



Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Vol. 30, No. 14

July 17, 1981

Belgic Confession Updated

One of the most important parts of *Rapport van de deputaten voor de herziening van het kerkboek* deals with the linguistic revision of the Belgic Confession. It is possible that some Canadian readers of *Nederlands Dagblad* have become acquainted with decisions of Synod Arnhem in this respect, but at the moment I myself have at my disposal only the report of the standing committee (Committee-Bremmer). If we compare this second draft of a contemporary text of the Belgic Confession with the draft of the Synod of Groningen-Zuid three years ago, we see the result of a more daring enterprise. "Het openbreken van zinnen bracht uiteraard met zich mee dat er nogal wat verschil is tussen dit concept en het vorige. Ook gingen deputaten hier en daar verder in taalkundige modernisering." Long sentences have now been broken up and the linguistic modernization has progressed also in other respects. This is in agreement with the discussion at Synod 1978 and with the remarks that the churches in The Netherlands made after the first draft. It is interesting to compare the present text, the proposal 1980 of our Canadian Reformed standing committee and the "Bremmer draft" 1981. Let me take the first sentence of Article 1, Belgic Confession. What do we all believe and confess?

Present Text	Can. Ref. Draft	Committee-Bremmer
that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God.	that there is only one God, who is a simple and spiritual Being.	dat er een God is, een geheel enig en een-voudig geestelijk wezen.

The similarity of the two drafts is remarkable. The clause "which we call God" is reworked in a more direct statement of Faith that stresses the uniqueness of the living God. The word "simple" or "een-voudig" remains difficult for modern ears. Would "indivisible" or "not complex" be better?

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs are still called the three books of Solomon in Article 4. Our Canadian Reformed draft, provisionally accepted by Synod 1980, is more progressive here. It does not speak about the Psalms of David and the Three Books of Solomon. With respect to the letter to the Hebrews, however, the Dutch deputies follow the Canadian example: it is no longer ascribed to the apostle Paul.

The word "testimonies" in Article 9 is replaced by the singular "testimony." Our readers know that I take the plural "testimonies" as a reference to Scripture passages. Calvin in his *Institutes* had the same usage of the plural for prooftexts. "Het getuigenis van de Heilige Schrift" or "the testimony of Holy Writ" in singular conveys another meaning than Scripture passage or prooftexts. The Committee-Bremmer maintains the article "in" and phrases the whole sentence as follows: "Wij weten dit alles zowel uit het getuigenis van de Heilige Schrift als uit de werkingen van deze Personen, voornamelijk uit die welke wij in onszelf opmerken." The operations of the Three Persons in us are then placed beside the testimony (singular) of Holy Writ. It may be clear to those who

followed my exposition in previous issues of *Clarion* that I do not agree with the Committee-Bremmer. This rendering raises misunderstanding. Another remarkable difference between the Canadian and the Dutch drafts is that in the same Article 9 the Dutch maintain I John 5:7, 8 as Scripture proof for God's trinity. "In de Nieuwe Vertaling staat het wel tussen haken maar het is niet geschrapt. Ook de door de Nieuwe Vertaling tussen haken geplaatste Schriftgedeelten behoren voor ons tot de kanonieke Schrift." Contemporary English Bible translations, however, are almost unanimous in deleting the reference to the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost because it is a later addition. The Canadian Reformed Synod 1980, did, therefore, wise to leave it out of the provisionally accepted new English text of the Belgic Confession. Why should we give Jehovah's Witnesses occasion to scoff at this point, while the proper Scripture proofs are more than sufficient to refute their heresy?

Article 13 is made more direct. In the present text we confess to adore the righteous judgments of God. The Committee-Bremmer now proposes to read that we adore God in His righteous judgments.

The confession concerning original sin (Article 15) is difficult to understand in one point. The present text says that original sin is not altogether abolished or wholly eradicated even by baptism. The Dutch proposal now is: "Zelfs door de doop is zij niet geheel vernietigd of uitgeroeid." The deputies did not accept a proposal to delete the word "altogether" or "wholly." They argue as follows: "Er gaat van de doop door de Heilige Geest ook een uitdelgende werking uit tegenover de erfzonde, maar wij blijven worstelen met de erfsmet." There is by the Holy Spirit an operation of baptism that eradicates original sin, although we always struggle with the hereditary pollution. In my opinion this construction is not very clear; it does no justice to the character of baptism as a sign and seal of God's promise of forgiveness of sin. The paraphrase of the Dutch deputies smacks of an automatic operation of baptism. I prefer the solution of our Canadian deputies who in this case returned to the original text of Guido de Brès (1561) and translated: It (original sin) is not abolished nor eradicated even by baptism At least this is clear language over against Roman Catholic and other sacramentalism.

Let me mention yet two important deletions in the draft of the Committee-Bremmer. In Article 36 they erased the famous 21 words about the removal and prevention of all idolatry and false worship completely. They did not even place them between brackets, and they leave it up to the General Synod to answer the question whether, for historical and catechetical reasons, a note should mention that these words have been removed from the text. Deputies wanted to execute the decision of Utrecht 1905 and did not make any statement about the question whether this decision was right or wrong. Nor did they answer the question whether a more Scriptural formulation could replace the 21 words (in English the twenty words).

Another deletion concerns the clause "that is to say,

the consciences" in Article 37. It cannot be defended exegetically that the books, mentioned in Revelation 20:12, are the consciences of men. In Daniel 7:10 it does not refer to man's conscience but to God's records: "Daar gaat het niet over de gewetens maar over de aktestukken in het gericht Gods." I, for one, do not have any objections against this deletion. Only, I think that it is more

than a linguistic modernization. As material alteration it deserves to be discussed with the sister-churches abroad according to the rules of correspondence.

The Belgic Confession is worth studying thoroughly, and haste, even in updating of the language, should be completely excluded.

J. FABER

Discipline in the Old Testament and Its Significance for the Church Today

Address delivered at the Office-bearers' Conference in Ontario, Saturday, April 11, 1981.

The topic which I am invited to speak on today may be called topical indeed. It is an issue not only the church but also "the world" is concerned about, as the regular reader of the newspaper knows. Let me by way of introduction take a few quotations from a newspaper appearing in the area where I live (*The Spectator*).

About a month ago one could read the following about a youth gang:

Staff sergeant . . . , who for 14 years has headed the regional police youth branch, said that by age nine a youngster will be determining the course of his or her adolescence.

Peer pressure more than any other thing will draw a straight child into activities that seem unusual. Once the child has been swayed, there is a good chance he or she wouldn't return to the "good kid" the parents once knew.

Kids are easily drawn into a gang when they aren't receiving love and attention at home. And they aren't likely to change their behaviour if they don't get the disciplining around the house.

The process of becoming involved in juvenile crime takes about two years, and, once started, is difficult to turn around.

All most of these kids want is some love and attention from their parents

Parents today don't seem to have the time to *discipline* their children or even to watch them grow up, help them with school work or keep a watchful eye on the company they keep.

Some times I wonder why they even bring kids into the world.

This week we read in the first article of a five-part daily series titled: "Keeping Teens out of Trouble with Sex":

Parents naturally make rules for very young children, but by "middle age," around six to eleven or so, kids are normally obedient and their temptations not very heavy. Parents don't worry

much about what they are "up to."

Then comes puberty, with its host of new problems, and parents crack down. They make rules, set curfews

They understand the dangers and believe in rules . . . but that is not enough . . . the teenager should be able to start some socializing, because they need to learn how.

So it is best to let young teenagers go but only when the rules are clearly specified by the parents about what kind of party it will be, what supervision and transportation are being provided and when they should be home.

These rules must grow and change. If your teenagers clearly understand that their limits will expand as they mature and demonstrate responsibility, they will have faith in your judgment and accept guidelines with better grace

Make sure your rules are clear and reasonable. Keep your community's ways in mind, but don't be afraid to be firm. The consequences of disobedience should also be clear and fair. Discipline is to teach not to retaliate. If it is too severe, you get rebellion, not learning. Punishment does not have to be pleasant but it does have to show that child how to control him- or herself better next time.

From the same issue under the head: "Fighting for the strap":

The Wentworth School Board, to nobody's surprise, has joined the rank of those fighting to keep the strap as a last-resort tool to maintain discipline in the schools. A committee of the Hamilton School Board has recommended that the city board follow suit.

When Education Minister Bette Stephenson asked school boards to support Education Act changes which would ban the strap, she forced the province into another debate on the old issue instead of dealing with the more important problems facing the school system today.

Nothing has changed. The strap is still widely considered necessary as a deterrent, even if it isn't used very often.

It is easy for Dr. Stephenson and her bureaucrats in their Toronto offices to

make academic and humane arguments against the strap.

But it is a far different situation for *those on the frontlines* (emphasis mine, H.M.O.) every day — the teachers. Most know they need to be able to fall back on the strap — or even the threat of the strap — if all else fails.

It seems parents agree with the deterrent theory. Last April, the Ontario Federation of Home and School voted two-to-one to reject a call to ban the strap.

The Wentworth board obviously agreed. But will anyone be able to convince the minister that few teachers are reincarnations of Marquis de Sade and that not all students are innocent little angels?

So far my quotations from recent newspapers. As you read, it is discipline and again discipline that comes up for consideration. Discipline, that in some form or other is recommended and advocated when it comes to the question of how to handle the problems of the children, especially the adolescents; the boy in danger of becoming involved in juvenile crime or, worse, a gang; the girl running the risks of going all the way till at the bitter end she is disillusioned by the consequences; and both, if their behaviour is such as to cause trouble at school.

Taking all this into account, you wonder: What is the reason why the cause of discipline is in need of advocates?

In answer one may say: Obviously because so many, too many, have become reluctant on the issue, or at least are hesitant, considering discipline only as something causing pain and grief and sorrow.

After these introductory remarks I come to my subject, or rather, no, I am already in the middle of the subject, for the Old Testament is not merely a book from a distant past, of the long, long ago, which no longer has a message for our present time. Not at all. The Old Testament world is

not way apart from the modern world, in spite of the fact that many a modern scholar, first and foremost modern theologians, try to make you believe so.

The people we meet there were people of like nature with ourselves. With an allusion to James 5:17, I would say so, and in addition I must say that definitely not all of them were Elijahs. People in Old Testament times were in every respect tempted as we people are today, to quote the well-known words of Hebrews 4:15. And that is why they were in need of discipline. Discipline, however, is not a word that appeals to the ear! One does not make oneself agreeable to the listeners by touching this string, let alone by harping on the same string. We all know. And the WORD OF GOD "knows" how we feel about it. Once again I quote from the Epistle to the Hebrews (12:11) where it reads: "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; but later on it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

Let us now turn to the Old Testament, being in touch and keeping in touch with the Church today; a church which has its place in the midst of the world today. The first reaction the word discipline calls up is that of dislike, aversion, even disgust with some people. The first time we meet the word in the Bible is in Leviticus 26, in the chapter on Blessing and Curse, one fourth of it being dedicated (devoted) to the Blessing, and no less than three-quarters to the curse. It is there, in the context of "curse," that you meet the word that is usually translated by "discipline." And we learn that it figures there definitely as something to be avoided by the people, and to be averted by the LORD God. For this reason YAHWEH warns them well in advance.

"Warned about what?" I would ask.

Warned about discipline as such, as if it were an evil in itself. If discipline — let us suppose so for a moment — were an evil, it is brought in its train by another real evil of which you read in the opening of this passage, verse 12: "But if you will not hearken to Me, and will not do all these commandments, if you spurn My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances, so that you will not do all My commandments, but break My covenant . . . I will do this to you."

What follows is a series of blows the LORD will strike His people: five altogether.

The first one coming down on the head of God's people is mentioned in vv. 16 and 17 and is comparatively the lightest. The second blow, vv. 18-20, is more serious, and it is here in v. 18 that you meet the word translated here by "chastise": "And if in spite of this you will not hearken to Me, then I will chastise you again sevenfold for your sins." Sevenfold — the chastisement is seriously enhanced, according to the aggravation of the sin, the offence. The LORD's intention is to prevent these calamities by having His people warned in advance. *Nota bene:* In the revelation of judgment is mercy. Prevention is better than cure, as the saying goes. But chastise is what the LORD does, in case, if . . .

The same holds true for v. 23, the fourth blow, where we read: "And if by this discipline you are not turned to Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you, and I Myself will smite you sevenfold for your sins." In case of continual hardening the LORD will take a still firmer line with His people. They refuse to listen to reason; they are not amenable to reason at all.

Yet a still heavier blow is to come, in case, if . . . the fifth one: vv. 27-29 where it reads: "And if in spite of this you will not hearken to Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and chastise you Myself sevenfold for your sins." Peremptorily stated, that is for sure, more than v. 23. This is the final warning. Blows will be dealt by the LORD. He will strike them a heavy blow. His people will suffer for it.

And God's Word does not make light of it. Discipline is terrible; that is the impression we get when we hear our God digress on the subject. No wonder! The Word of God, God Himself, is not alien, strange to life. That stands to reason. Is not life in all its facets — finely strung and knit together as it is — the marvellous work of His hand? a thing to be kept and protected at all cost? It hurts His heart, His Divine heart, that He has to treat His people this way. He would rather not, but He has to . . . has to.

For one thing is beyond dispute: He cannot leave all this apostasy on the side of His people unpunished, and that He would leave the people to their own devices. One might call this a third option, but it is no option. Such an option is not offered because it is completely against the very nature of the GOD of the Old Testament, and of the whole Bible, for the Bible is one.

He simply cannot do so, and we may advance two reasons for it. First, He cannot do so for His name's sake. Second, He cannot do so for the people's salvation's sake. Two reasons, which, basically are one. For first and foremost the LORD is good. Whatever He does is good. Establishing a covenant with a people which is to be HIS people henceforth, implies that this people is drawn into the companionship of a God who is good, in order that they may enjoy in His presence what is good, and nothing but that. Where He is, there His goodness radiates, shining on all there is. As it says in Ps. 84: "For the LORD God is a sun and a shield; He bestows favour and honour. No good thing does the LORD withhold from those who walk uprightly."

This God alone is and can be the guarantor of His people's salvation. Therefore what we read in Psalm 73 is no solemn language, but a confession taken from real life: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides Thee." By living in this spirit, the spirit of faith, people give evidence of having their salvation at heart, honouring the LORD as its source.

On the other hand, if people, HIS people, do not hearken to Him, the God of life, and will not do all His commandments — that is HIS Law unto life — then, having been warned over and over again, but not heeding the admonitions, they will ultimately come to a bad, calamitous end. They are bound to.

Now our GOD, immensely good, never says, "Well, it serves them right. Let them find out for themselves." No; seeing His goodness spurned, He feels hurt, offended, and instead of reasoning, "The evil will punish itself in the long run," He Himself is going to take action. In His goodness He announces well in advance that He is going to take action. That goes without saying. Israel, the Church, is not just another people, but the people of His covenant, with all the riches involved. In the covenant relationship the LORD's honour and our salvation are inextricably interwoven. It is the warp and woof of this wonderful relationship.

So, in summary, discipline, according to Leviticus 26, is to be prevented, but, should it become necessary, it will be applied. Thus is the way of this God with His people. Lest they should think that sin and evil are a power apart from Him, acting in an independent way, governed by the lot

or fate, He takes action in meting out to them what they deserve and announces it well in advance. It is a characteristic of His in His capacity as the GOD who governs history (cf. Isa. 44:7, 8; 41:22; 48:3ff.).

That does not mean that, if the people show continually the steadfast love they owe to God with all their heart, discipline would be out of the picture. From Leviticus I now come to Deuteronomy, where we read in 4:36: "Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might discipline you."

Deut. 4:36 refers to what has happened in the history of Ex. 19 and 20. Israel was encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai and witnessed the signs attending the LORD's coming down to the mountain, and heard His voice out of the midst of the fire. From this history we learn that what in the context of Lev. 26 is a menace, a threat, namely discipline, here and now in Deut. 4 is an inevitable, unavoidable reality. All the people without any exception witness the LORD's manifestation, good and wicked alike.

This manifestation is not a punishment. Seeing the cloud and fire, hearing the thunderpeals, they are not burned or scorched. But by the mere fact of being eye witnesses of this supermundane, awe-inspiring phenomenon, the Bible says, discipline is administered by nobody less than the LORD God Himself. They hear His voice clearly, in an understandable way, nevertheless attended by such signs "that the people were afraid and trembled and said: 'You, Moses, speak to us and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.' And Moses said to the people: 'Do not fear; for God has come to prove you; and that the fear of Him may be before your eyes, that you may not sin.'"

By the force of the thunderclaps and the sight of the lightning, YAHWEH taught His people to stand in awe before Him; AWE, that beautiful, almost untranslatable word in the English language.

What Israel saw — a mountain burning with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom — was a symbol of YAHWEH's consuming, devouring majesty, brought to light in this unequalled way. This Deut. 4:36 calls "discipline." Israel was being disciplined not because of a concrete, demonstrable sin. It was not by way of punishment that God became manifest this way. No, yet the Hebrew

word for discipline (*musar*) is found here again. In experiencing what sort of God they have — the LIVING GOD — over against whom man learns to consider himself in his frailty, weakness, and, I may add, his basic sinfulness, God's people becomes aware of what they actually are compared to such a God, so that they do not fancy themselves too much. To prevent such a fancy and imagination, God reveals Himself this way. Such a revelation the Bible calls "discipline."

The same holds true of Deut. 8:5, following after v. 2 which I quote first. "And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandment or not Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you."

The journey through the wilderness was a long one and a far from easy one at that. May we call it a continual punishment? I would not say so, for the Bible does not say so. If they committed a serious sin, they were punished for that sin in a conspicuous way, and especially the culprits were punished for it. But this is always mentioned especially, and the reason is given. Our God does not have, is not susceptible to, random outbursts of anger! So you cannot call the journey through the wilderness in itself a punishment. A school of learning, however, it was for sure! And, considered from that angle, it was discipline. Israel has to learn in a hard school anyway, regardless of specific sins. However, don't we fathom by passages such as Ex. 20 and Deut. 4 and 8 more deeply what sin is according to its nature? Sin, namely, is not restricted to particular deeds, acts, public manifestations, but there is always that sinful nature; man by nature is prone to sin, as we confess in Lord's Days 2-4 of the Catechism.

Significantly, the LORD compares Himself to a Father who disciplines his son. Israel is His son, as that son is standing at the foot of Mt. Sinai and as that son is marching or wandering through the wilderness. He disciplines the people all the way. So, whereas in Lev. 26 discipline is something threatened just in case, it turns out in Deuteronomy to be something you cannot think away. It is an integral part of the life of this people. They simply cannot do without. There are two lines (as was remarked during

the discussion after the address): the one concerning the people giving special reason for it, the other a people always in need of it; but basically the one Hebrew word — *musar* — embodies one idea, which is very well covered by the English word "discipline." God led His people all the way (apart from the Korahs, Dathans, and Abirams, and other incidents of rebellion) in the way He did to break their pride, their haughtiness, their innate conceitedness by testing them. "AS A FATHER DISCIPLINES HIS SON, THE LORD YOUR GOD DISCIPLINES YOU."

Centuries later the same note is struck by the prophet Hosea, 11:1: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." In disciplining them they are near to His heart, that very people of Israel, so stubborn, so alien often, yet His child. (To be continued) H.M. OHMANN



THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Published bi-weekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Second class mail registration number 1025.

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
1249 Plessis Road,
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2C 3L9
Phone: (204) 222-5218

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

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

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 1981:

Canada — Reg. Mail	— \$20.00
Canada — Air Mail	— \$31.50
United States — Reg. Mail	— \$22.50
United States — Air Mail	— \$32.50
International — Reg. Mail	— \$30.00
International — Air Mail	— \$44.50

ISSN 0383-0438

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial — J. Faber	286
Discipline in the Old Testament and Its Significance for the Church Today — H.M. Ohmann	287
¿Basilica En Perpetuidad? — Rienk Koat	290
International — W.W.J. VanOene	292
Thank You Brothers and Sisters — H.M. Ohmann	293
News Medley — W.W.J. VanOene	294
Ministers Workshop — W. Huizinga	296
Press Release — W.W.J. VanOene	297
A Ray of Sunshine — Mrs. J.K. Riemersma	298
The Canadian Reformed Home for the Aged, Hamilton — H. VanLuik	299
Report of the Annual League Day of Carman and Winnipeg Womens' Societies — Hilda Tiggelaar	300
Letters-to-the-Editor — W.W.J. VanOene	300
Labour Board Ruling a Disturbing and Dangerous Precedent	301
A Reformed Social-Political Magazine	302

¿Basilica En Perpetuidad? ¹

In the center of the Mexican coastal city lies a park where shoe-shine boys are quietly scouting for business, and in the center of the park stands a huge white bandstand where a public address system is loudly barking for business. A silver-coloured banner on the bandstand tells the public that a fakir is being buried alive, while a disembodied voice booms through the loud-speakers a rapid barrage of Spanish urging the bystanders to lend their *cooperación*. South, on the other side of the park, stands the basilica shimmering in the tropical sunlight. Its two other church towers point into the blue sky, in each tower a bronze-green bell. The far side of the nave supports a golden dome; if I'm not mistaken, beneath it should be the main altar in the chancel.

We cross the tiled plaza of the church and walk past a vendor who has spread out his trinkets on a blanket between two palm trees. Entering through a side door, we feel the soothing coolness and relax our frown in the subdued light. The pews are wide-spaced, set back about three feet from each padded kneeling bench. Here and there some heads are peering over the armrest of the bench, and suddenly I am looking into a pair of jet-black eyes. The Indian woman is silently moving her lips. We sit down near the pulpit, which hangs like a huge carved barrel from a pillar, a spiral staircase leading up to it.

Although the pulpit is relegated off to the side, up front under the dome rises the altar in all its dominating grandeur. On each side of the altar stand man-high candlesticks that are holding up white candles as thick as my arm, one candlestick for each of the twelve apostles. Behind the massive rectangular table in front of the altar, we notice in its very center a white house-shaped box with an Alpha and Omega sign on each of its doors. That is where the monstrance is kept, holding the Host.²

High up on the altar four figures covered with purple drapery proclaim that it is Lent. Four days from now, on Easter Sunday, the purple covers will have been removed. On the left side of the cupola wall a figure painted in blues and greys — like St. Nicholas: a miter on his head and a crozier in his hand — is staring out into space, cold and hautain. On the right of the

curved wall an emaciated, enraptured saint is holding a scroll that is unfurling in his hands. In the horizontal arc between these two figures we see a Spanish text in bold letters: "VENIDA MI TODOS LOS QUE ESTÁIS AFLIGIDOS Y YO LOS CONSOLARE." Let's see now: VENID must be "come"; A MI is "to me"; TODOS is "all or every"; LOS could be "them or those"; QUE ESTÁIS AFLIGIDOS — "that are afflicted or distressed." The rest is easy.³

Every now and then a far-off chattering drifts in from outside and breaks the silence. It's the fakir ballyhoo at the bandstand. Quietly a blonde lady in an orange dress steps up in front of the altar, genuflects, her knee almost touching the checkerboard tiled floor, and then she slips into a pew. She must be a *turista* like us.

Off to the left of the altar is a small chapel. Head a tilt, an Indian is looking at a group of candles spreading a soft glow. He makes the sign of the cross in a strange staccato rhythm that I have never observed elsewhere. It's time to explore the church further.

In spite of its privileged and royal name⁴ the interior of this basilica is austere, rather like a Presbyterian church in Aberdeen. No opulent splendour of the baroque churches in Austria, no golden glitter and stained windows and frescoes and numerous stations painted on the walls, depicting Christ's *via dolorosa* to Calvary. No, here is a stark, sombre greyness caught under the gothic arches. Even the midget pipe organ looks like a mouse-grey box stuck on the loft above the main entrance. It resembles a dusty, forgotten museum piece. Along the east wall of the nave are spaced three dark-brown confession booths, each with a latticed square swing door, wide open. Wonder how privacy is maintained when one goes to confession here.

In the back of the church we pass the baptismal font, a grey stone dish on a pedestal. The rim of the dish is accentuated by a plain, old-fashioned chrome tap.

Near the main entrance we notice two teenage girls clip-clopping in on their beach sandals. The tall one is wearing a T-shirt, nylon jacket, and shorts; the blonde one nothing but an aquamarine and magenta bathing suit. Her companion saunters away.

The girl in the bathing suit hesitates, furtively tugs at the back of her bathing suit, then takes a step forward and is accosted by a tiny figure, bent over like a comma. The stooped woman in her embroidered white dress looks like a human nautilus shell. Her grey hair is streaked with some dark strands; her face is wrinkled like a dried apple. Her eyes blazing, she motions with her leathery hand to the blonde girl, imperatively: out you go! There is, apparently, no misinterpretation about the universality of this wordless language. The girl turns around and slinks out through the main entrance, her Kodak Instamatic dangling from her wrist.

Meanwhile, a stocky elderly man shuffles closer after having dipped his fingers in the holy water basin jutting from the wall. He crosses himself staccato fashion. He moves slowly, deliberately, as if he were wearing leg braces. Now he stands immobile before a purple draped figure that has a backdrop of lighted candles. He crosses himself in that curious rapid cadence, in a blur like a double exposure, and then kisses the nail of his right thumb brought to his lips. Next, he searches in a pocket of his green cotton pants, pulls out a coin, and drops it through the slot of an offering box. Shuffling to the other side of the main entrance, he seems lost in a moment of artless concentration, eyes closed, lips moving, bowed in front of another draped saint. Again the staccato sign of the cross, followed by kissing his thumb pensively as if he tasted there some mystical flavour. Then he slips a coin into the slot of the second box.

Finally he scuffs back to the main entrance to our right. Reaching up with his right hand he holds on to a six-by-six mahogany vertical timber, the bottom end of which barely reaches the top of his head. With some imagination one can tell that the amorphous mass of purple drapery is concealing a human form on a cross. Clasp the timber like a dizzy man looking for support, he prays with his chin dropped down onto his chest. Twice in a blur of motion he crosses himself and then thoughtfully kisses his thumbnail with an intensity as if he were sealing this part of his devotions. After having dropped a coin into the third box, he fades away in the shadows.

Suddenly my eyes get blurred, and ambivalent emotions struggle for control. What is the meaning of all this? Does this devout soul understand the substance of the text above

the altar? Was he trying to buy salvation like making a long-distance call on a pay telephone? What would Christ say on His return? But what am I asking these questions for? "... what have I to do to judge them also that are without?"⁵ Yet I feel pity. We learned once that all service in the Church is a service of the Word, and that "the Word is the soul of the Church";⁶ and that wherever the Word is preached, there the sacraments will be rightly administered; and that there God's truth will be confessed according to the Spirit; and that then one's conduct submits itself to God's testimony. So what about this man who caused all this turmoil in my mind? Is he trapped in superstition, idolatry, and self-delusion? Does he understand the meaning of: "So Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many . . ."⁷ — only once, and not daily in this basilica as his priest would have him believe.

My eyes stop burning. Here was a lost sheep who would hold me for a lost sheep if he only knew what I was thinking. What is it that made this man's affecting behaviour on a level with a pagan ritual? First, there would be his recognition of the Power which determines his fate. And then the question arises how to appease this dreadful power. Just to make sure, call upon several mediators to make intercession. In this process the suppliant ignores that Christ is sufficient but believes "that something more is required besides Him." This Christ is for him "but half a Saviour."⁸ The sup-

pliant seeks to appease the dreadful God: pray and sacrifice, pray and sacrifice. Yet, "... in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure."⁹ Evidently the man's priest has not told him that "... we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once* and for all."¹⁰

With his biological clock steadily running down, did this man humble himself before his Maker, while paying insurance premiums to saints and Christ alike in an attempt to secure life eternal? Were all his devotions, and was all his pity, nothing but attempts at self-salvation? The questions multiply and the answers are labouring to escape the twilight of my memory into the comfort of clear recollection: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast . . ."¹¹ Too bad I don't speak Spanish.

We walk outside into the blazing sunlight; the heat hits like a sauna. On the church steps slouches an Indian woman, a black shawl around her head. She is holding out a chipped enameled cup while nursing her baby. High above her head a plaque in the wall says that the Basilica was built in 1938. In a few irregular patches red bricks are peeking through flaked-off ochre plaster. Two windows have fist-size holes in them that are staring out like blind eyes, and two fly screens are slowly flapping back and forth like black butter-

fly wings.

And there are words following the arch above the door of the main entrance: *BASILICA EN PERPETUIDAD*. How are we to read this superscription, as human boasting? What remains of it if we juxtapose: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."¹² Clearly, basilicas, too, shall pass away: "but the word of the Lord endureth forever."¹³ Or to put it in (very) basic Spanish: *¿Basilica en perpetuidad? ¡No!*

*¿La palabra de Dios en perpetuidad? ¡Si!*¹⁴

FOOTNOTES:

¹ *¿Basilica En Perpetuidad?* i.e. in perpetuity, or everlasting? The punctuation is a Spanish convention, also used for exclamation marks.

² This word is capitalized in accordance with dictionary tradition to distinguish it from other denotations.

³ One of the Spanish versions of Matt. 11:28. Another Spanish translation stays closer to the Greek text, since it uses *trabajados* (labor, toil); *cargados* (laden, burdened); *descansar* (rest, repose).

⁴ Basilica, a title conferred by the Pope on a church, giving it certain honours and privileges. (cf. Gr. *basilikos*: royal).

⁵ I Cor. 5:12a

⁶ Calvin, *Institutes* IV, 12, 1.

⁷ Heb. 9:28a

⁸ *Belgic Confession*, Article XXII.

⁹ Heb. 10:6

¹⁰ Heb. 10:10

¹¹ Eph. 2:8, 9

¹² Matt. 24:35

¹³ I Pet. 1:25

¹⁴ The Word of God in perpetuity, or everlasting. RIENK KOAT



PSALM 1

1. How bless-ed, is the man whose walk is not
 In coun-sels which un-god-ly peo-ple plot,
 Who does not stand where sin its pleas-ure of-fers,
 And will not take a seat with sin-ful scoff-ers;
 But his de-lights are with God's coven-ant law:
 By night and day he pon-ders it with awe.

The righteous man bears likeness to a tree
 Which by the water thrives exceedingly.
 And yields its fruit abundant in its season,
 Whose leaves, moreover, never fail by reason
 Of wintry blast or searing summer spell;
 What'er he tries, it ever prospers well.

The wicked are unlike the just, for they
 Are like to chaff that lightly blows away.
 The wicked all shall stand in condemnation
 When God appears to judge their generation;
 For sinners will not stand nor have estate
 Where'er the righteous people congregate.

The LORD our God beholds the works of men;
 His seeing eyes all their endeavours scan.
 He knows the just, their coming in and going,
 To them His truth and tender mercies showing.
 But all the plans and works of wicked men
 Shall perish with their treachery and sin.



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.

MEMPHIS, TENN. (RNS)

A United Methodist committee has recommended that a woman who was fired from the church's Women's Division after she announced she was a lesbian be given a deaconess appointment in Chicago. (CN)

* * *

ATLANTA (RNS)

The National Centers for Disease Control (CDC) here said more than one million abortions were performed in the United States in 1978, an increase of 7 percent over the previous year.

One abortion was performed for every three live births in 1978, the last year for which complete figures are available, the CDC reported.

Continuing the trend of recent years, women who obtained abortions in 1978 were found to be often young, white, unmarried and low income. Some 74 percent were unmarried.

The report showed 1,157,776 abortions in 1978 compared with 1,079,430 in 1977, an increase of about 78,000. (CN)

* * *

BAD BENTHEIM, WEST GERMANY (RES NE)

For the first time in approximately 400 years the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (GKN) opened their Synod meetings here in May. Not since the refugee churches, as churches in exile, under the oppression of Alva in 1571, held their synod in Emden, has a Netherlands Reformed Church met in synodical assembly in this area. The Evangelical Altreformierte Kirche, consisting

of 13 churches, with a total membership of 7,000, is a part of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands.

* * *

LIEBFRAUENBERG, ALSACE (RES NE)

The joint assembly of the four Lutheran and Reformed Churches was held on the 21st and 22nd of March. The introductory report raised once again the question of the form of unity possible between these four churches and principal tasks to be undertaken together. But the main theme, according to the Reformed Press Service, was to verify their fundamental agreement on the subject of the Lord's Supper by means of the Concord of Leuenberg (1973) and of other papers resulting from the ecumenical movement. The agreement, born of reflection by laymen and ministers in the presence of Catholic observers is expressed in the form of two papers. The first, more doctrinal, recalls in eight points the essential elements of the Lord's Supper, notably the link between Word and Sacrament "which are like the two focal points within the one plane of reference." The second paper contains recommendations addressed to the Churches concerning the practice of Holy Communion.

* * *

The Reagan administration last month pledged its support for tuition tax credits for students attending private schools and colleges. A bill introduced by Senate taxation subcommittee chairman Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) and Robert Packwood (R-Oreg.) would allow a 50 percent tax credit for private school tuition and fees, with a maximum of \$250.00 the first year and \$500.00 after that. (Unlike a deduction, a tax credit is a direct subtraction from taxes due.) Still, some Capitol Hill officials doubted chances for the bill's passage. A coalition of education and civil-rights groups recently formed to oppose the tax credits, and American Civil Liberties Union activists argue it is an unconstitutional advancement of religion. (CT)

* * *

America's first all-Muslim community is being built near Albiq, New Mexico. The projected 600-member settlement (mostly American converts) has as goal "perpetration" of the Islamic faith, partially through radio and TV stations. At an estimated cost of \$10 million over a

7-to-10-year period, the project will include a seven-domed mosque and a boarding school. Funds are reported to be coming from private Saudi Arabian sources. President of the project, Daral-Islam ("House of Islam"), is Nooridin (formerly Steve) Durkee. (CT)

* * *

Rome police have stopped street preaching by Protestants for the first time in 17 years. On the advice of higher authorities, the police in April issued an order restraining 27 North Americans from holding an open-air service. The "Centurions," sponsored by Christ's Mission of Hackensack, New Jersey, are a church planting team collaborating with three Rome evangelical churches in establishing a church in an area of Rome where now none exists. Team Director Dennis Eenigenburg said, "We are not going to accept this ruling without a fight." The right to preach openly in Italy extends to foreigners, and was established in a 1964-legal ruling. (CT)

* * *

Bibles, placed in Israeli hotels by the Gideons, have been removed and destroyed, according to CT's correspondent there. Also, he reports, an orthodox Jewish group, whose identity is so far unknown, has been making the rounds of the country's *kibbutzim*, gathering, for burning, Bibles containing the New Testament, and replacing them with copies of the Torah (Old Testament). (CT)

* * *

ARNHEM

The Reformed Churches are going to get an independent ecclesiastical training for missionaries. That was decided by the General Synod of Arnhem after an ample discussion which dealt, among others, with the question whether such training could not be incorporated in the courses at the Theological College. After it appeared that the Board of Governors of the College gave a negative advice and that such a training will be of a modest size, Synod agreed with the proposals. It also decided to initiate a mission-exam at the classical level. (ND)

* * *

MANAGUA (AFP)

The four priests who are members of the Sandinista government of Nicaragua decided to stay in office. Thereby they ignore the order given by their leaders to resign immediately. (ND)

Thank You, Brothers and Sisters!

June 29th, 1981

Tonight my wife and I hope to board the plane which will take us back to the "Old Country," the land where our roots and those of many of you are, which is in so many respects unforgettable.

On the brink of leaving the country which, though not our home-and native land, has hosted the two of us for almost ten years, we want to say thank you to all of you for all you have been to us and meant to us. When we arrived on October 1, 1971, we hardly knew anybody here. We were certain to be welcomed by brothers and sisters. During the past ten years we made acquaintance with you and were not disappointed. In spite of our imminent departure, in our hearts we keep a memory of you all and of the land, Canada, which we learned to love. Although it was not always all that easy to adjust, especially in those first months while everything was quite new and strange, to the language, habits, and customs, we experienced your willingness to help us with your hands and hearts, which were open to us. Thank you very much for all the tokens of friendship.

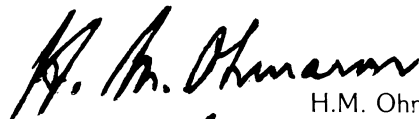
In this farewell letter I want to thank you especially for the sympathy and love shown in the time of and after my serious car accident on June 30, 1980, a year ago tomorrow, by cards sent, visits paid, and help offered to my wife and me. The LORD was pleased to save my life and use me further in His service. On that day it became more clear to me than ever before: "De mens overdenkt zijn weg, maar de HEERE bestuurt zijn gang." The service I was enlisted in is going to be continued in The Netherlands, at the Kampen seminary. I want again to thank you for your congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of the appointment on October 1, 1980.

I want to thank all of you who attended the farewell evening at the end of May for best wishes and wonderful presents, and those who were prevented from attending but let us know their feelings by letter or phone call. With a special word I could mention the churches out west: Cloverdale, Chilliwack, and Carman; and further Ottawa, London, Lincoln, and Smithville; which in one way or another, a letter, a get-together, address after the service, a social hour, or a speaking assignment expressed their appreciation.

I appreciate the appreciation; of course, not for selfish reasons — shame on me if it were that way — but because it tells me that the time of my stay in your midst has served a positive purpose; this: that not only at the Theological College, but also on the pulpit or in a speech or address I had the opportunity to bring the Old Testament, the first part of the Word of God, closer to the Church. It is my sincere conviction, and the message I wanted to pass on, that the New Testament Church has to be familiar with and WORK with — briefly, to assimilate — this part of the Bible just as well as the New Testament. This is very important for the life and well-being of the church, lest she wander away in the waters of a vague spiritualism or fall victim to a sectarian mentality. Here the way is outlined which has been trodden by HIM whom we know and revere as the Servant of the LORD, the SON OF GOD, who constantly referred and appealed to the Scriptures.

May our gracious God and Father grant that you may all cling to Him and His Word in sincere faith, ardent love, and steadfast hope. Then there is a future. May He bless you in all your undertakings and go with you as our faithful Covenant God.

With kind regards,
Yours in His service,



H.M. Ohmann



A. Ohmann (nee Jansen)

Our future address will be:

Watermunt 27
8265 EL Kampen
The Netherlands

news medley

The supply of bulletins is meagre, mainly because of the strike by inside postal workers. I am wondering how long we have to put up with those revolutionaries. One of the issues seems to be paid maternity leave for seventeen weeks, that is some four months. Do we have to pay for postal clerks having babies? It is quite something already that via the unemployment insurance some "remuneration" can be received if a woman has to be off work for some time because of pregnancy; but that seems not to be enough yet. How miserable and . . . can you get! Pretty soon the situation will become similar to the one in The Netherlands where teachers get thirteen months pay for twelve months employment and where the holiday pay is not that you get paid for the weeks during which you are on holidays, but that you are paid during your holidays and, on top of that, get so many percent of your wages as holiday pay. And then people are still wondering why the price of things is going up and up and up. High interest rates don't counteract that, for people simply ask for more wages. I can't follow it any more, if I ever could, that is!

Let's go to our news from the Churches. There was some and there was also some that was worth being passed on.

For a change we start closer to home.

That "closer to home" is this time the Ebenezer Church in Burlington. The Consistory there discussed a report of its committee that was to investigate planning for the future in connection with the possible institution of another Church. It appears that more and more the thoughts go in the direction of splitting the two Burlingtons, each one of them, so that we may expect to see four Churches in that area in the future.

The Committee suggested that the church look at the possibility of developing the Bronte/Oakville area. There are already 30 families living east of the Appleby Line. It has decided to study this in more detail after the holiday season and present the findings to a congregational meeting in October 1981.

I do not quite get whether it is the Consistory that has decided to present the findings to a Congregational Meeting or the Committee. If it is the latter, then I think that they are wrong. A committee has no right to present findings to a congregational meeting, unless the Consistory has requested it to do so. Committees are to present their findings to the body which appointed them: the Consistory and they need the consent and authorization of the Consistory to put matters before the Congregation. Perhaps that consent and authorization was given, but the text of the press release does not show it. As it reads there, it is wrong.

From Burlington East to Hamilton takes only some fifteen minutes by car, even when the speed limit is observed, and depending on the route one chooses.

The holidays may have just started, but it won't be long before September is there and various activities are resumed. For some undertakings it will be the beginning of activities. One such undertaking is the Teachers' College. That will open its doors this coming September.

When saying that it will "open its doors," I speak only figuratively, for this institution has no real doors as

yet: they will have to start in rented facilities. Apparently the Hamilton Church was approached, and now we read, "From the Committee of Administration a letter is received consenting to a request by the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College to use some of the downstairs facilities of the church building during the daytime of their 1981-82 academic year."

The establishing of an Old Age Home has come somewhat closer to reality as well. "It has become evident," we read, "that, outside of annual dues, not much interest was shown to invest money into this project." The steering committee realizes that this could be the result of a variety of factors. There is the increase in the cost of living, and then the contributions for Church and School demand a considerable part of one's income. Thus

The Board saw no other alternative than to establish a home by way of subsidy. Inquiries were made and meetings held, the result of which was proposed at our annual membership meeting . . . Our goal is to build a home during 1982, the Lord willing. It will have private living quarters for *all* our older brothers and sisters who desire to live there. The rent will be based on the individual's income, which could be anywhere from \$75 to \$300 monthly, as a rule approximately 1/4 of your monthly income.

From Hamilton we move on to Smithville.

The Consistory there pondered the question what to do regarding the liturgy now that the Synod 1980 made some decisions about the forms, etc.

The proposed redaction of the Apostles' Creed was extensively discussed. Consistory will not implement any of the liturgical forms until consistory has received the finalized copy of these forms from the pertinent committee.

So far I can well go along with the decision of the Consistory. Mind you, someone might say that it is not asked of me either to go along with it or not; but that is my way of putting it.

There are some questions in my mind, however, about the decision concerning the Hymn Section, and I wonder whether people are still not aware of the character, the nature of the "blue book" as it is sometimes called as distinguished from the Hymn Section which is the "green booklet." Let me first give you the relevant decision.

Hymn section: due to all the changes adopted by Synod as enumerated in the Acts, consistory decided not to use the new hymn section until the new *Book of Praise* has been published and has been made available to the congregation.

Our readers know that I have my criticism on the decisions, or rather, on *some* decisions of our latest General Synod affecting the *Book of Praise*, but one should not make things worse or present things as worse than they really are. There are not all *that* many changes made! Consider that we have 65 hymns and that the changes which were deemed desirable by Synod can be counted on the fingers of your two hands; and that some of those changes regard the music (I wonder whether indeed the brethren all knew what they were deciding when they made those decisions! This apart from the fact that music-technical matters such as half or quarter notes are no ecclesiastical matters and Synod acted there contrary to Article 30, Church Order); and when you have considered that, can you then derive from that an argument not to use that section? Could the ministers not be en-

trusted with the task of leaving out those songs which have to be changed? There are still lots of them left!

What is Smithville going to do now? Use the Hymn Section from the "blue book"? Or sing no hymns at all? That would include the songs of Mary, Symeon, Zechariah, to name a few. Strictly speaking, the consequence of the decision is: Sing no hymns at all.

But *if* the decision means: we sing from the "blue book," we see this strange phenomenon that a Church sings songs which have *never* been adopted by *any* general synod while bypassing those songs which have been adopted for use in the services. All in all, a confusing situation in my view. I have an inkling that the consequences of the decision were not realized sufficiently. In my view, anyone who still sings from the Hymns in the "blue book" ignores the decisions of our broadest assembly, and that is something which no one has a right to do.

By the way, a few weeks ago I learned that there are still lots of "green booklets" available at the well-known address; also books with four-part music settings. Further, it might be advisable for parents who wish to preserve their present *Books of Praise* to purchase for Catechism Classes some little booklets with the Three Forms of Unity, which also are still available in large quantities. I am no longer in these matters, but pass it on to you so that you may be able to stock up at relatively little cost. I have no idea when a reprint of the *Book of Praise* with the new rhymings will be issued, but have been asked more than once whether the Hymn Section is still available. I did not know that it was, but now may tell you that they still can be ordered from the old address. That's all I can tell you, sorry.

We move on to Carman.

"Some of the office-bearers complained of the uncomfortable pew and what could be done to change this. This will be further discussed at the next meeting." When the next meeting came around, the matter was solved in a unique manner. "It was mentioned in the last report that the pew for the elders was very uncomfortable. That was discussed and it was decided to put in some swivel chairs." Now I hope not that all office-bearers in all Churches will start complaining after having read the above. It shows that even the most careful planning of new buildings and the arrangement of the pews does not solve everything beforehand. I have the impression that the pew itself was not all that uncomfortable but that the angle from which the office-bearers have to look at the pulpit made things somewhat difficult. After all, it is not something to be looking forward to when after each Sunday you have to go to a chiropractor again to have things straightened out in your neck. Maybe I can tell you more about it at some future date, for if everything goes well, I shall have an opportunity to visit the Carman church building this summer. Perhaps I'll even try out the swivel chairs!

Carman's Home Mission Committee reports on their efforts to arrange radio-time for "our" broadcasts. They contacted some radio stations where they received a definite "No" for an answer. One station, however, "sounded a little more favourable and agreed to meet with us to discuss the matter further." We wish the brethren success in their endeavour, so that the work of spreading the Gospel by means of the airwaves can be expanded.

Sometimes one can find strange things in reports. One such strange thing I found in the Carman report. I'll give the quotation first.

A letter was received from a brother of the congregation, suggesting that since we are increasing in number, it would be advisable that elders and deacons meet separately. Also it was suggested to increase the number of deacons by one. Some of the brethren were not really ready for a discussion. This will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

The strange thing I find in this is not that a suggestion is made to meet separately or to increase the number of office-bearers, but that this is done by "a brother of the congregation." I find this incorrect, that a member of the congregation makes suggestions for what is an internal Consistory matter. Here I find an effort to govern along with those who have been called to govern. Is the Consistory itself not capable enough to decide whether the number of either the elders or the deacons should be increased? I don't think that a member of the Congregation has the right to interfere in this point by suggestions and letters. If the Consistory itself does not feel the need, who in the Congregation has the authority to suggest to the Consistory that it is necessary?

I have to say the same thing concerning the point of having separate meetings of the Consistory and of the Consistory with the deacons.

The same applies to what the Rev. VanRietschoten mentions about "the last Classis." He writes, "Some brothers at the last Classis privately brought to our attention that it was time that the Congregation at Carman started to pay attention to Article 38 of the Church Order." My question is: "What business is that of 'some brothers at the last Classis'?" Is that not an interfering in the matters of a local Church? If anyone at one of our Classes had made that remark to us — we still always meet together as office-bearers, although the deacons also have their separate meetings — we would, no doubt, have replied that that is none of his business.

I do realize that the question of "Consistory" and "Consistory with the deacons" is not an easy one; likewise the difference between our Confession and our Church Order is not explained in one or two sentences. Books have been written about it and the end of it is not yet there. But I refuse to believe that our promises laid down in the Church Order *demand* of us that elders and deacons "shall have their separate meetings because of the distinction of each office," and that we act in conflict with our Church Order when we always meet together. More than a remark of "some brothers at a Classis" would be needed for us to change our policy in this respect.

The Immanuel Church Consistory in Edmonton "decided to request the Committee of Administration to provide a monthly updated list of Regular and Voluntary contributions of the membership with sufficient copies for every elder, and to publish a monthly statement in the *City Guide* about the amount budgeted to date as well as the income for this period and the possible deficit or surplus."

It is always a good thing when the Congregation is being kept informed and when the elders are up to date as far as the contributions are concerned. As one of the brethren said at our latest Consistory meeting: "It is of little use to come the last two months of the year with a list showing which members are in arrears. We have to know that throughout the year." We also have the rule that the elders avail themselves of the latest figures before they go on home visits and that they are informed by a committee of two — the brothers who administer the contribu-

Continued on page 296.

Ministers' Workshop

On June 1, 1981, ministers, including professors, and students gathered together for a theological workshop. Our convener, Rev. Cl. Stam, was unable to attend, and therefore Rev. G. VanDoren acted as moderator. After singing, prayer and the reading of Isaiah 40:18-26, the speaker for the morning was introduced.

Professor J. Faber had done extensive research into a typically American type of theology. It had been new to him and it was probably new to many of us. It is called "Process Theology." It is *the* theology of America in the twentieth century.

First of all, our speaker introduced the philosophical background of this "theology." The father of "Process Philosophy" is Alfred North

Whitehead (1861-1947). His philosophy is so complicated that you need an accompanying definition of his own terms to understand the meaning. Yet, it is good and necessary to come to grips with it since this philosophy is applied to every field of knowledge and practice, it seems.

One of the students of Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne by name, applied the principles of this philosophy to the field of theology. This is always dangerous as the history of the church makes clear. You need only to hear that John A. Robinson's popular book, *Honest to God*, is a result of this "process theology" and you know immediately how dangerous it is.

To describe this philosophy and theology I mention an old, old Greek

philosopher, Heraclitus, who said that you cannot step into the same stream twice. Everything is "becoming" rather than being static. Process philosophy and theology believes all things are in process of becoming.

This theory replaces the so-called static, sterile and traditional concept of God with all His attributes, with a dynamic view of God. Instead of God as immutable (unchangeable) or as absolute judge, or as sanctioner of the status quo, this theology speaks of an ever-changing God who can relate to an ever-changing world. Instead of seeing God as Creator, it sees God as the Poet of the world who patiently persuades, by means of a vision of beauty and goodness, the actual entities of this world in their orderly development toward Eternal Objects. The critical reader will see the influence of evolutionary and platonic thoughts in this "theology."

NEWS MEDLEY — Continued from page 295.

tions — whenever someone is slack and delinquent. It is too bad that the office-bearers have to pay special attention to this point but, on the other hand, delinquency in contributions is practically never a point apart: mostly, if not always, it is only a sign and proof of something else, of being delinquent in other respects as well. Finances never are a thing in themselves: they are always one element and aspect of the whole spiritual life.

When one celebrates a birthday one expects presents, however few and however small. It is a pleasant surprise when something comes later on in addition to the things one got when the birthday was there. The Church at Smithers experienced something like that. When the office-bearers entered the Consistory room on a certain evening, they found armchairs there (perhaps no swivel chairs, but nevertheless real armchairs) and that was a pleasant surprise. "Before closing the meeting the minister expressed his appreciation on behalf of the Consistory to those who placed them there as a belated Anniversary present and did not want their name to be known." Gradually the meeting rooms of our Consistories become a little more comfortable and we have come a long way since the days when, e.g. in New Westminster, we had our meetings in the basement of the parsonage with the brethren sitting on the hard benches which were also used for Catechism Classes. There is, I am convinced, no chance that the armchairs and swivel chairs will cause the Consistory meetings to be multiplied or lengthened; they only make the meeting more pleasant.

Smithers' Home Mission Committee is also active.

The Home Mission Committee presents their proposal regarding the future course of Home Mission, based on reactions received at the Congregational meeting. It is unanimously decided to charge the Home Mission Committee to make a feasibility study of their proposal and to approach the Churches in Western Canada to see whether they are able and willing to support this calling of a Home Missionary financially.

It is gratifying when the calling towards those that are without is seen and when serious efforts are made to fulfil that calling. I am wondering what the reaction of the Churches will be, and do not wish to make any predictions. One question which most certainly will be asked is why the sister Churches should support Smithers whereas the need for such a minister is just as great elsewhere, if not greater. I am thinking of the vast terrain in the southern Fraser Valley or Vancouver, to mention those. Calgary and Edmonton could ask the same question. We'll see what the reaction will be.

Thus we proceed to the Fraser Valley.

The work on the Annex in Abbotsford apparently had not progressed as much as I supposed to be the case the other time.

In the June 7 *Church News* the Rev. VanderWel reports, "In the past week some good efforts have been made to get the floors ready of our Annex. Although the weather was not that favourable, and some more volunteers would have been welcome, the work went on. But once the floors are in, we are going to see some more construction, I suppose."

As I said about Carman's swivel chairs, so I say about Abbotsford Annex: I hope to "inspect" the same in person this summer and can tell you more about it after the holidays.

Whether I shall have an opportunity to see the following is doubtful. Langley's Congregation will have enjoyed "reliving" the construction of their church building. "The films which were made during the construction of the church building have been developed and edited." Rev. VanderBoom betrays that there were some "excellent shots" which he saw during a "preview." Perhaps there will be a "postview" but nothing is certain about that. We'll take things as they come.

May your holidays be pleasant and fruitful, so that you return with new strength and vigour, looking forward to the resumption of your labours. And remember: the same obligations rest upon us whether we are at home or away from home. It is all our Father's world. vO

PRESS RELEASE

of Classis Ontario North of June 25, 1981
in Toronto, Ontario.

The meeting is convened on behalf of the Church at Fergus by the Rev. VanOene. Hymn 37:1 and 2 is sung and I Corinthians 2 read, after which prayer is offered.

The brethren from Burlington West examine the credentials and report that all Churches are legitimately represented.

Classis is constituted with the Rev. Aasman as chairman, Rev. Mulder as clerk, and Rev. VanOene as assessor.

The chairman congratulates Rev. Pouwelse on his thirtieth wedding anniversary, mentions the calls which the Rev. Mulder received and declined, and the calls which the Church at Orangeville extended but which were declined. He further congratulates the Rev. VanOene on the marriage of his youngest daughter.

The provisional agenda is increased by some incoming mail and additional reports, after which it is adopted.

Classis then takes note of the documents submitted by Mr. Clarence Bouwman with a view to his examination by Classis. They are found in good order, and Classis proceeds to the examination. Mr. Bouwman reads his sermon proposal on Acts 16:11-16. Upon discussion of this sermon proposal, Classis comes to the conclusion that there is no objection to the continuation of the examination. Rev. Mulder examines Mr. Bouwman on his knowledge and understanding of the Reformed doctrine. The result of the examination is that Classis grants Mr. Bouwman the right to speak an edifying word in the Churches for a period of one year from date. Mr. Bouwman promises to abide by the Holy Scriptures as summarized in the Reformed Confessions.

The incoming mail consists of a letter from a brother in Orangeville. This letter is dealt with in closed session.

The Church at Orangeville reports on the financial support given to the Rev. C. Olij and family.

Preaching arrangements stand as they have been made by the previous Classis.

The Church at Guelph reports on the support of a student at our Theological College. The Churches are requested to contribute \$2.00 per communicant member for the academic year 1981/1982.

The Church at Brampton reports on the inspection of the Classical Archives.

Next Classis is scheduled for Thursday, September 10, 1981. Guelph will be the convening Church. Rev. Van Beveren will be chairman, Rev. Aasman clerk, and Rev. Mulder assessor.

The Acts are read and adopted; the Press Release is read and approved.

Hymn 58 is sung, Rev. Aasman leads in thanksgiving, and Classis stands adjourned.

By order of Classis,
W.W.J. VANOENE, assessor e.t.

God is also "in process," according to this theology. Jesus becomes nothing more than an example of God's incarnate and creative activity (Jesus is a mere man).

Basically this theology is rationalistic (man's reason is the judge of all things). It does not accept God's description of Himself (cf. Isa. 40:18-26 which was read at the workshop). Evil is a real and unsolvable problem for process theology. Moreover, one can criticize process theology for overstressing the fact of progress or "the process." There is not only the everchanging stream but also the rock on which I stand to admire it.

In the discussion the connection between this theology and the concept of "relational truth" (H. Berkhof et alii) was brought out. It was asked how process theology approached the need for "satisfaction" or "redemption." It was answered that it views that as unnecessary and therefore goes much farther than H. Wieringa, for example. The remarkable affinity between Buddhism and process theology was discussed. Since Whitehead was mystical in many ways, and since the "Christian Faith" is in process, as are buddhists, to "eternal objects," there is much agreement between both, process theology argues. This explains, in part, the openness of the World Council of Churches to world religions.

As you can tell, the topic of process theology, as heretical as it is, still proved very informative for us. It taught us to recognize the enemies in the gate.

In the afternoon, after an excellent lunch served by sisters J. Faber, H.M. Ohmann and A. VanSydenborgh, Rev. W. Pouwelse introduced the topic, "Pastor and Psychiatrist." Dr. H. Scholtens and br. H. VanDooren sat in as listeners and guests. The ladies were invited to sit in and learn too, while they were waiting (no, that's not Reformed theology in process!). He asked if cooperation between pastors and psychiatrists was possible. He referred to a controversy about this, as covered in the *Nederlands Dagblad*, in which twenty-three letters to the editor were received on this subject.

Our speaker stressed the need for complete confidentiality in difficult and personal cases. This is necessary in order to build a base of trust. He also referred to the fact that there are different cases. Some disturbances are purely organic (retardation and physical disability).

Other problems are psycho-somatic, having an influence on our mental and physical well-being. In such cases does a psychiatrist oppose or complement the pastor? Are prayer, admonition and repentance enough?

Rev. Pouwelse stressed that human beings are a unit. If one part of us "malfunctions," the rest of us suffers too. Therefore a balanced approach is needed to restore people suffering from mental illness or psychosomatic disorders.

He also mentioned how desirable it is to have a Christian doctor/psychiatrist/psychologist. And a patient should know that a doctor is dependent on the requests and views of the patient. A Reformed person should tell the counselor about his convictions of faith. As practical examples, our speaker mentioned family problems, marital problems and homosexuality, alcoholism and paranoid schizophrenia.

During the discussion it was asked where we can find Christian psychologists and psychiatrists. Various experiences were related. Another asked whether "nouthetic counseling" (as developed by J. E. Adams) is a Reformed alternative. Still another questioner begged to differ, saying that psychosomatic and mental "illnesses" are not really diseases, but should be analysed as sins which have physical side-effects. Another remarked that it is a distressing matter to see members go to doctors, etc. and open up, while they do not go to the minister. This reporter had to leave at this point and cannot relate anymore of the discussion.

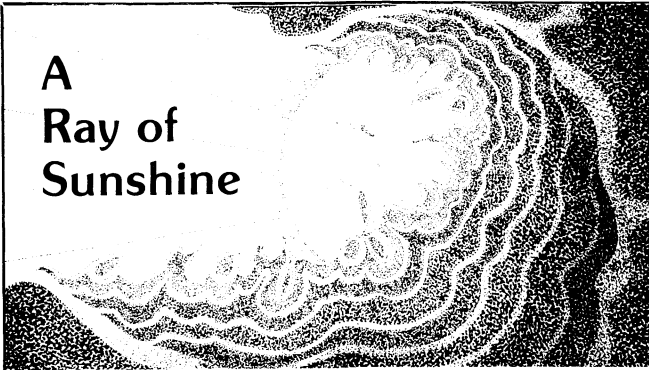
The next conference will be held on January 4, 1982. Rev. J. DeJong was elected as convener until Rev. Cl. Stam returns from the Netherlands. Rev. C. VanDam will introduce the subject of the "Urim and the Thummim" in the morning session, while Rev. R. Aasman will introduce a practical subject (the care for the dying was one suggestion) for the afternoon session.

Another issue of *Koinonia*, a ministerial paper, was published. Rev. M. Van Beveren's speech, "The Strong and the Weak," was printed in this issue.

After prayer and singing the colleagues dispersed to their various destinations. Again it had been an informative and fruitful workshop. All consistories do well to encourage their ministers to attend (even if the distance is great).

FOR THE WORKSHOP,
W. HUIZINGA

A Ray of Sunshine



O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee:
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Father God to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze;
And when I think that God His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.

When Christ shall come with shouts of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my soul!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Father God to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

by Carl Boberg

* * * * *

Thy mighty works and wondrous grace
Thy glory, Lord, proclaim
O, Lord, our God, in all the earth
How excellent is Thy name.

* * * * *

When I look at Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
the moon and the stars which Thou has established;
what is man that Thou art mindful of him,
and the son of man that Thou dost care for him?

Psalm 8:3, 4

Taal heeft altijd te maken met een gedachte, met een boodschap. In psalm 19 wordt ook over een taal zonder woorden gesproken. Dan gaat het over het werk van God, de schepping. Toch zegt deze psalm gaat er een prediking van uit. De natuur is een boek met grote letters waarin we kunnen lezen wie God is.

Het werk van God is prediking.

Er was eens een Vlaams pastoor, Guido Gezelle, die ook zo voorovergebogen boven een slootje stond. Opeens zag hij insecten zo over het water schuifelen. Het waren schrijvertjes.

Op het wateroppervlak schieten ze heen en weer. Ze schrijven natuurlijk niet en er blijft niets leesbaars op het watervlak achter, maar toch. Toen die pastoor daar zo keek, zag hij het wonder van deze diertjes, zag hij het wondere werk van God. En toen, toen las hij wat deze kleine diertjes schreven: De heilige name van God.

HET SCHRIJVERKE

O krinklende winklende waterding,
met 't zwarte kabotseken¹ aan,
wat zien ik toch geren uw kopke flink
al schrijven² op 't waterke gaan!
Gij leeft en gij roert en gij loopt zoo snel,
al zie 'k u noch arrem noch been;
gij wendt en gij weet uwen weg zoo wel,
al zie 'k u geen ooge, geen één.
Wat waart, of wat zijt, of wat zult gij zijn?
Verklaar het en zeg het mij, toe!
Wat zijt gij toch, blinkende knopke fijn,
dat nimmer van schrijven zijt moe?
Gij loopt over 't spiegelend water klaar,
en 't water niet méér en verroert
dan of het een gladdige windtje waar,
dat stille over 't waterke voert.
O Schrijverkes, schrijverkes, zegt mij dan, —
met twintigen zijt gij en meer,
en is er geen een die 't mij zeggen kan: —
Wat schrijft en wat schrijft gij zoo zeer³?
Gij schrijft, en 't en⁴ staat in het water niet,
gij schrijft, en 't is uit en 't is weg;
geen Christen en weet er wat dat bediedt:
och, schrijverke, zeg het mij, zeg!
Zijn 't visselkes daar ge van schrijven moet?
Zijn 't kruidekes daar ge van schrijft?
Zijn 't keikes of bladjes of blomkes zoet,
of 't water, waarop dat ge drijft?
Zijn 't vogelkes, kwietlende klachtgepiep,
of is 'et het blauwe gewelf,
dat onder en boven u blinkt, zoo diep,
of is het u, schrijverken, zelf?
En 't krinkelende winklende waterding,
met 't zwarte kapoteken⁵ aan,
het stelde en rechte zijn oorkes flink,
en 't bleef daar een stondeke staan:
wij schrijven, en kunt gij die lesse toch "al krinklen af
het gene onze Meester, weleer,
ons makend en leerend, te schrijven gaf,
één lesse, niet min nochte meer;
wij schrijven, en kunt gij die lesse toch
niet lezen, en zijt ge zoo bot?
Wij schrijven, herschrijven en schrijven nòg;
den heiligen Name van God!"

¹ schedelkapje

² al schrijven, al buigen, al slaan staat in het Westvlaams: schrijvend, buigend, slaande.

³ vlug

⁴ en . . . niet = niet. De ontkenning wordt soms ook alleen uitgedrukt door: en.

⁵ kapmanteltje.

Send your requests to:

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

The Canadian Reformed Home for the Aged, Hamilton

The Canadian Reformed Home for the Aged, Hamilton, held its annual meeting on April 24, 1981, in the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church, Hamilton.

Not too many of our members showed up. It was what we normally expect. Our annual meetings are always routine. The board gives a run-down of our usual failures. It did not matter what we tried; somehow or other it did not seem to work.

Working with our own money and borrowing on our own has been discussed so often. Every time again our efforts were thwarted by a lack of interest shown by those whom the home is meant for.

This time, however, the board came with good news. Central Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CHMC) was approached again this past year and we came back with good news. CHMC will not loan us money, but will help, making all necessary arrangements.

During the meetings held, the following points came to the fore:

- a. The society will be run by its own board, without interference.
- b. Building plans and how to build will be determined by the board.
- c. If we intend to supply care to patients that would be our responsibility.
- d. The financial set up will be determined by us, in co-operation with CHMC.
- e. CHMC will set a rent ceiling, based on the "rent geared to income program."
- f. Interest on money borrowed will be subsidized down to 2% where needed.
- g. No vacancies are permitted.
- h. If vacancies exist others must be admitted. The board will have the final approval.

Before final approval is given by CHMC several things will have to be done, of which the following are the most important:

1. A demand study.
2. An organization plan of how the Home is to be run.

Several more meetings were held in the meantime. A questionnaire was given to all people who are eligible or will be in the next few years.

The letter accompanying it explains the rent situation. If a tenant's

income is \$300.00 per month, rent will be about \$80.00 per month. If total income per month is \$600.00, the rent will be approximately \$150.00 per month. The maximum rent anyone would pay is approximately \$300.00 per month. The above amounts are approximate and could change a bit, but as a rule in proportion with everything else.

CHMC has set a strict timetable for us. The board and its committees are busy trying to meet the schedules.

CHMC has not committed itself to us but will help us to reach our goal. Commitment for both CHMC and us commences with final approval of plans. The goal set by this government agency is to start building in the spring of 1982.

We require many names to complete our demand study. Anyone wishing more information or wanting to submit their name for 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, please contact us as soon as possible. Submitting your name does not commit you to move into the home in the year indicated. It will give us an indication as to the potential size of the home.

Inquiries may be directed to: Canadian Reformed Home for the Aged, Inc.

Steering & Promotion Committee,
c/o Mr. L. Knegt
 882 Danforth Place,
 Hamilton, Ontario L7T 1S2
c/o Mr. A.L. VanderHout
 74 Rymal Road East,
 Hamilton, Ontario L9B 1C1
c/o Mr. Geo. Hart
 R.R. #6,

Cambridge, Ontario N1R 5S7

Our home will be built like self-contained apartments. Most will be one bedroom units, a few may have two bedrooms, depending on the demand. A living room, bathroom, kitchen, bedroom and storage area are standard. A refrigerator and a stove will most likely be supplied. A garden will be available for those who want one. A hobby room was asked for. A large hall for meetings and entertainment will be included. There may also be a need for a large room where a birthday party may be held with the children. The building committee has been looking at different plans and has also visited other homes.

A nurse will have to be on staff and arrangements may have to be made for a doctor to come in at regular intervals.

The location will be next to our Hamilton church. This will make it easy for sick people to listen to the church service in their own room, via a hookup. Transportation and shopping will present no problem.

Many other things will have to be discussed before we are ready. Our main concern now is to complete our demand study. For that we need people to submit their name as soon as possible.

May the Lord bless our endeavours to build a home for our older brothers and sisters.

H. VANLUIK



Church News

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OF CLERK, CHURCH AT BARRHEAD, ALBERTA:

From A. Emmens to: H. Marissen
 Box 1627, Barrhead, Alberta T0G 0E0
 Phone: (403) 967-2717

* * * * *

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OF CLERK, CHURCH AT BRAMPTON, ONTARIO:

From C.J. Nobels, Cheltenham, to:
P. Schoon
 8 Greta Drive
 Brampton, Ontario L6X 2E5
 Phone: (416) 451-5048

* * * * *

CALLED AND ACCEPTED to Surrey, B.C.:

REV. J. GEERTSEMA
 of Chatham, Ontario.

* * * * *

CALLED to Barrhead, Alberta:
 REV. W. HUIZINGA
 of Hamilton, Ontario.

* * * * *

CALLED by Hamilton, Ontario, as Missionary in Brazil:

REV. P.K.A. DEBOER
 of Watford, Ontario.

Report of the Annual League Day of Carman and Winnipeg Womens's Societies

Although early morning, the sun was warmly encouraging and brilliant — a good beginning to another Women's League Day. At 10:00 a.m., June 3, 1981, ladies from Carman and Winnipeg were privileged once again to assemble together.

After the preliminary refreshments and social exchange, we convened in the upper hall of the Canadian Reformed Church of Winnipeg. Mrs. B.J. Berends, president of the Winnipeg Women's Society and of this meeting called the meeting to order. With united voices we sang Ps. 33:1, 3, 6, after which Mrs. Berends led in prayer, thanking God for allowing us to assemble in freedom to learn more of His Word. A warm welcome was extended to the forty-seven ladies present, especially Mrs. Bruinsma, a visitor from The Netherlands.

We were reminded of last year's League Day by the reading of the minutes which included a summary of the speeches and questions raised.

Scripture reading was taken from I Thess. 5:1-11, II Thess. 2:1-12, Rev. 21:1-4, Rev. 22:12-21, after which our guest speaker, Rev. B.J. Berends, was charmingly introduced by the president, his wife. Rev. Berends received our attention to introduce his topic entitled "The Last Judgment." Prior to his speech we read Article 37 of the Belgic Confession.

Today Christian expectation is tossed aside as the world looks to science and technology — a computer-controlled paradise. As the turmoil of man increases, as great numbers of men fall away from His Word, as society becomes like that in Lot's and Noah's times, we know there is but a short time left — a short time until Christ returns, in the twinkling of an eye, with unquestionable clarity, sweeping across the universe to expose the sin of believer and unbeliever.

We may be comforted by the fact that through Christ all our sins will be pardoned. Our future lies with Christ on the new earth, in eternal joy, beyond all human comprehension, where we will be in perfect communion with Him. And as we wait, we work and serve Him. "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Following his most informative speech we sang Hymn 50:1-4. Rev. Berends was kept busy answering a deluge of questions ranging from nuclear holocaust to who the anti-christ(s) is (are).

The morning sped past swiftly, and before we realized it, lunch was ready. Mrs. Berends asked the Lord's blessing over the meal. We did much justice to the delicious lunch of homemade soup, buns, and cold cuts. During lunch we listened to and reflected on a poem entitled, "Forgive Me." Our older members were entertained and amused by a short story read in the Dutch language. After Rev. Berends read some parts of Revelation, he led in thanksgiving.

While some of the ladies were engaged in the unfortunate task of washing dishes, many others strolled in the surrounding neighbourhood enjoying the beautiful weather and a bit of exercise. We reassembled at 2:00 p.m. and sang the League Song, "Sing God's Glory."

Mrs. Sharon Dow, a member of

Winnipeg's Women's Society, although visibly nervous, spoke very knowledgeably on "Evangelism." We were reminded that a church must go out and witness, calling those who are strangers to the true church of God as well as those who have become estranged from the church. We must continually study and read so we may use most effectively our strongest tool — God's Word. We were encouraged to put aside our hesitancy and shyness and go forth with this thought in mind, "I believe and so I speak . . ."

She was thanked for her time, and we sang Psalm 47:1, 2, 3 after which a brief discussion period was held. We sang Ps. 145:1, 2, 3 and Mrs. Sharon Dow closed in prayer. The League Day was closed.

Coffee was served in the basement as ladies lingered until all went their respective ways. It had been a day of learning and fellowship — a wonderful day!

HILDA TIGGELAAR
Secr./Winnipeg's Women's Society

Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Editor:

In *News Medley* of "Clarion" (Vol. 30, No.9) you commented on some of the reactions that came in from the Consistories concerning the letter which the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* sent. The Standing Committee had requested the Consistories to review one of the decisions made by General Synod and revise it. Some of the Consistories had objected to this letter and at least one, on the basis of Art. 31, C.O. In your comments you compare the letter of the Standing Committee to the one sent by Prof. Dr. K. Schilder. You ask, "What is the *basic* difference between Schilder's writing and the writing of our committee?"

Is this not the "basic difference"? When Prof. Dr. K. Schilder wrote his letter to the Consistories, his objections to Synod concerned matters of *doctrine* which "proved to conflict with the Word of God" and matters of Church polity which "proved to conflict with . . ." (the accepted C.O.). According to Article 31, C.O., the objections which Prof. Dr. K. Schilder had

brought to the attention of the Consistories, were not "considered settled and binding" because (Remember the "unless"/"until" debate.) "it . . . proved to conflict with the Word of God (and) with the articles decided upon by this General Synod" (i.e. C.O.).

The objection the Standing Committee has, is *not* of such a nature that it concerns doctrine or polity. It concerns the English language. Can you imagine Mr. Editor, the chaos it will bring in our Churches and the workload on the Consistory tables, if every Synod decision which is disliked is appealed to the Consistories? Is that not why Art. 31, C.O. says, "whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless . . .?" It still seems to me that Prof. Dr. K. Schilder was correct but the Standing Committee incorrect.

Pondered the Point;
P. K. A. de Boer

Comment

I have the idea that, in his letter, the Rev. DeBoer does not give his own opinion

but passes on what he heard from others, and that he knows better himself. Anyway, his letter gives me the opportunity to elaborate a little on the point in question. I apologize for the delay, but do not wish to go on holidays with this letter still lying around, waiting to be answered.

I re-read more than once the letter sent by the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*, but I still cannot find therein any request to "the Consistories to review one of the decisions made by the General Synod and revise it," as Rev. DeBoer puts it. I agree: that is the impression which many people appear to have, but we cannot find one word in that direction in the Committee's letter. The most one could *conclude* from the letter is that the Committee asks the Consistories for their reaction to the Committee's suggestion that it might maintain the "new Hymn 2" instead of having thousands of copies of the *Book of Praise* printed with a blemish such as "old 46" appears to be. But even that conclusion would be for the responsibility of the one drawing it. The Committee does not even say that explicitly. One should not put any words into the Committee's mouth. I think that its members were well aware of it that only general synods can change general synodical decisions.

I did not "compare the letter of the Standing Committee to the one sent by Prof. Dr. K. Schilder." I was well aware of the difference in contents. I even stated, "I realize that the situation was different, but the point is: writing to the Consistories with objections to general synodical decisions."

That is still the point: writing to consistories with objections to general synodical decisions.

It is irrelevant *what* the letters deal with as long as they concern material which affects all the Churches. This is a requirement, for I certainly do not extend that right to matters of a personal, private nature!

Speaking therefore of matters which affect *all* the Churches, I asked, "What is the *basic* difference between Schilder's writing and the writing of our committee?" I did *not* ask, "What is the basic difference between *what* Schilder wrote and *what* our committee wrote"? The point is: the writing of a letter as such. If *that* is contrary to Article 31 of the C.O. — as was alleged — *then* Schilder was equally wrong.

I could confine myself to the above, for the rest of the above letter is the result of misreading my question. Yet I do wish to make a few more remarks.

The one who suggested to Rev. DeBoer that at the point at which Dr. Schilder wrote the letter I referred to the issue was "proved to conflict with the Word of God," and the "not 'considered settled and binding,'" of Art. 31, C.O. should read up on the history of the Liberation. Strictly speaking, those aspects were not yet at stake at that stage. One can find the letter I quoted from and referred to in G. Janssen, *De*

Feitelijke Toedracht, 4th printing, pp. 104, 105.

Further, it is not correct to state that our Committee's letter "concerns the English language." That is so simplistic that I am flabbergasted. It concerns the singing of the Congregation and it involves the whole work done for that singing, a work which had been going on for more than 25 years. Certainly, producing a songbook in the English language obviously "concerns the English language," but if that is all, I ask, "Why did we work so countless hours, many after midnight, for so many years?"

The point is not a "dislike" of a decision made by a General Synod, but that will be clear by now, I hope.

And: One cannot "appeal to Consistories." Let's not introduce wrong terms.

Finally: Article 31, C.O. speaks of what one has to do who appeals; it does not make a general statement about the obligation to accept decisions by major assemblies. That is something which is implied in our having entered into a federation and having promised to live according to the agreements made.

vO

Labour Board Ruling A Disturbing and Dangerous Precedent

The Ontario Labour Relations Board recently issued a decision that sets a highly disturbing and dangerous precedent, further eroding workers' freedom to join the union of their choice.

On June 10 the Board ruled that it has the authority to conduct a hearing and to decide whether members of Local 46 of the Plumbers' Union or members of the independent Christian Labour Association of Canada must perform the work on a certain construction project.

This is no ordinary jurisdictional dispute between two unions. Instead, it is a cold-blooded attempt by Local 46, backed by the Toronto-Central Ontario Building and Construction Trades Council, to effectively end whatever remains of the freedom of association in the construction industry.

This controversy is another stage in the international building trades unions' attack on the independent CLAC, and CLAC-organized firms. On this occasion it involves the mechanical work (plumbing and heating) on an addition to the municipal building of the Town of Vaughan — just north of Toronto. This project was awarded to the lowest bidder, Simcoe Mechanical Contracting, a firm with an excellent reputation for workmanship and reliability. Simcoe's employees have been represented by CLAC since 1971, and a *valid collective agreement is now in effect*.

Local 46 has demanded that CLAC members be sent off the job and be replaced by its members. This outrageous request is based on the

claim that a) this type of work "belongs" to Local 46; b) Local 46 is a better union; c) its members can do the job more economically and efficiently; d) not awarding the work to Local 46 "is disruptive of industrial relations stability."

These claims are a smokescreen for Local 46's attempt to obtain complete control over jobs and employment in this sector of the construction industry. If the OLRB would rule in favour of Local 46, it would mean that a municipal council such as that of the Town of Vaughan cannot freely award building contracts. It would also mean that the wishes of the employees concerned are irrelevant, that the Board's own certificate to the CLAC as the official representative of Simcoe Mechanical's employees isn't worth the paper it is written on, and that the CLAC's collective agreements can be declared null and void any time the Board so decides.

CLAC's executive secretary, Edward Vanderkloet, has warned that a ruling in favour of Local 46 "would for all intents and purposes mean that the international building trades unions have an unchallengeable monopoly on every Ontario construction jobsite. This is a truly frightening prospect."

OUR COVER

Mount Olympus, Olympic National Park, Washington. (Photo courtesy of David Muench.)

A Reformed Social-Political Magazine

During the past month the Board of the "Foundation for the Publication of a Reformed Social-Political Magazine" has visited most of the congregations across the country. The purpose of these tours was two-fold: for promotion, as well as for setting up mechanisms which would look after promotion and subscriptions on a local level. To make this a successful venture we need your support. The grass-roots organization, involvement, and support is crucial for our success. Generally speaking, the response which we have received across the country has been very positive and encouraging.

Following this article you will find a list of all congregations and the names of members who have been found willing to work on the committees in their respective areas. These committees are our link to the grass-roots level. They are the means through which everyone can become involved. It is these committees that will furnish us with subscription lists. To help the committees in their task, you will find in this issue of *Clarion* a "tear-out" subscription form which we ask you to fill out and hand back to your committee members. Please do not send the subscription form or fee to us but work through your local committees. This will allow the whole process of gathering subscriptions to flow in a much smoother and more orderly fashion. We would like to suggest that you take out one or more gift subscriptions as well. Let us together aim at a minimum of 2500 subscribers in Canada. The subscription fee is \$22.50. If you have any questions regarding the paper, do not hesitate to ask your local committee members. Without support and actual in-

volvement such as this on local levels, it will be very difficult for us, as board, to come out with the proposed magazine on time.

The target date for the first issue of the proposed magazine has been set for the latter half of November 1981. The magazine will be approximately thirty pages in length and will include some colour content. To give you a somewhat more concrete idea of what the magazine will include, let me list some of the departments which have been proposed: Current affairs, Social-Political life (reflection on backgrounds, philosophy, etc.), Religion, Economy and Industry, Sciences, Literature, Education, Music, Youth Corner, etc. Our magazine will focus on society and all its facets. If anyone has any questions, comments, or input in regards to content and format of the proposed magazine, do not delay in contacting your local committee members with whom we will have regular contact. Let's all get involved in this endeavour. In addition to this, if you know someone who would be eligible for the position of a regular (or part-time) contributor to the magazine in specific field of interest, please pass his/her name along to the committee so that it can be relayed to us. We are presently collecting a list of all possible contributors who can lend their talents to this magazine.

Finally, I would like to extend an invitation to all to suggest a name for the magazine. At the moment it is "nameless," but we hope that from the many suggestions we can expect from you we will find a very clear and dynamic name for our monthly.

LOCAL PROMOTION COMMITTEES (not all committees are complete)

BRAMPTON
C.Y. NOBEL
J. KOTTELENBERG

BURLINGTON EAST
P. KONING — C. SPITHOFF

BURLINGTON WEST
H. BUIST — M. BUIST
J. GELDERMAN
L. JAGT — E. LUDWIG
J. WITTEN

CHATHAM
MRS. INGRID VANDERGAAG
P. BULTJE
J. (JERRY) HUTTEN
S. WERKMAN

FERGUS
J. BOUWMAN
P. BROEKEMA
P. VANDERMEULEN

GUELPH
H. BOUWMAN — A. LODDER
MISS F. NYENHUIS
W. VERSTEEG

HAMILTON
H. VAN BEELEN
J. BOOT — T. ZIETSMA

LINCOLN
MRS. R.J. OOSTERHOFF
MRS. E.J. SCHULENBERG
MRS. W. VANDENHAAK
MRS. M. WERKMAN

LONDON
C. LINDHOUT
B. VANDERWOERD

ORANGEVILLE
J. VAN BODEGOM
K. BROUWER — G. JONKER
P. JONKER
A. VAN OVERBEEKE

OTTAWA
A. ZUIDHOF

SMITHVILLE
G. VANWOUDEBERG
A. VANEGMOND
P. WITTEN

WATFORD
J. JANSSENS

ABBOTSFORD
MRS. M. VANDERLINDE
E. BREUKELMAN
H. FABER — P. BLOM
J.K. FLOKSTRA

BARRHEAD
A. EMMENS
WM. VOGELZANG

CARMAN
G. VAN DIJK
K. VANDERVEEN

CHILLIWACK
MRS. K. HUTTEMA

CLOVERDALE
D. DEBOER — N. DEBOER

COALDALE
L. HOOGERDIJK
H. LUBBERS — C. VAN VLIET

HOUSTON
R. FENNEMA

LANGLEY
H. STEL — D. MOES
B. VEEN — P. JANSEN
J.R. HELLEWELL

NEERLANDIA
A. PETERS — J. PETERS
P. WERKMAN

SMITHERS
G. HELDER — J. PLUG
B. VERHOEF

SURREY
J. DAM — R. SCHOUTEN
A. KRABBENDAM

WINNIPEG
K. KOOPMANS
I. TIGGELAAR