

# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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## Round About the Pulpit <sup>5</sup>

### A COOPERATIVE PEW

In the fourth instalment we dwelt upon certain things that the “pew” (and we mean the people in the pew) can and must do “*after* the pulpit,” i.e. after the sermon has been delivered. This time we will ask what the pew can do *before* the pulpit. This question can only be asked by those who are convinced that preaching within the covenantal liturgy is a two-way business and matter. Several things will be mentioned that may, under the blessing of the Lord, improve that two-way business so that the “preaching situation,” as previously explained, may more and more become reality.

#### a. *Prayer for the Pulpit*

Not many words are needed to stress the need for constant prayer for the preacher and his preaching. He himself will never become a good preacher if his sermon preparation is not “drenched” in prayers. Prayer is the “channel” through which the Holy Spirit works.

Just an hour before this was written I heard a poem about the preacher: he lives in a house of glass; we see him and criticize him, but we should rather build a wall of prayer around our pastor and preacher (so we can summarize the poem). Such prayer, personal as well as family prayers, should be sent to the mercy seat, not only on Sunday morning — that’s a bit late, too late really, if it was not preceded by prayers during the week, when our minister was wrestling in his study to get hold of the divine message for his flock. Lord’s Day 35 speaks of “living preaching.” The congregation will have to “pull” such living preaching out of the minister’s study, during the days of the week. If one doubts whether that will make much difference for the pulpit, he offends the Lord who gladly hears such prayers, and he quenches the Holy Spirit who works in the praying congregation by the preaching.

#### b. *Announcements*

The preacher should help the congregation in preparing themselves for the preaching. The most simple means is a bulletin that informs them about the theme of the upcoming sermon(s). It isn’t much, but in the minutes before the service the interested churchgoer can look it up in his Bible and get ready to receive this message as formulated in the theme.

Several homileticians urge preachers to make a *program* for the pulpit. They suggest that such programming is good for self-discipline of the preacher. It also spares him the weekly anxiety of “finding” a text. With Spurgeon we say, “Not the pulpit should drive the minister to a text, but the text must drive him to the pulpit!”

Although we fully agree with the need for self-discipline, we doubt whether every preacher is able to develop such a program for a long period of time. In any case, if he makes a program, he should inform the congregation, and do that in a clear way that awakens their interest. He should explain why he has chosen such and such a program for the coming weeks. He should add some advice as to how the congregation can avail itself of more information about the Bible passages that will be preached on. Even a “superficial” preparation on the side of the “pew” will greatly enhance their interest in what the minister is

going to say the coming Sunday.

A simpler form of “programming” is preaching *series* of sermons. There are many and various possibilities for setting up series of sermons, too many to mention here. The College tries to train future preachers also in this matter. But the benefits are obvious. First, the benefit for the preacher. He can concentrate on a certain Bible book, or part of a book. Maybe he buys an additional commentary; anyway he makes an in-depth study of this part of God’s Word. Although every sermon ought to be a *unit* in itself, yet it is also a *part* of a series. And there lies the benefit for the pew. They know what is coming and remember what they had last week. They make it a custom to bring this Bible passage into the family worship, and possibly some have the means (all should have!) to make some study on the text. That will only sharpen the listening ear. It will intensify the interest and thus prepare the soil for the seed. Yet, the above-mentioned possibilities, though helpful, do not activate the congregation in order to give their input into the preaching. For that purpose more is needed.

#### c. *The Congregation a Source for the Sermon?*

Some readers know the Dutch expression that “een dominee moet zijn preek uit de gemeente halen” (a minister must get his sermon out of the congregation). Some would protest, “No! the only source for the sermon is the Bible.” Before you agree, you’d better assume that there is an element of truth in this saying. T. SIEBESMA, in his *Herders Worden Schaars* (“Shepherds Become Scarce,” Amsterdam, 1974) quotes extensively from a sermon of JOHN CALVIN on Ephesians 4:11, 12: Christ gave gifts; His gifts were . . . pastors and teachers to equip the saints . . . Among the many practical remarks in this sermon, we were especially struck by two: first, that a minister should not flit from the one congregation to the other, because he must, as a shepherd, know his members as the Good Shepherd knows his flock, i.e. by name, and in their needs, doubts, struggles, and so on. That takes years. He has to preach to the needs of his flock. In that sense one will agree with that idea of “getting your sermon out of the congregation”: a pastor walks in the midst of his flock. In his contact with them he tells about his plans to preach on this or that. He tries to get, and will get, reactions that may be very helpful to him in the preparation of his sermons. The present writer speaks from decades of experience. (The second remark, only indirectly related to the topic under discussion, was that ministers should not exchange pulpits too often. The flock knows the voice of its own shepherd best, and they should, as a rule, find him, every time, in his own pulpit.) In the above sense, the congregation can indeed produce a substantial *input* in the preaching. Happy the minister who has such a congregation, even though it may mean some criticism, too, now and then.

#### d. *Real Input by the Flock*

The rest of this article will ask attention for what has been suggested and is being practised outside our circle. We might not easily become impressed, yet we should listen. We start with R.L. ROXBURGH, *Pattern for*

*Change, A Handbook for Church Renewal*, Seattle, 1969. This booklet is discussed in *Get Out!* by the present writer, 2nd ed. 1979, Premier Printing, especially ch. VI, to which we refer. This "pattern" that Roxburgh introduced in his own church, with surprising results in spiritual growth, and also growth in numbers, boils down to the following. The congregation is divided into sections, or "neighbourhood bible groups." They get from the minister the chapter on which he will preach "next week." They all meet, discuss the chapter, and their secretary brings questions, remarks, etc., in writing to the minister in time before the next day of rest. Gathering all this material, in which the voice of the congregation speaks loudly, the minister continues the preparation of his sermon. You will understand that he has no problem in "filling" his sermon! You will also realize that all members who took part in this preparatory study go to church with eager expectation: What will the sermon tell us now? It is as with good music: the better you know it, the more you enjoy it.

One may say that the congregation "helped" the minister in the preparation of his sermon, and as a result receives a greater benefit from it. And the fruits came. Greater hunger for good, solid preaching. More benefit to take home and to multiply in the following days. Real spiritual growth that — one would say "automatically" — resulted in a growth in number, too. Only a spiritually blooming church may expect such growth. "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved," Acts 2:47.

We do not hesitate to recommend this "pattern." A sound decentralization in the congregation is already a thing-to-be-desired. If the ward-elders take the initiative in their ward by organizing such "groups," the minister will be found willing to say beforehand what he is going to preach about. (For further recommendations in this direction we again refer to *Get Out!* which is meant as a guide for congregational evangelism.) Evangelism may not be the (first) purpose, but it will become, in due time, the blessed result.

Everyone will benefit from it. Except, maybe . . . , the existing societies. This writer would not shed many tears on that. He once quoted an article in *Clarion* by a lady who declared that she had learned much more in a much shorter time in a "course" of this kind than in many more years in her women's society. It may even be possible to get the existing societies engaged in this "pattern for church renewal." Do we not need it?

Even if the minister would not feel able to participate fully, you can always start with that *fifty percent* of Reformed preaching that is based on the *Heidelberg Catechism*. Having heard a sermon on Lord's Day 22 last week, you can be pretty sure that next week you will hear one on Lord's Day 23! So you can prepare for it, personally, in the family, and also in the societies. That would bring back some of what Dort 1618/19 programmed for the churches. On Saturday the teachers had to explain to the young generation the Lord's Day that the minister was going to preach on the next day.

#### e. "Partners in Preaching"

That is the title of a book by REUEL L. HOWE, New York 1967. The subtitle is, *Clergy and Laity in Dialogue*. Title as well as subtitle will make you shake your head. Is this not the end of preaching? To replace that "one-man business" of preaching by a "dialogue," of all things! "Dialogue" nowadays means that teacher and student together walk the way towards the truth. There is no guar-

antee that they will ever find it, but they keep seeking it; and that's all we can do. "What is truth" anyway?

Well, one should have quite some criticism on this book, as far as it generalizes in an unfair way when it judges preaching. "The weakness of preaching stems from its wordiness and monological character; . . . But preaching does have power when it is dialogical, when preacher and people become partners in the discernment and proclamation by word and action of the Word of God in response to the issues of our day." That is what we read already on the first page of the Preface! Over against the great number of authors who claim new interest in and opportunities for "old-fashioned" preaching, Howe pens down, "Men will not hear the conventional sermon," p. 6. Some of his chapters have the expression "Dialogical Preaching" in their titles. And yet, after all such fireworks, he tones down quite a bit to a level on which even we could have a "dialogue" with him on such preaching in which the congregation becomes a "partner" to a certain extent. After all, the Bible does not belong to the minister; it is not a textbook for the "clergy." God gave His Word to the Church, and that still is the congregation of Christ-believers.

Howe comes down to reality when he remarks that a weakness of "conventional preaching is seen in the absence of *organized response or feedback* from the congregation" (p. 37, stress mine, vD). In chapter 9, "Implications of Dialogue for Preacher and Listener," he continues his remarks on "Preaching as a Cooperative Activity." Then it becomes clear that he does not want to do away with preaching-as-such. "If the preacher believes that he is preaching *with* his people, he is more apt to address them directly. In direct address one looks at people and is guided by their response." And then (emphasis mine): "*Verbal response from the congregation is not possible or desirable during the sermon . . .*" p. 86. Experience forces us to agree fully also with this statement, "Anyone who is at all observant, however, is aware of how much people respond *nonverbally*, especially if they are interiorly free to do so," p. 86.

Summarizing, we conclude that Howe is not that far from Roxburgh in stressing the need for two-way traffic between pulpit and pew.

If asked why we give attention to these "unheard" and strange things, we answer that we all, especially as Reformed believers, should fully practice what we confess. The church is gathered, protected, and preserved by *Word and Spirit*, Lord's Day 21. "Word," in the Catechism, is almost always the preaching of the Word, just as in Paul's mouth "the Gospel" is not a booklet but his preaching of the Good Tiding.

That is the heart of the church, and that heart will only remain healthy and throb vibrantly, if the pew is not only receptive but also cooperative. Still in the back of our mind there is that parable of the sower and the seed and the soil! So much seed fell by the wayside . . . 75%! That does not make for spiritual growth and for a healthy church, living and growing. Christ has provided for all this. It is up to us to "grab" the opportunities, to double the talents, to multiply the preaching.

We do not flatter ourselves by expecting that some magazine articles will have great effect. Also of these articles most falls by the wayside and does not bear fruit. Especially not when we are inclined by nature to be traditionalists in the wrong sense of the word. Yet, some indications, some suggestions have been given. We have even listened to others! Let's listen to Howe once more.

*Continued on page 475.*

## Justification by Faith — not a dead Faith <sup>3</sup>

In the previous Press Review I took over what Prof. Shepherd wrote to *The Presbyterian Journal*. He said among other things:

While the title to eternal life is given to us in our justification, the Lord leads us into possession of eternal life along the "Way of Holiness" (Isa. 35:8-10) . . . . The gospel not only exhorts men to believe and be saved (Acts 16:); but also demands "repentance unto life" (Luke 24:37; Acts 11:a).

I expressed agreement with this Biblical, covenantal way of speaking: the promise of God of eternal life will be fully realized in the way of a true — i.e.: living, active — faith. "Strive for holiness without which no one will see God." Justification and sanctification belong together as the two parts of Christ's salvation work. Following others, Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck wrote of a justification of the unjust, the sinner, and a justification of the just, the believer.

In a sermon on L.D. 23 of the Heidelberg Catechism, speaking about justification through faith, Prof. B. Holwerda writes: "Now this righteous God, i.e.: the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of perfect love, sits down on His judgment seat to pronounce sentence. He is going to reveal His justice. Where does He do that? For, you know, justification is an act of God as Judge, in which He acquits us and bestows upon us the rights of eternal life. But where and when does God perform this act of pronouncing acquittal? Where does God make known His pronouncement regarding us? Paul says: in the gospel. In it, the righteousness of God is revealed. God's righteousness is, as I just said, that, on the basis of Christ's work, God shows His love, grants acquittal, and bestows rights. But this He does through the Spirit. You know from the Form of Baptism that the Holy Spirit appropriates [makes our property, J.G.] what we have in Christ. The Spirit — that means: the word, the office, the church, the preaching. God justifies us in Christ, but through the Spir-

it. Here in church God comes with His sentence. Here He acquits. . . .

"God places His judgment seat here. We, alas, no longer know what preaching is. For one it is a profound discourse; for another it is a pious word. But it is acquittal. It is the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins, not just an exposition of the work of Christ, nor a discourse on how we can become partakers of it, but it is the proclamation that you have part in it. You are not told that you can receive the forgiveness of sins, nor how you can get it; but you are told that your sins are forgiven. John writes to the congregation: children, your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. That is preaching: pronouncing God's sentence."<sup>1</sup>

Holwerda then refers to Romans 4:5 where the apostle Paul writes that God justifies the ungodly, and says: "My faith never is first; the promise is first. . . . Is that not a contradiction? Scripture places the two beside each other: 'God justifies the ungodly' and 'we, then, justified by faith. . . .' Paul says: justified by faith, without the works of the law; James says: justified by works and not only by faith. It all seems hopelessly contradictory. Yet, there is no contradiction. . . . It is a matter of the covenant. . . . God comes to us in Christ, giving for Christ's sake, but for Christ's sake also demanding everything. For Christ's sake He promises unconditionally: your sins are forgiven you for the sake of Christ; but in Christ He also demands faith and repentance." Here we have them both: promise and obligation. And Holwerda continues to say that, because there is always first God's promise, now faith is possible. Therefore justification is not there only once. It is a promise that remains in the gospel. In the covenant. And time and again that promise of remission and acquittal can be received in faith, because that acquittal is given, that remission is there in the Gospel, in the promise.

So, coming to the conclusion of his sermon, Holwerda can say:

"Therefore, this afternoon the preaching of God's justice in Christ, giving everything, and therefore demanding everything, comes to all of us. Whether you believe or not, I say to you all: your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. That I say to the believers among you, in order that they may persevere in faith. And I say it to the unbelievers, in order that they may come to faith. May it not be said to those who do not yet believe? It has to be said to them; it is now made hot for them: your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. Woe to you, if you still do not believe. For the justice of God is revealed this afternoon, unconditionally giving everything, but now also obliging everyone of you in a total way: demanding everything. It is revealed from faith to faith."<sup>2</sup>

It may sound strange to hear Prof. Holwerda say in his sermon: "Whether you believe or not, to you all I say: your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." Yet, we understand Holwerda when we follow his line of thinking: preaching is proclamation of what God promises in the gospel. And this promise comes to all and everyone, unconditionally. There is not first the condition of faith or repentance, or whatever other condition. The promise is first. The promise goes to all, the godly and the ungodly, believers and unbelievers alike. All may take the promised good, unconditionally. But, with the promise comes the demand: do believe, and do repent.

In this connection it might be of interest to tell you about a controversy in the church of Scotland in the early eighteenth century. In 1717 a candidate for the ministry was examined by the Auchterarder Presbytery. He was asked whether he could agree with the statement, "I believe that it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we forsake sin in order to come to Christ." The candidate could not stand behind that statement. The consequence was that he was not allowed to enter the ministry in that presbytery. But that was not the end of the matter. It came to the General Assembly. This meeting judged the statement to be an "unsound and most detestable doctrine."

Let me first rephrase the statement: I believe that it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we first have to break with sin and repent in order to come to Christ and receive Him as Saviour. Or, in other words: Must we not repent and turn away from sin in order to come to Christ?

Does the Word of God not constantly say: repent and believe unto the forgiveness of sins? The reader may think about it for a moment, before reading on. And let me first say something more about the background of that statement.

In 1645 and 1648 a two-volume book was published in England. The title was *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*. The first volume was written largely in the form of a dialogue between a young Christian and his pastor as well as with a legalist and an antinomianist. The legalist emphasizes the law, the commandments, the need for repentance and breaking with sin, as *the condition for* coming to Christ. The antinomianist says that Christ has freed us from the law. The law is no longer a binding power. We are free in Christ. It is clear that this first volume deals with the relation between God's grace (or the gospel of grace) and the Law of the LORD. The second volume gives an exposition of the Ten Words of the covenant. Around 1700 a Scottish Presbyterian minister read the first volume. His name was Thomas Boston. He belongs to the Puritans of those days. In 1726 Boston's book, *Notes to the Marrow of Modern Divinity*, was published. The statement mentioned above was in line with the book. Boston and a number of other ministers defended this book, while others were so much against it that a General Assembly of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, in 1720, condemned the book and recommended very strongly that it not be read and warned the people against it. According to the General Assembly the book was heretical and antinomian. This controversy between the Marrow-men and their opponents was called the Marrow Controversy. "Marrow" means the "heart," the core of the gospel of free, unconditional grace.

In John 3:16 we read: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Everyone who believes! This means that the gospel of God's free, undeserved grace in Christ must be preached to everyone. "And that men may be brought to believe, God mercifully sends the messengers of these most joyful tidings to whom He will and at what time He pleases; by whose ministry men are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified. 'How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? ...'

(Romans 10:14, 15)," Canons of Dordt, I, 3. Romans 10:14 follows verse 13 where the apostle Paul quotes that "everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

And in Art. 8 of Chapter III/IV of the Canons we confess that "as many as are called by the gospel are unfeignedly called. For God has most earnestly and truly declared in His Word what is acceptable to Him, namely, that those who are called should come to Him. He also seriously promises rest of soul and eternal life to all who come to Him and believe." (And those who do believe and are converted, are the ones who are chosen by God and receive the gift of faith through the Holy Spirit. But that is not the issue now.)

So in the gospel God comes with the free, unconditional offer of Christ as Saviour to all who hear, while in that same gospel the call to believe is also included. This offer, seriously and unfeignedly brought to all, is unconditional. It is not: you may believe on condition of your breaking with sin, on condition of conversion. It is free: a free gift. Free for all. All may (and are called to) just believe and accept.

Repentance, conversion from sin, a breaking with sin, may not be made into a condition for coming to Christ. For two reasons. If we say that a person first has to break with sin and repent, we make the gospel of God's free grace conditional and not free anymore. But further, we take one of the benefits of Christ, that come with Christ, something that Christ works in those who believe, and we make that benefit of Christ (a benefit through faith) into a condition for faith, for coming to Christ.

Repentance, conversion, turning away from sin and breaking with it — no one can do this in his own power. Conversion is a work of Christ through the Holy Spirit in those who receive Him as Saviour. A work that Christ has to do in us never may be made into a condition for coming to Christ. That is putting the cart before the horse.

Does this doctrine of the free offer of grace to all, the free offer of Christ Jesus as Saviour, make people careless and profane? Does this mean that we can be saved without repentance and without breaking with sin? Certainly not. For when Christ is offered in the gospel, and when in the gospel He comes to us and gives Himself to us, He gives Himself to us as a total Saviour: the Saviour with His blood *and Holy Spir-*

*it*; He gives Himself to us with *all* His benefits; including both justification *and sanctification*. When we receive Christ, we receive His righteousness as a free gift, and we receive also His Holy Spirit to convert and renew us and to make us break with sin and turn away from it. We confess this in Question and Answer 86 of the Heidelberg Catechism: Why must we do good works? Not in order to save ourselves, not in order to make ourselves righteous, and be declared just through our works; but because *Christ*, after He has redeemed us with His blood, *also renews* us after His image by His Holy Spirit. We must do good works, because Christ works them in us. We are not justified on the basis of or through our own good works, but also not without the works, not without our sanctification. For Christ is a total Redeemer. In Him we have a complete redemption. This Christ is offered in the gospel. This

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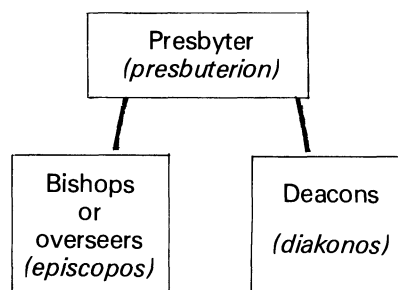
# The Necessity of Cooperation Between Bishops and Deacons

Speech given at the Fall office-bearers' Conference in Burlington, Ont., on October 31, 1981.

As the title of my speech I have announced: "The necessity of cooperation between bishops and deacons." You probably are wondering why I am using the less common word "bishop" while addressing a meeting or conference of office-bearers who are commonly called elders and deacons. In the convocation I already referred to I Tim. 3:1, 8, and to Phil. 1:1. There you find the same words. The reason why I prefer to speak about bishops and deacons today instead of elders and deacons is that the word "elder" in our translation is somewhat confusing, to say the least.

That is especially true when we are going to talk about the differences in task of both, bishops and deacons, and the necessity of cooperation between them. To be more specific, the word "elder" in our translation is a rendition of the original word "presbyter," a word well-known in our circles. But it is remarkable that the Bible never speaks about "presbyters and deacons." There are only two chapters in the Bible where a distinction is made between deacons and other office-bearers, and in both cases it says "bishops and deacons," or, in the Dutch language: "opzieners en diakenen." There the word *episcopos* or "overseer" is used instead of "elder."

When we keep that in mind, it is important to listen first to what Holy Scripture says about the origin, the task, and the responsibility of the office-bearers. We will also pay some attention to the historical aspects of this office, as far as the difference between bishops and deacons is concerned, and in this way we hope to find a Scriptural and practical rule for the cooperation between both. Let's therefore keep this picture in mind:



To start with, we will trace where in Holy Scripture the origin of the offices lies. In the (old) "Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons" we read: "Concerning the deacons: of the origin and institution of their office we may read Acts 6." One may question whether this statement is exactly correct. To say the least, it is not complete. Of course, the origin of the task and office of the deacons lies in Acts 6, but what I mean is this: In Acts 6 more than the office of deacons is mentioned. Let us read what is written there. All emphasis is put on the fact that the church was a fast-growing community and that the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem. 6:1 says: "... in these days the disciples were increasing in number" and in 6:7 again: "... the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith." Our Lord Jesus Christ had ordained only twelve office-bearers in His New Testament Church — the apostles — and their office was unique. On account of the rapidly increasing number of disciples, the workload became too much for these twelve men. Therefore, a new office was instituted; seven special office-bearers were appointed to assist the apostles and to take over part of their workload. The office of the apostles was unique. After their death others had to take over their work. The church of Jesus Christ was growing

very rapidly and a new office was instituted.

What kind of office was that? It was not the office of apostle, but an office that had to come in its place. Seven men were chosen, appointed, and installed in their office. It is not exactly correct to call these men "deacons." Of course, the direct reason why they were appointed was a matter which nowadays belongs to the task of the deacons. "The widows were neglected in the daily distribution," (6:1). Verse 2 speaks about "serving tables." One can question what is meant by "serving tables"? Does that refer to the "daily distribution" as far as the widows were concerned, or does it include also the celebration and administration of the Lord's Supper?

One thing will be clear anyway. What we today regard to be the task of the deacons did really belong to their mandate. It was even the occasion, the actual reason why they were chosen. But that is only one aspect of this matter. To a certain extent we can say that the origin of the office of deacon lies in Acts 6. But it is incorrect simply to call these men "deacons," for their task was not restricted to these things.

That becomes clear when we pay attention to what they did as soon as they were installed in their office. The first man among these seven was Stephen. Of him we read that he was a man "full of grace and power" and that he "did great wonders and signs among the people." That is certainly not what we have in mind when we talk about deacons today. He right away started preaching the Gospel, even in such a manner that verse 10 says: "They could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke." After his imprisonment, he stood before the high priest and the whole council, and there he delivered

a sermon, a speech, so harsh, that his audience was enraged and that they ground their teeth against him. Finally he was stoned to death, the first martyr for the Christian faith.

The second man mentioned in the list of office-bearers was Philip. Concerning his work we read in Acts 8. His task as well was not restricted to diaconal duties. He proclaimed the Christ. He did signs, cast out unclean spirits, and healed many who were paralyzed or lame. He brought the Ethiopian to Christ by proclaiming the Gospel and he baptized this man. Chapter 8 concludes with saying that he preached the Gospel to all the towns, till he came to Caesarea.

From all this it is clear enough that in Acts 6 more is at stake than only the origin of the office of deacon. Our conclusion has to be that the diaconal work really did belong to their task. It was even the actual occasion for their appointment and installation. But at the same time we can see that the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments belonged to their task as well. That is the first thing we read about their activities after they had been installed. Therefore we cannot see this as the origin of the office of deacons but rather as the origin of the special office in the Christian church. It was the special office, apart from, and as a replacement for, the unique office of the apostles. But no distinction was made between the different aspects of this office.

While the number of disciples continued to increase, there was also an increasing workload for the office-bearers. To organize the work the better, some office-bearers received a specific task, and had to take care of a special aspect of the work in the congregation. In this way a distinction was made between overseers and deacons. And as far as the overseers were concerned a distinction was made between rulers and teachers; the former we call "elders" and the latter are "the ministers of the Word." As far as the deacons are concerned, in the 16th century a distinction was made between deacons who had to take care of the sick, and others who managed the finances of the church. In church history we can see that sometimes there were only two, sometimes three, four, or even five, different offices in the church and different types

of office-bearers. It does not matter how many offices we distinguish as long as we keep in mind that they all are aspects of one and the same office, instituted in Acts 6.

Now that we have seen where the origin lies of the special offices, we will trace in which way the Bible speaks about the distinction between the different offices.

As I already stated in the beginning of my speech, it is remarkable that the Bible never speaks about "elders" and "deacons" as two different offices. In the few cases in which the deacons are mentioned separately, the other office-bearers are referred to as "bishops" or "overseers."

When our translation speaks about "elders," it is always a rendition of the word "presbyter," and it refers either to the office as it is instituted in Acts 6, or to all the office-bearers in general, the overseers as well as the deacons. This brings us, as an unavoidable consequence, to the conclusion that the presbytery, the consistory or the council of the church, is formed by the overseers *and* the deacons. That is the way the Bible speaks, that is the way it is worded in our confession (Art. 30, B.C.), and that is the way it is expressed in the old Church Order. You can find it in the Acts of the General Synod of Emden 1571 as well as in the Acts of the General Synod of Dordrecht 1574. Later it became the custom that the overseers and the deacons had separate meetings, each to deal with their own business, and the name "consistory" was then used for the college of overseers only.

That is what we find in the Church Orders since the end of the 16th century, and also in the form for the installation of office-bearers established at the General Synod of 's Gravenhage 1586. Personally I believe that we can accept this way of speaking as a practical rule for the office-bearers, to deal with their business in their own separate meetings, as long as we keep in mind that they are various aspects of, and therefore belong to, one and the same original office, instituted by the apostles. Basically they are all presbyters, members of the consistory or council of the church, according to our confession, Art. 30. Some are called "bishops" or "overseers," others are called "deacons."

We must be careful about one

thing, and that is that we never consider the one more important than the other. Or, to be more specific, we may never consider the office of deacon to be of a lower level, a second class office, or, rather, a stepping-stone to greater honour, a training someone has to go through to see whether he is worthy of being advanced to the higher level of overseer. I know, it is not always said in this way, straightforwardly, but often this is the attitude behind it. The consistory discusses who will be nominated for the office of overseer. A certain name is mentioned, but this brother is considered to be too young or too inexperienced for the office of overseer. Let us first put him on the nomination list for deacon. If he turns out to be a capable person, he can be advanced to the office of overseer next time. That is the way it goes.

How deeply rooted this attitude is, becomes clear even in official documents. On the table of the General Synod of Groningen Zuid 1978 was a report from the deputies for revision of the Church Order — a report tabled by men who are considered to be very careful and precise in their formulation and well aware of what is going on in our circles. They discuss the complaint that sometimes the deacons fail to do their work in the proper way, because there is a lack of experience in their circles. In this respect they make the following statement: "Not every deacon, who has fulfilled his duties in the proper way, ought to be nominated for the office of overseer the next time." (Niet elke diaken die zijn dienst goed heeft vervuld, hoeft de volgende keer voor ouderling gecandideerd te worden.) "The gifts, developed in the office of deacon, can remain available for this office, at least partly" (de gaven die in het diakenambt ontplooid worden, kunnen, zeker ten dele, voor dit ambt beschikbaar blijven).

The meaning is clear. The rule appears to be: a deacon who has fulfilled his duties in the proper way will be nominated for the office of overseer the next time. If someone does not develop "gifts" or appears to be not able to perform his duties in the proper way, then he will never rise to the higher rank and he will remain a deacon. But because deacons once in a while have to make "really important" decisions, it is necessary that at least

some "gifts" and some experience remain available to give leadership. It sounds like the advice sometimes given with respect to youth societies: it is important that at least some mature youngsters remain a member of the society, to give leadership on the way to maturity.

We don't have to be surprised that this attitude causes frustration as far as the deacons are concerned. They are often young and inexperienced. Still they are frequently confronted with great and complicated problems.

I had the privilege (and that is probably an exception as far as the ministers are concerned) of serving the churches in the office of deacon as well as in the office of overseer before I entered the ministry. My experience is that the home-visits brought as a deacon are often more difficult than the home-visits of the overseers. During the regular home-visits people are sometimes able to talk very nicely and impressively about faith and how things are supposed to be and have to be. They are showing what in Dutch is called their "Zondagse gezicht." But when you have to talk about finances with the same persons, or when they are having financial problems, their real attitude and their plain feelings come to the surface. Then it becomes really difficult to comfort, to assist, and to give guidance in the appropriate way. Then wisdom, prudence, and experience are required to deal with matters in the proper way.

I am afraid that we often underestimate the task of the deacons. Consequently, persons are appointed as deacons who are almost unable to bear this great responsibility. When they fail in the fulfilment of their duties, simply because of a lack of experience and a lack of support, we should not blame the deacons for that, but take it to heart, and reconsider whether we have given enough attention to this wonderful and beautiful mandate given through Christ as a ministry of mercy in His Church.

What is actually the task of the deacons? Only to collect and to distribute money? Only materialistic matters over against the spiritual task of the overseers? No, not at all. In the (new) Form for the Ordination of Office-bearers it is called the "ministry of mercy," proceeding from the love

of our Saviour Jesus Christ. They have to show the compassion of Christ to the afflicted. They have to take care that no one in the Christian Church suffers want. The form says it beautifully in these words: "No one in the congregation of Christ may live uncomforted under the pressure of sickness, loneliness, and poverty."

A beautiful expression indeed. It indicates three things at least: sickness, loneliness, and poverty. In all three cases the deacons have to bring comfort. Of course, poverty is mentioned, but as the third one in order. No one may live uncomforted. They have to show the mercy of Jesus Christ in their ministry of mercy. They have to bring comfort to the sick and the lonely. Comfort in poverty? That includes financial assistance, if necessary, but not in the first place, and not as the most important thing. For the collection and the distribution of money we don't need men full of grace and of the Holy Spirit. But for the ministry of the mercy of Jesus Christ we really do.

For the proper fulfilment of their task it is necessary that the deacons keep in touch with the congregation via home-visits. How can they ever comfort and make sure that no one lives under the pressure of loneliness, if they are not aware of what is going on in the congregation?

Sometimes a strict distinction is made between matters the overseers have to deal with, and matters belonging to the task of the deacons. The overseers have to deal with spiritual matters, and only when financial consequences are involved are the deacons informed!? What we need is closer cooperation. It appears to be impossible to make a strict separation between the different cases, and too often it happens that office-bearers are afraid to interfere in each other's business. "Mind your own business and don't interfere with mine" is an expression which should never be used in the relation between overseers and deacons. Many cases are so complicated that it is impossible to say where they start and where they end. They are not clear-cut cases, in which we can say what the cause is and what the consequence is.

Often there is a reciprocal effect. Cause and consequence will alternate and change places. Take, for instance,

a marriage problem. It is perfectly clear that a marriage problem often goes together with financial problems, communication problems with the children, and other social problems. In some cases alcoholism is involved. There is no doubt that spiritual life will also suffer and that the members' faith is at stake. But what is the cause and what is the consequence? "Great things often spring from trifling causes." Did financial problems cause friction between husband and wife? Did alcoholism cause financial problems? Is alcoholism a kind of a refuge for someone who does not see a way out of his marriage problems? Did spiritual life suffer because of family problems, or is it just the other way around?

Do you see the many questions? It is often a very complicated matter. Especially in such cases it is important that the office-bearers work together.

Once I heard of a case where the deacons were involved in family problems with respect to finances. A social worker gave advice, and they were working together to find a solution. At the same time this family was sloppy in attending the church and showed an indifferent attitude as far as spiritual life was concerned. The overseers talked with them about their faith, but considered the other problems not to be their business. That was something the deacons had to look after. Still the one was closely related with the other. Nonetheless there was no cooperation, not even communication between the office-bearers, as far as this case was concerned. At the very moment the deacons thought they had found a workable solution to solve most of the financial and social problems, they were almost kicked out when they visited the family. They had just heard from the overseers that they were put under discipline. The family could not believe that this was done without advice of the deacons, and they were very upset that the deacons pretended (in their opinion) that they did not know about it. To say the least: in this case the deacons should have been informed beforehand, and, even better, they should have been involved in the discussion before the consistory decided to exercise discipline.

Personally, I know of cases like this in which home-visits were brought



by a ward elder together with a ward deacon, and finally, after the financial problems were solved, also the marriage worked better and spiritual life came to a revival. Why should we be afraid of having the deacons involved in cases which are closely related with church discipline? It is not a matter of unacceptable interference in each other's office, but, rather, a necessity for appropriate assistance and help to the congregation. Cooperation has to be the key word.

Many families nowadays, also in our circles, are confronted with big problems. Disturbed relations between parents and children, friction in the communication between the parents themselves, social problems, broken marriages, and people who are in psychological need, upset, sometimes even desperate, because they do not see a way out in their problem. How come? What kind of problems are causing all these sad situations? Sometimes financial problems trigger others and frictions escalate. Where lies the borderline between the task of the overseers and the task of the deacons, *if there is any?*

In a case of mismanagement as far as the finances are concerned the deacons will become involved, but it goes without saying that, if these frictions end up in a divorce, the overseers have their task as well.

It also works the other way around. Many cases of spiritual indifference and sloppiness in the service of the Lord are triggered by financial, social, or psychical problems behind the scenes. It is impossible to work in a meaningful and fruitful way to solve the one problem while neglecting the other.

In The Netherlands a committee appointed by the national conference of deacons (het comité van de C.D.C.) took the initiative to establish an organization with professional social workers and counsellors. In this way professional help can be given in family problems. The office-bearers can call for help, and they can get social workers involved who are members of our churches and who stick to the rules, set down in the Word of God. That is very important nowadays. Many social workers and other counsellors will come with solutions and advice which are completely opposite to what is taught in the Word of God.

When a girl is pregnant, the most simple and readily-given advice is: abortion. In case of marriage problems, separation and divorce is a generally-accepted solution among counsellors. The advice given in cases of sexual problems and homosexuality are of the same nature: the norm is how people feel most comfortable, not the norm of the Word of God. That is what we have to be aware of. Therefore it is very important that we strive for reliable help and advice in all such cases.

The title of my speech is: the necessity of cooperation between bishops and deacons, between overseers and deacons. That is the first priority: office-bearers have to work together for the benefit and the well-being of the whole congregation, without any envy. Don't be afraid to interfere in each other's business as office-bearers. Rather, you have to be careful not to neglect the benefit and the well-being of the congregation. In many cases a close cooperation between overseers and deacons is necessary to provide appropriate help.

And also here we have to keep in mind that "prevention is better than cure." Through a close cooperation between the office-bearers you can sometimes prevent things from going from bad to worse. Therefore home-visits have to be brought. The regular home-visits or family-visits by two overseers. Of course!!! That is a worthwhile custom and can be of great benefit for the families and for the visiting office-bearers as well. It is a tool in order to stay informed about what is going on in the congregation. But it is not enough. The overseers as well as the deacons have to visit the families regularly — not only an official visit with two brothers, but also by just dropping in once in a while and listening. Especially when you have the impression that something is going on, keep yourselves posted. For some people it seems to be easier to start talking when you meet them in the barn, in the kitchen, or in the field, than when they are officially sitting in the livingroom during a home-visit.

There is still one point I should like to emphasize in this respect, and that is: confidentiality. It is not necessary to report at a consistory meeting everything that was said during a visit. On the contrary. You should only report those things which are important

or necessary for the consistory to know. Many details can be left out. There is no necessity to divulge sins or weaknesses which are not public, as long as people are willing to repent and fight against sin. If people know that everything will be reported at the consistory meeting, they may be hesitant to discuss their problems, until, finally, everything comes into the open and it is almost too late to cure the case.

Sometimes matters are discussed and reported on in very intimate details at a consistory meeting. That does not always serve the purpose. I consider it to be more important that a close relationship and cooperation is built up between ward-elder and ward-deacon. Such an exchange of information can be of greater benefit for the people involved than informing the whole consistory about things which don't have to be dealt with in these meetings and can better be kept secret.

One may say that consistory meetings are considered to be closed sessions as far as such cases are concerned, but this simply does not work!!! I have been a member of a consistory in eight different congregations, but I am still wondering whether it is possible to keep things secret if they are discussed in a meeting with so many people involved. Still, confidentiality is one of the basic requirements for adequate help. This help can be given by the office-bearers, the overseers as well as the deacons; not in a competition, anxious to interfere in each other's business, but in close cooperation.

Sometimes professional help is necessary. An office-bearer is not a physician, nor a psychiatrist, a psychologist, or a social worker. When someone is sick, the question is not whether he has to call the doctor or the office-bearer. Each has his own task. The doctor and the minister have to cooperate quite often. It is the same with respect to professional counsellors and office-bearers: they have to cooperate and they each have their own task, responsibility, capacities, and limitations. At the same time we have to be aware of the importance of appropriate help, especially as far as counselling is concerned. Therefore it is extremely important to check from

*Continued on next page.*

## “Now Thank We All Our God”

The original of “Now thank we all our God” is to be found in the fiftieth chapter of the Book of Ecclesiasticus (Apocrypha), at the end of a long section which begins with “Let us now praise famous men” and ends with

And now bless ye the God of all,  
Which everywhere does great things,  
Which exalteth our days from the womb,  
And dealth with us according to his mercy.  
May he grant us joyfulness of heart,  
And that peace may be in our days in Israel  
for the days of eternity;  
To intrust his mercy with us;  
And let him deliver us in his time!

The event, with which Rinckart's hymn was (is) erroneously associated, and which gave rise to its enormous popularity, was the Peace of Westphalia (1648) at the close of the Thirty Years' War. Since then, wedded to Crüger's magnificent tune, it has become the German “Te Deum” sung on all occasions of rejoicing and thanksgiving.

The circumstances under which the hymn was composed, one would not exactly call conducive to thank-

fulness. It “comes from the deep and gross darkness of the Thirty Years' War,” a time marked by “plague and bereavement and slaughter and famine.” In one year, following a terrible pestilence and famine, Pastor Rinckart buried over four thousand parishioners.

The hymn was published in *Jesu, Hertz Büchlein* (1636). There it is entitled “Tisch - Gebetlein” i.e. a short table prayer. This seems to indicate that Rinckart wrote the first two stanzas of the hymn for his own private use, and later, because of ecclesiastical use, added a metrical version of the “Gloria Patri,” the lesser doxology, as the third stanza.

When the switch from private to public use occurred is anybody's guess. The copy for *Jesu, Hertz Büchlein* (1636) was ready for the press in 1630, according to the author. In 1630 the Lutherans celebrated one centenary of the Augsburg Confession. There are strong indications that “Now thank we all our God” was included in the four poems that Rinckart wrote for that festive occasion.

Catherine Winkworth's “full and very good translation” has been printed in the Green Book, with two chang-

es. The singular “heart” of stanza one, line two, has become plural, and the last line of stanza two was rewritten. The Winkworth translation may be a bit awkward at this point and could give rise to misunderstanding if and when we get hung up on the juxtaposition this world and the world to come. That, however, is not what she means when she says “In this world and the next.” Often when contemplating the changes taking place in the world today we may say, “What will the world be like twenty years from now?” That is to say, the next world. Books abound with titles like “The world of Christ,” “The world of Shakespeare,” and so on. What is meant here is not “world” in the generally accepted sense, but in the sense of time, age, era. True, God will “free us from all ills of this world in the next,” but that is not the point Rinckart wished to make. God does it here in this world — if not today, then tomorrow. That He does deliver we know for certain. He did so in the past and, based on that, we may be confident that He will do so in the present and in the future. Throughout history God wrought deliverance in His time through the heroes of faith, the famous men, but gratitude is not due to them, but to God, at all times, regardless of whether He is doing it right now. That is the thrust of the Ecclesiasticus passage, Rinckart's paraphrase, and Winkworth's translation. Rinckart uses “hier und dort” (here and there). No matter where we are in place or time God will free us, for He is eternal, omnipresent, and omnipotent. This thought of deliverance in time and space is brought out very strongly in the new Dutch translation by Jan Wit.

Die uit genade ons  
behoudt te allen tijd,  
is hier en overal  
een helper die bevrijdt.

(Translation: Who in His mercy upholds us at all times, is here and everywhere a helper who delivers.)

Even in the abysmal darkness and despair caused by the Thirty Years' War Rinckart knew that God would give deliverance. He had promised, the historical evidence was overwhelming, and Rinckart believed “Glory be to the Father: and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.” Now, yes “Now,” no matter in what situation we find ourselves, “thank we all our God.”

W. POUWELSE  
Burlington, Ontario

S. VANDERPLOEG

### The Necessity of Cooperation — Continued

which people our church members receive their help. That is also a responsibility and task of the office-bearers. Make people aware that they have their rights; that is to say: they first have to explain to every professional counsellor that they are believers and that their faith and the norm of the Word of God are not up for discussion or for doing away with. Then it is up to the counsellor to decide whether he is still willing to help and to accept this precondition. It is my experience that some are willing and others are not willing to accept this, but then you know where they stand.

In conclusion I should like to make a suggestion for you to consider. I have experienced that there is also a real need in our circles for help from professional counsellors. In many cases it appears to be very important to receive advice, help, support, or assistance from qualified people, like a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker, or a family counsellor. Wouldn't it be worthwhile for us as office-bearers to have more informa-

tion available with respect to where to go for advice in emergency cases, and from whom reliable help can be expected when professional help is necessary? In The Netherlands there is an organization with a staff of qualified people to serve the members of our sister-churches there and to cooperate with the office-bearers when necessary. I think it is impossible to undertake such an initiative here in Canada. Our community is too small for that, I guess. At most it might be possible to have a counsellor available on a part-time basis, to help in case of emergency, either in giving actual help, advice, and counselling, or in referring to reliable resources and in ensuring that no helpers become involved who will make things even worse. That would really serve the necessary cooperation of the office-bearers, overseers as well as deacons, to the benefit of the whole congregation, the members of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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## FROM THE SCRIPTURES

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“. . . in wrath remember mercy.” Habakkuk 3:2b

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# Restrained Wrath

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There is something striking about these words in Habakkuk's prayer. He does not pray for mercy, but asks the LORD to remember His mercy in His wrath. We do not often hear an expression like this in prayer today. Normally we tend to think that if the LORD is angry, He cannot be merciful; and if He shows His mercy, He has forgotten His anger. Judging from our own experience, it's difficult to be angry and merciful at the same time. Usually our anger gets the upper hand. And we often tend to apply our experience to the LORD and His character.

Actually, the LORD is different. He is able to remember mercy in His wrath. And this is what Habakkuk prays for. He implores the LORD to be merciful as His wrath is being poured out. Habakkuk knows that the LORD's wrath is coming. It could not be avoided, because of the wickedness in the land. As God's servant, he prays that God might restrain His anger, so that He would not make a full end of His people or a complete devastation of the whole known world at that time.

That was certainly what all the nations deserved. We all deserve to fall under the force of God's consuming wrath. For who has done anything worthy before Him? There is really no ground for mercy in man himself. There can be no plea for mercy based on man's works, or his inherent goodness. Habakkuk can only make His plea on the basis of the LORD Himself, and on the basis of what the LORD has revealed about Himself. He can only plead on the basis of what God has promised. He has taken his watch, and knows that God will speak. In the urgency of the moment, he makes this plea to God.

That is what this prayer is — a bold plea based on a promise. The LORD has promised to show mercy, and He had promised not to make a full end of His people, Jer. 4:27, 5:7, 18, 30:11, 46:28. The nations would perish, Israel and Judah would be destroyed, but a remnant would be saved. In the outpouring of His wrath, God startles the world by remembering His mercy. In the outpouring of His wrath, He makes it a point to save. He did not forget His covenant. He restrains His wrath within the terms of the covenant that He has made. He startled His people and the world by showing salvation during the outpouring of His wrath, and remembering His mercy in His anger.

The LORD did the same for His Son, when He gave His life for our sins. He poured out His wrath, but

also remembered His mercy. He raised Him from the dead, and gave Him a name which is above every name, so that the world might bow before Him, and all things might worship Him, Phil. 2:9-11. Habakkuk's prayer is fulfilled in Christ, and it is in the sending of Christ that we see God's mercy fully revealed. To Him all power and authority has been given, and He comes to judge the world in equity and truth.

His coming makes this prayer a timely prayer. Today this prayer has much more assurance; but its words still apply, since God's dealings take the same form. Essentially this prayer is a prayer for the Church, a prayer for God's congregation. It is a prayer that God's flock may be kept from His consuming wrath. It is a prayer that the bride of Christ may be spared in the day of wrath, and may enjoy the fullness of God's grace. It is a prayer for the vindication of God's elect.

As the temperature of sin and wickedness rises, and the thermometer of hatred and petulance increases before God's face, this prayer becomes more and more timely. It is difficult to pray for peace when men openly defy the LORD and bring judgment upon themselves. Although we must pray for peace among men, we must not overlook God's coming judgment upon sinners. We must clothe our prayers with the realities of the age we live in. We must join in the plea for justice and righteousness on the earth. But we must remember, too, that we only have Christ and His work to plead on.

“In wrath remember mercy” — that is the prayer for the final phase of world history. It is a prayer for a triumphant conclusion to God's work. It is a prayer for the full redemption of God's people. Let us pray this prayer. For the LORD comes swiftly, and He will surely redeem those who have this prayer on their lips.

J. DEJONG

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**EDITORIAL** — *Continued from page 467.*

“It is always difficult to change people's concepts and behavior, which is no less true when it comes to changing people's expectations and behavior in relation to preaching.”

“First it is imperative that the ministry of preaching be discussed with the laity . . . Rarely have I found a layman who has ever been instructed on how to listen to a sermon . . . I suggest, therefore, that we begin to train the laity for their part in the church's preaching” p. 92/3.

That is the purpose of these articles. There is some material left for another article.

G. VANDOOREN

# news medley

With the help of the Fraser Valley's *Church News* I was reminded of the fact that brother and sister H. Pol celebrated their 55th Wedding Anniversary some time ago. That "some time ago" is the 4th of November. Although their health prevents them from coming together with the Congregation on Sundays, yet they may enjoy a reasonably satisfactory state of health at the moment. And via the cassettes they can still listen in, so to speak, be it some time after the services have been concluded. On behalf of the brotherhood I offer our heartfelt congratulations to our brother and sister. I know that their hope and trust is in the LORD, and they know that they will not be put to shame. May our gracious God spare you still somewhat longer for each other and for your children and grandchildren.

Another item from Langley (yes, brother and sister Pol belong to the Langley Church; sorry I did not mention that earlier) is the following, "It was decided that from now on the revised version of the Apostles' Creed will be used in the worship services."

A previous time I mentioned a letter which the Smithers Church sent to the Churches in Western Canada, asking them whether they would be willing and able to support the calling of a missionary to work among the Carrier Indians. In various bulletins of Western Churches I read the decision to table this request and discuss it later or to bring the matter to the Congregation at a Congregational Meeting to learn their opinion about this undertaking.

The Cloverdale Consistory, however, reports that "After ample discussion it is decided to support the proposal of Home Mission among the Carrier Indians." As far as I have read, this is the first Church that has decided to support the plan.

A decision of the Abbotsford Consistory deserves honourable mention: "The Consistory decided to ban all smoking from the buildings." One more down; how many to go?

The work of broadcasting has expanded considerably during the last three or four years. For many years the Churches in the Fraser Valley were the only ones to spread the Gospel in this manner. In order to give our readers everywhere some idea of the costs involved, I quote the following passage.

Ever since "The Voice of the Church" first started broadcasting fourteen years ago, our recorders and various other pieces of equipment have served us well. However, our technical committee tells us that we can no longer expect this kind of performance. This means that along with the costs we incur for weekly radio time, some capital investment in equipment will be necessary. Our budget to cover these expenses is \$10,000.00 before the end of 1981. Please encourage us by your prayers and gifts.

When we look at the above amount, we are to realize that this message was found in the *Church News* of November 8, 1981! A rather short time to bring together so much money.

No news is to be mentioned right now about the Okanagan Valley, and therefore we move on to the Bulkley

Valley.

It is gratifying that the need for continuing one's studies is felt not only by ministers but also by Consistories. The Houston part of the *Bulkley Valley Echo* tells us that

The minister has in the past expressed his desire to continue his studies in some formal way. The various possibilities are now discussed at length, and it is decided that the minister's request for a two-month leave of absence during 1982 ought to be granted. This will allow him to spend three months (one month's holidays) in Kampen, The Netherlands, where he can commence his studies at the Theological College of our sister-churches. Although final arrangements have yet to be made, this will probably take place from August to October, 1982.

We do take into account that final arrangements still have to be made, but I am happy about this development and the manner in which the Church at Houston is not inconvenienced too much.

In Alberta, the Immanuel Church in Edmonton draws our attention first of all. It is a rather sad item of information that I have to pass on.

After a discussion on Building-financing, Council decided to postpone the previous decision to start building as soon as possible, due to unforeseen problems encountered regarding financing. The necessary arrangements and planning were decided upon in order to be enabled to come to a meeting with the congregation in the immediate future with some detailed information regarding our present financial problems and whether or not (and when) to proceed with the building as planned. I hope that the difficulties will be solved soon and that the building-process can start before weather conditions render this practically impossible.

Barrhead will receive a minister of their own for the first time in their history as an autonomous Church. By the time you read these lines, this minister will have arrived there, the Lord willing. When you receive a minister, you also have to see to it that the man and his family can live somewhere. Thus a few decisions were made.

At a previous meeting the consistory decided not to buy the building of the Alliance Church and not to proceed with building a new church but to go on with calling a minister.

This work had the desired result, as we mentioned.

We may also report that a house has been found for the minister's family and will hopefully be available by December 1st. It is a four-bedroom house plus a study room, so that should be A 1.

Obtaining the house for a parsonage is not yet everything. More people are active. At a meeting of the Ladies' Aid of November 5th, "It was decided . . . to clean the minister's house on December 1st."

Can I be happy about the above activities, I cannot be happy about another invitation to become active which I read in the bulletin. "Anyone interested in forming a School Society, please attend a meeting which will be held . . . in the Church building."

As far as I can remember, the distance between Barrhead and Neerlandia is about the same as the distance between Fergus and Guelph, that is some 18-20 kilometers. There is a school in Neerlandia, and I do not think that it is all that difficult to get the children from Barrhead to that school. As little as we here are having two school

societies, one in Fergus and one in Guelph, but are all members of one society, so little can I see the need for a separate school society in Barrhead and a separate society in Neerlandia. I am afraid that two school societies will mean two schools in the long run and this, I am convinced, would put an unnecessary burden upon the membership. It is always more economical to operate a school with six teachers for all children than two schools with three teachers each or the one with four, the other one with two, for each group of children separately. This then even apart from the necessary drawbacks as far as the teaching itself is concerned: the more teachers, the greater the possibilities. As two people together can do more than two times one person, so a society can do more with eight teachers in one school than four societies with four schools with two teachers each.

It is never smart to cut up one's resources and to split up into small groups and segments.

We have to make a big jump, and land all the way in Ontario. Not all that much is to be mentioned from there. We visit two Churches.

First the one in Brampton.

An amount of \$2,000 is budgeted by both the Mission and Mission Aid, to finance a plan to attract teachers who are willing to go to the Mission Field (for perhaps one year) and help to teach the children of the missionary families and assist at the local schools. This plan (to start in about 1984) has the benefit that it enables the Versteeg and Vegter families to stay longer in the Mission Field.

These two thousand dollars were not budgeted by the Church at Brampton or by its newly formed Committee of Administration. The above quotation refers to what was dealt with at the meeting which the Toronto Church had with the delegates from the cooperating Churches.

I think that it is an excellent idea to send a teacher down there for the children of the mission workers. They are missing so much already as far as possibilities for themselves and their children are concerned that we should do whatever we are able to do to fill a vacuum that may exist.

There is, however, in the above quotation one point which doesn't agree with me. Perhaps it was not stated in that exact form at the meeting, but it bothers me when I read that the benefit of such an arrangement may be that it enables the families "to stay longer in the Mission Field."

I do wish to differentiate between a missionary and a mission worker. The latter, however important the work may be, went down there under contract and — upon reasonable notice — can terminate the contract, return to Canada, and look for another job. But a missionary, I am convinced, being a Minister of the Word, does not have such a right.

Mind you, I do not overlook the difficulty of the task there and the extraordinary demands which are made upon one's health and strength; I am very grateful that there are brothers (and sisters) who give themselves for that work. To me it is a point of principle. As little as a minister here in Canada has the right to say after so many years, "Well, brethren, I think that my work here should be terminated; I am going to look for another place," so little does a missionary have the right to say after so many years, "I come back to Canada, I leave the work here and I am going to see whether there is any Congregation in Canada that is going to call me."

The only legitimate way in which a missionary can become a minister in a Congregation here is, I am convinced, when he is called by a Church and accepts the call. *Then*, and only then does he have the right to leave his post in the mission field. That's how it was before the second world war, as far as I know, that's how it should be right now as well. A minister — whatever the work may be to which he has been called — is not under contract for so many years. He has to do that work until he is called away from it and comes to the conclusion that he has to accept that call.

I think I wrote about it before, but some repetition at times won't hurt.

The last Church we visit this time is the Burlington West Church.

A report is presented by the committee appointed to the task of dividing the congregation in two sections. After a lengthy discussion it is decided to propose to the congregation to maintain a decision already made in this regard on November 14, 1978, which would make the Q.E.W. [that is the Queen Elizabeth Way, vO] and Highway 403 the dividing line between a North and South section.

That brings with it, of course, that a choice has to be made by the minister of this Church which section he is going to serve. The Rev. Pouwelse did make a decision.

It was left up to me which section I would like to serve. Because it is impossible to make a choice based on personal preference as far as the membership is concerned, I decided without any other consideration simply to serve the section in which we live, that is the Northern Section.

Herewith we could conclude our Medley.

There is, however, one more point to which I should like to pay some attention. That is a remark which Mr. Vander Ploeg made in his first article, entitled "Hallowed Bunglers" (?). I am not completely certain whether he was referring to me with that remark, but I have not read something in that line from anyone else, and know that I myself did make some remarks regarding the point in question, so that I must come to the conclusion that I am meant (anyway among others) in the following passage.

A recurrent theme in the discussions about Synod's decision concerning the musical part of the *Book of Praise* — Hymn Section is that Synod had no business dealing with this, for, so the argument goes,

- A. Music is a technical matter,
- B. Synods may deal with ecclesiastical matters only,
- C. Synod did deal with musical matters; therefore Synod did the wrong thing.

"Crooked thinking," brethren. Neat, but simply not true.

If our readers wish to read the further remarks in the above-mentioned article, they can find them in the previous issue of *Clarion*.

Rather than writing a separate piece about it, I make a few remarks about it in the medley, for that's where it all started anyway.

What did I write?

In the News Medley found in No. 14, July 17, 1981, I wrote the following.

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 here contrary to Article 30, Church Order); . . .

I did *not* state that music "is a technical matter." As far as I personally am concerned, Mr. Vander Ploeg's "major" is wrong. Thus his whole syllogism does not affect me.

Be it far from me to state that a Synod is not allowed to make pronouncements about the *character* of the music which should find a legitimate place in our worship services. Would I deny a Synod's right to state that Rock Music is unfit for the worship of God?

But I do deny a Synod's right to deal with "music-technical matters," for they are no ecclesiastical matters. I even mentioned examples, in the same line as the blatant

examples which Mr. Vander Ploeg quotes in his article: half or quarter notes, for example; or rests at the end of the lines; or whether a certain tune can be considered to fit a certain song.

A General Synod — or any ecclesiastical assembly, for that matter — should deal with those matters only about which everyone who is a member of that assembly can join in the discussion and can take part in the decision. Ecclesiastical matters are such that every living member of the Church can judge them. Music-technical points do not belong to these matters. It is in these points that Synod Smithville acted contrary to Article 30, Church Order.

Meanwhile, I am happy with the more expert information and elucidation which we have received in the above-mentioned article. More has been promised, and we are looking forward to it.

vO

## Capital Calling

Seasons come and seasons go, and so has summer '81. Time seems to go as fast as ever. By now, most of us have settled into our daily routine of work or studies. The congregation of Ottawa hopes that all of you have had a pleasant summer.

Those who have visited the capital or its region may have gone home with pleasant memories by either having seen the "Changing of the Guard" ceremonies or our various museums, or having had a double-decker bus tour. Perhaps some people were even able to catch a glimpse of the dignitaries during the economic summit; whatever, we sincerely hope that you will be back in the not-too-distant future. Ottawa and surroundings is full of history, and the enhancing scenery speaks for itself.

The congregation of Ottawa is also left with the pleasant memories of the many visitors who came to worship with us this past summer. By participating in worship, we were strengthened in our faith to know that we have other brothers and sisters elsewhere. Listening to God's Word and singing in unison to His praise with a larger congregation than usual, gives us added strength. Not forgetting the individual contacts we had, we thank all of you.

In past years, and perhaps still now, Ottawa has been seen as a government city, with a limited growth pattern restricted to people interested in governmental work. However, in recent years this pattern has reversed itself, and Ottawa is capitalizing on and rapidly developing in the new era of High Technology. High

Technology presently employs some 18,000 persons in about 120 firms, and at the present rate of expansion it is estimated to be 100,000 by the year 1990. Ottawa is already referred to as the "Silicon Valley" of Ontario.

Throughout the years, the congregation of Ottawa has remained small and has always yearned for an increase in its number. In order to fulfill also this segment of its "Capital Calling," the congregation, realizing the industrial growth in the surrounding area, felt that this trend should be made known.

It is impossible for us to list all of the job opportunities available. For convenience's sake, we will classify them in four categories:

- 1) Executive Field  
(170 openings or more)
- 2) Scientific & Technical Field  
(250 openings or more)
- 3) Administrative & Educational Field  
(90 openings or more)
- 4) Industrial Field  
(70 openings or more)

These figures have been derived by counting the openings as advertised in local newspapers within a certain time period.

The congregation is willing, within reason, to assist anyone seeking employment in Ottawa, and asks anyone interested to send a copy of his/her statistical qualifications to the post office box of the Ottawa Canadian Reformed Church or call (613) 828-9711. Upon receiving that, we will inform and advise you if we find or hear of a position.

We also have verbal contact with

several "personnel pools." All have suggested that interested parties should send their resume directly to them. They will keep your file open until a position is found for you.

Students graduating from computer science or engineering programs in university or college can often find themselves in the position of choosing between four or five job offers.

Though we cannot act as an employment agency, we *will* assist anyone in any field as much as we can. Send us your resume and we will do our best. May the Lord grant us favour so that also the Church of Ottawa may fulfill this "Capital Calling."

Ottawa, October 1981

### PRESS REVIEW —

*Continued from page 469.*

Christ is received through faith. This Christ must be preached. This Christ, with all His benefits, is embraced in faith. Great is the mystery of salvation. Great is God's grace for sinners. To Him be the glory forever.

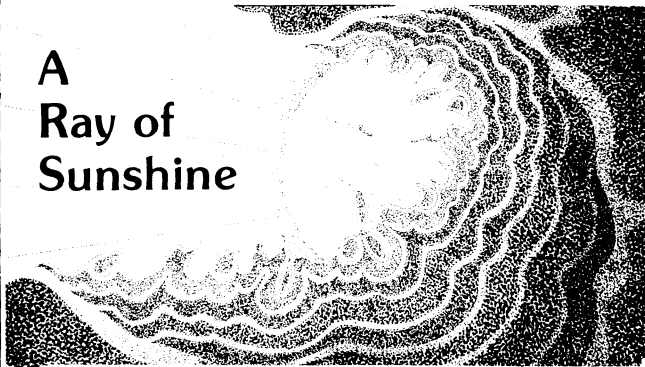
J. Geertsema

<sup>1</sup> B. Holwerda, *De Dingen Die Ons Van God Geschonken Zijn*, Vol. II, Oosterbaan en Le Cointre, Goes, 1954, pp. 159ff.

<sup>2</sup> B. Holwerda, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> *The Complete Works of the late Rev. Thomas Boston*, edited by the Rev. M. Millan in 12 volumes, Richard Owen Roberts, Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1980, Vol. VII, p. 465. This volume contains *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*. Cf. also Vol. XII, p. 290ff.

# A Ray of Sunshine



We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. II Corinthians 4:8, 9

In Matthew 16:24, 25, Christ told His disciples, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."

Christians must be prepared for a hard and troubled life. It is the will of their heavenly Father to exercise His people in this way while putting them to the test. James, in his letter to the twelve tribes in the dispersion, wrote: "Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness" (1:2); and, "Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love Him" (v. 12).

To bear the cross patiently is not to have your feelings blunted and to be insensitive to pain. People are able to hurt us deeply by their hostile words and actions. We are human beings who have a capacity for feeling. Man's existence would be bleak and barren without feeling. Man's emotions make him experience evil, sadness, and grief. Believers in the Old and New Testaments experienced many troubles as well as joys. If all tears were condemned, what would we have to think of the Lord Jesus Himself whose "sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44)? If every kind of fear or sorrow were a sign of unbelief, what would we have to think of the Scripture passage where Christ said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"? To bear the cross patiently does not mean to bear it without feeling, but to bear it as Paul describes it in II Corinthians 4:7. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us . . . So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal . . . for we walk by faith."

If wishes worked like magic  
And plans worked that way, too,  
And if everything you wished for  
Whether good or bad for you,  
Immediately were granted  
With no effort on your part,  
You'd experience no fulfilment  
Of your spirit or your heart —  
For things achieved too easily  
Lose their charm and meaning, too,  
For it is life's difficulties  
And the trial times we go through

That makes us strong in spirit  
And endow us with the will  
To surmount the insurmountable  
And climb the highest hill —  
So wish not for the easy way  
To win your heart's desire,  
For the joy's in overcoming  
And withstanding "flood and fire" —  
For to triumph over trouble  
And grow stronger with defeat  
Is to win the kind of victory  
That will make your life complete.

Helen Steiner Rice

\* \* \* \* \*

We have received the following word of thanks:

"We want to thank those who faithfully send Nelena cards. She is doing great in Bethesda, but will have to move to another home next year, along with five other residents. With greetings in Christ,  
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hofsink,  
Smithers, B.C."

\* \* \* \* \*

We have received the following thank-you note:

"On behalf of John, we as family would like to thank all the brothers and sisters for the many beautiful cards John received for his birthday — well over one hundred. They came from Ontario, the West, and even from Australia! A very special thanks to the Young People's Society "Shalom" of Cloverdale, B.C. and "The Blijvende Jeugd" Club of the Fraser Valley, B.C., and not to forget all the cards that came from Alberta. It made his day a very special one. John will paste all the cards in a scrap book, which he will look into many times. John has been attending an Adult Development Program in Port Colborne since last year. He works with nine other adults on four contracts: paper recycling, packaging food utensils, crayons, and assembling buttons. The contracts provide the necessary stimulation and purpose that these young people need.

Thank you, brothers and sisters, for giving John so much sunshine in his life."  
Mrs. H. Feenstra  
Wainfleet, Ontario

\* \* \* \* \*

A request was received for sister:

**MISS H. WIERENGA**

Ward M5, Royal Columbian Hospital,  
New Westminster, B.C.

Miss Wierenga was born with both hips dislocated. After years of pain, she was operated on last summer, and again in the Fall. The operation itself was successful, but she has much pain from muscles that she did not use previously. Her stay in the hospital will be long, in order to get the necessary treatment.

Miss Wierenga is in her mid fifties. She often feels lonely, although she is visited by congregational members. She would love to receive some mail from you, brothers and sisters. Please send your rays of sunshine across our country, continent, or from the other end of the world.

Send your requests to:

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

# school X crossing

As was mentioned before, from time to time "School Crossing" will focus on a specific school. This month, the Eben-ezer Canadian Reformed School of Chatham is featured. Mrs. J. Tillema, a member of that school society, took the time to make up the following report. Hopefully, you'll find it interesting and informative. One further point should be mentioned. Several principals were asked to submit details regarding the history of their schools. This was done to "get the ball rolling." Others, who were not approached, are encouraged to undertake a similar assignment. Eventually the account will be printed. Back to the Eben-ezer Canadian Reformed School . . . .

It was in 1972 that the Canadian Reformed School Society members could, if they so desired, pace out the 2.47 acres of land that was now their very own. The day before the signing of the papers, they would have been walking on property that had belonged to the Church and to Mr. Van Roboys. The church, deciding that the remaining 2.52 acres was sufficient, readily pleased the anxious buyer. The farmer, whose corn fields had been severely damaged by late spring frost, happily parted with some of his Kent County soil. The School Society members were

pleased to have this property located near the city, at 485 McNaughton Ave. East.

Though this farm land was excellent for walking upon, it could not be used for the purpose for which it was bought. First of all, a school building would have to find its place upon it. This is what happened, almost literally.

A two-classroom school building, that was to be moved from 18 Taylor Ave., was purchased for 5,000 dollars in January 1973. Three months later, an excavation was dug for the future basement of the school, after a blueprint had been drawn by a society member. In May, the mover began to move the building along its 1.2 mile path to its new location.

Before and after the building's relocation, the thirty-two members (1981 — 61) of the school society, and other concerned individuals, did innumerable kinds of jobs. As much work as possible was done by free labour. One member who was unable to work physically himself decided to donate 100 hours of work at five dollars an hour. The School Society also received a cheque of 500 dollars.

The variety of items required seemed endless. An older lady in Holland sent some money for the library; a member gave fourteen

trees; another lady disposed of her good vacuum cleaner; other valuable gifts were added to these. When many people were involved in an hours-long task, the women were very punctual in providing food and drink. The baked goods were so delicious that it was recorded in the Newsletter that coffee times were very much looked forward to.

The school building received a new basement, a new face (reddish brown brick), a new drainage system, new wood, steel, nails, etc. With money made from, e.g., garage, barn, vegetable, spoon sales, the building obtained desks, chairs, blackboards, lights, etc. Yet it did not have something that could not be bought with a price. It did not have a name.

In the Newsletter of May 1973, it was announced that a name was chosen for the school, a name that would confess what had really happened: "Eben-ezer" — Until now the LORD has helped us (I Samuel 7:12).

When, on Sept. 11, 1973, Mr. G. Noordhof cut the ribbon, Mr. J. Tillema presented the keys, and Rev. M.C. Werkman spoke on "Eben-ezer," the building was officially opened. Yet school work had already begun. The principal, Mr. L. Bol, teacher of Grades 5 to 8, was responsible for thirty-two pupils. Miss L. Wildeboer, teacher of Grades 1 to 4, had been preparing to teach twenty-one children. Mr. P. Roukema came in Jan. 1974 to lessen the workload.

The coming of the at-first-unplanned-for third teacher prompted the members to build a third classroom in the basement in Dec. 1973. Then the school remained adequate in size during the years that the following teachers came to Chatham: Miss T. Harmanny, Miss B. Hoogland.

While Mr. A. Van Overbeeke was principal in our school, an addition which included two classrooms, a basement auditorium, and washrooms was built in 1977. In 1979 the school was subject to renovations, the appearance of another classroom, and a relocated office-staff room. This was necessary because of the expansion of the elementary school into the high school grades of 9 and 10. When the Grade 9 students had graduated into Chatham's first Grade 10 class, the full-time high school teachers were Miss T. Hut-



*Our school in the corn county of Canada. Eben-ezer School, Chatham.*





*Our Principal:  
John Roukema.  
Eben-ezer School,  
Chatham.*

ten and Miss C. Van Weerden. Those who taught one high school subject were Rev. Geertsema, Mr. Van Overbeeke, Mrs. Wiersma, Mrs. Ludwig, Mrs. Hutten, and Mr. Tillema. Unnamed are the many people who during this time, and the previous years, helped in doing the secretarial work, extra typing, volunteer teaching, remedial teaching, supply teaching, and principal's relief.

Our present school building has six regular classrooms, a special education room, an office-staff room, an auditorium-gym, storage rooms, and washrooms. These areas are occupied by sixty-seven students and the following teachers: Mr. John Roukema (principal, high school), Miss Teresa Hutten (high school), Mr. Jake Bouwman (high school), Miss Phyllis Baartse (elementary), Mr. Sietse Werkman (elementary), Mr. Keith Sikkema (elementary), Mrs. Ida Tillema (special education).

Though the things written above are of varying values to different people and although the names recorded are not of the greatest importance to everyone (and many have not been written), we can all agree on the meaning of the name Eben-ezer: Until now the LORD has helped us. May He, in His mercy, continue to do so until time on this earth will end.

MRS. J. TILLEMA

#### *Statistics Anyone???*

I wonder if many readers know exactly the number and location of

our schools. Sweeping from West to East, let's take note of the following:

#### (a) *British Columbia*

- (i) Langley Christian High School
- (ii) Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School (Smithers)
- (iii) William of Orange Christian School (Surrey)
- (iv) John Calvin School (Yarrow, Abbotsford, Chilliwack)

#### (b) *Alberta*

- (i) Coaldale Christian School
- (ii) Parkland Emmanuel School (Edmonton)
- (iii) Covenant Canadian Reformed School (Neerlandia, Barrhead)

#### (c) *Manitoba*

- (i) Dufferin Christian School (Carman)
- (ii) Immanuel Christian School (Winnipeg)

#### (d) *Ontario*

- (i) Credo Christian School (Brampton, Toronto)
- (ii) John Calvin School (Burlington)
- (iii) Eben-ezer Canadian Reformed School (Chatham)
- (iv) Maranatha Christian School (Fergus, Guelph)
- (v) Emmanuel Christian High School (Fergus, Guelph)
- (vi) Guido de Brès High School (Hamilton)
- (vii) Timothy Canadian Reformed School (Hamilton)
- (viii) Covenant Christian School (London)
- (ix) Dufferin Area Christian School (Orangeville)
- (x) John Calvin School (Smithville, Lincoln)
- (xi) Ambassador Christian School (Watford)

#### (e) *U.S.A.*

Prof. Dr. K. Schilder School (Grand Rapids)

The twenty-one schools employ a total of 114 full-time and 30 part-time teachers. Elementary schools have a combined enrollment of 1823 pupils, while secondary schools combine for a total of 560 students. Other interesting statistics could be compiled. For example, the cost of education per student, membership and tuition



*Cozy corner in the library. Eben-ezer School, Chatham.*

tion fees, design of schools, or special programs, could be useful to various school boards. However, this information is not available to me.

#### Parent-Teacher Contact

In two school bulletins I found articles about Parent-Teacher or Home and School Associations. The two articles speak for themselves.

(a) "The task of providing a school education for God's covenant children is a very important one. This task must be fully supported by the parents in the home. School education must in fact be an extension of the home. Therefore, parents play a pivotal part in the education process. This requires close interaction between home and school, and is one of the prime reasons for establishing our own parental schools. To achieve close interaction, Home and School Associations (HSA) are an integral part of parental schools. The purpose of the HSA then, is to unify the parents and the teachers in their respective tasks and responsibilities to teach and to prepare the covenant children to live a Christian life. Such an association seeks to achieve this purpose through activities which promote the school and the interest of the parents in the school and its programs, and by fostering more direct contact and mutual understanding between parents and teachers. The HSA recognizes that the Board has immediate authority over the school and its programs, and will work within the framework of this authority."

from *Parkland Immanuel News*  
— Edmonton

(b) "The P.T.A. exists to promote a positive relationship between the home and the school. "P.T.A." means *both* parents and teachers. Too often the responsibility of providing topics falls solely on the shoulders of the staff. Sometimes there is even an impression of parents *versus* teachers — two adversary groups, struggling to have the final say on what is best for our children.

With all the meetings we have, why should we bother with more meetings and functions sponsored by the P.T.A.? The staff offer parent/teacher nights, and open house. The Board offers an opportunity for all of us to discuss school concerns at two membership meetings during the year.



Upstairs hallway, Eben-ezer School, Chatham. Teacher: Mr. Werkman.

Through its Public Relations Committee, the Board will extend a listening ear to problems and complaints. So why bother with a P.T.A.?

The P.T.A. is an important fund raiser and, without this extra resource, the school would be even more under-equipped. Some may argue the point that the school is under-equipped, and these are usually the members who feel that P.T.A. money is allocated mostly for frills, or that it provides a fringe benefit for the staff. This should never be the purpose of raising funds. Additions to the Library, physical education equipment, a new piano — all of these must have an educational objective, and must stand the test of being a direct benefit to our children's preparation for a responsible life in the Lord.

But the P.T.A. is much more than a fund-raiser. Let us consider what the P.T.A. provides:

- an opportunity for discussing mutual issues of concern in an atmosphere of working together, and always seeking to improve our own abilities to raise our children in the ways of the Covenant.
- a challenge for both parents and teachers in improving their understanding of the responsibilities of their offices of teacher and parent.
- an ally in the promotion of Reformed Christian education in which it joins the church community as a whole, and also

supports the work of the Board and its committees in running the school, and encouraging high quality education."

John Calvin School  
— Burlington

#### Play Today

The following poem was found in *three* school bulletins during the last few months (quite a coincidence).

Let's conclude School Crossing for this time with the following thought provoking words:

You say you love your children  
And are concerned they learn today?  
So am I — that's why I'm providing  
A variety of kinds of play.  
You're asking me the value  
Of Blocks and other such play?  
Your children are solving problems  
They will use that skill everyday.  
You're asking what's the value  
Of having your children play?  
Your daughter's creating a tower  
She may be a builder someday.  
You're saying you don't want your son  
To play in that "sissy" way  
He's learning to cuddle a doll  
He may be a father someday.  
You're questioning the interest centres  
They just look like useless play?  
Your children are making choices  
They'll be on their own way someday.  
You're worried your children aren't learning  
And later they'll have to pay?  
They're learning a pattern for learning  
For they'll be learners always.

Author Unknown

N. VANDOOREN



*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.*

**TAMPERE (ANP)**

An extensive telephone campaign of the Lutheran Church in Finland to get people back to church did not have much success.

From the result in the city of Tampere it appears that immediately after the campaign attendance improved enormously. The number of worshippers was in some instances even some 90% more than the corresponding number on the same Sunday a year before. After a few weeks, however, attendance dropped gradually to the level of before the campaign.

The results of the campaign in Tampere, where 350 volunteers phoned some 350,000 church-members, is considered to be representative of all of Finland. (ND)

\* \* \*

The Salvation Army has a new general. Commissioner Jarl Wahlstrom, 63, will assume the post being vacated by General Arnold Brown in mid-December at the mandatory retirement age of 68. A Finn, Wahlstrom has served the army since 1938 in his own country and in administrative posts in Canada (with Bermuda) and Sweden. Brown, a Canadian, has served as the top officer in the army's world-wide force of 25,000 officers (full-time staff) for four-and-a-half years. (CT)

\* \* \*

The largest printing job ever given to a single Swedish printing plant is under way there. It is a 500,000 copy edition of the first new translation of the Swedish New Testament to be made since World War I. Swedish Bibles have been financed by the government ever since the first version was printed in 1526.

The 750-page Testaments are subsidized, and will cost buyers about \$10. So far they have cost the government about \$1.25 million. (CT)

\* \* \*

A reported apparition of the Virgin Mary is giving communist officials in Yugoslavia fits. It all began in July, when six girls from the mountain village of Citluk reported seeing a golden-haired Madonna floating over a remote meadow. Western diplomats sources estimate that since then as many as 30,000 Yugoslav Catholics have flocked to the area. The state-controlled press began to ridicule the reported event as "scientifically impossible," and Radovan Samardzic, secretary of the government's Commission on Church Relations, saw it as "a publicity trick, an attempt to show strength." Officials thereupon fenced off the meadow, barred journalists, and sentenced the local priest to three-and-one-half years in prison for spreading "hostile propaganda." (CT)

\* \* \*

**OSLO (CNI)**

News of a more or less unsuccessful Dutch attempt to smuggle Bibles to Christians in China, recently caused debate in Scandinavia. Both in Norway and Denmark, warnings were voiced against destroying the possibility of openly supporting Bible work in China. "Time and again we see that we come further through legal channels," general secretary Birger Mathisen of the Norwegian Bible Society says.

Reports say that the Open Doors Society, led by the Dutchman Brother Andreas, last June dumped 1 million Chinese Bibles from a ship, near Svatov in the Ge Zhou area. On the shores, several thousand people were awaiting the transport. Some reports say Chinese police confiscated the entire load lighting a Bible bonfire burning for three days. Mr. Johan Companjen, a leader of Open Doors says 800,000 Bibles were brought into security before soldiers arrived. Of the remaining 200,000 Bibles, only 50,000 were burned or thrown into the sea again, he says. (CN)

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**LOUISVILLE, KY. (RNS)**

Next year's convention of the Lutheran Church in America will be "one of the most historic" of Lutheranism in North America, says the denomination's chief officer.

Bishop James B. Crumley Jr.,

said here that the convention would probably take the first step toward union with the American Lutheran Church and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

If the process for church union stays on track, Bishop Crumley said, the 3 million-member LCA could hold its last convention as a separate body in 1986. The new church could be operational by 1988, he added. (CN)

\* \* \*

**OSSEO, MINN. (RNS)**

Grace Layton Sandness is a quadraplegic, paralyzed from the neck down.

But her condition, which developed 31 years ago when she was stricken with polio, has not prevented her and her husband from adopting nine children and sharing life with three "foster children."

Eight of the children arrived with physical disabilities and practically all of the 12 have multi-racial backgrounds.

Despite her disability, Mrs. Sandness has written two books, *Brimming Over* and *Beginning*, typewritten by herself clutching a "Mouth-stick."

Her wheelchair, which she activates by blowing or sucking into a tube, is equipped with a respirator that aids her breathing. (CN)

\* \* \*

**NEW YORK (EP)**

Despite curbs on church activities, a religious revival is under way in Czechoslovakia, Marvine Howe reported in the *New York Times* on October 10.

Even Dr. Karel Hruza, head of the Government's Secretariat for Religious Affairs, says that there is a back-to-church trend among young people. "In olden days you would see only grandmothers in churches, but now there are young churchgoers, too," he commented in a recent interview.

Asked about the causes of the revival, he said, "Some sociologists say the people are seeking the meaning of life, others call it a protest against consumerism; I think probably both are right." One fact is evident: Young people are flocking to churches, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. (CC)

vO

**OUR COVER**

*Winter Scenery. (Photo Courtesy Government of Nova Scotia.)*

## Book Review

### Parenting the Parents

JOHN GILLIES, *A Guide to Caring for and Coping with Aging Parents*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville Tennessee, U.S.A., 206 pp., \$5.95.

"This book is John Gillies' sensitive, loving, and practical response to the issues and decisions which face middle-aged offspring when their parents no longer can live independent lives. It is written from the author's own background of experience with Paul, his father-in-law who suffered a stroke, and with Anna, his mother who became confused and senile following a blow to her head."

Thus far the opening words of the Publisher's announcement of this book that exactly says what we tried to express in the heading: there comes a time that you as children have to be parents to your parents who have become dependent the way you were when you were a little child, and they took care of your every need. It is just what Paul had in mind when he wrote that children should "requite their parents," I Tim. 5:4.

The book is filled with technical details and detailed information on what to do and how to go about caring for your dependent parents, what help is needed, what institutions should be contacted, and so forth; but what struck me deeply is that this care for your old and weak parents is nothing but a "natural thing" to do, and anyway a Christian duty. In this respect this book will go against the stream and the strain of today's "me-me" mentality. No wonder, because we live in the "last days" in which "natural love" will dry up. That's why this book could be written only because there is more-than-natural love that enabled the author and his wife to cope with the many and manifold, time-consuming and patience-testing acts of help and assistance.

Nowadays the rule has become that pensioners try to make up for the many pleasures that they could not afford in younger years; and the younger generation tries to get rid of care for the parents by having them removed to nursing homes and the like, where once-a-week visits are usually the only expression (if they are!) of filial love.

Only the love of Christ will make possible this kind of "parenting the parents" as described in this book.

A review cannot discuss all the many details of eighteen chapters each of which is subdivided into five to ten or twelve paragraphs.

The best we can do is to recommend this book most cordially to all who, in one way or another, find such aging parents or fellow-believers placed on their way by our God. Those who already have seen it as their Christian duty to give a home and care to dependent parents, do themselves a great service by learning from this Guide how to act in various and difficult situa-

tions. But everyone would benefit from the true Christian spirit that speaks in these pages where children, for the love of God, do not tire to accompany their parents to the very last moment of their lives, and do that in their own home as long as is humanly possible.

G. VANDOOREN

\* \* \* \* \*

### An Answer to Humanistic Psychology

by *Nelson E. Hinman*. Published by Harvest House Publishers, Irvine, Calif., 1980, paperback, 142 pages, price \$3.95 (U.S.). Reviewed by H.C. VanDooren, Burlington, Ont.

The preface of this book states: "This book has the potential of starting a revolution. It is a daring expose of humanism." While the reaction of the reviewer is much more subdued, he will concede that this small book packs a good punch, even though Hinman is not all that original in his challenge to Humanism as it has pervaded the field of psychology.

Hinman uncovers the false assumptions of three "schools" of psychology: Psychoanalysis; Behaviour Modification; Transpersonal Psychology. While he does not outrightly reject the usefulness of Psychology in understanding behaviour, the author does maintain that all that is important to know is contained in the Bible. Such a statement can be misleading and turn some readers away from a thorough study of man and his behaviour. Hinman himself would not encourage such an abdication, however. He would urge more Christians to study Psychology in order to challenge the humanistic distorters "to earn the credentials to qualify them to write and to publish material based on truly Biblical presuppositions," p. 19.

Hinman states correctly that Humanism has usurped the privileges and prerogatives that belong to God alone, and has invaded God's right to rule his own creations. Because all things are of God, we should not be surprised when Psychology does come up with good insights. But, says the author, this should not entice us to dive headlong into the study of Psychology, or to develop our own syncretized version of human behaviour from a smattering of psychological and biblical insights.

This book makes a good statement, but it should not be considered the best and, far less, the only authority on the subject.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Living Without Fear

by *Wilma Burton*. Published by Good News Publications, Westchester, Ill., 1981, paperback, 154 pages, price \$4.95 (U.S.). Reviewed by H.C. VanDooren, Burlington, Ont.

This book belongs more to the genre of devotional books. It is not designed to apply various insights to dealing with daily problems in a practical way. Bible texts are quoted throughout, but there is little attempt to provide a thorough under-

standing of these passages. The point of living without fear gets worn after awhile. There is much repetition which may help to drive the point home, but could detract if the reader is looking for something more substantial or thought-provoking.

As devotional reading the book may fill a need. It has much less to offer in the way of understanding fear in its complexity and finding ways of overcoming fear, other than contemplating texts from the Bible.

## PRESS RELEASE

of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College Association, Nov. 6, 1981.

After a Christian opening, and the reading and acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting, the agenda is established and proceeded with.

From the outgoing and incoming correspondence it is noted that results of the "Drive" in congregations without a supporting Association or Society have been somewhat apathetic. Further efforts to arouse enthusiasm, however, are being engaged in.

Correspondence is also maintained with the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies regarding financial arrangements for the Staff and the development of a Diploma Reformed Education (part-time).

From the committee reports it becomes obvious that our financial situation, although not perilous at the moment, will need to be reassessed in Jan. 1982. For in order to meet the 1981/82 budget of \$87,000.00 approximately 66% of that amount has yet to be received. Future decision-making will be contingent upon stable financial support.

From the Principal's report matters dealt with include development and planning for 1982/83 and 1983/84. Numerous programme and timetable possibilities are examined. All these considerations, however, are subject to our staffing potential. Advertisement therefore, for full-time and part-time positions, will be proceeded with.

A proposed structure for a Diploma Reformed Education, including perhaps ten part-time courses, is being developed in liaison with the Canadian Reformed Teachers' Association and in consultation with the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies.

On behalf of the Ex. Comm.  
of the C.R.T.C.A.,

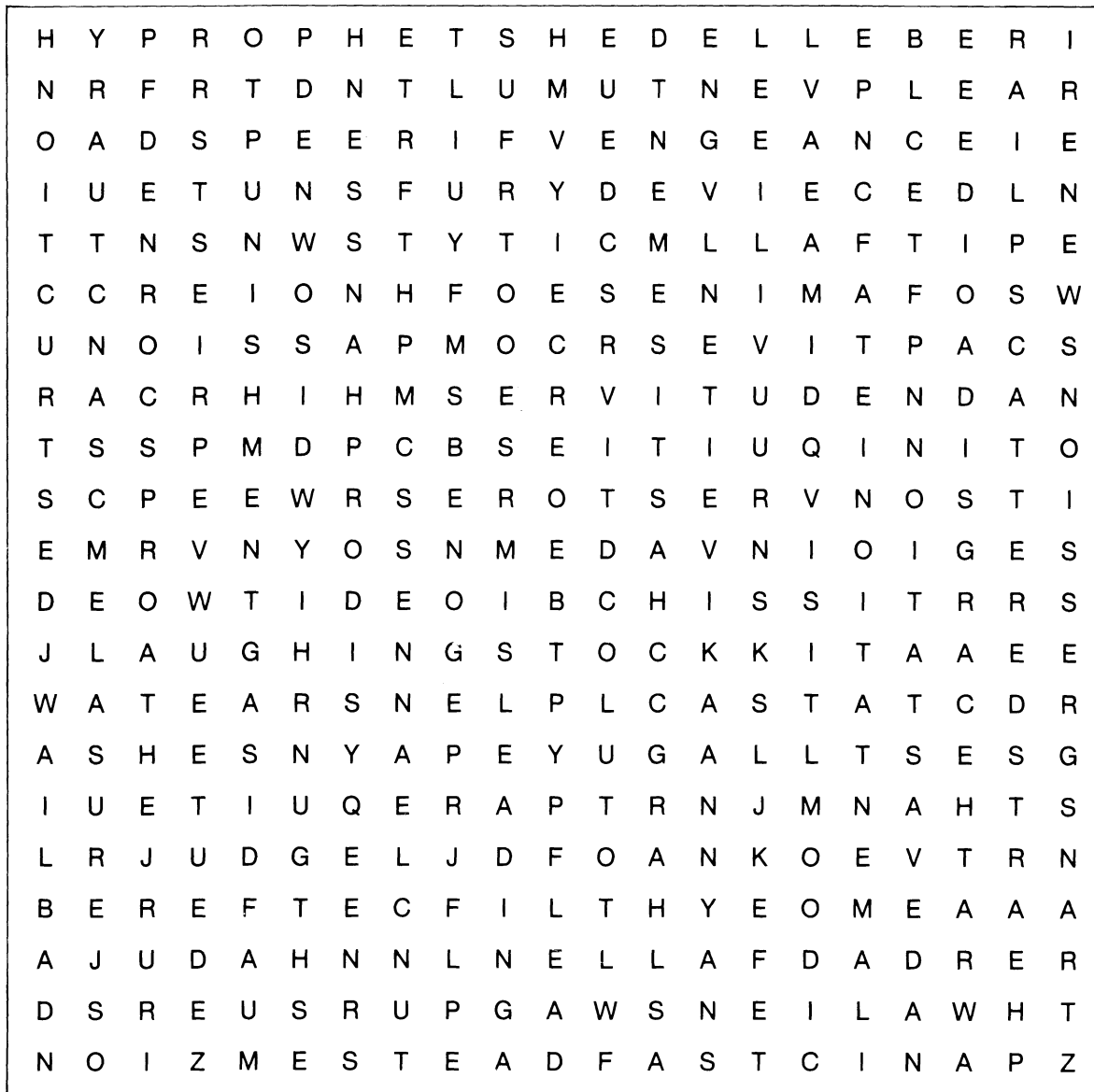
A. WITTEN

### FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of *Clarion* was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on November 27, 1981.

# Word Search Puzzle

# LAMENTATIONS



- |              |            |               |                |             |
|--------------|------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| aliens       | fallen     | Judah         | rail           | tumult      |
| ashes        | famine     | judge         | rebelled       | uncleanness |
| bereft       | filthy     | lamentation   | renew          | vengeance   |
| captives     | fire       | laughingstock | requite        | vent        |
| cast         | foes       | lift          | restore        | wag         |
| chastisement | fury       | love          | return         | wail        |
| city         | gall       | misleading    | rod            | weep        |
| compassion   | gone       | orphans       | ruins          | woe         |
| cry          | heart      | panic         | sanctuary      | wrath       |
| deceived     | hiss       | pay           | scattered      | Zion        |
| destruction  | hope       | pitfall       | scorned        |             |
| devastation  | iniquities | plea          | servitude      |             |
| disgrace     | invade     | priests       | shed           |             |
| disowned     | Jacob      | prophets      | spurned        |             |
| doom         | Jeremiah   | punishment    | steadfast      |             |
| end          | Jerusalem  | pursuers      | tears          |             |
|              |            |               | test           |             |
|              |            |               | transgressions | W. AIKEMA   |



CALLED to Burlington-West:  
REV. J. DEJONG  
of London, Ont.

\*\*\*

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:  
*Canadian Reformed School  
Society of Edmonton  
c/o J. DeHaas  
Box 7, Site 3, R.R. 1,  
St. Albert, Alberta T8N 1M8*

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# our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

I had a very interesting letter I thought you would like to read too. Here it is:

Watford, November 5, 1981

Dear Aunt Betty,

It has been a long time since I wrote you. I am in grade six now, and I am the only one in grade six. We have only eleven students in our school. But we will be getting more, because there is a family immigrating from Holland, and will be going to our school.

We went to an Indian village close to London. It was really fun there. I typed out a story on our visit there. I gave it to the teacher, and he is going to put it in the Watford newspaper. And while we were at the Indian village, they took pictures which will also be in the Watford newspaper with my story. There is a copy of that story with my letter. Goodbye for now.

Yours Sincerely,  
Alan Janssens

### My Visit to Ska-Nah-Doht Indian Village

When we got there we went to a resource centre. We saw some slides about how the Indians lived 1,000 years ago. Then we looked at the displays in the building. Then we went outside and made a tour of everything. The first thing we saw was a very small hut. It was used by small boys who had to stay there for three or four days without eating anything. That was to test the boy to see if he could take it.

Then we went into the village. To get into the village you had to go through a maze. Once you were in the village you could see three long-houses, and some other buildings. First we went to a small round house. It was sort of a sauna. The Indians put very hot rocks in it and then put water on them, which produced steam. From there we went to a garbage pit. That is where the Indians put their garbage. There were bones and empty cobs of corn. Then we came to the storage pit. This was a pit dug deep underground. That is where the Indians kept their leftover food. Then we came to a place where there were stumps with the top hollow. This was used to crush corn and other foodstuffs. After this we came to the drying racks. They were used to dry and smoke meat or fish. Finally we came to the long-houses in which the Indians lived. Inside were a lot of bunk beds on the sides of the long-houses. They only slept on the bottom of the beds, because the smoke of their campfires stayed in the long-houses. The beds were made of sticks with bark on top. Then there was deerskin layed on top of that.

After the tour we had to make tools out of sticks and stones and bones and string. Our group made a bow and arrow, a knife, a spoon, a hoe, an axe, and a flagpole. After we had those things finished we had to make a small bowl out of clay. After everybody had their bowl made we went home.

THE END



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Kimberley Vander Zwaag*. We are happy to have you join us. And we hope you'll join in all our Busy Beaver activities, Kimberley. Bye for now. Write again soon.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Sharon Duker*. You're a real Busy Beaver already, I see. Thanks for the picture and the jokes. Do you have any hobbies, Sharon?

Have you been back to your uncle's camp, *Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg*? Sounds to me as if you had lots of fun there! How did you do on your report on B.C.? Thanks for the puzzle and for the riddles, too, Mary-Ann.

I'm glad you had such nice holidays at Kelowna, *Karen Stam*. Have you had P.E. lately? And will you share your art with the Busy Beavers, Karen? Or maybe you have a fun math puzzle for them?

Hello, *Margaret Oosterveld*. I see you've been busy again. And you mean to keep the other Busy Beavers busy, too! Good for you. Keep it up!

How are you doing, *Diane Smith*? You're a good puzzler, I see. Did you need some help with the Reformation Day Quiz, Diane? Or could you manage on your own? Either way is fine. Keep it up!

Hello, *Alan Janssens*. It was nice to hear from you again. Your visit to the Indian village sounds very interesting. I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy your story.

Thanks for your poem and riddles, *Pauline Lodder*. Looks to me as if you've been a real Busy Beaver again. Keep up the good work!

You're a good cartoonist, *Miriam Vander Werf*. Keep it up! Thanks for the puzzle, too. Are you looking forward to the Christmas holidays, Miriam?

\* \* \* \* \*

### Riddles For You

Try them on your family!

The first three are from Busy Beaver *Pauline Lodder*, the last three from Busy Beaver *Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg*.

1. What can turn without moving?
2. Why are animals such poor dancers?
3. Why is Lassie like a comet?
4. I am a gigantic ball. I turn around all the time. Who am I?
5. I go all around the field but I don't move. Who am I?
6. I am a home made of glass. I am often round. Who am I?

Answers: 1. Milliki! It can turn sour. 2. They have two left feet; 3. They are both stars with tails. 4. the earth; 5. a fence; 6. a fishbowl.

### QUIZ TIME

#### Star Puzzle

from Busy Beaver *Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg*

