

# Clarion

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# A Canadian Reformed View of the Christian Reformed Church<sub>1</sub>

*Speech given at the Christian Reformed Elders Conference in Lethbridge, Alberta, October 29, 1982.*

## *125 Years Christian Reformed Church*

This year the Christian Reformed Church remembers that it is 125 years ago that she was instituted as such, albeit under a different name at that time. At many meetings and in many magazine articles attention has been paid to this fact. It is also with a view to this remembrance that I have been invited to speak to you this evening, as an "outsider" belonging to a church communion closely related to yours.

The Rev. Jelle Tuininga, who put it this way in the convocation letter for this Elders Conference, gave as reason that it is good to know how such an "outsider" looks at the Christian Reformed Church, but he especially based this invitation on this: that "we must be interested in promoting good, Biblical ecumenicity (the 'unity of the true faith,' L.D. 21)."

I am very happy about this reason for the invitation to speak to you, a reason which at the same time brings along a great responsibility for me, namely, that what I am going to say to you must indeed promote that good, Biblical ecumenicity which is meant by the Catechism in Lord's Day 21 when it characterizes the gathering, defending, and preserving of the Church by the Son of God as taking place, by His Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith.

When an anniversary is celebrated, it is customary that congratulations are conveyed. Often these congratulations are sincere, but sometimes they are only a formality. It hap-

pens that people attend a reception and utter some congratulations, but that what they really come for is a nice party and the goodies which come with it. It also does happen that some relative is invited and indeed attends and extends his congratulations, in spite of the fact that there are tensions, difficulties, yes, even a conflict between him and the person or persons who are celebrating the anniversary. They act as if nothing has happened between them, because, well, you don't want to spoil the party, do you? But the day after the congratulations have been extended they go on like before, living as enemies of each other, or anyway each going his own way again without speaking to and listening to each other.

## *The Early Years of the Christian Reformed Church*

The Christian Reformed Church is to be congratulated on her 125-year existence, in as far as her existence during these past 125 years is characterized by that good, Biblical ecumenicity of which we make confession in Lord's Day 21. Did you know that it took a considerable number of years before the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (the churches of the Secession of 1834) were willing to accept the Christian Reformed Church in America as sister churches? Several letters sent by the Christian Reformed Church to Synods in Holland were simply received and filed. When the Christian Reformed Church sent an official delegation to the Dutch Synod of Groningen in 1872 (15 years after its beginnings), this delegation was not received with open arms. After ample discussion this Syn-

od decided "that it was obligated to receive the delegates from America, without wishing to be deemed thereby to pass judgment on the ecclesiastical questions in America or to decide upon the objections, stated in the credentials submitted to Synod." Did you know that members of the Dutch churches who emigrated to America received attestations directed to the Reformed Church of America, because the Dutch churches were not at all convinced that the Christian Reformed Church had rightly separated and started her own existence? Apparently the Churches in Holland were not ready in 1872 simply to congratulate the Christian Reformed Church on her 15th anniversary. (The historical data are taken from *Inheritance Preserved* by W.W.J. VanOene, Premier Printing Ltd., 1975, p. 51.)

In the eighties of the previous century a change came about. On the one hand, the churches in The Netherlands became more aware of and agreed with the objections of the Christian Reformed Church against the Reformed Church of America, and, on the other hand, they recognized in the Christian Reformed Church a church which indeed let itself be gathered by the Son of God, by his Word and Spirit, in the unity of the true faith. The Christian Reformed Church, in her desire to promote good, Biblical ecumenicity, insisted on an official relationship of correspondence with her Dutch sister churches, with rules containing the promise that the corresponding churches shall "take heed mutually lest there be deviation from the Reformed principles in doctrine, worship, or discipline."

The thought underlying this

strict rule on which the Christian Reformed Church insisted was her confession in Lord's Day 21 about the gathering of the Church by Jesus Christ in the unity of the true faith. The Christian Reformed Church understood very well that the church is Reformed in order to be Christian, and that it is not sufficient to call a church Reformed, but that a Reformed Church must always keep being reformed. *Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda.*

*Also for the Church, Self-examination is Necessary*

It is in this respect that also the church is called to examine herself. She must examine whether indeed she remains a Reformed Church, gathering and being gathered in the unity of the true faith. Especially on the occasion of a 125th anniversary there is reason for such self-examination, and it is with a view to this self-examination that you invited me to give my view of the Christian Reformed Church, or rather, as you have formulated it, a Canadian Reformed view.

The question could be asked: Why me? Why a Canadian Reformed view? The Canadian Reformed people are, I suppose, known among you as quite critical people, and one could say that they themselves need to engage in self-examination, if only for the reason of their always being so critical. Well, let me tell you, we don't right now have a special anniversary as an occasion for that, but there is an anniversary which we both are used to celebrating: Reformation Day; and if there is one day which gives reason for self-examination to churches which are called Reformed, then it is that day; and I will certainly for my part let the call for self-examination be heard in the Canadian Reformed Church where I am called to preach this Sunday. And if I am going to be critical of the Christian Reformed Church, then you should know and remember, in the first place, that this does not mean that with the Canadian Reformed Churches all is fine and that they may boast of themselves; and in the second place, you should not forget that you did invite me with the purpose of hearing the Canadian Reformed view.

*The Purpose and use of Church Polity*

*A) Article of Rev. H.J. Bout in Calvinist Contact of October 15, 1982*

I would like to start out with

something which happened in this anniversary year. A week ago I received the October 15 issue of *Calvinist Contact*, in which I read an article under the heading, "Reverend Harry Bout deposed by Classis." When a Reformed person who has experienced the conflict in the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands in 1944 reads such a heading, he rightaway remembers the great number of ministers and elders that were deposed from their offices by Classes, in direct contrast to the Reformed principles of discipline, and he wonders.

Now it might very well be that this heading was incorrect, because in the article the minutes of that Classis are quoted as saying, "Classis . . . decides to dismiss Rev. Harry J. Bout as minister . . . and considers his status as that of one deposed from office," naming as ground 1: "He has abandoned his office by resigning his membership in the Christian Reformed Church." Still one wonders how a Christian Reformed journalist can speak so easily about deposition by Classis. Is it because such an action is considered normal, because it has happened more than once before?

If the grounds adduced for the Classis' decision are correct, then indeed this minister acted disorderly, and it could be said on the basis of the Church Order that his status must be considered as that of one deposed from office. But the question arises, of course: Why did this minister act disorderly, and also, what is the purpose of church polity? As to the purpose of church polity, we confess in Art. 30 of the Belgic Confession that the Church must be governed by that spiritual polity which our Lord has taught us in His Word, namely, that there must be ministers, elders, and deacons, and that (and now I quote) "by these means the true religion may be preserved, and the true doctrine everywhere propagated, likewise transgressors punished and restrained by spiritual means." And in Art. 32 we confess that in church government "we admit only of that which tends to nourish and preserve concord and unity, and to keep all men in obedience to God."

In short, the purpose of church polity is not simply to keep order, but to serve the preaching of the Gospel of reconciliation by the blood of Christ, the preservation of the true religion, the propagation of the true

doctrine. Now it appears that the deeper cause of Rev. Bout's disorderly conduct was the rejection by the consistory of his motion to separate from all the sinful decisions of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. I don't know whether this is the literal text of his motion (there were no quotation-marks); but the same page of *Calvinist Contact* contains an (abridged) article of this minister which makes it quite clear that he is concerned about the spiritual welfare of the people in the Christian Reformed Church, and that he wanted to be faithful to his promises in the form of subscription.

I mention a few of his concerns. Synod has told our people to redeem



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the area of dance for Christ; the authority of the Scriptures has been cast into doubt (e.g. the creation account in Genesis, the earthquake in Matt. 28); there is no clarity any longer concerning the decree of reprobation, limited atonement, the place of women in the church, the headship of man, capital punishment, Christian lifestyle. He feels that the foundation of our faith is being changed. He mentions the shift in thinking that has taken place in the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (Syn.), and the connection between these churches and the Christian Reformed Church. He does not say that the Christian Reformed Church has adopted the same wrong decisions as the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (Syn.), but that she has not dealt with those who hold similar views. He summarizes his concerns by saying that we have been standing by while the children of the church are eaten up by modern theology.

Now I am not saying that I agree with all the criticisms voiced here, although some of them are certainly shared by me and the Canadian Reformed Churches; but what struck me is that the Consistory did not reject his motion because his criticism of the Christian Reformed Church was considered to be untrue or incorrect, but because "acceptance of this motion would place our congregation in a very exceptional position with the Christian Reformed Church."

Of course this would have been the consequence of acceptance of this motion, but can and may this ever be the ground for rejection of a motion of this nature? In the first place, the Church Order, in Art. 29-31, allows such an exceptional position. And in the second place, the purpose of taking such an exceptional position, of course, not only honours the responsibility which a minister and a consistory have for their own congregation, but also helps the Christian Reformed Church as a whole to come back from a direction which, according to them, is not in agreement with the Word of God.

I do not condone this minister's reaction of resigning his membership, but I can understand his frustration; just as I do not condone the action of Rev. Hendrik De Cock in 1834 who baptized children from other congregations, and yet I can understand it. Now Rev. De Cock was suspended and deposed from his office for disorderly

conduct, but the real cause was nicely evaded. Similar things were experienced in The Netherlands in 1944, and here a minister in the Christian Reformed Church seems to be up against it again.

I say, "seems to be up against it again," and I use the word "seems" because all I know about this is from what I read about it in *Calvinist Contact*. Now you might ask, "But why then do you deal with this?" Well, in the first place, because from this minister's article it appears that also he cannot simply congratulate the Christian Reformed Church on her 125th anniversary, but has strong reservations about the unity of faith in the Christian Reformed Church; in the second place, because of several similarities between his criticisms and those living in Canadian Reformed circles; and, in the third place, because, even if what *Calvinist Contact* reported in this particular case might need correction, a use of church polity similar to what is reported here has been employed in other cases.

#### B) The "Verhey Case"

As to similar uses of church polity, I first refer to the so-called "Verhey case." It is clear that when Biblical hermeneutical principles are followed one must conclude from Genesis 3 and from Matthew 28 that the serpent spoke to Eve and that an earthquake shook the earth. Acceptance of Dr. Verhey's "exegesis" means acceptance of a "new theology" with "new hermeneutics" which are at loggerheads with the Reformed principles of doctrine which the Christian Reformed Church is bound to uphold. However, when objections were brought forward at Synod against his admission into the ministry, a judgment was evaded on church-political grounds. His "exegesis" may not have been officially accepted, but the minister who teaches it has been accepted in spite of legitimate objections. Church polity was not used in agreement with Art. 30 and 32. of the Belgic Confession, but only for the protection of this minister. How frustrating for those who want to make sure that the unity of the true faith is maintained.

#### C) Experiences of the Liberated and Canadian Reformed Churches

It is this same frustrating use of church polity which the Canadian Reformed Churches have met in their

contact with the Christian Reformed Church, yes, by which they learned to know the Christian Reformed Church in the first place. It started in 1945/6 when the Christian Reformed Church was informed that the larger part of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands had deviated from the Reformed principles in doctrine, worship, and discipline. This information was simply ignored, and is still being ignored in practice until this very day. In conflict with the accepted rule, Synods from the very beginning until today have refused to deal with the cause of the schism in The Netherlands — matters of doctrine and Reformed church polity — while at the same time accepting the majority and denouncing the minority. If the Christian Reformed Church would have investigated the issues, it would have been able to find out that the doctrine about the Covenant and Baptism as understood by the Christian Reformed Church itself had been condemned by the (Syn.) Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, and still was to be found in the (Lib.) Reformed Churches. The result of contact meetings between the Christian Reformed Church and the Canadian Reformed Churches was therefore — it had to be — that we are one in doctrine as officially confessed by both churches.

If the Christian Reformed Church would have shown herself to be a continually reforming church, there would have been no reason for the institution of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and, by the grace of God, the Christian Reformed Church could have been instrumental in calling the (Syn.) Reformed Churches back from the course it had taken and which has led to the deplorable state in which they find themselves today.

But the trouble is the way in which church polity was used and is still being used. I am afraid that it is not being used for keeping together what belongs together, but, on the contrary, for keeping together what should be separated. I think of the admission which can be read in the Acts of Synod 1973 (Art. 53): "The Inter-Church Relations Committee recognizes that, given our present definition [the rule for church correspondence as quoted above, DJ], it is likely that the demands of integrity will compel us to discontinue our sister church relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken. Your advisory com-

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# REFORMATION

mittee concurs in this." Then what did Synod do? It did what had been shown to be in conflict with the demands of integrity, and yet was proposed by them: it changed the rules. It gave in to the demands of modern situation ethics instead of to the demands of integrity, and the whole issue was evaded again. No wonder, then, that, after the Christian Reformed Synod also discontinued its Committee for Contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Canadian Reformed Churches, being frustrated, decided to do the same at their Synod one year later. No wonder that not only among many members of the Christian Reformed Church itself, but also with the Canadian Reformed people there is a feeling that there is simply no way of getting through the planning and organization, and seeing those issues which are most important for a church of Christ dealt with by the Christian Reformed Church.

The Canadian Reformed Synod of 1974 decided to send a second appeal to the Christian Reformed Synod and all the Consistories. Alas, the way in which it was addressed was not as it should have been, and I personally have complained about that at the next Synod (Coaldale 1977), and for my part I also apologize for that here to you; but that cannot and should not be the reason why no response has been given to this appeal, neither by Synod, nor (as far as I know) by any Consistory.

Yet, the (Lib.) Reformed Churches desired to continue the sister church relationship, and the first immigrants who came from them did join or desired to join the Christian Reformed Church. The reason for this was that they saw themselves as well as the Christian Reformed Church as the same people who had lived in that relationship before the war made all contact impossible. In other words, it was not the (Lib.) Reformed Churches and their members who brought about a separation and, in words and/or deeds, denied the unity of the true faith which we confess to be the way in which Christ gathers His Church, but it was the Christian Reformed Church which did.

And also later in Canada, it was not the Christian Reformed Church, but the Canadian Reformed Churches who took the initiative in contacting the Christian Reformed Church in at-

*The following is the brief address which the Rev. P. Kingma gave at the opening of the Regional Synod of Ontario of November 10, 1982 at Lincoln, Ontario.*

*Reformation of the Church is return to the Word of God (the old truth)*

The Word of God brings together all sorts of people, not as a group or party, but as the Church of Christ which returned to the Lord in those things wherein apostasy is manifest. A reformational movement presupposes that the Church has declined. It is a movement against symptoms of decline. It tries to point out from the Word of God that these symptoms make the Church stray from the truth. If the Church officially heeds these warnings the Church stands corrected. But usually there is growing opposition against such a movement, which is either silenced or, if kept up, leads to reformation of the Church.

A reformational movement loses its strength to reform the Church when it degenerates into a congenial party-spirit of like-minded people within the Church, a fellowship within the communion of saints, an established wing of the Church. It should neither acquiesce in recognition as such by official decisions of Synods. Polarization is a finishing stroke to reformation of the Church. A "frozen" position has a paralyzing effect in generations. Symptomatic decline officially accepted by the Church makes it apostate. The ecclesiastical way to follow is then to send in documented appeals to responsible ecclesiastical assemblies. That is the legal road for a legitimate action within the Church. If these appeals are rejected, and the issues of decline are touching the very foundation of the Church, the reformational movement has come to the end of the road.

The next act of obedience is reformation itself by moving out of the apostate Church and calling the others to move out. Reformation is return to the Word of God, and the people who do return are again built upon the only foundation of the Church. A reformational movement which stays

within the apostate Church has part in her sins, acts against the ordinance of God (Belgic Confession, Art. 28), and has lost its reformational character despite its protests and actions against the apostasy of the Church. Office-bearers delaying the very act of reformation till they be deposed of office or excommunicated by their Church, which in their own judgment has become apostate, exempt from their office the duty to lead the flock to reformation. The command of the great Shepherd: "Feed My sheep," must give such a deep sense of responsibility for their flock that they at no time nor under any circumstance permit the Church to prevent them either partly or fully from faithfully discharging all the duties of their office. Christ caused His apostles to continue to preach in His Name by His Holy Spirit against the expressive prohibition of church leaders (Acts 4). Accountability to Christ should outweigh fear for men or love for an apostate Church.

Reformation is not withdrawal from the Church but maintaining the unity of the Church and separating from all those who do not belong to the Church. It is joining oneself to this congregation, wherever God has established it, even though the magistrates and edicts of princes were against it, yea, though death or any corporal punishment should be involved (Belgic Confession, Art. 28). "Therefore all those who separate themselves from the same or do not join themselves to it act contrary to the ordinance of God."

This kind of reformation Christ has used to gather, defend, and preserve a Church to Himself to the present time. They were His deeds and actions, shown in history by making believers return to the Word of God and to the true confession of it. Faithful remembrance and confession of these deeds and actions of Christ unites believers in the true faith as His Church, gathered, defended, and preserved by His Spirit and Word.

P. KINGMA  
Grand Rapids

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# PARALIPOMENA

## ON PLURIFORMITY

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### *All Over the Place*

I always liked the sound of this word. It is close to being "academical," and yet the average normal being feels what it means. Must be something like: a great variety in forms.

Is that not all around us, in God's creation? It is said (I never checked it . . .) that no two leaves of a tree are exactly the same in form and size. Without this variety InterPol would be at a loss: how would the criminal ever be found, if the fingerprints of every single human being were not unique? No other person has the same prints as I have, not even my closest relatives. And so one can go on, with the faces of humans, possibly of apes too; pluriformity among potatoes; no two Holstein cows have exactly the same black spots; the same goes for dogs and cats. Talk about character, gifts — again: pluriformity. Only the Chinese communists have managed to come close to uniformity, be it then the ultimate in drabness. It is (no wonder) atheistic, anti-Christian.

If pluriformity is the mark of God's creation, then — so I reasoned — it must be found in the church too. I asked our minister about it. He said, "Yes, Paul uses the term in Ephesians 3:10 for the church." In my Bible: "manifest"; no two Christians alike, in their make-up, in their outlook. Boy, isn't that wonderful! Not only "many members," 1 Cor. 12, but also a great variety in hands and feet and ears and eyes of the body of Christ! In the midst of this dazzling pluriformity I may be myself.

### *Misuse (?)*

No wonder, I would say, that people have covered the great number of denominations and religious groups with the term pluriformity. I have heard several "paraphrases" on this theme. I mention two. The one said, "The truth of God's revelation is so enormous in size that one denomination cannot possibly do justice to every aspect. The one stresses solemnity, like the R.C., the other democracy like the Congregationalists; the one is for outward rites (sacraments), the other more for inward experience." There is some-

thing for everyone in the line-up of the many local denominations. And, just like Dominion, IGA, Food City, etc, they all have the same right of existence. "Voor Elck Wat Wils": for everyone something to his taste. The second paraphrase sounded even nicer: "Before Christ's return we are only tuning our instruments, as before the concert. But it is like cacophony, no harmony. Only a Japanese person, who for the first time attended a Western concert, thought this tuning was the nicest part of the evening . . . . But when the Conductor appears he taps with his baton: silence! That's judgment day. And then . . . he swings his baton and the symphony starts!" My friend even went further, comparing the Salvation Army with the drum, the R.C. with a bass, and "Article 31" with a thin bassoon . . . .

### *Practical Pluriformity*

Although we happily believe that Christ's return means the end to all divisions among believers, we would rather stress the unity of the body of Christ as having (only) One Head. Pluriformity among believers — yes; but not a pluriformity of churches, all having the same rights to be there.

Thus far okay. But do we not practice a practical pluriformity? I share the blame. But, in fact, we exercise a pluriformity of churches when we let other believers believe whatever they want, if they only leave us alone. We do not deny that there are believers everywhere. But we do not reach out to them, nor pull them into what we believe to be the right address of the church. Our "outreach" is close to nil. We have (big idea) "The Voice of the Church," but recently, in a group of fellow members, I found I was the only one who listens to it now and then. At the back of our church building the mountain of not-taken, not-distributed booklets with the radio messages grows by the week, till the caretaker cleans out the "mess" when it gets too big. So much for practical pluriformity . . . . Am I my brother's keeper? I am right and he is wrong, but so what . . . ?

CHRONICLER

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tempts to solve the problems and restore the unity of the true faith. As for my own role in this, as soon as I arrived in Canada at the end of 1963 (our first Appeal had just been sent out then), I was instrumental by the grace of God in bringing the Consistories of the two Christian Reformed Churches and of the Canadian Reformed Church in Brampton (Ont.) together in several combined meetings which were very brotherly, joyful, encouraging, and fruitful. The result was that from both sides we also worked at our respective General Synod levels for the removal of obstacles and the appointment of Contact Committees. Also the work of these Committees was brotherly and fruitful in the beginning, but, alas, it came to an inglorious end due to the lack of integrity about which I was forced to speak earlier.

D. DEJONG  
*To be continued.*

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## Church News

ACCEPTED to Neerlandia, Alberta:  
REV. A. DE JAGER  
of Anna Paulowna-Enkhuizen, The Netherlands

DECLINED to Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, Burlington, Ontario:  
REV. J.D. WIELENGA  
of Coaldale, Alberta

DECLINED to Orangeville, Ontario  
REV. G.H. VISSCHER  
of Houston, B.C.

### OUR COVER

Winter Scene, picture courtesy of Mr. J. Pieterman, London, Ontario.

## FROM THE SCRIPTURES

“... and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.” Exodus 19:4b

# On Eagles’ Wings

The beginning of a new year in a world of growing uncertainty leads one to consider the words of the LORD to His people Israel as He makes a new beginning with them at Mount Sinai. In forming them into a kingdom of priests, a people with their own national status, the LORD also outlines how much He had done for them. Using the image of a flying eagle, He relates how He bore them up on His wings, and nourished and protected them as His own special treasure, v. 5. It is a remarkable image, reflecting both the unfailing power and strength of the LORD and His deep love and affection for His people. Moses recalls the same image in his parting song addressed to Israel as a memorial testimony: “Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions, the LORD alone did lead him. and there was no foreign god with him, Deut. 32:11, 12.

Two distinct elements are immediately discernable in this one great saving work of the LORD: He *delivers* His people and He *brings* them to Himself. The LORD’s people were not delivered in order to be left on their own and fend for themselves. They were delivered so that they might serve the LORD and be a special people for Him throughout their generations. Thus, the renewal of the covenant at Sinai forms a very important revelation of the LORD. Having delivered His people, He now gives His laws, the ten words and the ensuing commandments, in order to keep His people in the place where He has brought them. He had borne them on eagles’ wings; now He gives directions to hold them there, so that they might freely live and work under His daily care and protection.

However, later sacred history records how the people of the LORD soon forgot what He had done for them. They exchanged the revelation of the roadmap of protection, the saving Law, for the service of idols, which, as Moses had previously warned (Ex. 34:12), became a snare to them and brought them into the bondage of sin and death again. So the law which was meant to give them life only meant death and destruction for them.

Yet the LORD did not forget His people, and that is also what gives this image so much more depth and meaning today. Israel proved faithless, but the LORD manifested Himself all the more faithful; He is the unfailing covenant God. For just at that point when Israel’s universal guilt against the law was clearly manifested to the world, the LORD gave His people a Saviour, born out of the Jews, who read the law of Sinai, and who also kept it perfectly, without failing on one letter. One of Israel’s sons who was also, more especially, the very Son of God, Jesus Christ, came into the world, and so fully endorsed

the wonderful roadmap of Sinai by which we are brought to the Father.

So the image of the eagle finds its fulfilment in Christ and His work. By His death and resurrection He has delivered us from the bondage of sin, borne us up on eagles’ wings, and brought us to the Father. Christ does what the Law could not do: He effectively deals with sin, removing its source and strength in the world. In Christ, Israel finds her first Son that perfectly answers the call of Sinai, word for word, letter for letter. Thus He becomes the Mediator who bears us up and brings us to God.

Hence the words speak with greater force to us, today — believers who through Christ have been brought to the Father. The roadmap of Sinai is now sealed with the blood and Spirit of Christ. The way that Israel was formerly unable to walk has been made an open road for us. We are able to begin walking on it today, through the Spirit of Christ given to us. Because of Christ’s Amen to the call of Sinai at Golgotha, a new and living way has been opened for us. We may enter every new year with the power of the Spirit, with the lifting, guiding, and leading hand of the LORD.

So the Church of Christ has a greater gift today, with the revelation of God’s mercy and justice at Golgotha. We have the Law, the Testimony, but also the Lord, who fully endorsed it, cancelling the penalty for those who believe and opening the door for them to walk according to God’s commandments in newness of life. We have the Word and the Spirit, the Law and the Spirit, who quickens our understanding to read and *hear* it as it must be heard, II Cor. 3. That is what makes us so much richer than God’s people in the old covenant. Truly, we have been borne on eagles’ wings.

It is not surprising, then, to discover how in the Revelation to John, the apostle sees that the woman pursued by the dragon was given *two* wings of a great eagle, “. . . that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness . . .,” Rev. 12:14. Yes, we have two wings, the Testimony and its endorsement at Golgotha, the standard of truth and the cross to lead us to it, the Word and the Spirit, the Way of Glory and the Lord of Glory. In Christ, the Lord has brought us to *Himself*, II Cor. 3:18.

Thus, in the twilight of the age, we have great comfort. Through all turmoil, we know that we are on a steady course. We soar on eagles’ wings; finding safe shelter under the refuge of His wings. He takes us through the years, and, taken up by Him, we know that we will be cared for. With His Word and Spirit to guide us, we will surely arrive and see His glory.

J. DEJONG



*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.*

### BERG EN DAL

The riddle around a more than two meters high statue of Christ, which disappeared last year without a trace, has been solved. Nuns who moved from Venlo to Berg en Dal admitted that they buried the Christ-statue one-and-a-half years ago.

As they are under the special protection of Mary, they were of the opinion that the image of Christ had to give up its place for one of Mary. When the statue was hanging in the cables, it appeared too heavy, and the cables snapped. The nuns did not know what to do with it, and therefore decided to bury it. (DNC)

Christ has to yield to Mary.

It is only the story of an image.

It is, nevertheless, characteristic for the whole Romish line of thought.

Pope John Paul II is one of the leaders in this field.

Sad, extremely sad, but true.

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### SAO PAULO (ANP)

A judge in the Brazilian state of Bahia provided a unique sentence by commuting a seven-months prison sentence to the obligation to attend mass for two years.

The man sentenced to this is the mayor of the town of Morro do Chapeu who, three years ago, hit a pedestrian with his car. According to the judge, the character of the mayor and the antecedents raise fears for repetition.

Taking the function of the accused into account, the judge did not impose a prison sentence upon the mayor. Instead of that, the latter has to attend mass once a week for the next two years; he has to present to the judge every time a certificate of

good behaviour, signed by the priest Jose Soares.

The mayor refuses to accept the sentence. He considers an appeal or, if necessary, to submit to the imprisonment, for the priest Jose Soares is his political arch-enemy in Morro do Chapeu. (ND)

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### MINNEAPOLIS (RNS)

A recent statement by the Minnesota Council of Churches supporting homosexuals has drawn fire from 16 conservative evangelical Lutheran pastors.

The Rev. David Barnhart, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls, said the statement violates everything he understands the Bible to say about homosexuality. Fifteen other pastors, all meeting for their weekly fellowship at the Lutheran Church of the Master in suburban Brooklyn Center, indicated they agreed with him.

"There is a definite, organized movement here," pastor Barnhart said. "And it has an agenda. It includes the ordination of homosexuals into the ministry. And it would involve marriage of persons of the same gender."

Such strong emotional reaction to the council statement is typical of the largely negative response that the Rev. Willis Merriman, executive director of the council, has received since it urged congregations to accept and welcome homosexuals into their fold and to fight for legislation protecting their rights.

The Lutheran pastors said that while they will accept anyone into their churches, they would require gays to first "repent of their sins," meaning they could not be practising homosexuals. (CN)

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### LINCOLN, NEB. (AP)

The Nebraska Supreme Court has rejected an appeal from a fundamentalist minister who was sentenced to jail for continuing to operate a church school in violation of state law.

The Reverend Everett Sileven must serve the rest of a four-month sentence imposed by the Cass County District Court for operating the Faith Baptist Church School in Louisville, the court ruled.

"We have already found that Sileven and the Faith Baptist Church do not have a First Amendment right to ignore the state's school laws," the Nebraska court said. (CN)

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THE DECEMBER, 1982, CHARISMA re-

ports that "The Kathryn Kuhlman Foundation of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, officially closed its doors early last summer. The 35-year old organization sent its collection of Kathryn Kuhlman's records, tapes, audio visuals, films, and photographs to the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, where the collection will be part of the archives available to the public."

"Miss" Kuhlman was a leading tongues speaking healer. She was held in high regard by charismatics throughout the world and was even praised by the Pope. Many of her "healings" were exposed as frauds by a doctor who at one time was among her supporters. "Miss" Kuhlman, who divorced her husband without any scriptural reason, did not accept what the Bible says about marriage and women preachers. She was another one of the phony religious leaders gullible and emotional charismatics approved. (CN)

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### MOSCOW, USSR

Any Westerner touring the Soviet Union with the assistance of an In-tourist guide will see a large number of Russian churches. Within the Kremlin walls, the main tourist attraction remains the private churches and chapels of the czars.

The skylines are dotted with crosses and church steeples. In a society committed to atheism this, at first, seems somewhat of an anachronism. When one investigates a bit further, however, it becomes clear that these buildings are simply remnants of the Russian past and are not living religious institutions. They have been transformed into museums and historical curiosities. St. Basil's, located at Red Square, is now a Museum of Atheism.

If you ask Soviet officials whether or not religious freedom exists in the country, they uniformly reply that it does. They point out that the Soviet constitution guarantees such freedom.

Dr. Tancred Golenposky, a commentator for Radio Moscow, was asked about the status of religion in the Soviet Union. His reply: "Of course there is religious freedom. Billy Graham visited Moscow and preached in the Baptist Church. He did not find any lack of religious freedom."

Golenposky's response is, of course, completely in error. In fact, religious persecution is alive and well in the Soviet Union for all of those be-

*Continued on page 14.*



## PATRIMONY PROFILE 5

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

The men who formed that first synod of The Netherlands Reformed Church regarded men more than God and His Word. In flattering language they stated that "Synod trusts that in all humility it has given convincing proofs of its great respect for the honoured State Commission, a respect which has caused it to refrain from even daring to contest a single addition to the Regulation." When the highest ecclesiastical assembly thus appears to be out to please man more than God, not much good can be expected for the maintenance of the purity of doctrine.

In 1817, Synod issued various ordinances concerning public worship. One of the provisions was that members of other Protestant denominations might be admitted to the celebration of the Lord's Supper if they were of irreproachable conduct.

In 1819 Synod forbade private baptism. It recommended ecclesiastical confirmation of marriages and introduced the commemoration of the Reformation, especially when the 31st of October was on a Sunday. It is a common occurrence that man becomes more religious when he departs from the Truth of God's Word, from the Scriptural doctrine as it has been summarized by the Church in her confessions, and when he puts man and his religious feelings in the center.

Synod's concern was not at all directed towards "maintaining the doctrine of the Reformed Church." This became evident in the change which was made in the so-called Proponent Formula. Ministers have to sign a Subscription Form which, in its present form, dates back to the Synod of Dordrecht 1618-1619. Already before that Synod there were several such forms in use, but after 1619 one Form was used in all Churches and classes. Article 53 of our present Church Order provides that ministers shall subscribe to the Confessions of the Canadian Reformed Churches. However, a simple declaration that one agrees with the doctrine of the Church is not sufficient. One can change one's conviction, can he not? One may agree with a certain doctrine today and disagree with it tomorrow because one has come to the conclusion that what one previously believed is not correct. Thus the Churches need more guarantees than a simple declaration of agreement on a certain date.

Even *that* guarantee was removed in a subtle manner. Since 1619 ministers and proponents had been declaring that they believed from the heart that all articles and parts of the doctrine contained in the confessional forms of the Reformed Churches "agree in all things with the Word of God." That is a clear statement, not liable to be misunderstood or misinterpreted. Synod 1816 changed the Subscription Form. It drew up a new form (approved by the king) in which the above passage was changed in

this manner that signatories declared that they accepted in good faith and wholeheartedly believed "the doctrine which according to God's Holy Word is contained in the adopted Forms of Unity of The Netherlands Reformed Church."

A subtle change indeed. Here the *quia* (because) was replaced by the *quatenus* (insofar as). A minister or proponent could deviate from the doctrine of the Church as much as he wished without coming into conflict with his subscription to the Form, for he could always state that a certain point of doctrine was not "according to God's Holy Word." Had he not declared by his subscription that he believed (only) that doctrine which is "according to God's Holy Word"?

There was another subtle change in the formulation. That change can be noticed in the word "adopted." There was, namely, the mistaken notion that the Canons of Dort had never been officially adopted by the Churches. Thus the Canons of Dort were surreptitiously dropped from the official doctrine of the Church. No wonder that Hendrik de Cock had never read those Canons as a student or even during the first years of his ministry.

Many requests came in at the Synod to restore the old Subscription Form, but they all fell on deaf ears. Synod did not consider itself competent to give a further explanation of the Form, the reply was. Finally, when Synod in 1841 had to reply to an address by almost nine thousand members, it replied, "It belongs to the relative imperfection of the present Form that it does not — as the previous Form did — require of the persons subscribing to it agreement with all the articles and parts of the doctrine found in the symbolic books as being in every respect in accordance with God's Word, so that it would border upon unfaithfulness to differ from those writings where their fallible authors were mistaken, where their thinking was less clear, or where they expressed themselves less fortunately."

Clear? There was complete freedom of doctrine, and many ministers made the most of it. Where there is freedom of doctrine, those who propagate the pure doctrine are maligned and persecuted. This, too, was seen soon enough.

In 1855 the formulation became even more superficial, when the wording was changed into the declaration "that we are prepared and willing faithfully to maintain the spirit and essentials of the doctrine contained in the accepted forms of unity of The Netherlands Reformed Church." And in 1883 all restraint was abandoned when the only thing that was asked was that ministers promised to promote "the interests of the kingdom of God and especially those of The Netherlands Reformed Church."

Let us pay attention to one more point before proceeding. The Churches kept a free hand in the administration of the ecclesiastical possessions and assets. That lasted until 1819, when the king appropriated that right and put it into the hands of a "General College of Supervision," which was to have the oversight of the administration and management by

the local churchwardens or board of management.

One Church was exempted from that. Upon its request, Amsterdam received the free administration of whatever possessions the Church had. Already in 1810 the Amsterdam Congregation had transferred the management of its possessions to the General Consistory. The Consistory, in turn, appointed a committee "for the management of the church buildings, goods, funds, and income of the Congregation." This committee was known as the "Ecclesiastical Committee." We shall hear more about this Committee when we deal with the history of the Amsterdam Church before and during the Doleantie. But that is some fifty-five years later.

#### *J.H. Regenbogen*

How was the development and situation in doctrinal respect within The Netherlands Reformed Church? What was the general trend? And did all go along with that trend towards modernism and denial of the most fundamental truths of the Christian Church?

With regard to the general trend, we can do no better than to pay some attention to Professor J.H. Regenbogen's ideas, which he propagated in a skilful manner and by which he influenced his students in the wrong direction, that is, the direction of rationalism.

Regenbogen became professor in Franeker in the year 1799. He considered it his duty "to restore the Christian Religion to its original purity." The title of his inaugural oration already points in that direction: "How to watch out carefully for the extremes into which the expositors of the Holy books have sometimes fallen." He was a declared enemy of the confessional forms "which sometimes were in conflict with the gospel," propagating his ideas more and more unashamedly. He denied the reality of the miracles described in Scripture, the depravity of man, the divinity of Christ, the reconciliation with God. Sin was no more than imperfection, conversion nothing but moral improvement. Baptism he called merely a formality; Christ was only a Teacher of Morals.

Was there no one who spoke up against the clear violation of promises made when Regenbogen became a minister and of the oath which he had to make as a Doctor of Divinity? Yes, there was Professor J.A. Lotze of Franeker and Rev. Joh. van Assen of Harlingen who opposed Regenbogen, as well as Rev. A. Bruining of Pietersbierum who wrote and spoke in Regenbogen's line. But those who dared to stand up and be counted in defense of the Reformed doctrine and Confession and were so bold as to call such deviation by its real name were a diminishing, though not disappearing, minority. More and more, however, they would be covered with shame and reproach.

#### *Nicolaas Schotsman*

Take the case of Rev. Nicolaas Schotsman. Since 1793 he had been minister in Leiden. That lasted until, after the "velvet revolution," he had to make the oath of allegiance to the new statutes. Schotsman

refused and was deposed. His wanderings ended in Sloten (Friesland), where he found shelter. Later he worked for a while in Sneek but when a general amnesty was proclaimed in 1801, Schotsman returned to Leiden. Among the ministers who sent in objections to the new Regulation of 1816 we find Schotsman too.

The first centenary of the National Synod of Dordrecht 1618-1619 certainly had not passed by unnoticed; it had been celebrated in a worthy manner. The second century was full in 1819, but hardly anyone paid attention to it. Nicolaas Schotsman did. He delivered two sermons to commemorate that Council, and had them printed under the title *A Monument in Remembrance of the National Synod Held in Dordrecht Two hundred Years Ago, Erected by Nicolaas Schotsman*.

His deed was not received with gratitude and appreciation. Things were going so nicely: relations between the Christians grew more and more close; they appreciated each other and were at peace. And now someone was trying to ruin the whole thing by rekindling the fire of the controversies which had disrupted the peace and unity two hundred years ago! And that was done by someone who received his salary out of the public treasury! Scorn and reproach was Schotsman's reward from the side of the majority of the Church members. But simple ones who held on to the old truth read his writings with gratitude.

What was Schotsman's reaction later? He wrote that he thanked God because "he was deemed worthy to be scorned for the sake of the truth; yea, he was even permitted to consider those acrimonious judgments as a sealing proof of his faithfulness and sincerity and to rejoice right heartily in that."

One man was particularly impressed by Schotsman's booklet. He was Mr. Willem Bilderdijk, of whom we shall speak later.

Being a minister in Leiden, Schotsman was also the minister of many students attending university there. Some of them received lessons from him, and among them we find T.F. de Haan, the eleventh of the Seceded ministers, doцент at the Theological College in Kampen.

The year of Schotsman's death was 1822.

#### *The Reveil*

The Rev. Nicolaas Schotsman was greatly impressed by the Reveil. Although events outside of The Netherlands and the North American continent are beyond the immediate scope of our investigations, we will have to pay some attention to the Reveil because of its influence on the development in The Netherlands.

The name "Reveil" speaks for itself: it was a revival, a spiritual awakening, although we should not identify it with revival movements as we know them from later times. The origin or beginning of the Reveil is to be sought in Switzerland. Initially it had a more pietistic character. For a more precise indication where the Reveil began we have to go to Geneva, the city of Calvin.

*To be continued.*



# Evangelism or Home Mission

## 1. Introduction

In modern usage the connotative meaning of evangelism and home mission have become synonymous. They both refer to bringing the gospel message to covenant breakers or unbelievers who live in an area where the Church of Christ has already been instituted. In this article it is suggested that the confusion of these two expressions reflect a confusion of the matter itself. To sort out this confusion, it is necessary to search out the Scriptural texts which have been used to speak about this matter and to learn from the Confessions in which way the Scriptural teachings have been maintained during historical conflicts. In the end the conclusions must be drawn from the Scriptures themselves.

## 2. Meaning of the words

The word "evangelism" is a loan word from the Greek of the New Testament. In Greek it is a compound word consisting of the word *aggelia* which means "message," or its verbal form *aggelizoo* which means "to give a message," and an adverbial prefix *eu* which means "well." In translations the verbal form is usually rendered as by, "to preach the gospel" and sometimes as by "to bring glad tidings." The noun form is usually translated by "gospel" and sometimes by "glad tidings." The form which expresses the agent — which occurs only three times in the New Testament (Acts 21:8, Eph. 4:11 and II Tim. 4:5) — is quite consistently translated by "evangelist."

From this it becomes clear that the word "evangelism" in its nominal or verbal form refers to preaching and its content. From the usage of this word in its various forms in the New Testament, it is clear that its meaning is not restricted to the preaching which is done among those who live in an area where the Church has al-

ready been instituted. In the New Testament the word "evangel" simply means "gospel," "to evangelize" means "to preach the gospel," and "evangelist" refers to one who preaches the gospel.<sup>1</sup>

One thing which is important in the meaning of the word "evangelism" and the Greek forms from which it has been borrowed, is that it refers to a message. It does not necessarily refer to an eye-witness report. It generally refers to a message which is transmitted by a messenger. It is not the messenger's own word; he speaks the words of one that sent him.

It is here that the word "mission" comes to the fore. It is a Latin loan word which means "to send." The word by itself has been used when referring to how Christ has sent His apostles to preach the gospel to all people, beginning at Jerusalem and from there on to the whole world. The word "mission" has been used to express the continuation of this task by way of foreign mission. The expression "home mission" has been introduced to express the same work which is done at a different place.

The confusion of the expressions "evangelism" and "home mission" is in the emphasis. The danger in using the word "evangelism" is that it speaks of preaching while the implied "mission" is forgotten. The result has often been that evangelism is left in the hands of those who are inclined to it. It has left the question of who is responsible for its organization: the consistory, a committee of the consistory, a volunteer committee of members of the congregation, or just individual members on their own. The difficulty with using the expression "home mission" has been this question of who is commissioned for this work and how it is to be distinguished from foreign mission. This confusion has been shown by how some of the very same Scriptural texts have been used when referring to

home mission, evangelism, and foreign mission.

## 3. Scriptural Texts

It would be impossible to mention all the relevant texts here. The most relevant and most-often-referred-to texts will be mentioned; these ought to be sufficient to teach us the direction which the Lord gives us for this matter.

Matt. 28:19 seems to be the text which is mentioned most. In it the victorious Christ commands the eleven disciples saying: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This command is based upon the victory of Christ over sin. The result of Christ's victory was expressed by the Lord Himself in v. 18 when He says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." Here Christ claims the authority to send the apostles to preach the gospel on the ground of the salvation He has obtained by His sacrifice. Here, by this commandment, as it were, He ordains the first office-bearers of the New Testament Church. This text has therefore rightly been used to show the unity of Word and sacrament. It shows us that the preaching (teaching) office-bearer should administer the sacraments also.

Furthermore, we notice that the command which Christ gives here shows no distinction between home and foreign mission. The apostles whom the Lord has prepared for this mandate must teach "all nations." This mandate is perhaps expressed in a clearer way in Mark 16:15, where the Lord Jesus says to His disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." This mandate includes the lost sheep of Israel as well as the Gentiles. The Lord informs the men of Emmaus in Luke 24:47, "... that repentance and

*Continued on page 15.*

# news medley

It is only proper that the first news medley of the year of our Lord 1983 starts with greetings and good wishes. Therein I not only respond to some of our faithful "bulletin-mailers" who added some handwritten notes to the official information, conveying to us their best wishes for the new year. To them and to *all* our readers I send in this way my best wishes for the new year. May the LORD our God continue to be merciful and gracious to us, and use us all as good instruments in His hand to promote the coming of His kingdom and the furtherance of progress towards His day.

At the same time I express the wish that our cooperation and mutual endeavours may continue to the praise of His glory.

There is much to be thankful for already at the beginning of the new year. This thankfulness will be found especially with two couples whom we wish to mention this time and with their children and grandchildren or even great-grandchildren.

Following the dates, we first mention brother and sister M. Onderwater of Abbotsford. On January 18 they will celebrate their fifty-fifth wedding anniversary, the Lord willing. Yes, we have to add the words "the Lord willing," for although something can happen at any age, when one is around eighty years of age one has to count with it even more. Brother and sister Onderwater both are not yet eighty, but they, too, have experienced that health is not always there in such a measure as we would like to possess it. I am certain that they will receive many congratulations on their anniversary date and we wish to add ours as well. We do not know how long the Lord will still leave them together, but are certain that they receive every day as a beautiful gift out of the hands of our Father.

The day after that, brother and sister H. Oosterveld will celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary. They live in Burlington, and are still enjoying good health. Brother Oosterveld still faithfully takes care of the taping of the services, as he has been doing for many years. I can assure you that the picture which will appear in this same issue of *Clarion* is a very recent one and one that shows reality. You can see for yourselves. To them, their children and grandchildren we also offer our congratulations. I cannot tell something new about them and, besides, I don't think that too much personal information would be appreciated by our readers.

We should also mention here that the Rev. and Mrs. L. Moes were married for thirty-five years in the beginning of November. Sister Moes has been confined to bed for many years and it is a miracle that the Lord left them together for so long. Their ways are not easy and have not been easy for quite a few years, but we know that their trust is in the Lord and that their outlook is — together with all the saints — the new heaven and the new earth. Our brother also remembered that he has been a minister of the Gospel for 35 years. Although he retired some years ago, I think that Rev. Moes is still conducting services in our Netherlands sister Churches. When he visits here, I do see his name under the heading "Worship Services." May our God surround you both with His goodness and strength also further.

In this first news medley of the new year we may welcome another sister Church. If everything went as planned — and why should it not have gone as scheduled? — there is another Church in our federation: the Church at Burlington South. We are thankful for this development and are certain that reduction in size of Burlington West and the size of the new Church in Burlington South will encourage participation by more members in more actions and activities. I heard already — via the grapevine, sorry — that there were younger couples who joined the new Church because they thought it to be very "exciting" to help building up a new Church and all its activities. Keep it up!

For the information of all concerned, I mention the address as I found it in the bulletin. The address of the Burlington South Church is: P.O. Box 433, Burlington, Ont. L7R 3Y3. I am certain that the official information will be passed on to *Clarion* as well, but it is better that you read it twice than not at all.

The neighbouring Church at Burlington East also experiences the influence of this new institution. "Already several of our western members have requested their attestation for this new congregation. It is encouraging to see the gaining support for this important and necessary expansion of congregational life."

I am happy to note that the apparent loss of members does not cause any resentment but is, in this case, a reason for joy. My only — and expected — criticism is on the expression "*their* attestations." They don't have any attestation for which they can ask. I'll keep on repeating this until I don't see this expression any longer.

Hamilton, too, experiences the effects of the new institution. Some members have left for the new Church. However, this does not alleviate the Hamilton problem sufficiently to enable the Consistory to give a new destination to the balcony.

Regarding this balcony the Consistory decided that it shall "be used for 'overflow' at the discretion of the ushers." The Rev. Huizinga writes, "Though I am not an advocate of a balcony, I must admit that it is beautifully furnished. One can see the pulpit and the church more clearly from the balcony than from the back of the church downstairs. The raised platforms are a great advantage."

As for the view on the pulpit, I do not doubt that it is much more unobstructed from the balcony than from the auditorium. I recall the large Church buildings in Amsterdam with their two — or was it three? no, I don't think so — balconies above each other. Of course, the seating arrangement became much steeper the higher one had to go. But the view on the pulpit was unobstructed. Whether this view was fully utilized was and is a question. Unobstructed view of the pulpit does not necessarily enhance attention.

In proof of this statement I quote from a bulletin.

"It has been brought to my attention that some adults have moved from the back of the church to the front during worship services. They did so to move away from unruly, distracting behaviour of young people who clutter together in the back. I am sorry to see this happen. Let us do the opposite: Let adults and families move to the back and let the youth of the Church spread throughout the church. Let the youth do this voluntarily, and, if necessary, be told to do so. The role of the parents is emphasized here."

This has my wholehearted agreement. And I add the wish that our young people who are in Church to listen and try to listen, tell those who endeavour to distract their attention to "shut up." If you don't pay any attention and clearly show that you are annoyed by the tactics, the

efforts will cease. But I agree: the greatest responsibility is with the parents who in MANY instances allow their children *far too soon* to sit by themselves or with their friends and then to crowd together in the rear of the auditorium. If they had the sincere intention of listening and the heartfelt desire to pay undivided attention, they would not go and sit there. If the trouble-makers were left together, we could soon single them out and, if needs be, even ask to leave.

Let our parents be aware of their responsibility!  
We continue our tour of the Churches.

From Hamilton to London we go. This brings us the following information: "Progress of the construction project is going well. As can now be seen, the foundation for walls and footings have been poured. Funding for this project will be secured by increasing the mortgage on the manse." Fortunately the interest rates have gone down considerably so that increasing a mortgage might not add too great a burden. The construction is at the rear of the Church building if I remember well.

The Chatham Consistory received "a proposal to eliminate all smoking in the Church building." It was "voted on and accepted." How many more to go?

The last Church in the East about which we are going to mention something is the Church at Toronto.

"For a long time," the Rev. Mulder writes, "we did not hear anything from the mission field. There were communication problems; MAF planes broke down; fuel shortage; forest fires with smoke hanging over the jungle so that planes could not land. All this meant that no mail came through. The situation is now apparently improved. We received some letters and reports again although they took a very long time to arrive."

Rev. Mulder also mentioned that the Vegters will come on furlough this year and expect to arrive in Toronto on March 2, 1983.

"From the Korean Seventh Day Adventist Church a request was received to rent the church building on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. Our building is in use on most Friday nights and we shall therefore not be able to accommodate them." That was Toronto's conclusion.

In Carman the senior citizens are going to organize something which is already found in many other congregations. "Beginning in January 1983, the 'Senior Citizens' hope to start coming together for some social afternoons to help us pass the winter." They ask for games, such as shuffle-board, checkers, Chinese checkers, and so on. I am certain that there is a sufficient quantity of games hiding in the Carman Congregation to fill the requests.

From the Immanuel Church in Edmonton we have a few items to pass on.

"It is with much gratitude that we could take note of the fact that our school board has seen its way clear now to implement a previous school society decision to add grade 10 to our parental school." I don't think that Mr. Vandoreen will take it ill of me that I pass this item on in my column. He has enough left for the School Crossing.

"As far as our future church building is concerned, we are still awaiting the Building Permit. The latter seems to be only a matter of time, i.e. there seems to be no reason why it will not eventually be obtained."

And a last item: "It was decided to not incorporate the church, since this would legally make the congregation congregationalist in government."

We continue and visit the Fraser Valley.

We were told that the "subcommittee for the programming of our Radio Broadcasting" was to have a meet-



## 50th Wedding Anniversary



*Mr. and Mrs. H. Oosterveld hope to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on January 19th, 1983, the Lord willing. They were married in Groningen, The Netherlands, and emigrated to Canada in 1954. They settled in the Burlington area with their 8 children and are enjoying their retirement now.*



ing and that "the five ministers in the Fraser Valley have agreed to attend this meeting, the Lord willing."

This item boosted my spirits somewhat, although the experiences are not all that encouraging. During the month of December we had re-runs again here; and when I asked our brother Harpert VanderWel who takes care of the technical aspects of the matter, what the reason for this was, he replied, "Ask your colleagues." As I do not have the extra funds to send a letter to all my colleagues with this question, I do it via our news medley. "What is the reason, brethren, that we have re-runs? Are we not able together to provide a new message for our broadcasts every time? If everyone cooperates, how often would you have to prepare four or five messages for a one-month period?" I leave it at this.

There was an item under the heading "Langley" which perturbed me and caused me to be worried to a certain extent.

It was not so much the first item: "The ladies from the nursery request permission to start an extended nursery for THREE year olds. The request is granted. The ladies will be informed." Here, too, I had some question marks already.

In the first place: do the sisters need permission

from the Consistory to extend their activities of babysitting? When it was decided here in Fergus to have babysitting services also in the afternoon, we did not get any request at the Consistory table. The sisters simply saw the need and saw to it that the need was taken care of.

The second question mark which I put was behind that capitalized "THREE." I have never heard of an age-limit for nursery attendants (I mean infants that "attend" the nursery). I always thought that the nursery was for those children whom the parents could not yet take into Church with them, and that it was up to the parents to decide how old their children were to be to accompany them into Church. Besides, the one will sit quietly at the age of two, the other will be five before it can be reasonably expected that no disturbance will be caused by him or her. Almost everything depends here — again — on the parents and their way of dealing with their children. The sooner our children become accustomed to attending the services the better it is.

My doubts were increased when I read the following passage. "As you may have read in the 'Press Release' an extended nursery program has been approved by the Consistory. The program has been set up for 3 year olds and 4 year olds who presently attend church only once. The first class will be on November 28 in the *afternoon* service. Please bring your children in the Catechism room."

What are we going to get here? I thought. Now it is extended already to four-year olds, and the sisters speak of "the first class." Are we getting some sort of a Sunday School for Church-children? I certainly hope not! "The program has been set up," we read; this means that it is not just a nursery with babysitting.

I hope from the heart that my fears are unfounded, but the terminology used certainly is not very suited to take them away.

Our children belong in the services, together with their parents and brothers and sisters. If they are not able to come along yet or if they are not yet able to come twice a Sunday, every effort to provide babysitting is to be applauded. It should be not more than babysitting, though, and every appearance of organizing something more permanent for them should be avoided.

You again have some points to ponder.

My news is exhausted for this time.

Rests me to say "Thank You" to Mr. Gerry Kuik for all the cooperation I have received from him during the past ten years he was at the helm. That we never had any problems is, for the larger part, his doing. He was more than a publisher, and if it had been his intention and aim to "make money" out of *Clarion*, he would have abandoned the project after half a year at the most. And so would we all.

Together we strove for improvement and worked for the edification of Jerusalem.

It is comforting and encouraging indeed that Mr. Gerald VanDyken is of the same spirit.

Thus we face the future with confidence and cheerful hearts.

That's one of the reasons why I am looking forward to meeting you again two weeks from now.

The Lord willing.

VO

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## Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped

During the last couple of months you must have read several articles in our magazine through which you could familiarize yourself with the work and purpose of our association. This time we would like you to show your interest in the work for the handicapped.

Until now we have introduced ourselves with the above heading, which is actually only an explanation

of who and what we are. It is good that we show who we are, yet it is sometimes awkward to introduce ourselves with such a long name. Also, regulations for incorporation are that the name cannot start with the word "Canadian." These are the reasons why we would like to find a name for our association. The name must be catching and brief; at the same time it must show the purpose and the background of the association.

We invite you to send suggestions for a fitting name to the Public Relations Committee. A suggested design for a crest to go with the name would be appreciated but is not essential. Since we hope to make a proposal to the board by mid-February 1983, early replies are encouraged!

We hope that with your help we will be able to introduce ourselves under a new heading in the near future.

for the Public Relations Committee  
J.E. HOOGLAND  
P.O. Box 345

Smithville, Ontario L0R 2A0

## STICHTING BRALECTAH

From Mrs. W. Pouwelse we received word that a collection was taken at the Annual Meeting of the League of Men's Societies and that the amount collected was \$77.00.

As you know, Stichting Bralectah's work is to provide reading material in Braille and on tape. This material contains (parts of) magazines and papers which are published by various Reformed organizations, for example, *Nederlands Dagblad*, *De Reformatie*, and others. The organization also takes care of producing suitable books in Braille or on tape. A total of some fifty volunteers donate their time for this work.

For some time now Bralectah has been active in your country as well, where Mrs. Pouwelse has started this work and coordinates it. She regularly sends reports on the progress of this work in Canada.

On behalf of the board of Bralectah I wish to thank you wholeheartedly for your gift for this work which is being done for the brothers and sisters who are visually handicapped.

H. BRUIJNIS,  
Secretary

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### INTERNATIONAL — *Cont'd.*

believing Christians, Jews and Moslems who seek to practise their religions outside of the "official" and "registered" churches, and who seek to transmit their religious faith to their children.

Anyone in the Soviet Union who seeks to practise a religious faith outside of the official channels subjects himself to serious penalties. (CN)

VO

## EVANGELISM OR HOME MISSION —

*Cont'd.*

forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." This mandate is repeated with almost the same words when Christ addressed His disciples just before the ascension in Acts 1:8.

We therefore cannot agree with H. Bavink who in a speech for the "Congress for Reformed Evangelism" said that in Matt. 28:19 the Lord gives a two-fold mandate, one which is a mission mandate outward and the other which is an edifying mandate inward.<sup>2</sup> There is one mandate given, and that is to preach the gospel to all nations. It is one mandate given to the first office-bearers of the New Testament Church.

Another text which is often referred to is in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matt. 5:14-16, near the beginning of this discourse, the Lord says, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Regardless of whom Christ is addressing here,<sup>3</sup> from the context it is clear that Christ is not speaking about the mission to evangelize or preach the gospel here. The "light" about which He speaks does not refer to preaching. It refers to v. 16, "your good works." These good works are to come forth from the loving covenantal obedience which Christ teaches in the entire sermon. It is these "good works" which must make other men "give glory to your Father which is in heaven." These words cannot be used as a ground for home or foreign mission in the sense of being sent to preach the gospel or to evangelize. They can be compared to how Israel as God's covenant people were to be a light among the nations by walking in the way of the covenant.

The Lord used a similar example just after He had explained what the parable of the sower means in Mark 4:21-25. In vv. 21-22 He says, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a bushel, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For there is nothing hid, except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret, except to come to light." Here the Lord, in continuation of the teachings of the parable of the sower, teaches that what is in the heart will become evident in deeds. It will become clear where the seed which has been sown will grow. This text does

not give a mission mandate to evangelize. We find the same words used in much the same way in Luke 8:16-18. A warning is expressed there. What is in the heart will come to light. "Take heed then . . ."

The Scriptural texts have thus far shown that the Lord gave to His disciples, having become apostles and the first office-bearers of the New Testament Church, the mission to preach the gospel to all nations. All believers are told to show the gospel truth by confessing it in their walk of life.

To prove that all believers have a mission to preach the gospel (to evangelize) some have used Acts 11:20-21. In Acts 11 we read of how the Church at Jerusalem became dispersed because of persecutions. We read that ". . . there were some of them [dispersed believers], men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord." We must be careful in what way we refer to this text. It comes in redemptive-historic context. It is not necessarily normative. No specific command is given here. We cannot simply apply a past historical situation to our present day even though the Lord gave them His help. At this early date the specific ecclesiastical offices about which we read especially in the pastoral letters had not been fully established yet. What we do notice is that as soon as the Church at Jerusalem heard about what was happening in Antioch, they sent a missionary (someone officially sent by the Church), namely, Barnabas, there. From this text we cannot clearly conclude that the Lord has sent all believers to preach the gospel.

Because Acts 11:20-21 is inconclusive concerning this matter, many have suggested that Eph. 4:11-12 proves that all believers are called to evangelize.<sup>4</sup> There we read: "And His [Christ's] gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." The comma placed after "saints" has been questioned. The translation without the comma would be ". . . the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry . . ." The meaning would then be that the office-bearers must equip the saints for the work of ministry. It is not necessary to go into the text-critical question. We cannot give a definite answer. We, notice however,

that the liberal theologian Marcus Barth, who in the end leaves this comma out, admits that it is a decision which does not come from the Greek text itself. He says, "The wording of the Greek text of v. 12 does not permit a decision. Different, though practically synonymous, prepositions stand before the first two [phrases]. This can, but need not, mean that the distinct purposes are suggested."<sup>5</sup> Seeing that the Greek itself gives no conclusion to a decision concerning this comma, we would do better to consider the meaning of the Greek words used and their context.

We first notice that the word "ministry" about which we read in v. 12 does not refer to preaching the gospel. The Greek word used here is *diakonia*. From it we receive the word "deacon." It literally means to "serve at tables." In his Commentary, S. Greijdanus rightly says that this word does not pertain to the special office, but to the office of all believers.<sup>6</sup>

We furthermore notice that the end purpose for which the office-bearers must equip the saints is expressed in vv. 13-14: "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles." It is also with this end goal in mind that the saints must do their work of service. Dr. S. Greijdanus furthermore suggests that the actual increase of Christ's Church in the sense of expanding in membership, is more the work of the special offices called for this task.<sup>7</sup>

From these texts we must conclude that the Lord does not call all believers to evangelize. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find a mandate for all believers to preach the gospel.

#### 4. *The Confessions defend the Scriptures in this Conclusion*

When Marcus Barth writes about the questionable comma of Eph. 4:12, he favours leaving it out for theological reasons. He does not like the meaning of the text should the comma be left there. He says, "This interpretation (with the comma) has an aristocratic, that is, a clerical and ecclesiastical flavour; it distinguishes the (mass of the) 'saints' from the (superior class of the) officers of the church. A clergy is now distinct from the laity, to whom the privilege and burden of carrying out the prescribed

construction work are exclusively assigned.”<sup>8</sup> Marcus Barth does not do complete justice to the Reformational objection to the Roman Catholic doctrine of clergy and laity here.

During the Reformation the place of special offices in the Church was strongly defended. The objection against Roman Catholic doctrine of clergy and laity was two-fold. It concerned the claims of papal infallibility and clerical dispensing of Christ’s gifts. The objection to the claim of papal infallibility is that it is a claim which is contrary to the Scriptures, and in practice becomes an overruling of Christ’s words revealed in Scripture. The warning of Gal. 1:8 applies here: “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preach to you, let him be accursed.” The Lord warns all His children against false teachers who might lead them astray. They are all given the responsibility to “test the spirits to see whether they are of God” (I John 4:1; c.f. Ezek. 3:16-21). From this it is clear that no sinful human speaks in an infallible way except when inspired to record the Scriptures. Every word now spoken, after the completion of God’s revelation, must be tested by the authority of God’s Word revealed in Scripture. It is by His revealed Word that Christ rules the Church as its Head. In this way Christ is confessed to be the Head of the Church and its highest authority; but that He institutes offices in the Church is not denied.

The Church of Rome furthermore claims that the gifts of Christ necessary for salvation are entrusted to the Church and dispersed by its offices. We must understand this claim in the whole context of Romanized theology and especially what Rome taught about transsubstantiation and the imputation of God’s grace. We need not go into a detailed outline of Roman teaching and Reformed objections here; it should be clear that the Roman Church claimed that the broken body and shed blood was given in transsubstantiated form to the laity.

The Reformed objection to the Roman Catholic teaching of clergy and laity is that by its doctrines Rome makes the salvation of the laity dependent on the clergy. The laity depends on the clergy to know God’s will in an infallible way and to receive the necessary grace for salvation. Contrary to these claims which the Church of Rome made for the clergy, the Reformers confessed that salvation rests upon the work of Christ

alone and His gifts of salvation are received through faith. It does not depend upon a clergy. Furthermore the will of the Lord is sufficiently revealed in Scripture and all are responsible to hold it fast (see Lord’s Day XXXV, especially Q. and A. 98, and Belgic Confession, Art. VII). The Reformed objection to Roman Catholic teaching of clergy and laity is not that there is a distinction between the special offices and the office of believers, an objection such as Marcus Barth implies, but that the laity depends on the clergy for the gift of salvation.

During the time of the Reformation there were some independentists and individualists influenced by the rising tide of humanism of their time who denied that there are offices instituted in the Church. Both Luther and Calvin objected very strongly to this independentism, as well as to Roman clericalism.

The Scriptures clearly teach that special offices have been instituted. In Romans 10:14-15 we read: “. . . And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent . . . ?” From here it is clear that those who preach must be sent. In the same way the Lord through the Apostle Paul instructs Timothy (II, 2:2): “and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” The distinct office for the ministry of the Word is also implied in I Tim. 3:17: “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching” (see Form for the Ordination [Installation] of Ministers of the Word).<sup>9</sup>

In the Belgic Confession this Scriptural direction is maintained against Roman Catholicism and independentism / individualism. In Article XXX, “We believe that this true Church must be governed by that spiritual polity which our Lord has taught us in His Word . . .” contradicts Roman teaching concerning papal infallibility. Further in the same article: “. . . that there must be ministers or pastors . . . also elders and deacons . . .” contradicts independentism. In Article XXXI the Confession again speaks against Roman Catholic doctrine. Ministers, elders, and deacons “. . . ought to be chosen to their respective offices by a lawful election by the Church . . .” As for the ministers of God’s Word, they have equally the same power and authority wheresoever they are, as they are all ministers of Christ, the only universal Bishop and the only Head of the Church.” This ar-

ticle contains a warning against individualism: “. . . Therefore every one must take heed not to intrude himself by improper means . . .” (see Heb. 5:4ff); and against independentism: “. . . this holy ordinance of God may not be violated or slighted.”<sup>10</sup>

## 5. Conclusions

- a. Nowhere in Scripture are all believers called and sent to preach the gospel. They are all called to confess Christ in their own vocation (Lord’s Day XII, I Cor. 7:17-24).
- b. The Lord has instituted a special office for the ministry of the Word.
- c. By the institution of the office for the ministry of the Word the Lord forbids all rejection and overshadowing of it by taking up this office in an unlawful way (Belgic Confession, Art. XXXI).
- d. “Evangelism” (preaching the Word) may never be separated from “mission” (a lawful calling and sending).

P.K.A. DE BOER

## Notes

1. Friedrich, “*Euaggelizomai*,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* ed. by G. Kittel (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976).
2. H. Bavink, “Het Begrip en de noodzakelijkheid der Evangelisatie,” (W. Kirchner) 1913.
3. The meaning of Matt. 5:1 is not entirely clear. “Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth . . .” — does it mean that Christ went up the mountain like on a pulpit, to teach the crowds, or did He go up the mountain to escape the crowds and teach His disciples there?
4. G. Van Dooren, *Get Out*, A Guideline for Reformed Congregational Evangelism, (Premier Printing, 1973) p. 43ff.
5. Marcus Barth, “Ephesians,” *The Anchor Bible* (Doubleday & Comp. Inc. 1974), Vol. II, p. 478.
6. S. Greijdanus, “Epeze,” *Korte Verklaring der Heilige Schrift*, (Kok, Kampen 1949): “Hier wordt niet op een speciaal ambt gezien, maar gesproken van aller gelovigen ambt,” p. 91.
7. *Ibid.* “Dit zou echter de gedachte geven, dat het werk van bediening door de gelovigen verricht, eigenlijk tot doel heeft, de opbouw van ’s Heren lichaam, terwijl die opbouw, in den zin van de uitbreiding der gemeente, veel meer het gevolg is van den arbeid der speciale ambten en ambtsdragers.”
8. Marcus Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 477ff.
9. *Book of Praise, Liturgical Forms* (Premier Printing, 1981) On p. 36 reference is wrongly made to I Tim. 3:17 (printing mistake?) while speaking about I Tim. 5:17.
10. See A.D.R. Polman, *Onze Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis*, (T. Wever).



# PRESS RELEASE

of Classis Pacific held on October 20, 1982, in Langley, B.C.

**Article 1 — Opening.** On behalf of the convening Church at Langley, the Rev. D. VanderBoom opens the meeting and suggests that Psalm 132:8, 9 be sung. Thereafter he reads from Psalm 132 and leads in prayer.

He welcomes the brothers present, also the deputies ad Art. 49 C.O., Rev. D. DeJong and Rev. J.D. Wielenga, as well as Candidate C. Bouwman who has been called to the Church at Chilliwack and has accepted that call.

Rev. VanderBoom makes mention of the fact that Rev. C. VanSpronsen has accepted the call to work among the Carrier Indians in the Bulkley Valley. He wishes him the Lord's blessing in his new task. Rev. M. Werkman, who is present at Classis, has been called by the Church at Smithers. He is congratulated on his call and the hope is expressed that the Lord will bless his decision.

Rev. G.H. Visscher is still in The Netherlands for study reasons. Rev. J. Visscher will soon travel to the same country to attend the Constituent Assembly of the International Conference of Reformed Churches. The Lord's blessings are extended.

**Article 2 — Constitution.** The credentials are examined and found to be in good order. Two Churches have instructions. Classis is constituted. The delegates are: for the Church at Abbotsford — Elder J.T. Pruijm, Rev. M. VanderWel; Church at Chilliwack — Elder G. Breukelman, Elder P. Van Woudenberg; Church at Cloverdale — Elder H.A. Berends, Rev. J. Visscher; Church at Houston — Elder G. Leffers, Elder J. TenBrinke; Church at Langley — Elder D. Doesburg, Rev. D. VanderBoom; Church at Surrey — Elder C. De Jong, Rev. J. Geertsema; Church at Smithers — Rev. C. VanSpronsen, Elder L. Wierenga.

The deputies ad Art. 49 C.O. are Rev. D. DeJong and Rev. J.D. Wielenga.

The Executive Officers appointed are: Chairman: Rev. D. VanderBoom; Vice-Chairman: Rev. J. Visscher; Clerk: Rev. J. Geertsema.

**Article 3 — Agenda.** After a few additions and changes are made, the Agenda is adopted.

**Article 4 — Examination Cand. C. Bouwman.** Classis proceeds with the Pre-emptory Examination of Candidate C. Bouwman. He presents his sermon proposal on Psalm 125. Classis goes into closed session and discusses the sermon. Classis decides to continue the exam.

Rev. C. VanSpronsen examines on Exegesis O.T. (Genesis 11 and Psalm 23); Rev. J. Geertsema examines on Exegesis N.T. (Luke 16 and James 1); Rev. J. Geertsema examines on Knowledge of Holy Scripture; Rev. D. VanderBoom examines on Doctrine and Creeds; Rev. J. Visscher examines on Church History; Rev. M. VanderWel examines on Ethics; Rev. M. Van-

derWel examines on Church Polity; Rev. J. Visscher examines on Diaconology.

**Article 5 — Admission Cand. C. Bouwman.** Classis discusses the results of the examination. After hearing the advice of the deputies ad Art. 49 C.O., the Classis decides with thankfulness to admit Candidate C. Bouwman to the ministry of the Word of God. Candidate Bouwman is informed of this decision and the members of Classis sing Psalm 134:3. The Form of Subscription is read and signed by Candidate C. Bouwman. He is congratulated and the blessings of the Lord are extended upon his future ministry.

**Article 6 — Approbation.** Classis approbates the call of Candidate C. Bouwman to the Church at Chilliwack. All the documents are found to be in good order and the call is approved. Rev. M. VanderWel is appointed to represent Classis Pacific at the ordination of Candidate C. Bouwman.

**Article 7 — Call Rev. C. VanSpronsen.** The Church at Smithers informs Classis that Rev. C. VanSpronsen has been set aside for the special work among the Carrier Indians. He has accepted this call. The date on which Rev. C. VanSpronsen will be released from his regular duties remains to be determined.

**Article 8 — Reports.** The Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey reports that it has audited the books of the Treasurer and found everything in order.

The Church Visitors report on their intention to visit all the local Churches prior to the April 1983 Classis.

**Article 9 — Discipline.** Several Churches ask for advice in matters of discipline.

**Article 10 — Appointments.** Various appointments are made.

a) *For the next Classis* the Convening Church: the Church at Houston.

The date: April 27, 1983. Suggested Officers: Chairman — Rev. C. VanSpronsen; Vice-Chairman — Rev. J. Geertsema; Clerk — Rev. D. VanderBoom.

b.) *Examiners:* Exegesis O.T. — Rev. C. VanSpronsen; Exegesis N.T. — Rev. G.H. Visscher; Doctrine and Creeds — Rev. D. VanderBoom; Church History — Rev. J. Visscher; Church Polity — Rev. M. VanderWel; Ethics — Rev. M. VanderWel; Diaconology — Rev. J. Visscher.

Coordinators for Examinations — Rev. D. VanderBoom, Rev. J. Visscher.

c) *Church Visitors:* Rev. D. VanderBoom (Coordinator), Rev. M. VanderWel, Rev. C. VanSpronsen, Rev. J. Visscher.

Alternates: Rev. J. Geertsema, Rev. G.H. Visscher.

d) *Church for the Archives:* the Church at Smithers.

e) *Church for the Inspection of the Archives:* the Church at Houston.

f) *Treasurer:* P.A. VanEgmond.

g) *Church to Audit the Books of the Treasurer:* the Church at Surrey.

h) *Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry:* K.F. Huttema, Rev. D. VanderBoom, Rev. M. VanderWel (coordinator).

i) *Committee for Needy Churches;* H.

A. Berends (coordinator), G. Boeve, R. Paize.

j) *Deputies for Preaching Arrangements:* Rev. D. VanderBoom and Rev. M. VanderWel.

**Article 11 — Censure.** Censure ad Art. 43 C.O. is deemed unnecessary.

**Article 12 — Acts and Press Release.** The Acts and the Press Release are adopted.

**Article 13 — Closing.** Rev. J. Visscher calls on the brothers to sing Psalm 84:1, 2 and leads in prayer. The Chairman closes the Classis.

J. VISSCHER, et

# PRESS RELEASE

of Classis Ontario South, held December 8, 1982 in London, Ontario.

1. On behalf of the convening church of London, Rev. J. DeJong asks the delegates to sing Psalm 79:1 and 3, reads Jeremiah 23:1-16, leads in prayer and welcomes the delegates.

2. The delegates of Lincoln examine the credentials and report that all churches are duly represented. From the church of Catham an alternate elder is present.

3. Classis is constituted. Chairman: Rev. Cl. Stam, clerk: Rev. W. Huizinga and assessor: Rev. M. Werkman. The chairman expresses gratitude for the fact that Rev. M. Werkman declined the calls to Carman and Smithers, that Rev. J. DeJong declined the call to Ottawa and that Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer declined the call to Smithers.

4. Classis adopts the agenda.

5. Question period ad Art. 41 C.O. is held. Classis meets in closed session to deal with a request of Chatham for advice.

6. Reports: the report of the classical treasurer, brother C. Ouwersloot, is read and dealt with. Classis decides to ask the churches for \$14.00 per communicant member for the expenses of Classes, Regional Synods and General Synod 1983. Reports are read of the church visitations in the churches of Lincoln, Grand Rapids, Hamilton and Smithville. The church of Watford reports that the classical archives are in good order.

7. Next classis is scheduled for March 9, 1983 at London, 10:00 a.m. Convening church: Smithville. Chairman: Rev. J. VanRietschoten, clerk: Rev. Cl. Stam and assessor: Rev. W. Huizinga.

8. Personal question period is held.

9. Acts are read and adopted.

10. Press release is read and approved.

11. Censure ad Art. 43 C.O. is not necessary.

12. The chairman thanks the delegates for their cooperation, asks Classis to sing Hymn 13:2 and leads in prayer.

The ladies are thanked for the excellent meal they served.

On behalf of Classis,  
M. WERKMAN, assessor

# our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

I got TWO letters with something for YOU!  
I was very happy with those letters.  
I will tell you why.  
They both had a BEDTIME PRAYER for children.  
Even the music to sing them!  
It's a tune almost all "older" people among us know very well.

I think many of you will know it, too.  
I'm very happy to pass this music and the two sets of words on to you, Busy Beavers.

I hope one prayer, or the other, will be part of your "going to bed" every single night!

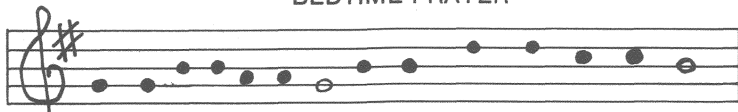
Sing both prayers through a few times.

Do you think the one a little more suitable for younger children than the other?

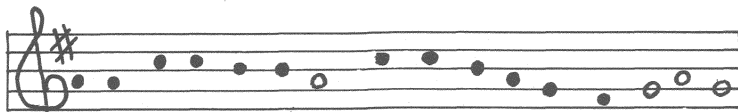
You could learn that one first, and the other when you're a little more "grown up."

Here they are:

## BEDTIME PRAYER



Now before I go to bed; I kneel down and bow my head.



To our Lord in heav'n I pray, Thanking Him for work and play. Amen.

Jesus, Who loves children, keep  
Me in Thy hands while I sleep.  
Please take all my sins away;  
Teach this little child Thy way.

Please make other people too  
Love Thee Jesus as I do.  
May we all together bring  
Thanks and praises to the King.

## Bedtime Prayer

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
Pray, my Lord, a watch to keep.  
Father, I do trust in Thee,  
Wilt Thou now abide with me.

Make me free from guilt and spot,  
And my sins remember not;  
Will into Thy care me take;  
This I ask for Jesus' sake.

Think of all poor children, Lord,  
And, according to Thy Word,

Take the orphans' lot to heart:  
Show that Thou their Father art.

Heal the children that are ill;  
Give us strength to do Thy will  
When tomorrow we awake.  
This I ask for Jesus' sake.

AMEN

Now I want to say something to our SENIOR BUSY BEAVERS!

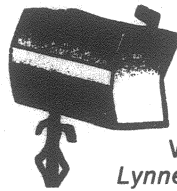
Do you have a baby brother or sister?

She/he would love to have one of these prayers sung to her/him every night on going to bed.

Sung softly and reverently it soon becomes a signal for the baby to go to sleep.

When your baby starts to talk, you'll be surprised how soon he can "help" with the words.

He soon learns that prayer is part of "going to bed"!



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Mary-Lynne Kottelenberg*. We are happy to have you join us. You're a real Busy Beaver already!

Thank you for the puzzle. Did you have a good time during your Christmas holidays?

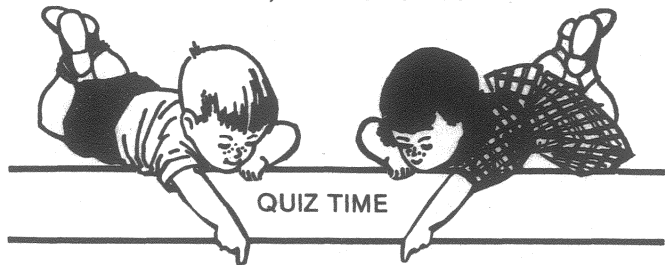
Thank you for your letter and puzzle, *Felicia Viersen*. It was nice to hear from you again. How did you enjoy your holidays? Did you have lots of snow?

How did your picture turn out *Anne Kottelenberg*? Congratulations yet on your baby brother! He's quite a big boy already, I guess. Sounds to me as if you had a really good birthday, Anne. Bye for now.

Thank you for the pretty letter and puzzle, *Cathy Van Delden*. Yes, you may send in a design for a new mailbox. And I will tell you more about the Birthday Fund another time soon, all right? Did you have lots of fun during your holidays, Cathy?

Busy Beavers, Cathy would like to TRADE STAMPS with some other Busy Beavers. If you have a stamp collection be sure to get in touch with:

*Cathy Van Delden* 109 Oneida Blvd.  
Ancaster, Ontario L9G 3C7



## QUIZ TIME

Find the five books of the Law, by connecting the letters and without skipping spaces.

by Busy Beaver, *Erica Blom*

BIBLE  
BOOKS

E	L	S	U	X	E	S	I	S	Y
V	I	T	D	O	G	E	N	E	M
U	C	I	B	E	D	E	E	R	O
S	N	U	M	R	S	U	T	O	N