



Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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Christian Reformed Issues

WOMEN IN OFFICE

One of the most important reports for Synod 1981 of the Christian Reformed Church was Report 32, "Synodical studies on women in office and decisions pertaining to the office of deacon." The committee was charged with the mandate to define the office of deacon in the light of Scripture, the Confessions, and the historical development, and to review without prejudice the decisions of the Synod of 1978 regarding the ordination of women as deacons. Synod 1978 had decided to admit women to the diaconate, provided that the work of deacons is clearly distinguished from that of elders. This decision had caused some disturbance within the Christian Reformed Church. The character and direction of this unrest and concern can be concluded from the mandate that the committee also had "to study the implications of the ordination of women to the office of deacon in the light of Church Order Article 35, giving specific attention to the concept of male headship and the nature of that authority."

Synod 1978 had not reckoned with the intricacies of implementing their decision within the framework of the present Church Order. This Synod also appeared to have miscalculated the depth with which a large section of the Christian Reformed Church held certain attitudes and convictions about the place of women in leadership roles. At least, this is the way in which the committee now in 1981 described the situation. I would say the reaction to the decision of 1978 showed that in the Christian Reformed Church there are at least segments that read Holy Scripture as still being normative also with respect to the offices in the church.

At least four different sets of recommendations now came to the Synod of 1981:

1. The Rev. Henry VanderKam recommended that the present practice of excluding women from ecclesiastical office be maintained. His grounds were that Biblical teaching does not warrant a change (I Cor. 11:2-16, 14:33-36; I Tim. 2:9-15); that the headship principle would be violated if women held such office; and that the nature of office prohibits a change in practice.

2. The majority of the committee wanted to make a distinction between the offices of minister, elder, and evangelist, on the one side; and the office of deacons, on the other side. The first group of offices would be open for communicant *male* members of the church, while *all* communicant members would be eligible for the office of deacon. The Church Order would indicate a clear distinction between the consistory and the diaconate. The first would be composed of the elders and the minister(s), the diaconate would be composed of the deacons. Wherever the number of elders is small, only male deacons could be added to the consistory, while the meetings of the diaconate would be presided over by "a chairperson elected by the diaconate from among its membership." The chairperson of the diaconate, therefore, could be a female deacon.

3. A minority of three would also open the office of deacon to women, but would not exclude them from cer-

tain aspects of the governing of the church. At present there is a distinction in the Christian Reformed Church Order between the general consistory and the restricted consistory. To the general consistory belong all office-bearers, while the deacons do not participate in the restricted consistory. The minority of three now recommended to speak about "a consistory of the office-bearers" which would be responsible for the general government of the church and which could be composed of male and female members. Besides the consistory there would be a restricted consistory of the minister(s) and the elders and a board of deacons. This set of recommendations went a step further than those of the majority. This minority of three leaves open the possible role of women in the office of elder and minister and they see no fundamental reason why deacons (male and female) should not be delegated to major assemblies.

4. The fourth set of recommendations was found in two overtures that argued for the immediate opening of *all* offices to women in the church. Especially the broad report and overture of Hope Christian Reformed Church of Oak Forest, Illinois, were remarkable. This church wanted "qualified women . . . to serve equally with men as ordained in the office of deacon, elder, and minister of the Word." In defending this far-reaching recommendation the consistory wrote:

It may be a reasonable and responsible tactic to allow the churches first to become accustomed to ordaining women as deacons before moving on to ordaining women as elders and eventually as ministers of the Word. We have no quarrel with this process as a positive and helpful strategy. We recognize that change most effectively takes place one step at a time and that the timing of those steps is often a crucial aspect in their becoming widely accepted and integrated into the life of either an individual or a community such as the church.

What is a matter of concern, however, is that in giving restricted approval to the ordination of women as deacons, synod may now be defining the issue in such a way that the possibility of eventually ordaining women as elders is becoming more rigidly excluded than ever before (1981 Agenda for Synod, p. 449).

Remarkable are the words "tactic" and "strategy." There may be people in Reformed circles who, without saying it aloud, are in favour of women in all offices but who for the time being only strive for the admittance of women in the office of deacon. Certainly the third set of recommendations gave the impression that the authors themselves are not against female ministers and elders. They only acknowledge the state of affairs and in a realistic church policy they propose what they think is obtainable within the present Christian Reformed Church situation. If the people in the pews have become accustomed to the sight of sisters in the benches of the deacons, if *the* consistory, and also its female deacon members, would be responsible for *the* general government of the church, would then the transition to female elders and ministers not be easy? It is clear that with respect to the ordained

officers in the church there are basically only two positions: the one states, on the basis of clear Scripture proofs, that according to a permanent ordinance of God the offices in the church should be held by qualified brothers only; and the other alleges, on the basis of a so-called general Scriptural principle concerning equality, that all offices should be open to male and female alike. Now that Synod 1978 had decided to admit women to the diaconate, the Rev. VanderKam should not have recommended that the present practice be maintained, but that the decision of 1978 be rescinded. As long as it still stands, reports of committees and following decisions of synods will drive in the direction of throwing all offices open to women.

What did the Synod of 1981 of the Christian Reformed Church decide? Well, Synod did not accept any of the four sets of recommendations, but decided:

1. to postpone the implementation of the decision of the Synod 1978 regarding the ordination of women as deacons, pending the findings of a study committee on headship.
2. to appoint a study committee with the following mandate: to examine the meaning and scope of headship in the Bible as it pertains to the relationships of husband and wife and man and woman to ascertain:
 - a. Whether headship has implications for authority and leadership in marriage and family, church, business, educational institutions and government, and if so, how?
 - b. How these conclusions apply to the question whether women may hold office in the church.

Ground:

Because the issue of headship remains unresolved, Synod of 1981 has not seen fit to accept any of the proposals before it relative to Report 32 — Synodical Studies on Women in office — and decisions pertaining to the office of deacon.

3. to instruct this study committee to report to the Synod of 1983.

One can only judge the significance of this decision against the background of another action of Synod 1981. As we already saw, the Rev. H. VanderKam wanted to retain the practice of excluding women from all church offices. The majority — six members — of synod's advisory committee followed his approach. They wanted to postpone the implementation of the 1978 decision *indefinitely* and to appoint "auxiliaries" to male office-bearers. This motion, however, was voted down and the motion of Dr. G. VanderVelde (Toronto) carried, namely, to postpone the implementation of the decision of 1978 *until a committee reports in 1983*. Although both motions spoke of a postponement, the decision now leaves the whole issue of women in *all* offices open. The question of female deacons has now officially been broadened to the question "whether women may hold office in the church." The decision of 1978 has not been rescinded; in principle, women remain admitted to the diaconate; only the implementation of the decision has to wait till the study committee on Biblical headship has finished its report in 1983. And this report can and will deal with all offices. I hope that I am too pessimistic, but the road to an unScriptural synthesis with the feminist movement of our twentieth century is wide open.

AGAIN TWO YEARS GKN

Another issue in which we are vitally interested is

the relationship of the Christian Reformed Church with the Synodical Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN). Our readers remember that in *Clarion* of May 1, 1981, I wrote about the lack of information in the report of the Interchurch Relations Committee. The Synod of 1980 had expressed its alarm over the 1979 decision of the GKN to allow practising homosexuals to come to the table of the Lord and to serve in the offices of the church. After the *Agenda 1981* had been published, the GKN finally explained their position. This reply will be made available to all churches in the upcoming Acts of Synod 1981.

In the meantime, the advisory committee on interdenominational matters of Synod 1981 proposed to break the ties with the GKN. *The Banner* of June 29, 1981, gives a lively account of what happened in synod's only Saturday session, June 13. Before synod considered its committee's proposal, the GKN's fraternal delegates, Rev. A.C. Hofland and Dr. H.B. Weijland, addressed the delegates, and naturally they influenced the synod by urging restraint.

In this issue there was, in my opinion, clear evidence of the influence and power of fraternal delegates who do not participate in the discussion. There was another powerful influence:

The debate over the advisory committee's recommendation to cut ties with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands . . . was an emotional one. Repeatedly during the morning discussion, Canadian delegates tried to soften criticism of the Dutch church. Many Canadian members of the CRC, only one generation removed from the GKN, still have family and friends in that church.

Because the advisory committee's recommendations differed substantially from those of the study committee, Rev. Clarence Boomsma, president of the Interchurch Relations Committee, was given the floor.

Near the end of the lengthy Saturday morning discussion, one member of the advisory committee tried to set aside the moderate proposal defended by Boomsma. His attempt failed by ten votes. Canadian delegates voted 4 to 1 to stick with the study committee's recommendation.

That vote set the tone for Monday morning's discussion. In less than half an hour synod approved the moderate recommendation and instructed the IRC to "advise the Synod of 1983 whether present provisions for table and pulpit fellowship between the CRC and the GKN should be continued."

Again for two years the fellowship of the Christian Reformed Church and the synodical churches in The Netherlands is being maintained. Again for two years the pulpits of the Christian Reformed Churches are open for preachers of false doctrine. Synod 1981 rightly denied the candidacy for the ministry to one graduate of Calvin Seminary who expressed his belief that the opening chapters of the Bible are "not transparent to the event" and that Romans 5 does not require the presence of a historical character named Adam. But why then leave the pulpits open to Dutch preachers who are of the same (un)belief?

Remarkable for us, members of the Canadian Reformed Churches, is the decisive influence and impact of the Canadian delegates in the Christian Reformed Synod. It was an influence and impact in the wrong direction. *The Banner* speaks about the bonds with family and friends in The Netherlands. We should also not forget that the older generation in the Canadian segment of the Christian Reformed Church has deliberately chosen

against the liberation from unScriptural doctrinal statements and church-political measures in 1942 and following years. This generation and the following one are inclined to mitigate the doctrinal decay in the synodical Dutch churches. He who in the Kingdom of God closes his eyes to iniquity, will fall into a deadly slumber.

And as far as family ties are concerned, we who lived through the struggle in The Netherlands know what it means when your natural brothers and sisters cease to be spiritual family and are no longer partakers of the same bread and cup of the Lord within the communion of saints. But let us never forget Moses' blessing of Levi "who said of his father and mother,

'I regard them not';

he disowned his brothers,

and ignored his children.

For they observed thy word,

and kept thy covenant" (Deut. 33:9).

He who loves family and friends more than Jesus Christ, is not worthy of Him.

Let the Christian Reformed people in Canada listen and obey and not become a stumbling block for others.

J. FABER

TO THE READERS

During my leave of absence the first two pages of Clarion will be filled by my colleagues. Especially one of them, the Rev. G. Van Dooren, has promised to try to provide our readers with some food for thought. I am convinced that this former editor-in-chief of the *Canadian Reformed Magazine* is an example of what the psalm says about the righteous: They still bring forth in old age; they are ever full of sap and green . . . We welcome the septuagenarian in the editor's chair and greet the readers with warmest regards.

J. FABER

Education in the Scriptures ¹

Address delivered to a mixed audience of parents and teachers at the Canadian Reformed Teachers' Convention held in Edmonton in March, 1981.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is with a certain amount of reluctance and hesitation that I have accepted the honourable invitation to speak this evening to you, a mixed audience of parents and teachers. For when I consider that my experience as a parent does not even amount to one year's duration as of yet, I begin to wonder whether I should not be the one requesting the advice and instruction of the more experienced parents among us. And, even though I am referred to as a "pastor and teacher," when I consider that that experience too is minimal, and that my training for the role of teacher hardly makes me an authority in this area, then, too, I wish that I might be the one sitting back and listening this evening. But the brothers who approached me have apparently taken these weaknesses of mine into consideration for they have nicely restricted me to an area within which I should have something to say. That is, they have asked me to speak about education as it existed in *Biblical* times. They directed me to questions like: what kind of educational system was there in those days? What is the background of the remarks made in the Scriptures about education? And what does all of that have to say to us

about our educational endeavours today? Thus, having delved into the Scriptures on these points, I gladly divulge the results thereof. The title of this evening's address, "Education in the Scriptures," is indeed somewhat ambiguous; but that is intentional, for I would like to deal both with the educational system in the days of the Scriptures, and with some aspects of what the Scriptures themselves have to say about education.

2. HISTORICAL SURVEY

He who looks for a complex, formal system of education in early Israel, will certainly search in vain. Schools and professional teachers were unheard of at this time. The task of educating children fell squarely on the shoulders of the parents. Those who brought children into the world were also expected to equip them for life in the world. Mother and father were instructed to teach their children about the LORD, His great redemptive works, and His gracious covenantal promises (Deut. 4:9, 10; 6:7, 20-21; 32:7; Ps. 78:3-6; Prov. 4:3-4). But their education was by no means restricted to that. Skills in reading and writing, as well as some basic ones in arithmetic, were taught, especially since they were needed in order to study the law of God. Children were also encouraged to learn a foreign language. Parents also taught their children such everyday duties as pasturing the sheep (I Sam. 16:11)

and working the fields. They were very well aware of the fact that it was their task to teach their sons a trade, for, as one rabbi said, "he who does not teach his son a useful trade is bringing him up to be a thief." Artistic training was not neglected either. Think of David and his ability to play the lyre while yet a youth (I Sam. 16:15 ff.), or of the great number of those who played a variety of instruments during the temple worship. Throughout their history, the Israelites had a lively taste for music and song, as well as dance (e.g., Judg. 21:21; Ps. 137; Jer. 31:13). Mothers also instructed their daughters in the domestic arts, such as baking (II Sam. 13:8), spinning and weaving (Ex. 35:25-26; Prov. 31:13 ff.). The children had other opportunities for learning too. At the city gates, they could listen to the talk of the elders, hear lawsuits settled and commercial transactions agreed upon. Accompanying their parents to the sanctuaries or the temple (I Sam. 1:4, 21; Luke 2:41 ff.), they could hear the singing of the psalms and the historical events retold. All in all, the Israelites were not your average, primitive, illiterate people; rather, time and again we meet those in the Old Testament who were quite able to read and to write (Deut. 6:9; 17:18, 19; 27:2-8; Josh. 18:4, 8-9; Judg. 8:14; Isa. 10:19; 29:11, 12).

As the history of the Israelites progresses, however, we do come across some more formal and struc-

tured systems of education. In the days of the kings, we read of "bands of prophets" (I Sam. 10:5, 10; 19:20). Although it is not certain, many believe that these were actually "schools" of sorts and that a certain body of knowledge and skills was imparted to these young men. It is also possible that Elisha was one of the outstanding members of these "sons of the prophets" (II Kings 2:15).

As it may have been with the prophets, so it definitely was with the priests. The Books of Moses clearly state that one of the tasks of the members of the tribe of Levi was to teach the people of Israel the law of the LORD (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 33:10). They were to become experts in the law themselves, and from time to time and place to place they were to assemble the people together and expound the Torah (the law) to them (Deut. 31:10-13; II Chron. 17:8,9; 35:3). After the return from exile this practice was continued and even intensified. Men such as Ezra, who were priests as well as scribes and were "skilled in the law of Moses," felt called to continue this priestly tradition of teacher (Ezra 7:6, 10; Neh. 8:4, 9, 13). In Nehemiah, we hear how Ezra would stand upon a "wooden pulpit," read from the book of the law, and how the many Levites standing around him would later help him in his interpretation and exposition; Scripture says that "they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading" (Neh. 8:4-8). From the time of Ezra onward, these scribes became a specialized class of biblical scholars and were recognized as the official teachers and spiritual leaders of the people.

It was not until the first century before Christ that a mandatory system of education was established, and it was the Pharisees who were the driving force behind it. At the age of six or seven, children had to be admitted and teachers were appointed in every province and town. These schools were referred to as "the House of the Book," because the Torah was pretty well the only textbook. The instruction given was primarily oral, with the students sitting on the ground in a semi-circle around the teacher. Verses of the Scriptures were taught, explained, and applied daily. On small wooden tablets covered with wax they wrote passages from scrolls of sacred writings. Reading and writing made up a large part of the curriculum, while such subjects as arithmetic, anatomy, history, and geography were only taught inso-

far as they were needed to understand the Torah and the Jewish writings. The synagogues, which probably date back to the time of the exile, played quite a role in this whole educational process; in fact, besides being meeting places for the local Jewish community, and besides being places of worship, they were seen above all as places of *study*. Young men who were especially gifted and promising could graduate to "the House of the Midrash," where the great Pharisaic teachers would instruct them yet more thoroughly in the law and in that which former scholars had taught about the law. Thus, at the age of fifteen already, many young men were experts in the Books of Moses and in the many Jewish commentaries written thereon.

You see, then, how the very informal and casual system of education prevalent in early Israel gradually developed into a very rigid and complex structure. Considered from most angles, that was hardly a development for the better. In fact, by the end of this development, instead of finding its heart in the temple worship, Judaism had deteriorated almost exclusively to a matter of education alone. Everything turned around what they considered to be the literal and exact meaning of the law and living precisely according to the letter thereof. It is then the men who went through this educational system or, we would almost say, the "victims" of this educational system, whom the Lord Jesus confronts in the gospels. This system also remained prevalent throughout the New Testament times; Saul of Tarsus, for instance, was a "product" thereof. Alongside of this, there were also many Greek schools, the result of Hellenistic culture. But Christian day-schools, such as we know them, were non-existent during these years, although the New Testament Church later developed its own catechetical program.¹

If we bear in mind, then, these remarks about education as it existed especially in early Israel, and at the same time combine these facts with what Proverbs, that treasure-house of wisdom also with respect to education, has to say, then we find that all of this actually reinforces us with respect to what could be called the main "pillars" of our educational system. Herein we receive some valuable lessons as to what is and what should be the aim and nature of truly Christian or Reformed education.

2. ITS PARENTAL CHARACTER

The very first thing that we ob-

viously can conclude from this is that in and according to the Scriptures, education is indeed not primarily a governmental, or an ecclesiastical, or a societal task. First and foremost, it is a *parental* responsibility and duty. That is seen in that beautiful passage in Deuteronomy known as the *Shema*.

Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and *you shall teach them diligently to your children*, and shall talk to them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the door posts of your house and on your gates (6:4-9).



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That is a theme that actually runs throughout the whole book of Deuteronomy; time and again we meet phrases like: "make them known to your children and your children's children . . ." or "you shall teach them to your children" (4:9; 6:7; 11:19; 31:13; 32:46; cf. Ex. 10:2; 13:8). That theme even echoes all the way into the New Testament: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but *bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*" (Eph. 6:4). In the Books of Moses, we see, too, that the LORD actually designed much of the temple worship and sacrificial system in such a way that these things would arouse the curiosity of the children to such an extent that they would be motivated to ask their parents about them. You see that, for instance, with respect to the Passover as it is described in Exodus 12. There, after Moses has described how they were to choose a lamb, how they were to prepare it, how they were to smear the blood on the doorposts, how they were to go through the whole house searching for leaven, and to eat only unleavened bread, then Moses says: "And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this sacrifice?' you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover . . .'" (12:26, 27). On more occasions, we meet the expression "when your children ask in time to come . . ." (Ex. 13:14; Deut. 6:20; Josh. 4:6). Clearly, many such things have a didactic function, intended to instruct the children in the ways of the covenant.

That education is a parental responsibility is very evident also from the Book of Proverbs. For Proverbs, you could say, is actually a living and outstanding example of how a father would and should teach his children. Just think of those first words of chapter 4:

Hear, O sons, a father's instruction,
and be attentive, that you may gain
insight

When I was a son with my father,
tender, the only one in the sight of
my mother,
he taught me, and said to me,
"Let your heart hold fast my words;
keep my commandments and live
. . . ." (1, 3, 4).

Think, too, of how we repeatedly meet those two words "my son, . . . my son, . . ." throughout the early chapters of this book. Tenderly and compassionately, a father would seek to instruct and direct his son. And we would say, also urgently; for so often nowadays we tend to think that if we do not get around to teaching my child about

this or that, then the teacher or the minister will. We are quite assured that somehow he will learn about it. But the Israelite parents seemed to be aware, and the LORD wanted to make them aware, of the fact that *they* had to do it, that education was *their* responsibility, for in their society if they did not do it then they could not count on anyone else doing it for them. Therefore, there are those strong admonitions: "tell it to your children." Speak about it! And to be sure, that was not just a father's task. For Solomon says twice: "Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching" (1:8), and "My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching" (6:20). Lemuel, too, who in chapter 31 gives us that beautiful poem about a good and virtuous wife, learned about that, not too surprisingly, from his mother (31:1).

Surely, for parents to be so extensively and intensively occupied with their children was a very healthy and precious thing. For why is it that today there is so much talk about a "generation gap," and there is so much concern about children being estranged from their parents? Is that not mainly because so often parents are only people who provide their children with food and clothing, and a roof over their heads? Is it not because in so many instances parents do not spend enough time with their children? Is it not so that at an early age already the doorway of communication swings and remains shut? True, we do not have the time, the means, nor the expertise any longer to teach our children a host of subjects and to train them in a trade or occupation. The pressures of our society are of such a nature that there is only one way out for us, and that is to delegate most of these tasks to teachers and others. But what we surely need to see is that even if we delegate and put some of our responsibilities on the shoulders of teachers, we cannot put all the responsibilities on them! The LORD, in His admonitions to parents, actually forbids that! And when it comes to the point, there is so much to be done, so much that needs to be taught, and so many pressures are already exerted on those little ones at an early age that the home *must* also do its share! Moreover, let us not forget that it is difficult and not always wise for children to form a lasting bond with teachers. For teachers tend to come and go; a child normally

has many teachers throughout his life, but he has only one father and one mother. What is badly needed is warm and intimate bonds established already at an early age between children and parents; undoubtedly, that is the best way for children to survive through the trying difficulties of the adolescent and teenage years, and to make it all the way to the tremendous responsibilities of adulthood.

(To be continued.)

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Church News

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A Reformed Social-Political Magazine

Contributors Wanted

Now that the mail strike is supposedly over, we have written invitations to quite a number of people whom we consider potential contributors. Sitting together with a Committee, we started listing names. This may not be a very methodical approach, but we knew of none other. Still, out of it came a surprisingly complete list of possibilities, to cover the different departments we have in mind. But, it is very likely that we overlooked some valuable talents, talents that we cannot do without. On the other hand, although beggars can be no choosers, we must be selective in publishing. Not everybody with knowledge can write. Not everybody who can write has knowledge. Some people may be engaged in fields that are so specialized that their readership in a general interest magazine drops to zero.

In the meantime we have obtained a number of commitments from contributors for our first few issues, a fact for which we are most grateful. Much more is necessary, though. Therefore we make this appeal: If you have any project or any contribution that could benefit a wider public, please let us know. If you know any person who, according to you, could be a worthwhile contributor, let us know. Let no one say: don't bother me. Remember your calling in the Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 55: ". . . every one must know himself bound to employ his gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and salvation of other members" It is our intention to have coverage in (roughly speaking) the following departments: Current Affairs, Politics, Religion, Education, Industry and Economics, Sciences, Literature, Music and other art forms, Youth Corner, Chess and other games, and puzzles.

There must be more people who have something to contribute than we have contacted. Whether or not you have been contacted, please come forward. Do not hide among the baggage (I Sam. 10:22).

What is in a name?

A loaded question that is. Think of the biblical report on different name givings. Often the name is given because . . . and then follows the reason. Example: "she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

Sometimes names are prophetic demonstrations; think of Hosea's "Lo Ammi" and "Lo Ruhamah."

It would be a great thing if a name were found that expresses the intent and purpose of our magazine. We are looking forward to the mail (which is still held up) and hope for several helpful suggestions. Up till present we have such recommendations as "STAND," "ALERT," "CALVINIST REVIEW," "CREED,"

"TENET," and "ARK." For some names, graphic advantages are given. One name even functions as an acronym: *Helpful Observation on Political and Social Events*. Add it all up and what do you get? "HOPE."

The question "what is in a name?" can also be understood to shrug off the whole issue as non-problematic. And there is some point in that. Names to us have become codes, which, when mentioned, immediately create an association with the object so identified. Thus *Clarion* is not a musical instrument for a man in befeater dress. It is a set of folded pages stapled together, black and white front picture, home of Aunt Betty, News Medley, and profound writings by Dr. Faber. Once a magazine has been established, its contents recognized, a pattern of appearance set, any name once given will identify that periodical. Just think of such leaders as "Forbes" and "Harper's."

This brings us to the conclusion that an indicative, attractive name may be desirable, but it is not essential. The quality of a product makes the brand name, not the other way around.

Think of these things and let us know.

Subscribers Wanted

The drive for subscribers is still on across the country. Unfortunately, due to the mail strike we cannot provide our readers with a summarized report on the progress. We heard some encouraging results in individual instances; we also heard of the reaction: Show me what you have to offer and then I will see. Readers of *Clarion* may remember the article in the 1980 Year-End issue, where the proposal was made to raise sufficient funds in advance to cover the first two years' budgets. When we reviewed our plan of action, it was decided to take a somewhat different approach. Rather than a capital drive, we would attempt to find subscriber support in the form of subscriptions, gift subscriptions, and donations. In this way, we feel, the grass roots foundation is laid, so that the magazine does not come falling out of the sky. We have the confidence that among our own people there is enough commitment to support a cause "sight unseen," to carry us over the initial stage. Then, once a number of issues have been produced, an expansion drive can be held to reach more paying subscribers, so that the remainder of the budget may be met. Consequently, since we are not "sitting easy" on a fat bank balance, there is an urgent necessity to produce a good product in order to continue. From that the magazine should benefit. But it cannot be done without your help. See your local committee members and make them happy.

Development of the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College

... SOME BRIEF HISTORICAL NOTES.

It often happens that something which is much desired is hard to obtain or difficult to bring to reality. This certainly has been true for the Teachers' College.

When our schools were started they needed teachers, but qualified teachers were not readily available. Many Dutch-trained teachers were hired, while others had been trained at a secular institution. Some schools were forced to hire teachers with limited training, or none at all. These problems were discussed in meetings of the LEAGUE of SCHOOL SOCIETIES. The League started to provide summer courses to help overcome some of these problems.

In November 1974, the League appointed a committee to investigate some form of academic training for teachers. Studying the possibility to establish a Reformed teacher training institution, this Committee produced a tentative plan in the summer of 1975. With the help of the Principals' Club, course outlines and a timetable were provided. In the spring of 1976, this report — its implications and possible alternatives — was considered again; a preliminary budget totalling some \$65,000 was drawn up. The budget was based on the coop-

eration of all school societies: they had given the mandate to establish the College, and they needed the teachers. The contribution was calculated at \$1.00/week/member; with about 1300 members this would be sufficient to meet the budget. The League dealt with this report in its meeting of November 5, 1976. This must have been one of the most important meetings they ever held. It was carefully considered to:

- (a) make available to our School Societies teachers trained in a Reformed environment;
- (b) provide parents with the opportunity to have their children attend a Reformed Teachers' College.

and: whereas it was recommended that

- (1) the Canadian Reformed Community set up a college to provide teacher training consisting of a three-year course primarily aimed at the elementary school level;

and that

- (2) this College be operated and supported by as many school societies in Canada as wish to participate with equal representation.

Furthermore, it was decided that a committee be appointed to study materials for a Canadian course, and that September 1977 would see the opening of the College. Thus the decision had been made to actively pursue the establishing of a teachers' college; this decision was based on reports from the Ad Hoc Committee with the assistance of the Curriculum Committee and the Principals' Club. Reactions from East and West were invited, and thus a set of strict guidelines could be drawn up in a meeting, called by the League, on May 20, 1977, with representatives of some Societies, and letters from others. A Steering Committee was installed to implement these decisions.

Although September 1977 was maintained as the starting date, it soon became apparent that this date could not be realized. The input of many school societies resulted in changes to the original report. Yet the main difficulty was the hiring of a Principal. Several names were suggested, both from within Canada as well as from Holland. The assistance of Dr. Rittersma and Mr. VanEsch was requested. Both these men had already greatly assisted in lecturing for the summer courses, and with their advice regarding the establishment of our College. They were both well-qualified to do so since each was — at that time — Principal of a Reformed teacher training institution in The Netherlands.

Despite frustration and disappointment, we were sure that God would provide at His time, and in this faith we went on. September 1978 became another important date: the work of the Steering Committee culminated in the formation of a Board of Governors. Representatives from East and West were present, and thus the work continued under the auspices of the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College Association. The Executive Committee consists of five members, all from Ontario for obvious reasons. This has worked out well. Our secretary has made detailed minutes which are sent to all governors, and their response has been great and cooperation excellent, despite the distances.

During 1980 the Constitution and By-Laws could be finalized. They



The full-time staff of the Teachers' College: W. Horsman and T.M.P. VanderVen (principal).

were officially accepted and signed at the annual Governors meeting in September 1980. Early in 1981 we were granted the status of charitable organization: all your contributions and gifts to the College are tax deductible!

The search for a Principal continued. Our patience was tested till late spring/early summer 1980, when we learned of a person who could well fill this position. Mr. T.M.P. VanderVen of Armadale, Australia, was contacted. Looking in retrospect, it has been a rather quick succession of events, considering distances and immigration problems: Mr. VanderVen was contacted in June; he replied in July and informed us that he could be here for a visit in August. We met, and discussed many aspects of the CRTC; Mr. VanderVen visited a number of schools and colleagues. In its September meeting the Board unanimously appointed Mr. VanderVen; a brief was submitted to the Government, outlining our dilemma and our solution, and requesting permission for the VanderVen family to enter Canada as landed immigrants. After many visits to the Government offices, many calls to and from Australia, this request was granted: in January 1981 the VanderVen family arrived safely in Canada and has since taken up residence in Hamilton. In April this year, Mr. W.F. Horsman of Burlington could be appointed as the second full-time instructor.

These notes can be but brief and incomplete: some eight years of meetings and discussions cannot be compacted in a few lines. The number of people involved has been great, while it will be impossible to express our appreciation to all those who have



Standing l. to r.: H.J. Homan, Smithville, Ont.; R. Klaver, Smithers, B.C.; P. Vanderpol, Surrey, B.C.; C. Wiersma, Chatham, Ont.; T.M. Veenendaal, Carman, Man.; C. Hoff, London, Ont.; G. Nordeman, Burlington, Ont.; J. Gelderman, Burlington, Ont. (treasurer); A. W. Gortemaker, Winnipeg, Man.; (Missing: Mrs. C. Meliefste, Coaldale, Alta.; S. Tuininga, Neerlandia, Alta.)
Seated l. to r.: T.M.P. VanderVen, Mrs. VanderVen, E. Kampen (chairman), Mrs. Horsman, W. Horsman.

assisted in different ways. The mandate, given by the League in November 1976, is about to be fulfilled: preparations have been nearly completed and the College will open its doors on September 8, 1981. With God's help and at His time it can start; with your support our schools and our children will reap the benefit of our Reformed heritage.

Let me end with this note: At the beginning of our last Executive meeting the Chairman read Psalm 20. It struck me that — this being the last

meeting before the opening of the CRTC — I heard in verses 4 and 5 (NASB):

May He grant you your heart's desire, and fulfill all your counsel! We will sing for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God set up our banners!

May the Lord fulfil all your petitions!

C. HOFF, 2nd Secretary, CRTCA
Ingersoll, August 15, 1981

PRESS RELEASE

A Report of the (national) Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College Association, August 29, 1981.

In the usual Christian manner, with Bible reading and prayer, the chairman, Mr. E. Kampen, opens the meeting and welcomes the brothers present. After a roll call, mentioned are the efforts made and the events that have occurred since our previous national meeting, recognizing above all our heavenly Father's care and blessings.

The minutes of the previous meeting are read and adopted, and an agenda is

established and proceeded with.

From the Principal's Report: Much information is made available. Most noteworthy is that the College is proceeding with the three-year diploma, with an enrollment of four students. The part-time program initiated presently has attracted approximately eight students, and it is anticipated that this course will also be accepted toward the proposed Diploma Reformed Education.

Further, the governors and local school societies are encouraged to have the local elementary school staff view and utilize the CRTC and its staff as a resource base, especially for curriculum writing, implementation, and evaluation.

For a more detailed student handbook introducing the College, the Public Relations Committee is commissioned to publish a College Catalogue.

Secretarial services for the first

school year are determined and arranged.

Also decided is that, when feasible, an annual visit will be made by someone from the College staff to the supporting western provinces.

From the Committee Reports:
1. *Finance.* Financial support and commitment "normally" comes from the local elementary school society. As an alternative, however, rather than make the CRTCA an item on the elementary school society budget, a local association can be established. If in a congregation neither the local elementary school society nor a local CRTCA is available, an individual may make a cheque payable directly to the treasurer of the CRTCA (Mr. J. Gelderman, 491 Karen Drive, Burlington, Ontario L7R 3J2).

To facilitate the work of the treasurer

(Continued on page 338.)

news medley

Last time you had to do without a news medley and initially I thought that also this time there would be no material for me to write one. I shall not say too much about our dear inside postal workers, even though — according to one of my good friends — I do very well when “fulminating against” them. Thanks for the compliment, John, but I wished it were not necessary. Tonight I saw a beautiful cartoon in the paper. It was in the form of a postage stamp, complete with the figure 17 (weeks maternity leave, namely, not cents), a woman with a baby, asking whether Jean-Claude Pierre would be a nice name for her child. The “stamp” was duly marked “Canada Maternity service (with occasional mail delivery).”

I must say (seeing the trickle of mail which has reached me since the strike was allegedly over) that the service hasn't improved any. I did get a few letters which should have reached me six weeks ago, but we'll forget about that.

However, you don't pay your subscription fee in order to re-read what the newspapers have already told you, and therefore we shall proceed. Perhaps I'll make your reading worthwhile by telling you about our experiences during the holidays; but first we go to see whether there is anything more important.

Brother and sister K.J. Riemersma of Burlington, Ontario, will celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary on September 3rd. With this fact we congratulate them from the heart. You have sufficient information about them in the write-up with their photograph, so that I am not going to tell you any more particulars. May it suffice to mention the fact and to assure our brother and sister that we rejoice with them.

Before I start telling about our holidays, I had better pass on some news from the Churches, and that may lead me to other things.

Thanks to the correspondents, some of whom saw to it that I should get the bulletin by personal delivery, we are aware of what is going on in some members of the federation. We start in Ontario.

From a few bulletins I learned that the society for a Home for the Aged in Ontario is planning on building a home in 1982. The place where this will be done is on a property adjacent to the Hamilton Church building. For such a Home for the Aged a location close to the Church building is a great asset. It will enable the elderly brothers and sisters to go to Church and meet with the Congregation without too much effort. It is also quite feasible to connect such a Home with the sound-system of the Church building so that the residents who can no longer come together with the Congregation yet are enabled to hear what is going on, to join in prayer and singing, and thus feel more involved than would be possible via cassettes or other tapes.

A disadvantage may be the location far away from shopping centers and other facilities, but that can be overcome.

Gradually the area around the Hamilton Church building becomes sort of crowded. There is the Church building with the parsonage, then there is the elementary school, there is the high school, and now there will be a home for the aged. We must watch out that we do not es-

tablish temple-complexes; centralization has never proved to be to the real advantage of the Church. I would rather have seen some spreading of the facilities, but I am no member of the Hamilton Church and therefore proceed to a different topic now.

The Consistory of Watford tells us that “Church attendance and the services in the Dutch language were discussed. The consistory is contemplating the termination of the services in the Dutch language. A decision on this matter will be made in the next meeting.”

I have not found that a decision was made in the next meeting; I did not even find an indication that the matter was discussed at the next meeting, and therefore I have to keep you in suspense as far as this is concerned. Insofar as I can see it, Watford is (or was?) one of the very few Churches where some of the regular services are still conducted in the Dutch language; there are still a few Churches where Dutch services are conducted as “extras.”

The Watford Consistory also discussed the new liturgical forms which were adopted by Synod Smithville. The new form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper will be used; the form for the administration of baptism will be discussed.

“Also, attention was given to the recommendation of Synod Smithville to use the RSV of the Bible in the public worship services. It was decided to try to gather more information concerning this matter.”

It is not clear what is meant by “concerning this matter.” It is clear that more information cannot be gathered about the decision of Smithville. All the information which is official is contained in the Acts, and no one can give any further authoritative information. I gather, therefore, that Watford means: regarding the RSV. There must be ample information about that.

In a subsequent Consistory report we read that it was decided to multiply “now available liturgical forms as accepted by Synod Smithville and have them available for church members.”

I happen to know that the committee appointed by Synod Smithville has prepared a revised text and that this text will be made available to the Churches in due time. I tell you this in order to prevent unnecessary work and expenses. It is my impression that a sufficient number of copies will be made available, although I do not know when we can expect them.

The Guelph Consistory also made a decision regarding those forms.

“It was decided that from now on the new Liturgical Forms will be used in our Church. Members of the congregation will then have the opportunity to comment on these new forms. When the situation arises . . . everyone is urged to take the Acts of Synod Smithville to Church for referral purposes.”

We make a big jump and are there faster than we could manage this summer by car: we go all the way to the West coast.

A team from the Surrey Church will visit Brazil to “inspect” the work and to discuss various questions with the missionary workers down there. The Consistory drew up a mandate for this committee. “A copy of the mandate will be sent to the supporting churches with the understanding that several items will lead to several other aspects of our mission in Brazil.” I understand that several words can be used to describe several aspects which do not mean one bit to several people which will lead to frustration with several others. Do you get it? If you don't want to say anything, why say anything at all?

I think that it is a very wise thing to send a committee down to get acquainted with the work and the problems. One can do his best to write as precisely and succinctly as possible, but it is never possible to describe a situation and condition so that an adequate impression is received. That is the same with our writing to relatives in the old country: they have to have been here if they are to understand what we are writing about. For the mission workers themselves it is also very encouraging when they receive visitors from the home Church with whom they can describe things, knowing that now the discussions in the home Consistory can be more meaningful.

I wish the brethren a safe and fruitful journey. And please, give us some meaningful information upon your return. Let the *Mission News* be full, so that we can take over from it all that will enable all our people to remember the work in their prayers.

We conclude our factual reporting in Langley. "A proposal that all the coffee, cream, and sugar served in the church (except privately organized parties) be paid for by the church is unanimously adopted." Bravo for the Langley Church! Perhaps it will urge members to become a member of a society, for then they will get their free cup of coffee.

No, I am not criticizing the decision, I am seriously applauding it. Should not all activities in the Church be supported by all in the Church? And when things can be made more cozy, why should we not do it? Perhaps some other Churches feel like following the example.

This past summer we had an opportunity to visit the Langley Church. I even had the privilege of conducting services. It is a beautiful building although (and no one will be surprised to hear that) it is far too big. A projected seating capacity of 500 is no good, I am convinced. However, that does not take anything away of my appreciation for the building as such. The only thing that I could find wrong with my superficial "inspection" was the mid-get-size pulpit, but I understood that this will be corrected. I like the semi-circle or quarter-circle in front of the pulpit. It brings one closer to the Congregation and prevents that part of the Congregation is so far removed from the pulpit that contact is lost. The various facilities also appeared very functional.

It was good not only to see the new Church building here and in Chilliwack, it was also good to renew the bonds with the brotherhood there and everywhere. We visited quite a few Congregations, in fact, we were in Surrey, Langley, Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Houston, Smithers, and Winnipeg. Not bad for an amateur, is it? And then I should also mention Carman, with its new Church building. The swivel-chairs are not there as yet, but I was at least partially right when assuming that they were planned in order to improve the elders' chances of looking at right angles at the minister in the pulpit.

When we were in Smithers, we heard from the Rev. Van Spronsen that there seems to be more and more interest in the Okanagan Valley. He himself had spoken an edifying word in one of the gatherings and estimated that there were about seventy people present, many of whom were holidayers, but they were there. We ourselves did not have an opportunity to visit the brotherhood in the Okanagan, but what could not be done this year may belong to the possibilities of next year. We heard of a few families that are planning to move to the Kelowna area. Perhaps there will be a Church there after all. I was happy to hear of the encouraging development.

In several Congregations we talked with people about the planned social-political magazine and I noticed



Mr. and Mrs. K.J. Riemersma of 1363-509 Lakeshore Drive, Burlington, Ont. (L7S 1B2), will celebrate their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary, the Lord willing, on September 3rd. They were married in Marum, Groningen, in 1931, but lived in Enschede for most of their married life in The Netherlands. There also their five children were born. In 1954 they emigrated to Canada and came to Fergus first; they settled, however, in Burlington, where Mr. Riemersma had his own business. After Mr. Riemersma had to have one leg amputated, they retired. That was a few years ago. They are in their early seventies and are enjoying reasonably good health; in any case, they are able to travel to their heart's content. They also experienced great joy in receiving three great-grandchildren.

On their anniversary day a dinner with children and grandchildren will be enjoyed. Those children and grandchildren will be coming from the East, West, North, and South of Canada. Have a good and pleasant day!

some fear hear and there that this new magazine would mean competition for *Clarion*. There was concern with some of the brothers and sisters with whom I talked that *Clarion* would suffer from the new magazine. "You have so much trouble already," it was said, "to fill *Clarion* that the new magazine will take away whatever support you might get for the contents of the former."

I have tried to allay those fears. I appreciate very much the concern which was expressed and hope from the heart that we shall get more and more cooperation from colleagues and others to provide our Church people with good, solid, truly Reformed articles.

However, the new magazine has a different set-up and a different purpose. Of course, its purpose is to listen to God's Word first of all and in that way it does not differ in any respect from what we intend to do in *Clarion*. But then: it is intended to be a social-economic-political magazine which will not deal specifically with those points which are typically Canadian Reformed. *Clarion* is for our own people, whereas the new magazine is not only for our own people but also for those who are without, to show

them the Light of God's Word over against the lies of Satan and the darkness which has covered the earth.

We of *Clarion* wholeheartedly support this new endeavour and are not afraid in the least that we might suffer from its success. I wish to urge everyone to take out a subscription for himself and, possibly, for someone else, so that this enterprise may be a success. When we have an opportunity to spread the light of God's Word upon every event in life and every trend which we discover, we must use it. Don't be afraid that there will be a sort of competition between the two. Competition — No. Cooperation — Yes.

During the recent postal strike many readers were surprised to receive their *Clarion* earlier than they had received it when no strike was going on. That was the fruit of the courier service of which Premier Printing availed themselves. Although the cost was considerably higher, yet they expressed the wish in many cases to receive the magazine in the same manner every time. Some even said that they were willing to pay a dollar or two extra if that were necessary.

The sending of our magazine is a matter for the publisher, but I do happen to know that on the average it will cost perhaps as much as four dollars per subscriber more if the magazine is shipped by private courier and then distributed by the correspondents each and every time. That is then even apart from the question whether the publisher would lose his special mailing privileges if all of a sudden *Clarion* were shipped via different channels at least as far as the Canadian subscribers are concerned!

I do not know whether Premier Printing will take up the matter and will pursue it. There is more than one angle to it and I thought it to be wise to prepare you for it.

During our holidays we were privileged in meeting many brothers and sisters, some of whom we had not seen for many years. We experienced the unity of faith and enjoyed the greatness of our Father's creation. We drove many thousands of kilometres and oftentimes had the road for ourselves for scores of kilometres. At times we drove through regions where, if there were six or seven houses within half a kilometre, we could read signs, "Congested Area." We saw deer and wolf, we heard the cry of the loon and admired the soaring of the hawks.

We also noticed the different driving habits in the various parts of the Western provinces. One of the most impolite cities as far as yielding to oncoming traffic is concerned is the city of Kamloops, B.C. We enjoyed its hospitality, but had to put the brake on whenever we approached a traffic light: someone would come from the right and, without stopping, pull up in front of us.

We saw the disastrous effects of strikes when mills were lying there idle, their bins sometimes still breathing out a weak puff of smoke, remnant from days when there was activity all over the place. We saw the politeness of the drivers in the prairie provinces who would move over to the shoulder of the road whenever someone wished to pass them. We experienced the stubbornness of some drivers pulling trailers who refused to budge or to pull over even though ten or fifteen cars were held up by them. I recall having seen signs telling drivers to use pull-outs if five cars were behind them on only one highway. It is the No. 20 in northern Washington State, if I am not mistaken. Only once I saw an RCMP car pull up to a hay-truck, telling the driver to move over and let the traffic pass.

One more thing I wish to relate.

We have no television set, as you know. During our

holidays we stayed in motels many a night and then also put on the television set. We enjoyed the news and the Medicine Show. But that is about all. We also enjoyed seeing the wedding of the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer. As for the rest: what we saw was mostly junk and made us the more determined not to purchase a set. Everything is so fake and so base that we turned away in disgust.

At times we looked in the morning and thus saw also some religious broadcasts. Actually I should have put the word "religious" between quotation marks. There were moments when it was outright blasphemous. All the "players" had a perfect set of teeth and were attractive to look at. Of course, for otherwise the viewers would be repelled. Who wants to look at an "ugly" face? Everything was timed perfectly, even the "prayers" and the cameras did their work in an admirable way: just the right effect, just the right moment, just the right pose and angle. Even puppets were used to proclaim the "gospel," but I heard very little of the real message which the Lord wishes to give us.

As a whole, the religious shows were money-making propositions. No indulgences were promised, it must be said, but the gifts of one hundred, one thousand, or even ten thousand dollars that were solicited certainly would bring their rewards. And the postal strike should not prevent anyone from getting his donation through: name and address to which donations should be sent were displayed very prominently: you could not have missed it even if you had wished to do so with all your might.

I was the more grateful for the simple character of our services and for the glorious truth which is being proclaimed to our people without any gimmicks. Let us spread the Word in all simplicity. Even if we don't get many reactions to our radio broadcasts, let's keep going. Over against the hollowness and emptiness of the talk of many we may bring the loaded message which we pass on in obedience to Christ's command.

During the above mentioned wedding ceremony I heard the thoroughly humanistic speech of the archbishop of Canterbury. Not one word from Scripture! Poor people who are instructed in that manner. Woe the church that has such leaders. They bring a message which has no contents; they proclaim a gospel which brings no true salvation; they preach a hope which has no firm foundation. They have no standards and therefore cannot bind by any; they have no basis themselves and therefore cannot prevent others from sinking in the mire.

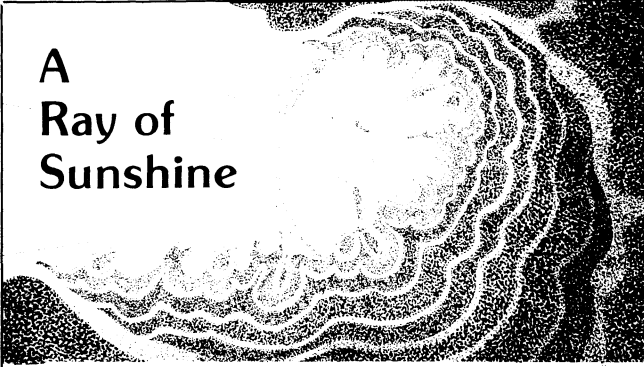
Hold on to what you have received, that no one take your crown.

vO

Proverbs 2:1-5

My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making you ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

A Ray of Sunshine



Fear not, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them. II Kings 6:16

Do we not all need reassurance sometimes? In this chapter — II Kings 6 — we read the story of Elisha's servant, a young man who became very worried when he noticed the horses and chariots and a great army surrounding his master. He asked Elisha in fear, "What shall we do?" Then Elisha answered him, "Fear not, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed, and said, "O Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see." So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

It is because we are blind to God's strength and power, His love and protection, that we feel insecure.

In Zechariah 2:5 we read about God's wonderful promise of protection of Jerusalem, "For I will be to her a wall of fire round about, says the Lord, and I will be the glory within her." And in Psalm 125 we read, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people." In Psalm 91 we read, "For He will give His angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways."

Our security lies in God's faithfulness. We may know that when we call upon Him and His Holy Name, He will hear us. David also experienced this and confessed in Psalm 34:4, "I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears."

Today, we, too, may confess together with Paul when he

wrote to the people in Rome, "If God is for us, who is against us?"

Father, to Thee we sing with high exultant voice,
Praise to Thine only Son, the Saviour of Thy choice,
Praise to Thy spirit, whom Thy hand has sent to guide us
To be the Source of Light which on the road abides us;
Thy Church will sing Thy Name, where Thou hast called
and bound her
Thine everlasting care bends like a wall around her.

Hymn 46:3
Book of Praise

* * * * *

On our birthday calendar for the month of September we have:

MARY VANDE BURGT

2789 Lehman Road,
R.R. 1, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1M3

The Lord willing, Mary will celebrate her 25th birthday on September 11. She is slightly handicapped because of a heart defect. She helps at home; baking and handicrafts are her hobbies. She loves to receive mail! Shall we surprise her with many cards for her birthday?

* * * * *

PAUL DIELEMAN

307 Connaught Ave.,
Willowdale, Ontario
M2R 2M1

The Lord willing, Paul will celebrate his 12th birthday on September 29. He is Jack's brother. Paul attends a special school. He likes caring for animals, and playing the piano. Brothers and sisters, now that the mail is moving once again, shall we remember to send cards?

Send your requests to:

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

PRESS RELEASE

Classis Contracta of the Canadian Reformed Churches of Classis Ontario-South held on Wednesday, August 5, 1981, in Chatham.

Art. 1, Opening. Br. S. VanderHeide opens the meeting with reading Ephesians 1:1-14 and leads in prayer after which he speaks a few words concerning the chapter he read.

Art. 2, Credentials. The delegates from the Church at Watford examine the credentials. The credentials are found to be in order. The Churches at Chatham, London, and Watford have sent delegates.

Art. 3, Constitution. Classis Contracta is constituted. Elder S. VanderHeide is appointed chairman; the Rev. P.K.A. de Boer, scribe.

Art. 4, Agenda. The agenda is adopted.

Art. 5, Approbation of the acceptance of the call to the Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey, B.C. by the Rev. J. Geertsema. All the required documents are present and in order.

Art. 6, Letter of Release. Classis Contracta agrees upon a letter by which the Rev. J. Geertsema is honourably released from Classis Ontario South. This letter is signed.

Art. 7, Question Period. a. The delegates from the Church at Chatham inform Classis Contracta that the Rev. J. Geertsema will have a farewell sermon, D.V., on August 16, 1981, at 1:30 p.m. b. Br. F. Wilderboer is delegated to attend the scheduled farewell service on behalf of Classis Ontario-South.

Art. 8, Farewell. The Chairman expresses gratitude to the Lord for the work Rev. J. Geertsema has done in Chatham and the sister Churches. He expresses the

wish that the Lord may bless and strengthen Rev. J. Geertsema in the work he is called to do in the Church at Surrey and Classis Pacific. He wishes him and his family the best and a safe journey to the place where he has been called.

Art. 9, Adoption of Acts. The acts are read and adopted.

Art. 10, Press Release. The press release is read and approved.

Art. 11, Closing. Br. F. Wilderboer leads in closing prayer. The Chairman closes the meeting.

On behalf of Classis,
REV. P.K.A. DE BOER

OUR COVER

*Looking towards the ranges,
North of Gaguop, Irian-Jaya.
(Photo Courtesy Bram Vegter.)*

PRESS RELEASE CRTCA — Cont.

the following is decided. The Executive Committee will annually send a letter to the contact person (governor or otherwise) in places where a Canadian Reformed Church is located, requesting information and commitment as to the number of people supporting the CRTCA.

The following Budget (Sept. 1, 1981-Aug. 31, 1982) is accepted:

A. Organizational Expenses	
1. Travel and meeting expenses, Ex. Com.	\$ 500.00
2. Travel expenses, Annual Meeting.	3,500.00
3. Administration, telephone.	1,250.00
4. Newsletter	2,000.00
5. Miscellaneous	1,250.00
	<hr/>
	8,500.00
B. Operating Expenses	
6. Salaries (Principal, Teacher, Part-time, Secretary)	65,000.00
7. Building, Supplies, Equipment, Furniture	4,000.00
8. Practice Teaching	2,500.00
9. Library	5,000.00
	<hr/>
	76,500.00
Total Budget	\$85,000.00

The following societies and/or associations have committed support; Abbotsford/Chilliwack, William of Orange, Smithers, Carman, Winnipeg, Neerlandia, Brampton, Burlington, Orangeville, Chatham, Hamilton, London, Lincoln/Smithville.

For those (nine?) congregations from which, unfortunately, little or no support has been realized, a "drive" has been started.

Decided is that the present membership fee of \$75.00 annually will not be raised, pending the results of the "drive." A decision to increase the membership fee, if necessary, will be made after the results of the "drive," to be completed Nov. 1, 1981, are known.

2. *Property.* Commitments to property have been limited. Presently a one-year agreement is in effect with the church of Hamilton for use of some of their meeting rooms. Furniture and equipment bought reflect these temporary arrangements. Future activities and plans are discussed but remain subject to yet unforeseen developments.

Ratification of the Executive Committee's actions for the year 1980-1981 takes place.

A retirement schedule is proposed and accepted. Retiring from the Board in 1981 are, from Ontario: E. Kampen and A. Witten; from Manitoba: T. Veenendaal.

Publication of CRTCA matters will include using the *Clarion* for press releases and the *Association Newsletter* when feasible.

On behalf of the Board of the CRTCA,
A. WITTEN



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.

Divorce in America is on the rise, more than tripling the number of broken marriages 20 years ago, according to a recent government study. About 1.8 million divorces were granted in 1979, the largest national total ever recorded in the U.S. In 1959, 395,000 marriages were dissolved. Although the average number of children per divorcing couple has declined, an increasing number of children were involved in broken marriages, say the National Center for Health Statistics. (CT)

Dancing has been ruled out as an activity of the "Y" in Norway. The board of the YMCA and YWCA there voted unanimously, saying dancing is not fit for creating a sound, Christian milieu. They urged Christian youth groups that sponsor dancing to reconsider. (CT)

Pentecostal believers in Medias, Romania, have been stymied for nearly two years by the withdrawal of a building permit. Based on oral permission, the 200 to 300 members of one church had already built the basement for their new building when authorities ordered them to stop, and cut off gas and electricity. The temporarily roofed-over structure has no windows, so the believers meet using oil lamps for light, and wood fires for heat — filling the building in winter with smoke. (CT)

The Mozambique government has eased restrictions on Christians, but many churches remain closed. According to Ron Mathies, Men-

nonite missionary to Swaziland, 28 Anglican and 2 United Methodist Churches are still closed, six years after President Samora Machel took office and pledged to transform the country into "the first truly Marxist state in Africa." However, Protestant pastors in some areas recently regained the right to conduct weddings and funerals, pray for the sick in hospitals, and even to work in cooperation with the government in assistance programs. "We no longer hear the old slogan, 'Down with religion — God does not exist,'" said the general secretary of the Christian Council of Mozambique, ID. Mahlalela. (CT)

"What's this, some kind of Christian Marxism?" asked a puzzled reporter in the *Deccan Herald* last month. He was referring to the seventh assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia just concluded in Bangalore, India. The columnist professed to be mystified by Christians who gather in luxury hotels to talk about the world's oppressed, who disapprove of converting people to Christianity, and who work against established governments. (CT)

Ministers in record numbers are being fired or leaving their jobs for other careers. According to a number of recent surveys, this trend is due to minister burnout, an emotional deterioration that occurs in most high-pressure professions. The condition often results in loss of motivation and enthusiasm, and in doubts about the validity of the call to ministry — even uncertainty about personal faith. (CT)

Psalm 14:1, 2

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none that does good. The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any that act wisely, that seek after God.

Books

Richard J. Niebanck, *Economic Justice: An Evangelical Perspective*. Published by the Division for Mission in North America, Lutheran Church in America, 231 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016, 159 pp., US \$2.50 plus 50¢ postage. Reviewed by J. De-Jong.

This book is an attempt to come to grips with the increasing problems and complexities of economic life in the world today. It is written from a modern Lutheran perspective, and essentially gives the theoretical foundation to the social statement "Economic Justice: Stewardship of Creation in Human Community," adopted by the tenth Biennial Convention of the Lutheran Church in America in the summer of 1980. While the views expressed are entirely those of the author, it is obvious that his views are also amply reflected in the adopted statement. The social statement is included in an Appendix, along with a statement on Lutheran World Relief adopted by the seventh Biennial Convention.

While remaining essentially consistent with Lutheran dogma, the book seeks to develop a view of economic justice that will give perspective to Christians in the complicated economic climate that shapes our world today. According to Niebanck, the new world order has resulted in greater interdependency between economics and politics and ethics, and therefore the church must address itself to the urgent economic issues facing the world today. In formulating his definition of economic justice, Niebanck makes a decisive break with the older non-interventionist views about economics, while simultaneously steering away from the mirky waters of the radical left with its use of Marxian categories in defining the church's task today. Economic justice, according to Niebanck, must be more than just making sure that everybody plays according to the rules of the game, yet it must be something less than the actual implementation of God's righteousness on earth, in the sense it is maintained by the proponents of liberation theology.

While there are certain features of this approach which are in themselves commendable, on the whole it must be said that Niebanck fails in developing a truly evangelical perspective on economic justice, or on any issue in economics facing believ-

ers today. This failure stems from his view that the Bible is the "written precipitate of the church's living witness to the saving activity of God," and as such cannot be directly applied to economic issues today. He calls his approach an "evangelical" approach, but at the same time repeatedly distinguishes it from the perspective which holds that the Bible gives fixed norms which can be applied to specific economic situations in history. For him, the Bible is an essentially human book, fully historical, and subject to the same critical techniques that are applied to any other such documents.

As an example of his approach, Niebanck takes one of the passages in which Christ speaks about the last judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). He claims that both liberation theology and the "status quo" exegetes misread this pericope, because they fail to take into consideration what Matthew's purposes really were. Arguing on the basis of Matthew's purposes, Niebanck says that the righteous set apart by Christ are not Christians but "tolerant and comparatively humane pagans benignly oblivious of the Christians living in their midst," (p. 78). They inherit the Kingdom because they have shown help to the believers, "these my brethren."

This example illustrates only too well how much Scripture criticism has made its inroads in the Lutheran Church, and how powerless these views are against the spirit of this age. While purporting to travel a golden mean, the book in effect falls prey to the standard "social gospel" of the day, and does not provide any firm opposition to the teachings of liberation theology or the revolutionary activities carried on in the name of Christ by the World Council of Churches. The social statement also gives a task to the Church far surpassing the task given to her by the Lord Himself when He ascended into heaven, Acts 1:8.

Of course, the dangers of literalism and biblicism cannot be overlooked. But we cannot make any progress unless the full inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures are maintained. If that starting point is denied, then the conclusions cannot be of any help to the Church today. And that, unfortunately, is the case with this book. ■

"THEY STILL BRING FORTH FRUIT IN OLD AGE . . ."

THE FULNESS OF LIFE: *Aging and the Older Adult*, edited by CEDRIC W. TILBERG, for the "Christian Social Responsibility Series," for The Division for Mission in North America, Lutheran Church in America. 1980.

In addition to the title (!) two quotations will tell you what kind of view is taken in this book on "retirement," "old age," and such. On "The Aging Process" we read, p. 13,

Although some signs of aging do occur in the 30's and 40's (*adulthood*), the questions with which we will deal in this book relate primarily to *the three stages of advanced adulthood* [stress mine, vD]: *middle age* (40's and 50's), *later maturity* (60's and 70's) and *old age* (late 70's, 80's and 90's).

It becomes clear that in this book what we call "old age" and "retirement" is considered part of "The Fulness of Life," a "fulness" that throughout the book is meant as "fruitfulness." The pillar on which this approach to "old age" rests, is the fact that man is created in (or after or as) *the image of God*. In this sense the whole book is, next to very practical and helpful, profoundly biblical.

The second quotation is from p. 69. There the term "*ageism*" is introduced (it occurs throughout the book). *Webster* does not know the word. I suspect that the writer coined it and meant it as an ugly word. Listen:

Consider the phenomenon called ageism — an automatic prejudice toward the elderly solely on the basis of chronological age — and the paternalistic efforts to do things for older people rather than open up full opportunities for them to participate freely in church and community.

The author is fully convinced and tries hard to convince his readers of the truth of the words from Psalm 92, put at the head of this review. He would also underline that moving picture in the closing verses of Isaiah 40, "the faint who renew their strength."

One already expects that he is opposed to forced retirement at a certain age, be it 70, 65, or even 60. The chapter on "Mandatory Retirement" starts with Winston Churchill who at 62 was a failure. Three years later he was called to save his country! The U.S.A. has an attitude quite different from The Netherlands, even from our sister churches there: "Sociological arguments, as well as those based upon a biblical understanding of man, support the recent U.S. government act lifting the minimum man-

datory retirement age in private industry from 65 to 70. 'The Bible assumes work to be the natural activity of man' (Psalm 104). The basic assumption of the biblical viewpoint is that work is a part of the divinely ordered structure of the world and human nature," p. 33. This being the case, the main question that we expect to be answered by this book is how our brothers and sisters of "later maturity" shall, instead of being pampered and often treated like dependent creatures who have to be kept busy with childish games (we speak from experience), be kept busy in a fruitful way. It is impossible to mention everything suggested in this book within the limits of a "review." But one is pleasantly surprised when the book suggests that here lies a great responsibility for the Christian community, the congregation, to make use of the gifts and talents of our older brothers and sisters who no longer have (in most cases anyway) to "work for a living." Yes, there are those wonderful persons of "later maturity" who keep themselves busy, in volunteer work, by going back to school (university), and the like. This book, however, has made the present writer painfully aware of a lack within our own congregations. One may think, first of all, of a near-total lack of engaging the time and talents of older sisters for certain services within the communion of saints. As to the men, there are lots of things, like bookkeeping, the administration of the membership, the care for the archives, and more such activities, all necessary but mostly burdened upon younger shoulders that are already burdened and hardly spend time with their families. We think especially of the age which, among us, is obviously considered the best for serving the Lord and His church in the offices of elder and deacon. There seems to be an inclination to remove from the nomination any brother who is approaching his so-called "retirement age," i.e. 65. But think, first of the time that becomes available; then of the accumulated experience and (one may expect: on that basis) wisdom of older brethren who are still vital and alert, who have lived the life of a living member of God's church; who — this also — could be excellent assistants to the minister or preacher by sharing with him the task of pastoral care in cases that devour your time.

Yes, the book also mentions possibilities to serve fruitfully in the community of town and village. One thinks of the hospitals, meals-on-

wheels, and many other activities. In this context I would like to mention a burning controversy in the beautiful city of Burlington, which built a beautiful "Senior Citizen Centre." The controversy? Among those who visit this centre are several persons who have had a position of leadership and responsibility. They would like the Centre turned over to them, in the sense that they are responsible for the running, for programs, etc. The city, however, wants to maintain the staff of (highly) paid "officials" who have been appointed to keep the "old people" happy with all kinds of (often silly) programs. The earlier-mentioned ladies and gentlemen assert that this is a big waste of money: all these officials; but even more: they feel offended by being treated as kids who have to be kept busy and happy in playing their games. The flames of the controversy are still burning high: there may even come a "vrijmaking," or liberation . . .

Back to the book. In addition to the main stress — keep busy and lead a fruitful life as long as you can — it also pays detailed attention to the times that one becomes dependent. I only mention that on p. 96ff. no fewer than 30 (thirty!) points are mentioned that should be brought up in choosing a nursing home. And, at whatever stage of dependence one has come, always respect the person; give him/her as much freedom, also freedom of choice, as possible; do not

offend him/her who is made as the image of God!

Yes, a nursing home means that one can no longer stay "at home." It is the considered opinion of this book that "home is the single most important element in the life of an older person," p. 84. One should, therefore, never be "pushed" out of his/her/their home because others (relatives or well-meaning fellow-believers) think that they can no longer manage. We mention this stress on independent living, p. 85ff., in order to show the direction of this book.

We would love to continue for some time, but must come to a conclusion, which is — first — a recommendation, not only to older people, but to all who have leading positions, especially in the church, also for those who have older relatives, whom they want to honour and love and care for till the end. It is, in our opinion, a "must" for office-bearers (all of them!) and students at the College. This book, after a summary of a "theology of aging," will also serve the reader with an extensive *bibliography* on what has become an important branch of medical, theological, psychological and social studies: "gerontology," or the science on getting older. That's important to us all: we all are, every day, getting older. That should not scare us like the ladies who flee to the help of Oil of Olay, but it should cause us to rejoice because we are getting closer to the eternal dwellings. G. VANDOOREN

school X crossing

Once again "School Crossing" may be expected to appear at regular intervals.

Mr. N. Vandooren, principal of the school community in Fergus-Guelph, has offered to take care of this column, and we have gratefully accepted this offer.

Although most of the school bulletins are already sent to various schools, and although Mr. Vandooren does receive quite a few, there may be some that appear regularly but have not yet reached these regions.

We therefore request every society and every school that issues a bulletin or newsletter to send a copy of it to:

Mr. N. Vandooren
Emmanuel Christian High School
57 Suffolk Street W.,
Guelph, Ontario N1H 2J1

It is the intention that "School Crossing" will appear in every other issue. As soon as sufficient material has been received, you'll again find one of your favoured columns restored to life.

vO

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers!

Here we are back again.

How are you all doing?

Did you enjoy your holidays?

I'm curious what kind of adventures you've had! I've missed hearing from you!

Anyway here's hoping you're all ready for your next school year.

But before you go there's still time for our Summer Contest, don't you think?

Be sure to join in everybody!

Do the quizzes as carefully and as neatly as you can and send them in right away to:

Aunt Betty

Box 54,

Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7

Here we go! Here's:

QUIZ #1

Name Please!

1. Peter stayed in his home during his visit to Joppa.
2. She gave God everything she possessed.
3. The apostle who heard the Lord Jesus' voice from heaven.
4. He introduced Paul to the Lord's disciples.
5. The most favoured of women.
6. She came a great distance to see Solomon.
7. The man who told everyone in the Ten Towns what Jesus had done for him.
8. He was eager to preach the good news in Rome.
9. He was commanded to take off his shoes.
10. This evangelist rode in a chariot.
11. He was mighty in physical strength but weak in resisting temptation.
12. Jesus called him the first martyr.

QUIZ #2

Of Whom was it Said?

1. Of whom was it said that none greater was ever born?
2. Of whom was it said, "She hath done what she could"?
3. Of whom was it said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth"?
4. Of whom was it said, "Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting"?
5. Of whom was it said, "Saul slew his thousands and ___ his ten thousands"?
6. Of whom was it said, "... he that cometh after me is mightier than I...?"
7. Of whom was it said, "Is not this the carpenter's son"?
8. Of whom was it said, "And they were both righteous before God"?
9. Of whom was it said that she "pondered these things in her heart"?

10. Of whom was it said, "This woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did"?
11. Of whom did Paul say, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you...?"
12. Of whom was it said, "She served God acceptably with reverence and godly fear"?
13. Of whom was it said, "I have lent him to the Lord"?
14. Of whom was it said, "He was a choice young man... there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he"?

QUIZ #3

Please Match

- | Bible Passage | New Testament Book |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." | a. John |
| 2. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." | b. Revelation |
| 3. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." | c. Colossians |
| 4. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." | d. Hebrews |
| 5. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." | e. II Timothy |
| 6. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." | f. Matthew |
| 7. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." | g. James |
| 8. "Pure religion and undefiled before God is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world." | h. I John |
| 9. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, but the greatest of these is charity." | i. Philippians |
| 10. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." | j. I Corinthians |

* * * * *

Time to wish all those Busy Beavers celebrating their birthday in September a very happy day with their family and friends. May the Lord bless and keep you in the year ahead!

We missed the birthday list for August, but we hope those Busy Beavers had a good day already, and the same good wishes go for them, too, of course!