod 1980. We are at work, but it will be a while before something will be sent. And when we send something, we intend to send a sufficient number of copies for the office-bearers so that the Churches do not have to go into the trouble of copying it for each Church’s office-bearers.

Our trip brings us this time directly to Orangeville.

The Consistory apparently dedicated a large part of a meeting to the discussion of requests received during this past season’s family visits. Of those requests the following are of interest to the membership at large. The request to have the celebration of the Lord’s Supper six times per year instead of the present four times will be discussed during the family visits this coming season. Orangeville still has a collection at the Lord’s table. That is a point which will be discussed at the next Congregational Meeting.

The problem of smoking apparently has come closer to a solution by the following decisions. “The consistory has decided that there would be no smoking during any meetings in the church, including the basement auditorium. This means no smoking during intermission. Everyone is advised that there is no smoking in the church on Sundays either.”

I am happy with those decisions. It applies to catechism classes as well, I presume, although those are not what might be called “meetings.”

The Ladies’ Auxilliary in the Rehoboth Church Burlington asked the Consistory’s permission “to place picnic tables on the lawn in back of the church building. It is pointed out that these could be used for numerous purposes, e.g. having coffee after the a.m. service. This request is granted.” *Who could deny such a request?*

The Rev. Pouwelse wrote a long piece explaining the various possibilities and solutions which were being considered to cure the overcrowding of the Church building on Sundays. The Consistory came to a conclusion. Under the heading “Church Expansion” we read:

After a lengthy discussion, and having dwelt on all aspects of finishing the balcony as opposed to splitting the congregation, also having taken into consideration the report of the committee delegated to discuss a third congregation with Burlington East, the consistory decides the most responsible action at this time (also considering the financial implication of such moves) for an intermediate term solution is: 1. to finish the balcony; 2. reaffirm our decision to split the congregation in two wards; 3. to call a second minister;

4. to maintain a continued consultation with Burlington East on the borderline and to come to a satisfactory solution for the benefit of both congregations.

In *Lincoln’s Vineyard* the Rev. Werkman gives an extensive report on the latest Classis Ontario South. By the way, there are still bulletins and writers in bulletins who use the wrong terminology — and not only they. Sometimes we hear or read “A meeting of Classis.” That is wrong! Rev. Werkman writes, “Last Wednesday a classis was held in London again.” That is correct. A classis is a meeting and not a permanent body which has meetings once in a while, e.g. once every three months. In the same stack of bulletins which I read for this medley I also saw in one Consistory report that the provisional agenda for “the meeting of classis” was received. That is the wrong way of putting it, and I cannot stress that sufficiently. And now that I am at it anyway, I might as well mention that frequently I still see that “an attestation is accepted.” That is another wrong thought, that an attestation is accepted by a special decision of a Consistory. What is meant is that a brother or sister is accepted as a member of the Church on the ground of an attestation handed in. Let’s say that, and not use a terminology which might give rise to a wrong opinion as if we were allowed to refuse an attestation given by a sister-Church.

I was going to pass on to you part of what Rev. Werkman wrote about the proceedings at that Classis, namely, about an appeal by three members of the Hamilton Church.

I read in some Consistory reports — never mind of which Church — that copies of an appeal of some members of the Church at Hamilton against a consistory decision regarding Mission Aid were discussed “for the benefit of the delegates that go to Classis.”

There you have another matter which is wrong. In the first place: copies of an appeal to a broader assembly should not be sent to Consistories. One appeals to the broader assembly and not to the Churches whose delegates comprise that broader assembly. And if such copies are received, the Consistories should return them as being out of order at the Consistory “level.” The Consistories certainly should not discuss them, for they do not belong on the Consistory table.

Perhaps someone is thinking right now of what I wrote about the action of our Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*, and is wondering how that is in agreement with what I wrote above. I received a letter to the Editor about the former, and will deal with that in a separate article. I hope that I can find time to do so before the holidays, but in any case you will hear about it. Let me remark here that the above appeal is dealing with a Consistory decision, and I have always maintained that an appeal is no business of Consistories.

Anyway, let me now pass on what the Rev. Werkman wrote, for the arguments which he brings to the fore may convince some who still have their doubts.

Classis dealt at length with an appeal of three brothers of Hamilton against a decision of Hamilton’s consistory to keep Mission and Mission Aid separate. The three appellants tried to prove that the consistory should handle Mission Aid as well as Mission since the preaching of the Word and the work of mercy go together. Personally I am convinced that they failed to prove this. No one will deny that Mission (the preaching of the gospel) and Mission Aid (work of mercy) are both required by the Lord. But that does not make it the task of the consistory! The work for Korea committees is not handled by the consistory either,

neither the work done for the "refugees," etc. That too is work of mercy. The members of the church themselves can and should organize many things instead of the office-bearers.

From the same *Vineyard* I learned that the total budget of the John Calvin School in Smithville for the coming academic year is no less than \$232,812.00! That made me silent for a moment, and I considered that this amount is many times the total budget of all the Churches together some thirty years ago! Yet we have been so blessed by the Lord that we can do it and in many instances it is even easier for us to bring those enormous amounts together now than it was to meet the budget thirty years ago. Many people are complaining about the high cost of everything, but indeed: we never had it so good. The only dark aspect is that we are living off the future with all the deficit budgeting that is being done by federal, provincial, and municipal governments. That, too, just like inflation, is a *moral* issue.

It would be good if we had soundly Scriptural instruction about all those points and questions. It is also for that reason that I hope wholeheartedly that the planned Political Magazine will get off the ground and have a prosperous flight.

Almost every bulletin in Ontario contained a little note regarding meetings to be held for the promotion of such a magazine; and all the comments which I read in

those bulletins were favourable. The brothers and sisters were urged to subscribe and to take out subscriptions for others as well. It is quite an undertaking and a responsibility: to call a brother out of his job and means of existence and to entrust him with the task of writing about all sorts of topics in such a manner that the lie is exposed and the Truth propagated. Although the periodical will be exclusively in the hands of Church members, the circle of readers will be much wider, at least that is our striving and goal. The meetings which were held were convened on short notice and late in the season; thus they were not as well attended as we would have liked to see. The local committees will have quite a job on their hands. It is my wish that their work may prosper and may be well received by the brothers and sisters so that also in this manner we are enabled to let our light shine before men. What does the LORD tell us? "Say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns.' He will judge the peoples with equity." We have the obligation to share the insight which we have received and to warn the people, to expose the wiles of the evil one and to propagate the Gospel which lets its light shine upon each and every event.

Let this work succeed! Cooperate en bloc. Have not the ends of the earth been given to our Lord and Saviour, and should not all of life and the whole of this world be claimed for Him?  
vO

## PRESS RELEASE

Classis Ontario South held on June 10, 1981, in London, Ontario.

1. On behalf of the convening Church at Watford, Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer opens the meeting by requesting the brothers present to sing Ps. 145:1, 5. After the singing of this psalm, the chairman reads Ps. 97, and leads in prayer. He welcomes the brothers present, congratulates the Church at Chatham with the decision made by her minister re the call from the Church of Orangeville, and also extends best wishes to the Rev. Cl. Stam who will be on leave of absence in 1981-82.

2. The chairman asks the Church at Chatham to report on the credentials. These are found to be in good order. There is one instruction.

3. Classis is constituted. Moderamen is as follows: Rev. J. Geertsema, chairman; Rev. M. Werkman, clerk; Rev. J. De Jong, assessor.

4. After some questions, the provisional agenda is adopted.

5. The Church at Smithville requests preaching arrangements one Sunday every three months for one year for celebrations of the Lord's Supper. Classis decides not to grant this request. Since only four Sundays of the year are involved, Classis is convinced that for these four Sundays the Church at Smithville will be able to obtain a minister without an arrangement by Classis.

6. a) The Church at Chatham reports re the Fund maintained ad Art. 19, C.O. The Church at Chatham proposes to assess the Churches \$8.00 per communicant member for the period June 1981 to

August 1982 for the support of one student. This proposal is adopted.

b) After the lunch adjournment, the chairman reopens the meeting. The Church at Lincoln reports on the Audit of the books of the Classis Quaestor. The books and records were found to be in good order. Classis expresses its thanks to both the treasurer for his work, and the auditors.

c) Classis receives a Statement of Income and Expenses for the year 1980 from the Classis Quaestor. This statement is accepted with thanks.

d) The Church at Watford reports on the Classical Archives. Two Church visitation reports were not present. Beyond this the Archives were found to be in good order. The report on the visitation to the Church at London is read and received with thanks, and it is mentioned that the report concerning the visitation to the Church at Chatham is still forthcoming.

The Churches at London and Watford will make arrangements concerning the maintenance and review of the Classical Archives.

7. Three brothers of the Church at Hamilton have submitted an appeal to Classis concerning a decision of their Consistory on the matter of Mission Aid. The brothers request Classis "to state that the consistory at Hamilton should not have made the decision that 'mission aid work is not to be organized and managed by the consistory' since it is based on inconclusive grounds and since the previous decision was founded on good scriptural and church-political grounds."

On the basis of the following grounds, Classis decided not to grant the request of the appealing brothers:

a) The appeal gives insufficient background information re previous decisions and grounds of the Consistory of the Church at Hamilton, and previous appeals and advices to the Consistory.

b) Although the grounds of the decision of the Consistory of Hamilton taken on Nov. 17, 1980, could have been more clearly formulated, the appellants have not proven that the decision of the Consistory re Mission and Mission Aid is in conflict with Scripture and confessions.

c) The appellants have not proven from Scripture and confessions that Mission Aid should be placed under the control and supervision of the Consistory.

8. The convening Church of the next Regional Synod is the Church at Grand Rapids. This Church is advised to schedule Regional Synod on November 4, 1981, and to hold it in Hamilton, Ont.

9. In the Question Period ad Art. 41, the Churches at Lincoln and London ask and receive advice in certain matters of discipline and supervision of the flock. In the Personal Question Period one question is dealt with.

10. The following provisions are made for the next Classis: The Church at Chatham is appointed as the convening Church; Classis will be held, D.V., Sept. 9, 1981 in London, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Proposed moderamen is: Rev. P. Kingma, chairman; Rev. J. Geertsema, clerk; Rev. M. Werkman, assessor.

11. The Press Release is approved.

12. The Acts are adopted.

13. Censure is not necessary. The chairman requests the brothers to sing Ps. 97:1, 6, leads in prayer, and closes the meeting.

On behalf of Classis,  
J. DEJONG, assessor e.t.

**RSV** — Continued from page 273.

was asked to write in order to explain the situation. You are at liberty to make any use of this statement that you wish, in order to answer very legitimate concerns that have arisen as to what actually is going to happen to the RSV Bible. We are resisting making it a paraphrase.

If I can be of further help, kindly let me know.

Sincerely yours,  
BRUCE M. METZGER

The letter of Dr. Metzger makes it clear that the RSV Bible Committee should not be identified with one of the two task forces mentioned above.

From the statement which Dr. Metzger enclosed we also learn that "the National Council of Churches holds the copyright of the RSV Bible . . . but only the RSV Bible Committee has the authority to make changes in the text of the RSV." That sounds reassuring — the more so since the changes made in the second edition of the RSV were for the better, and more improvements may be expected in the next edition which is expected within a decade.

Yet, I am not completely satisfied. The suggestion was made within the NCC that "the RSV Bible Committee 'move more boldly' in employing inclusive language about persons." This suggestion, as letter and statement tell, was rejected by the Bible Committee with respect to the person of God and the Son of God. No tampering there. In his statement Dr. Metzger declares, however, "that for the past several years . . . we have been giving attention to the elimination of masculine-oriented language pertaining to people, so far as this can be accomplished without distorting the historical background reflected in the original texts and without resorting to contrived English expressions." One example is the use of "men" in the KJV of Luke 17:34 where it is not used in the original text which only speaks of "two." Another example is the translation of "man" or "men" in cases wherein the Hebrew or Greek original speaks of "anyone" or "no one" as in Ps. 143:2, Mark 10:18, Luke 18:1, Rom. 2:6, Rev. 3:20.

There is, of course, nothing against, but everything in favour of, adding no words in the translation which are not used in the original, if there is no necessity for the sake of understanding the passage to do so. Neither is there anything against the translation of "anyone" by "anyone," though the matter is not as simple as

in the first case. The tricky point, namely, is that in the original this "anyone" is expressed in the masculine form in accordance with the predominance of the masculine in general in the Bible. That is the reason why the KJV did not translate those "anyone's" by "anyone" but by "man."

It is, however, a different matter with the third example Dr. Metzger gives. It concerns cases wherein the words "man" or "men" are used in the original but a general statement is made in the passage concerned. Reference is made to Ps. 1:1, John 2:10, Rom. 1:18, 2:16, 2:29. "Here," Dr. Metzger writes in his statement, "the RSV Committee plans to employ a variety of expressions, including 'those who,' 'all people,' 'everyone' and 'human beings.'"

It may all seem very reasonable, but the result, in the first place, is that, without any necessity to do so, the original words are no longer translated but are substituted by a rendering in general expressions. "Blessed is the *man* who walks not in the counsel of the wicked" may become "blessed is the *person*, or *the one* who," etc. What we get, in the second place, is that the Bible authors — the first and the second ones — no longer determine how the text shall read in translation, but this is done by the members of a Bible committee which will also be opened up for feminists when vacancies arise. In the third place, my main objection against the employment of inclusive language is that this whole attempt to put man and woman on a textual par in the Bible language is not in agreement with, but rather at odds with, the spirit of the Bible. Scripture language is masculine-oriented indeed, and not only in the Old Testament but in the New Testament as well.

Why is that? Is that because the Bible writers, the Holy Spirit first of all, had no idea of the equality of man and woman? Is that because they were completely dominated by the idea of a patriarchal society wherein women had an inferior place? The whole Bible is proof to the contrary. The place of the woman is different from the one of the man, but that does not mean inferior to that of the man. With the pagans it may have been that way but certainly not with the people of Israel, nor with the New Testament church. The Bible speaks as it speaks, often including the women but also the children with the men, because the Bible, as the name

"testaments" already expresses, is the book of the covenant of God for the covenant people. Because of that the Bible speaks *covenantally*, i.e., for what the people addressed are concerned, not in terms of individuals subdivided into a number of classes or in sexes, but in terms of the *family* and of the *nation*.

Our modern atomistic society no longer knows what that is. Each has to fend for him/her self and stand up for his/her rights. Each is pitched against the other: man against woman, parents against children, and the other way around, and the tug of war never ends.

In the covenant it is different! It was made by God with Adam and in Adam with Eve and with their offspring, and it was renewed with Abraham and in Abraham with Sarah and their descendants, the natural ones; but after Pentecost the spiritual offspring as well. They, as the Bible language indicates, are all included and all embraced in the covenant head. That is the glory of the Bible message. That is also the glory of the Bible language. Cutting it out may be lauded as a gain by the feminist movement, but actually it is a loss for the whole people of God, male and female, united in the covenant and testament of God. It is good that we have a new Translation Committee to watch developments and to warn, if necessary, what the future of the RSV will be.

L. SELLES

## Church News

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

T.M.P. van der Ven  
Principal, C.R.T.C.

From:

43 Yeoville Court,  
Hamilton, Ontario L9C 5W4

To:

29 Lorraine Drive,  
Hamilton, Ontario L8T 3R8

\* \* \*

### NEW ADDRESS:

Rev. C. VanDam  
642 Ramsgate Drive,  
Burlington, Ontario L7N 2Y1  
Telephone: (416) 634-0593

### OUR COVER

Botanical Gardens, Hamilton,  
Ontario. (Photo Courtesy Ministry of Industry and Tourism, Government of Ontario.)

# *A Reformed Social-Political Magazine*

In the *Clarion* issue of June 5, 1981 we have informed you about the most recent developments with respect to the publication of a magazine that will deal with social-political issues from a Biblical and Confessional viewpoint. (See also the 1980 Christmas issue and the issue of Feb. 27, 1981.)

You were informed about the working relationship between the Foundation responsible for the promotion and publication of this magazine and *Nederlands Dagblad* (a Reformed daily), which has expressed willingness to assist this Foundation in every possible way.

At this time we would like to report on the meetings which have been held in the East. All the congregations in Ontario have received a visit from either one or two representatives of the Foundation.

After a short speech, which touched on the importance of Reformed journalism and on the developments since the establishment of the Foundation, the opportunity was given to ask questions.

Practically in every congregation the question was raised whether the future of *Clarion* was not at stake. Would the proposed magazine not compete with this magazine? Is it not possible to expand on *Clarion* instead of starting a new magazine?

It was made clear that although *Clarion* does at times contain articles of a social-political nature it is still pre-dominantly a magazine that deals with ecclesiastical matters. Furthermore, to hire full-time editorial personnel would require a minimum of 5000 subscribers, a number which we are unable to reach at the present among our own membership. Moreover, since the proposed periodical is not specifically ecclesiastical in nature it is able to address English-speaking Christians everywhere. Therefore, the decision was made to make this magazine international rather than national in scope in order to address people in all English-speaking countries. However, all this does not preclude possible cooperation with those presently responsible for the publication of *Clarion*. Perhaps, articles can be written with special emphasis on the Canadian scene and subsequently be inserted in *Clarion*. Thus, rather than being a competing force this new magazine could very well become a beneficial complementary one.

Other questions were related to the content: Are you sure you can consistently fill this magazine? Can

you get enough regular contributors who are able to speak knowledgeable about any given subject from a Reformed perspective?

We answered that we did not anticipate too much trouble in this area. Although it is true that many among us could have contributed more in the past via *Clarion*, we like to think that the nature of this new magazine may motivate and stimulate many among us to become regular contributors. Furthermore, the hiring of two full-time journalists by the Foundation would certainly facilitate this matter of content. They will be working day in and day out to make sure that this magazine will be filled with sound Reformed commentary on the whole spectrum of life. Further, we hope to have correspondents in Australia, South Africa, and England who will contribute on a regular schedule. And last but certainly not least is the support promised to us by *Nederlands Dagblad*. In giving access to research material and in providing copy which can be translated and easily be made adaptable to an English-speaking public it has given this whole journalistic enterprise a realistic basis from which to begin. It is of course our prayer that the Lord will bless this undertaking and allow the subscriptions to increase to the point where we may think of a bi-weekly and perhaps of a weekly publication and of simultaneously increasing the editorial staff.

As you can understand there were many more questions at these meetings and perhaps many more could have been put to us. In order to meet every possible question and suggestion the Foundation is in the process of setting up special committees in every congregation. These local committees will form the necessary communication-link between the Foundation and the local membership. As time goes on the Foundation will provide these committees with additional information. Therefore do not hesitate to contact your local committee to receive the answer to any possible query you might have so that you will no longer hesitate to take out as soon as possible one or more subscriptions and support this much necessary Reformed activity with word and deed.

*\* In the next issue of CLARION, we hope to publish all the names of Committee members in each of the churches across Canada.*

# Official Opening of the New House of Worship

*Canadian Reformed Church at Langley*

In the morning of May 14, 1981, the flowerbeds around the new church building were still grey and bare; in the late afternoon, however, flowering plants and evergreen shrubs scattered bright accents of colour against the black topsoil and the stucco church walls. This slight-of-hand performed by br. R. Vane should not be misconstrued as if the building of the church had taken place at a similar dramatic pace. In fact, it was a year ago in May that the foundations for the building were poured. Since then the work proceeded at a steady rate, and all the facilities were in working order just one year later.

By 8:00 p.m. the auditorium was filled to its 500-plus capacity. Br. F. Bergsma, chairman of the Planning Committee for this evening, invited the congregation and the visitors to sing Psalm 122:1 and 3, whereafter he read Psalm 96 and led in prayer. In his brief opening address, he extended a heartfelt welcome and stressed that it is God's grace that the congrega-

tion was now able to worship in its own beautiful building.

Elder T. Pothoven, chairman of the Building Committee, then sketched how the Langley Canadian Reformed Church (since its institution June 20, 1976) held its services in the Seventh Day Adventist church building. In collaboration with the School Society and the Resthome Society several attempts were made to buy suitable property. On one occasion a "land-freeze" imposed by the provincial government thwarted the acquisition of a choice building site. At present, however, Langley Christian High School and the new church building have become neighbours. Making a reference to Psalm 127:1 ("Except the LORD build the house . . ."), br. Pothoven then presented a symbolic gilded key to the chairman of the consistory, Rev. D. VanderBoom, who also was master of ceremonies for this evening. In addition, br. Pothoven presented a miniature replica of the table which now stands central in the consistory room.



*Rev. Vanderboom receiving the key from br. T. Pothoven, chairman of the Building Committee.*

In accepting these gifts, Rev. VanderBoom summarized how in a series of Psalms the people of God are called to His house, the temple with all its symbolic and liturgical implements. The new dispensation, too, knows the special places of worship. In receiving this house of worship, there is no room for boasting on our part. Accepting the key and the building symbolized by it, he then expressed thanks to all those who so enthusiastically and faithfully contributed materially and with their work and skills to the completion of the church building.

In a telegram Rev. VanSpronsen conveyed a congratulatory message from the Church at Smithers, B.C.

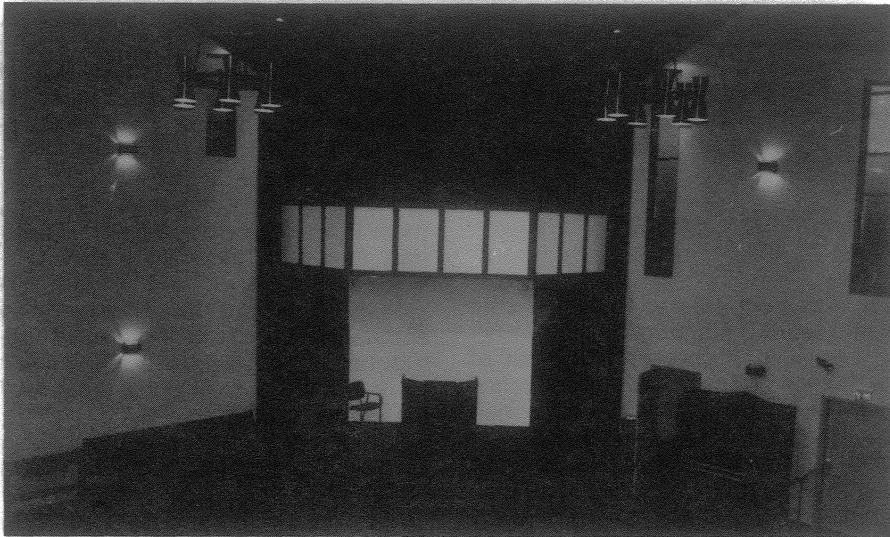
At this juncture delegates from neighbouring churches received the opportunity to address the gathering. These were (in alphabetical order): from the Church at Abbotsford — Elder D.R. Aikema; from the Church at Chilliwack — Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar and Elder J. Van; from the Church at Cloverdale — Elder H.A. Berends; from the Church at Surrey — Elder E.J. VanWoudenberg. In each instance, the wishes and the attendant messages were accompanied by most useful gifts that were gratefully accepted by Rev. VanderBoom.

The civic authorities were represented by Mr. H. Harper of the Langley Municipal Council, who extended — on behalf of the council and the mayor — best wishes for a prosperous growth of the church.

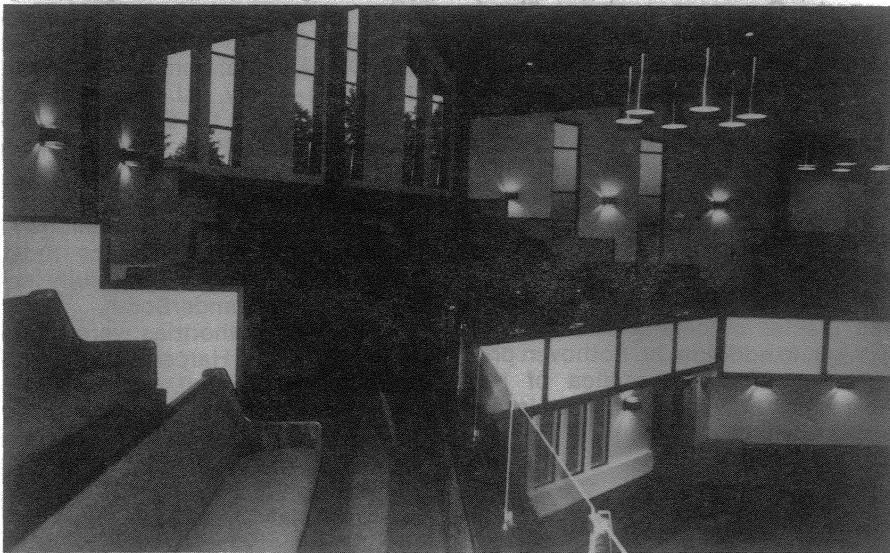
Pastor A.N. White of the Seventh Day Adventist Church at Langley reviewed how — for nearly five years — their building had served to accommodate our congregation, and he shared our joy on this festive occasion.

Mr. L.A. Galpin, the architect of the building, observed that never in his career had he worked together with a more "unusual building committee," i.e. a group of people that "never seemed to have a major problem and worked single-mindedly to the glory of God." With reference to Ephesians 2:21 (" . . . in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord.") he expressed the hope and prayer that in this building — transformed from lines on paper to a house of worship — 1. the name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be held high; 2. the Gospel will be preached in all sermons; 3. the Word of God will be upheld in all its truth; 4. God will always be honoured and glorified.

The next item on the program



A view of the pulpit, with the organ loft above for the upcoming organ.



A view of the balcony.



A view of the Sanctuary main floor and balcony, taken from the Southeast corner of the balcony. Main floor seating capacity, 300. Balcony seating capacity, 200.

consisted of a performance by the mixed choir "In Jubilant Accord" under the directorship of Mrs. P. Jansen and accompanied at the organ by Mrs. H. Schouten. The choir (with membership of Cloverdale and Langley congregations) sang: "Song of Thanksgiving," "How lovely are Thy dwellings," and "Gloria in Excelcis Deo" (Haydn). On behalf of the choir, Mr. P. DeBoer presented the chairman of the consistory with a crystal water pitcher.

Four representatives of the Boys' and Girls' Societies made a rhymed gift of a clock (destined for the catechism room) with a solemn admonition of "not keeping us in a second too long."

The Young People's Society spelled out **LANGLEY CAN. REF. CHURCH** with hand-held cards, while each cardholder recited an appropriate rhyme bearing on some particular activity during the building of the church facilities.

Chairman of the Men's Society, br. T. VanPopta, presented the means for the purchase of two oak trees, a contribution to the landscaping of the grounds.

The entire Women's Society made a musical presentation of a variety of articles for the nursery, kitchen, vestibule, and pulpit area. They concluded with the singing of a Mendelssohn melody.

Rev. VanderBoom thanked all those who attended the festive meeting, those who had expressed their good wishes and proffered their much appreciated gifts. Quoting the old saying of "Churches of gold, hearts grow cold," he expressed the fervent hope that this situation may never come to pass, that the Lord may protect us from that disaster.

The Fraser Valley Band, "Praises in Harmony," under the baton of br. G. Arink, played "Hymn 19," "Pomp and Circumstance," and "Abide with me." Given the fact that this band of thirty members has been in existence only since October last year, their performance was a most auspicious one. Accompanied by the band, the meeting finally sang a joyful rendition of Psalm 150. Prayer and thanksgiving concluded this part of the evening. All were invited for a social encounter in the meeting hall where the Ladies' Auxiliary served refreshments.

The theme of this evening was found in the words previously expressed in Rev. Tiggelaar's message: **Soli Deo Gloria!**

R. KOAT



# our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Here's wishing you all a very happy and SAFE holiday this summer!

I hope you will all enjoy yourself and really get rested up for another school term, come September.

But that's a long time from now, right?

What are you planning to do in the meantime?

Are you taking swimming lessons, or helping in the garden?

Maybe you are responsible for some jobs at home or somewhere else?

Maybe your family has plans for going out?

Anyway, here's hoping that at the end of the summer you'll all be able to say:

"What a great summer we had!"

"What a lot we have to be thankful for!"

\* \* \* \* \*

It's time for birthday wishes!

To all the Busy Beavers celebrating their birthday in July we wish a very, very happy day celebrating with their family and friends. Many happy returns of the day, and may the Lord bless and guide you also in the year ahead.

	July 1	Sharon Leffers	July 16
Ian Hulzebosch	1	Kimberley Van Dooren	16
Theodore Kanis	2	Anita De Vries	17
Eric Jans	3	Michael Wildeboer	20
Jessica Bijker	3	Alison Helder	21
Robert Feenstra	4	Tammy Veldkamp	22
Angela Linde	6	Henrietta Gansekoel	23
Ingrid Feenstra	7	Rick Leffers	23
Marion Van Grootheest	7	Eileen Salomons	24
Sharon Van Grootheest	9	Helen Vander Pol	25
Shona Meerstra	10	Judith Barendregt	26
Joanne Hamoen	11	Cynthia Eenkhoorn	26
Wilma Meerveld	11	Jason Van Vliet	26
Karen Schouten	11	Corrie De Boer	29
James Slaa	12	Darlene Lodder	29
Rosemary De Haas	13	Mary Van Raalte	29
Sharalee Terpsma	14	Esther Bouwman	30
Irene De Jong	16		
Jo-Anna Flach	16		

\* \* \* \* \*



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Anko De Jong*. We are happy to have you join us, and we hope you'll enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Do you have any hobbies, Anko?

And welcome to you, too, *Peter De Jong*. I see you're a real Busy Beaver already, sending us a puzzle! Keep it up.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Theresa De Boer*.

We hope you'll really enjoy being a Busy Beaver. Are you happy the holidays have started, Theresa? And do you have some plans for this summer? Please write and tell me your birthday, Theresa.

Welcome to the Club, *Shirley Van Raalte*. I'm glad you enjoy doing the quizzes, and hope you'll join in our other activities, too. Thanks for the puzzle, Shirley.

Hello, *Cynthia Oosterveld*. Thank you for your quiz, too. Keep up the good work! Next time, hopefully, we'll announce a winner in our Guessing Contest.

I'm glad you had a nice birthday party, *Nancy Lodder*. What do you like best about the holidays? Thanks, Nancy, for the puzzle. Write again soon.

How is your garden doing, *Jane Meints*? What are you growing in it? Did you have a nice visit with your company from Holland?

Is the weather there still so hot, *Pauline Leffers*? Maybe you're swimming to cool off? Do you still play the organ to keep in practice, Pauline? How did you enjoy your dress-up day and treasure hunt? Maybe you'll write and tell the other Busy Beavers about the fun you had.

Hello, *Karen Stam*. It was nice to hear from you again. What a lovely birthday present you got, Karen! Do you wear them on Sundays? I'm glad you had such a nice time on your Grandma's birthday, too. Bye for now.

You're a good puzzler, *Hilda De Vos*. You did very well on that quiz! Keep up the good work. And thanks for the picture, Hilda.

Hello *Margaret Oosterveld*. Would you like to join the Busy Beavers? Just write and tell me, and tell me your birthday, too, all right? Then we can include you in the birthday list. Are you enjoying the holidays, Margaret? And thanks for the quiz you made.

\* \* \* \* \*

## FOR YOU TO DO

Speaking of birthdays — our country just had its birthday on Canada Day, July 1.

Did you do something exciting to celebrate Canada's birthday?

We would love to hear your story about what you did to honour Canada Day!

Busy Beaver *Jane Meints* has a poem for you about:

### *Our Weather*

Drip, drip, drip!  
Falls the rain.  
Drip, drip, drip!  
On my window-pane.  
Drip, drip, drip!  
I get wet.  
Drip, drip, drip!  
So does my pet.  
Shine, shine, shine!  
It brings joy to everyone.  
Shine, shine, shine!  
It makes me hot,  
Shine, shine, shine!  
But I like it a lot!

\* \* \* \* \*

## RIDDLES FOR YOU . . .

from Busy Beaver *Pauline Lodder*

1. When are roads angry?
2. What two words have the most letters?
3. Why is the letter "A" like a flower?