

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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DISCIPLINE

Within the Church₃

9. *Non-communicant members*

Discipline with respect to non-communicant members has always been a difficult matter. There has been confusion and lack of unanimity in this respect for centuries. Many office-bearers will remember a classis where questions have been asked with regard to such cases. The Church Order gives no guidelines. The expression "non-communicant" member is not even used in the Church Order. There is a good reason for that. The Church Order deals with normal situations, and censure or discipline with respect to non-communicant members has to be an exception. We have seen at the beginning of this article already that there has been a difference of opinion for more than four hundred years. People did not even agree on the basic question whether discipline can be exercised with respect to non-communicant members after all.

Prof. G. Voetius was of the opinion that non-communicant members, being incomplete members of the Church, can never be an object of discipline. As long as they are children, they have to be further instructed before real discipline and excommunication can take place. Adults who fail to make public profession of faith are, for that reason, no longer considered to be members of the Congregation.

The Rev. J. à Lasco, the well-known leader of the refugee Churches in London (England) in the middle of the sixteenth century, preferred an explicit statement of the consistory that they had forfeited their membership, rather than a more or less automatic loss of membership. According to him, youngsters had to be admonished, at the age of fifteen years if they were not willing or ready to make public profession of faith. If at the

age of eighteen years or ultimately twenty years they still had not made public profession of faith, they were explicitly cut off from the Church and forfeited their membership.

The first official statement of the Reformed Churches concerning this matter was made by the General Synod at Dordrecht 1578. This Synod gave the advice to continue the admonition, instruction, and training, as long as such members had not by public apostasy rejected the covenant of the LORD.

This matter has caused many discussions, and different, sometimes contradictory, decisions have been made.

10. *Some synodical decisions*

I should like to mention a few points as far as the Churches in The Netherlands are concerned. Immediately after the Union of the Reformed Churches in 1892, the General Synod of Dordrecht 1893 gave instruction to deputies to come with advice, to be presented to the next general synod. Two questions had to be answered; in the first place, how to deal with non-communicant members who become delinquent, and secondly, how to deal with non-communicant members who fail to come to public profession of faith. In 1896 they presented their report to the General Synod at Middelburg. The Synod decided "because of the very serious and tender nature of the matter dealt with in this extensive advice, and because of the difficulty to come immediately with a somewhat ripe judgment, to print this advice and to hand it out to the members of Synod, to deal with it later." However, scrutiny of this report by the members of Synod did not have the desired result. Therefore, Synod finally decided to hold this report over to the next Synod.

In 1899 the matter was dealt with

again by the general synod. No clear decision was made. Synod declared to agree with the main intention (hoofdstrekking") and considered it to be desirable that the consistories should work in this spirit as much as possible. This was certainly not a strong statement; it was a non-binding advice.

What was really the content of this advice? It was almost the same as the approach of the Rev. J. à Lasco, mentioned before, except that a different age was mentioned. We can summarize the advice as follows:

1. Children are incomplete members of the Church and for that reason they cannot be the objects of discipline and excommunication. They can only be admonished and instructed.

2. Non-communicant members who come to maturity and fail to make public profession of faith, have to be repeatedly admonished. If they do not heed this admonition, they will forfeit their membership, and for that reason they will not be an object of discipline either. Before they reach the age of thirty years, the consistory has to make an explicit statement in this respect.

3. Because they have lost their membership, their children are not considered to be children of believers any longer and cannot be baptized.

Especially the last point could have had far-reaching consequences. In that time there were many non-communicant members who asked for and received baptism of their children. However, the decision of 1899 was only an advice and the custom remained to administer the sacrament of baptism also to children of non-communicant members. In some cases the questions in the Form for Baptism were answered, not by the parents but by witnesses, often rela-

tives of the parents.

In 1920 the matter was again laid before the general synod. The Regional Synod of Groningen asked the general synod to adopt a "Form for the Excommunication of Non-Communicant Members." The advisory committee recommended not to grant this request, because the adoption of such a form would sanction the "system of non-communicant members," as it very often could be found in the northern provinces, where many non-communicant members, even aged people, failed to make public profession of faith. This was considered to be an unacceptable situation.

From this report we can learn that the advice given by the General Synod at Groningen 1899, namely, that members who failed to make public profession of faith should forfeit their membership ultimately at the age of twenty years, was not adhered to. The "system of non-communicant members" is called a phenomenon that "very often could be found in the northern provinces."

The General Synod of Leeuwarden 1920 decided:

a. that non-communicant members who, in spite of their maturity, fail to make public profession of faith, do not have a legal place in the Church;

b. that for that reason no excommunication can take place either. If they behave as ungodly and unbelieving people, the consistory simply has to announce that they have withdrawn themselves from the Church;

c. that in some cases it can be desirable to ask advice from the Classis before such a public announcement is made;

d. that the formulation of such an announcement should be left in the prudence of the Consistory.

From this decision it became clear again that the position of adult non-communicant members always is considered to be an exception and was sometimes even called an "impossibility." At the same time we have seen that many people, sometimes even aged members, still remained "non-communicant members."

In spite of all the deliberations and decisions of general synods, no satisfactory solution was found. The main reason was that no attention was paid to the question *why* they did not come to public profession of

faith. It makes quite a difference whether someone does not come to profession of faith because of shyness, lack of knowledge, and insecurity, or that it is a matter of indifference, aversion, and even hostility. Later this distinction was made, as we will see.

11. *Negligence or aversion*

At General Synod Middelburg 1933 the matter was on the table for the umpteenth time. The Synod decided that "the time has not yet come to make a binding decision in this matter, but commits this matter to the serious consideration of the Churches." One might wonder why after all the previous discussions the time had still not come to make a binding decision. However, the matter was to drag on for quite a while before it would be settled.

General Synod Amsterdam 1936 decided to appoint a committee of three members "to advise the next synod concerning the leading principles" and to come, if possible, with some regulations. This resulted in the famous report on the table of General Synod Sneek 1939. Initially the matter was postponed, but finally in 1940 a decision was made. It was not a binding decision, but rather a guideline to be adhered to by the consistories "as much as possible."

The most important point was that a distinction was made between negligence and aversion. Negligence refers to people who do not come to public profession of faith, but who still, apart from that, behave as active members of the Church in doctrine as well as in conduct. With respect to them, the consistory has to continue instruction and admonition. The consistory shall not proceed to the ultimate remedy of cutting off from the Church except when it becomes clear that not shyness and lack of knowledge, but rather unbelief is the reason why they do not come to the Lord's Supper by way of public profession of faith.

Aversion refers to the attitude of adults who, by godless works and deeds, by public rejection of the doctrine of the Church, by continuous wilful abstention from the worship services and from catechetical instruction — by all these sins or by some of them — transgress the requirements of the covenant. If repeated admonition remains fruitless, the consistory shall make an announcement

to the congregation. If after a certain period of time repentance does not take place, the consistory shall proceed to the ultimate remedy: the announcement that they have forfeited their membership. As far as the age is concerned, Synod decided that, as a rule, this announcement shall not be made before they have reached the age of thirty years. In cases of very offensive apostasy, it can be done at the age of twenty-one years.

Still one aspect has to be mentioned in this respect. We have said before that discipline stops as soon as a member withdraws himself from the Church. When a communicant



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IN THIS ISSUE

Discipline — Within the Church3	
— W. Pouwelse	70
From the Scriptures — Seizing the Seized	
— J. DeJong	73
Yak'Isda Bik'Ah — Smithers Indian	
Ministry — Newsletter No. 2	74
International — W.W.J. VanOene	76
Paralipomena — <i>Chronicle</i>	77
Reformed Evangelism Taskforce	
— J. Visscher	78
Patrimony Profiles	
— W.W.J. VanOene	79
A Ray of Sunshine	
— Mrs. J.K. Riemersma	81
News Medley — W.W.J. VanOene	82
School Crossing	
— Nick VanDooren	84
Book Review — J. DeJong	85
Press Releases	86
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty	87

member moves to another place without asking for an attestation, or when he fails to join the congregation in his new residence by keeping his attestation in his pocket, he, in fact, withdraws from the Church.

When children move to another place, they do not receive an attestation. On request of their parents an attestation will be sent by the consistory of their present congregation to the consistory in their new place of residence. When mature non-communicant members move, the rules are different. When they move, they cease to be members of the congregation to which they belonged. However, they do not automatically become members of the congregation in their new place of residence. They have to join the congregation by a personal act. A consistory which in such a case sends an attestation to the new congregation, without a request of the person concerned, acts in error. In this respect the synod made the following statement: When a non-communicant member leaves without any notification, the consistory in his new place of residence shall be notified, with a request to urge him to ask for an attestation. If he refuses to do so, the consistory has the sad duty to conclude that he factually has withdrawn himself from the Church. This withdrawal has to be announced in the congregation to which he belonged before he left.

It happens quite often that a consistory in such a case sends an attestation to the consistory in the new place of residence, but that the person concerned is not willing to see the office-bearers of the Church. In such a case discipline and the announcement of withdrawal or forfeiting of membership is not a matter of the new congregation. The attestation should not have been sent. We have to bear in mind that joining a congregation always has to be a personal act of willingly submitting to the admonition and discipline of the Church. Only with children an attestation can be sent directly to another congregation, on request of their parents.

12. The Church Order

By what has been said till now, it is clear that the Churches in the past have dealt with this matter very often and quite extensively. Many decisions were made, sometimes even contradictory decisions. However, in the Church Order we cannot find a

word about it. The Church Order simply presumes that children of believers by baptism are ingrafted into the Christian Church and, as soon as they come to maturity, make public profession of faith. In the articles of the Church Order dealing with discipline, the suspension from the Lord's Supper is always mentioned as the first disciplinary action. There are no disciplinary rules as far as non-communicant members are concerned. At least there are no rules in our present Church Order.

During the revision of the Church Order in The Netherlands an article was added (Article 82) in which arrangements are made and rules are set out as to how to deal with non-communicant members who obstinately reject the admonition of the consistory. Also in the draft report on the revision of the Church Order to be presented to General Synod Cloverdale 1983, a paragraph is added to the article dealing with excommunication (Article 67). It reads as follows: "In case a non-communicant member hardens himself in sin, the consistory shall in the same manner inform the congregation by means of public announcements. In the first public announcement the name of the sinner shall not be mentioned. In the second public announcement — which shall be made only after the advice of the Classis has been obtained — the name and address of the sinner shall be mentioned and a date shall be set at which the excommunication of the sinner shall take place. The time between the various announcements shall be determined by the consistory."

So finally, after more than four hundred years, a regulation might be included in the Church Order, to set a general rule in dealing with cases of non-communicant members who obstinately reject the admonition of the Church.

13. Conclusions

In this article we have tried to give a historical review of the development with regard to the discipline of non-communicant members. We hope that the proposed revision of the Church Order will be accepted, and that in this way more unanimity and uniformity may be achieved in this matter. We always have to be aware of the difference, mentioned above, between "negligence" because of shyness and a lack of knowl-

edge, and "aversion," sometimes even manifested in hostility and indifference. No one who, because of shyness, lack of knowledge, and spiritual problems, fails to make public profession of faith should automatically forfeit his membership of the Church. But at the same time we have to prevent the situation where those who reject the requirements of the covenant and who live an ungodly life in apostasy and hostility towards the Church, remain members of the Church. The consistory has to take the appropriate measures in this respect.

Finally, in all these matters we have to bear in mind that the ultimate aim and purpose is not to get rid of troublesome, annoying, or indifferent members, but rather to save those who are in danger of going astray. And above all things: to keep holy the congregation of Jesus Christ, to the honour of Him, our Lord and our heavenly Father.

W. POUWELSE
Burlington, ON

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FROM THE SCRIPTURES

*“And when His family heard it, they went out to seize Him,
for they said, ‘He is beside Himself.’ ”*

Mark 3:21 (Cf. RSV).

Seizing the Seized

The high-paced gospel of Mark presents us with a dramatic scene here in the early ministry of the Lord Jesus. The Lord had healed many who were sick, had cast out demons, and had appointed the twelve disciples who were also sent to preach and cast out demons. It all constituted one dramatic offensive of God’s abundant salvation to Israel. The Son obediently followed the way which the Father had opened for Him.

With this kind of an offensive, conflict must come, and the evangelist notes that one of the first pockets of resistance was the first circle around Jesus, His immediate family and friends. They may have been genuinely concerned about His progress and welfare, but they thought that He was going too far, too quickly. Things were getting out of hand, and He did not appear to be in control of Himself. A strange spirit had gripped Him; He was not the same. Considering Him to be “seized,” “possessed,” or, quite literally, beside Himself, they quickly came from Nazareth to the home in Capernaum to seize Him. They wanted to give Him a break, slow Him down, and give Him an opportunity to relax and catch His breath. They thought He needed to get out for a while, for His mind was going.

While the intentions may have been genuine, we ought not to overlook the tremendous suffering this charge implied for the Lord Jesus. Unclean spirits had fled before Him and He had demonstrated His power over them. Through the signs He did, many believed in Him as the Messiah. But here His friends and family were acting under the claim that He was seized by demons, rather than seizing demons Himself. Essentially the position taken by His relatives does not differ from the one held by the scribes as Mark describes it in v. 22. Motivations may have differed, but the essential conclusion was the same: the Lord Jesus was not on top of things; He was possessed, seized, beside Himself: hence had to be seized or pulled away Himself.

The timing of this blow against the Lord Jesus and His Messianic task is significant. He has seized His task with amazing tempo. More than once He only said, “Follow me,” and yet another disciple left everything, arose, and followed Him. Then He appointed the twelve. The mighty word of power, His salvation-bringing Word, *creates* new relationships. It forms a new community, a community set apart and consecrated to the great task of spreading the Messianic hour of salvation throughout the land of Israel.

However, the Lord Jesus no sooner formed this new community according to the will and good pleasure of His Father in heaven, than He met with a severe blow, a major step on the road of His sufferings. For just as a new community is formed, older, more established relations are breaking.

Just as He begins to do up-building work, creating true community by the power of the Word on high, He meets with deteriorating relationships among family and friends. Those who knew Him best failed to understand His mission. Those of His own blood lines want to pull Him out of the battle. In attempting to seize Him, they seek to prevent His continued work.

Hence, in this dramatic moment the Lord Jesus must carry on an intense spiritual battle. The new community, just formed by His word of power, stands under a threat. His decision here will determine whether it stands or falls. Should He obey that call of His friends and relatives, that call from those to whom He felt close, and let Himself be seized? He could not and does not. He perseveres and obeys His Father first of all. In obeying His Father, He restores and creates relationships of lasting joy and meaning, v. 31ff. For Him, the bond of faith precedes the bond of blood. In making His decision, He acknowledges the counsel and will of His Father. In placing His Messianic task first, and in remaining with it despite the hostilities involved, He endorsed the decision of His disciples, many of whom also had left family and friends for His sake.

Through His obedience we see the Messianic offensive carry on. “You are those who have continued with Me in My trials,” He says to His disciples at the last supper, thereby not acknowledging their faithfulness as much as His recreative Word through which lasting community and relationships are formed, Luke 22:28. In the same hour He is also able to say, “No longer do I call you servants . . . but I have called you *friends* You did not choose Me but I chose you and appointed you that you should bear fruit and that your fruit should *abide*,” John 15: 15, 16. Although they were momentarily scattered, they were kept safe by the Father through His own high priestly prayer, and gathered together as one fellowship after His resurrection. As a new community of faith living out of the power of the cross, they were sent out into the world.

Following Him, they were not of those who were “seized”; rather, they seized the evil spirits possessing men, women, and children, and so proclaimed the victory of Christ over sin and death, forming in and through the Word of power which they preached the new community of faith which precedes and outlives the bond of friendship or blood. He stayed in the front lines of the battle, sacrificing with His disciples all relationships that could hinder the progress of the Messianic salvation. And He still calls all who sincerely wish to follow Him to show the same obedience and steadfastness in battle in all their relationships today. Only then are we ensured that we share true communion, communion which endures forever.

J. DEJONG

YAK'ISDA BIK'AN

Smithers Indian Ministry
Newsletter No. 2

GETTING ORGANIZED AND PLANNING OUR STRATEGY

Due to the busy schedule of the month of December, this second Newsletter is slightly delayed. This had the advantage that we can now also cover the activities of the last month of the year. In general we may say that it has been a time of getting organized and planning our strategy, while time was limited since I still had my commitments to the congregation of Smithers as well. However, the latter will improve soon, since a full release of the regular ministerial duties will become effective March 1st. In the meantime there is a gradual phasing in.

Agreement of Cooperation

An Agreement of Cooperation had to be drawn up and has been sent to the supporting Churches. The secretary of the Board will tell you more about this elsewhere in this newsletter. For convenience sake, we distinguish between supporting and assisting Churches. Supporting churches are those which are committed to an assessment, while assisting churches are those which help otherwise, by means of collections, donations, etc. We hope that this agreement can be finalized before too long.

Housing

One of the first needs was to look for housing for our family since the manse had to be made available for the second minister whom we hoped would come soon. A suitable house was found and we are very pleased with it. We realize the Board received some criticism as to the amount spent for housing. However, choice is rather limited when you look for housing for a family of eight to nine persons, with enough room for a study and reception area as well. Since this fifteen-year-old house had a double garage under the main roof which could be converted into a

roomy study, the problem was solved. At the same time it has a good location so that we are easily accessible to the people; this is also important.

First Meeting in Moricetown

Last summer we had quite a number of children and young people in our camps from Moricetown, an Indian reserve 36 km. from Smithers. Some of them asked if we could not have Get-Togethers there like we have them in Smithers with the young people, and we have been keeping in touch with them. However, seeing it is a reserve, the initiative should come from them if we are to use the Community Hall, the only suitable building in the village. Well, with some coaxing a few of them did make arrangements to have the hall for an evening and also spread the word that there would be a camp reunion and Christmas celebration on Friday, December 17th. It turned out to be a very nice evening, with about thirty-five young people attending and a few parents. Some guitar players came along from Smithers to accompany us with the singing, and we enjoyed good attention and cooperation when we spoke to them about the meaning of Christmas, explaining and applying John 3:16. After that we played some games and shared refreshments.

I think we will be welcome there again; it may be the beginning of regular follow-up work in Moricetown.

Get-Togethers in Smithers

We could hold our regular Get-Togethers in Smithers, with between twenty and twenty-five young people attending. Also here we had a special Christmas celebration. Members of the congregation donated food hampers which were distributed over the twenty families with which we have closer contact. It is good for them to know that there is a whole Church standing behind this work. The program was quite similar to the one

held in Moricetown. It was disappointing that not more parents showed up, but the place of meeting may have something to do with it. We met in the basement of the church building. I think that many feel that joining in any activity in this building already means they are committing themselves to the Church. We can hardly expect them to differentiate between a worship service and a Christmas celebration if these are held in the same building with some of the same people in charge. However, we had many good contacts with the parents when we delivered the invitations and the hampers afterwards.

Public Relations

We have to be careful as to how we present ourselves and our work. Among ourselves we may speak of Home Mission and a home missionary, but we should realize that no one likes to be the object of mission, for that implies that one is a heathen or a savage even. In public relations, we therefore prefer to speak of Indian Ministry, Special Ministry among the Indians, or our Outreach Program. Why risk closing the door of communication even before we have spoken a word?

"Christian Indian Centre??"

Our work needs an address, a place the people can identify us with as well. Seeing that the threshold of an established church building forms an insurmountable barrier for many people, especially when there also is the difference of race and culture, we are of the opinion that we need a separate meeting place for the initial stages of the work, some kind of a drop-in place, just off Main Street if possible, where we can conduct our various activities: our Bible study groups with children, a "Coffee-House" for teenagers, a drop-in centre for troubled people who spend most of the day pacing Main Street, Bible Study for adults, etc.; a place

where the native population can drop, in without feeling that they are immediately committing themselves, a Christian Indian Centre.

At the moment we are inquiring about various possibilities in this respect. May the Lord bless our efforts.

Tribal Convention

Every year the Gitsan-Carrier Council holds a convention in this area dealing with Indian issues, attempting to come to certain resolutions. These are usually well-attended by Indians of the Gitsan and Carrier tribes, as well as some government representatives and other interested persons. I attended a small part of this 3-day meeting to show interest in their affairs and to learn more about their problems, their way of dealing with them, their way of conducting meetings, etc. At the same time we make ourselves and our work known. Some people know me and will introduce me to others, often striking up a conversation about the work we are doing. That we attend their gatherings is greatly appreciated; it establishes a positive relationship, so essential for the work.

For the same reason I also attended an "Open House" at the local Indian Friendship Centre in December. I knew most of the Indians who were present. A good opportunity to speak about the Lord and His service arose when one of the leaders expressed his dislike for the fact that his wife, involved in some charismatic group, spent all night till dawn in a prayer meeting. A good discussion followed. People have to know us before they will consider coming to our meetings.

Encouraging Support

We are greatly encouraged by the support this project is receiving from the Churches throughout Canada. The treasurer in his report will acknowledge these collections and gifts, but I also want to let you know that it helps me much to know that so many people stand behind this. Thank you very much and may the Lord bless your gifts. Remember us also in your prayers so that we may receive the wisdom needed to set this work up on the right basis with the most effective approach. These first steps are so important since they set the pattern for the future. May the Lord guide us by His Word and Spirit.

C. VAN SPRONSEN

FROM THE SECRETARY

Recently we sent copies of an Agreement of Cooperation to all the supporting Churches. In the replies we have received to date changes have been suggested in some of the articles for clarity and to avoid repetition. When all the supporting Churches have been heard from we will incorporate some of these suggestions and send copies of the revised Agreement to the Churches involved for approval. We appreciate all the comments we have received to date, and are confident that a satisfactory Agreement can be presented before too long.

R. KLAVER

NEW ADDRESS

Home Mission Board
Can. Ref. Church
Box 3868
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

* * * * *

FROM THE TREASURER

Financial Report — January 1983

The Home Mission Board started off with \$2,403.24, which amount came from the books of the Can. Ref. Church of Smithers. Our books started on October 15, 1982.

Our balance on Oct. 19 was \$ 2,403.24

We received on requisitions from:

Abbotsford	\$3,038.97
Cloverdale	\$1,134.75
Edmonton (Imman.)	\$ 631.19
Houston	\$ 824.50
Smithers	\$1,887.00
Chilliwack	\$ 541.88
Coaldale	\$1,459.88
Edmonton (Prov.)	\$1,096.50
Surrey	\$1,377.00
Okanagan Valley	\$ 165.00
Total:	\$12,156.67

Collections:

Barrhead	\$ 53.00
Chatham	\$ 144.90
Grand Rapids	\$ 233.15
Smithers (spec. coll.)	\$ 422.47
Toronto	\$ 789.90
Carman	\$ 867.53
Fergus	\$ 278.00
Langley	\$1,400.38
Surrey (Deacons)	\$ 650.00
Watford	\$ 80.93
Total	\$4,920.26

Gifts

From a family in Edmonton	\$ 500.00
From a family in Surrey ...	\$ 20.00

From a family in Smithers .	\$ 75.00
"Bloeiende Amandel Boom"	
Smithers	\$ 50.00
From a family in Surrey ...	\$ 50.00
From a family in Telkwa ...	\$ 200.00
From a business in Smithers	\$ 500.00
Total:	\$1,395.00

Total received from Requisitions	\$12,156.67
Total received from Collections	\$ 4,920.26
Total received from Gifts	\$ 1,395.00
	\$20,875.17

Total Expenditures, thus far, amount to:	\$ 8,510.97
Balance	\$12,364.20

The Home Mission Board has acquired a house for \$100,000. It is a very nice home and is in a good location for the home missionary's work. A large double garage has been converted into a large, comfortable study.

To finance the house, we have a mortgage with the vendor for 15 years, for \$70,000 at 13.5%, renewable in 5 years. The board has the right to prepay the mortgage in part or full at any time, without penalty. The down payment of \$30,000 was borrowed from the Canadian Reformed Church of Smithers. Currently we are paying interest only on this amount, at the rate of 1% over Bonus Saving. Monthly payments are \$1,125.00.

Although the board at first looked into the possibility of renting a house, nothing suitable could be found, and we therefore decided on the purchase of a house.

Thus far the money is coming in very regularly, and we are very grateful that the Churches, and many donors, have responded so liberally. For this we may especially thank our God and Father!

For the Home Mission Board,
D. BANDSTRA, Treasurer

Please make all cheques payable to:
Home Mission Board
Can. Ref. Church, Smithers
Box 3868, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

OUR COVER

Interior of the Canadian Reformed Church at Toronto.



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.

TEL-AVIV

An Israeli archeologist has found the earliest inscription of the name of God which has ever been discovered in Jerusalem. It is in the text of a silver prayer-scroll from the seventh century B.C.

Gabriel Barkay, who is connected with the University of Tel Aviv, discovered the document which consists of almost pure silver three years ago in a grave near the Church of St. Andrew. Only last week they succeeded in unrolling the scroll with the help of a special technique. According to Barkay, it was the first time in 150 years that the Hebrew word for God, Jahwe, was found with excavations in Jerusalem. In the rabbinical history the tradition has grown to forbid the use of that Name.

Barkay kept his find secret for such a long time because he was afraid that extreme orthodox Jews would succeed in having the excavations stopped on the ground of the argument that ancient Jewish graves would be violated. The excavations also yielded the largest quantity of ornaments which have ever been found in Jerusalem since excavations were started. (ND)

* * *

NAIROBI (EPD)

The number of independent Christian communities in Africa has increased from 200 in 1900 A.D. to 7320 in 1970 and 8260 in 1980. These figures have been provided by the *World Christian Encyclopedia* appearing in Oxford, England and published by the Rev. David Barrett, at a meeting of African Bible Societies in Nairobi.

Barrett counts that the growth will result in a number of 8770 inde-

pendent denominations by the year 1985. With a view to the fast growth of Christianity in Africa he spoke of a "confusing chaos of communities of faith." Of the approximately 500 million inhabitants of Africa some 210 million are considered to be Christians.

According to Barrett's calculations, the number of Christians in Africa grows annually with more than 6 million, of whom approximately 1.6 million come over from other religions.

Apart from the churches dating from colonial times and having bonds with the Western Churches, there are now 6950 other denominations with almost 30 million members. Around 40 per cent of the African population has not yet come into contact with Christianity. The Bible has been translated into only 104 of the 2100 African languages. (ND)

* * *

BAPTISTS in Yugoslavia have targeted the 100,000 Turkish Muslims in their country for evangelism. Their publishing house in Novi Sad is producing New Testaments and other literature for this purpose. Protestants themselves number only 150,000 in a population of 22.5 million. (CT)

* * *

ON JANUARY 1, the legal drinking age in New Jersey went from 18 to 21. State Assemblyman Martin Herman argued that drunk driving among the 18-to-21-year-old age group "rose astronomically" after the age was lowered to 18 in 1973. Herman said he was convinced that raising the drinking age would save 40 lives annually and reduce juvenile crime in the state. In 1982 New York and Connecticut raised the legal drinking age from 18 to 19. (CT)

* * *

SIXTY-SIX PERSONS who were forcibly removed from Faith Baptist Church in Louisville, Nebraska, in October have filed a \$66 million lawsuit against Nebraska state and local officials. The plaintiffs, 30 pastors and 36 laymen, allege that their constitutional rights of free religion, assembly, speech, and association were abridged in the incident. Twenty-one of the plaintiffs are from Nebraska. The rest are among several hundred persons who had come to Louisville to support Everett Sileven, pastor of Faith Baptist Church, where the incident

occurred. The church housed a religious school, which operated in violation of Nebraska law because its teachers were uncertified. (CT)

* * *

CHICAGO (UPI)

Boxing is so harmful to the human brain that it should not be sanctioned by any civilized society, a group of doctors says.

"Boxing is the only sport in which the intent is to inflict physical injury," Dr. Ronald J. Ross said in the current Journal of the American Medical Association. "Our data show that boxers with even a moderate number of bouts may suffer cerebral atrophy."

The AMA has issued a resolution noting brain damage — dementia, memory loss, slurred speech, tremor and abnormal gait — is seen in perhaps 15 percent of professional boxers. Symptoms may become progressively worse after a career is over.

Ross and colleagues examined 40 ex-boxers to determine the effects of boxing. They found that these fighters developed abnormal brain-wave patterns and degeneration of the brain. (CN)

* * *

NEW YORK (RNS)

Victories for freedom were more evident than defeats in 1982, with most promising changes in Latin America, according to the annual survey of Freedom House.

The non-partisan organization, which monitors political and civil rights in countries around the world, asserted that the percentage of people living in partly free and not-free areas has declined, but the growth in population has slightly increased the number of people living in such areas. (CN)

* * *

MINNEAPOLIS (RNS)

Pressures in the church encourage workaholicism among the clergy, but pastors who succumb to them become poor role models for their parishioners, says a counsellor of clergy.

Lay persons are looking to their clergy for leadership about how to live balanced and whole lives instead of being strung out on stress, according to Dr. Charles L. Rassieur, author of "Stress Management for Ministers."

He said the pastor who responsibly cares for himself and manages stress can have a profound impact for health and wholeness upon the insti-

tutional life of the church and the individual lives of parishioners. That means, he told the Minneapolis Ministerial Association, that the pastor should sometimes pull out his calendar book and tell his parishioners, "No, I cannot meet on Thursday, because I have a commitment to my family," or "No, I cannot take on another assignment because my family commitments need more attention." (CN).

* * *

MINNEAPOLIS (RNS)

How to maintain the momentum of improved Lutheran-Roman Catholic relationships was a big topic when Pope John Paul II received an American Lutheran leader recently in a private audience.

Presiding Bishop David W. Preus of the American Lutheran Church said the pope showed considerable interest in finding ways to do this. Dr. Preus said he suggested that local Catholic and Lutheran Churches be encouraged to have annual celebrations — a service of the Word — to show they are members of the same Christian family, although there are still substantial differences between them. (CN)

* * *

THE LEGALITY OF A STAMP commemorating the five-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther is being contested. Americans United for Separation of Church and State and another church and state separation group have urged Postmaster General William F. Bolger not to issue it. W. Melvin Adams, executive director of Americans United, conceded that Luther had an important impact on secular history, but warned that issuing the stamp might imply U.S. government approval of Luther's anti-Semitism. (CT)

* * *

A UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON sociologist has asserted that religious cults and sects will be strongest where traditional religion is weakest. Rodney Stark cites the high cult activity on the West Coast and the low church membership there. People who have no preference, as opposed to those who have a commitment to some kind of religion, are the most likely to believe in astrology, transcendental meditation, or spiritualism (communicating with the dead), according to Stark. (CT)

VO

PARALIPOMENA

SIMPLICITY PLEASE . . .

Bombast

I hasten to state: I still read some Dutch papers, church papers. That's where I sometimes find bombast. Even in so-called "meditations." In the heading a text or part of a Bible verse, very simple, very clear. But this is then turned and kneaded and rolled and thrown around so that in the end you can hardly find it anymore under a layer of theological, dogmatic, or should I say "ecclesiastical" (?) jargon. It all sounds very important and high and mighty, but I doubt whether Paul or John or . . . the Lord Himself would recognize His own word. And this is, alas, not the exception.

Mark of the Truth

Simplicity is the mark of the Truth. That's why He who called Himself not only the Way and the Life, but also the Truth, was so simple in His presentation of the treasures of the kingdom that a child could understand Him.

Do they understand the *dominee*? Some preachers, I'm told, have the (in my ears crazy) custom of addressing the congregation as "brothers and sisters, boys and girls." I first thought that he meant: you big people are just boys and girls to me. But no, he meant to cut the congregation into two parts, with a wide generation gap in between. You won't find that in the Bible. And then, now and then, the pulpiter descends from the high level of his sermonizing to those boys and girls with a special word-for-the-young. Does any preacher think that young people like that? Ask them!

From Difficult to Simple

Long ago, also in Holland, I was in a company where some ministers were "under discussion" (stress or "under"). You know, this a beloved pastime among the sons of men. One complaint was: "His [the local pastor's] sermons are so difficult." A professor happened to

be in that company. I will not easily forget his comment. First he gave the critic something to chew on. But then he added: "If a sermon is difficult, it is unripe; the minister did not take enough time for preparation. He has to proceed from difficult to simple. It is difficult to be simple!"

That brings another story (from real life!) to my mind. A great professor was to preach in a small village where they had never had a professor in the pulpit before. Expectations were high: a professorial sermon! But ah, the disappointment; it was all so simple that a child could follow him. After the service one elder could not hide his disappointment. He blurted out: "We had expected a professorial sermon, and now it was all so simple." The professor's answer (of course): "Then the Lord has heard my prayer, brother."

But . . . "beloved brother Paul"?

In II Peter 3:15 and 16 Peter writes about his colleague Paul, and says that Paul wrote some things "hard to understand." So, then! Who talks about "always being simple"? To be honest (although I probably may not say that), I wish Paul would have been a bit clearer in Romans 9-11 about the future of the Jews. But I don't think that anyone can hide behind these words of Peter, because who have problems with Paul? "The unstable and ignorant, who twist his words to their own destruction." Draw your own conclusion.

I return to the Saviour who once said to His Father, "I thank Thee, Father . . . that Thou has hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was Thy gracious will!" (Matt. 11:25 and 26). Indeed, a special kind of simplicity, the Biblical kind. "Lord, save us from the bombast and give us lots of simplicity!"

CHRONICLER

Reformed Evangelism Taskforce

At a meeting of the Home Mission Committees of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the Fraser Valley, held on Monday, January 10, 1983, in Cloverdale, BC, the *Reformed Evangelism Taskforce* was officially launched.

For some time already the question has been asked as to what more we can do to bring the Gospel to those who live around us. Our present activities include: neighbourhood canvassing, Vacation Bible School and Sunday School, visitation at hospitals, old age homes, prisons and other places. There is also the work of *The Voice of the Church*, which belongs under the heading of evangelistic activities, although it has its own organizational structure.

Now, while the above list of undertakings may present quite a dynamic picture, the consensus at our meeting was that we have only touched the tip of the iceberg as far as outreach is concerned and that some of the things that we do we could do much more effectively.

In response to this a proposal was made first to one of the Home Mission committees in the Fraser Valley, that of Cloverdale, and thereafter to all of the committees in the Valley. The reactions were favourable and all four committees decided to place their shoulders behind the Taskforce.

What was the nature of that proposal and what is this Taskforce all about? To begin with, it will busy itself with the following efforts:

- a) the publication of an evangelistic *MAGAZINE* to be produced six times a year initially. The aim is that this magazine will be distributed by local church members to people living near the church building, in their neighbourhoods, to hospitals, and other public places. Each local church, through its Home Mission committee or otherwise, will have to decide on the most effective means of distribution. A space will be provided in the magazine for each church to stamp on its name and address.
- b) the publication of an evangelistic *BIBLE COURSE*. The Taskforce has received permission from the Federation of Evangelism Committees of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands to translate, revise, and publish the Bible Course that was recently used there. It was the centerpiece of a national advertising campaign in evangelism and attracted over 5000 respondents. Once this Course has been prepared for publication the intention is to advertise it in the evangelistic magazine, over the airwaves by means of *The Voice of the Church*, in local newspapers, and perhaps in a more national medium like *The Globe and Mail*, *Maclean's*, or *Time*. International distribution is also being considered.
- c) the publication of *BROCHURES* and *TRACTS*. At the present time there are a great many tracts being published by all kinds of organizations. These will be evaluated as to content and format. Suitable material will be promoted and, if need be, translated. In those areas where obvious gaps exist, new material will be written. Among the more urgent present needs is a tract that gives due attention to the doctrine and history of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- d) the publication of an evangelism *TRAINING MANUAL*. There is a need not only to produce material for external use, but also to develop a course or training manual on evangelism for internal use. This course will lay a solid Biblical basis for outreach. It will survey the history of the church and the confessions of the church showing how they contribute to a sound understanding of Reformed evangelism. It will deal with the cults of today. It will give practical advice on the nature and content of evangelism dialogue. In short, it will "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:12) and for bearing testimony to the Name of their Lord and Saviour.

Needless to say, this is quite a project. It will require much prayer, a great deal of work, many volunteers, and some financial backing. For the moment the last three will be largely taken care of locally, but as regards the first, we earnestly request your support. Without the Lord's blessing whatever we do will be so much froth and emptiness.

For your information the following executive has been appointed to head the Taskforce:

Chairman
Rev. J. Visscher (Cloverdale)

Vice-chairman
Mr. D. Moes (Langley)

Secretary
Miss T. VanderVeen (Abbotsford)

Treasurer
Mr. G. Vane (Maranatha-Surrey)

As coordinators of the various sub-committees we have at present:

for the magazine
Mr. D. Moes (doctorandus in theology — Kampen)

for the course
Mr. P. Schon (doctorandus in English — Amsterdam)

for the manual
Mr. A. Nap (former mission worker — Brazil)

for the printing
Mr. T. VanHengel (former staff member — Nederlands Dagblad, Amersfoort)

I trust that the above gives you a good introductory picture of the work of the Taskforce. Should you have any questions at all, please write us. If you have no questions as such, we would still be interested in your comments.

For the Taskforce,
JAMES VISSCHER,
chairman
P.O. Box 1008, Station A
Surrey, BC
Canada V3S 4P5

PATRIMONY PROFILE 8

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

Vijgeboom was a man who had not received much formal education, who could not write well, nor could put his thoughts into writing in a satisfactory manner; but he could speak well, knew how to test the spirits, and was well-acquainted with the writings of the old "fathers" whose books with sermons and edifying treatises were held in high honour by many. His "sermons" were well-liked by the people, and under his guidance a secession took place in Axel. They called themselves "The Restored Church of Christ," and so many people came to listen to Vijgeboom — even though only a limited number joined him — that at the beginning of the year the Reformed Church in Axel did not have a large enough number of suitable persons left to fill the three vacancies for the office of elder; only one vacancy could be filled.

The church which Vijgeboom established did not flourish. Some returned to the Reformed Church, and several members later joined the seceded Church. Vijgeboom himself tried in later years to become a minister in the seceded Church in Bunschoten, but he did not succeed.

During the years of its existence Vijgeboom's church had its share of persecution and fines. And the manner in which requests that their debts be forgiven and their fines be cancelled were dealt with, gives us a clear picture of the line of thinking of the officials and of the derogatory manner in which they tried to brush aside the whole desire and endeavour of many of God's children to keep the Church pure or to bring it back to obedience to her Lord and King.

In a letter to the Minister of Justice d.d. October 16, 1823, the attorney-general at the High Court of The Hague informed the Minister that upon a question of the Governor of the Province of Zeeland how meetings of Vijgeboom and his people could be prevented even if no more than twenty persons, assembled, he had to state that in his opinion as long as the matters dealt with were not in themselves illegal or subject to prosecution, nothing could be done to prevent or forbid such meetings. However, "it is easy to foresee — in my opinion — that the services of Vijgeboom, if they consist of only nineteen persons besides himself, will peter out of themselves," he wrote.

And if we read some further information regarding the people who signed the request that their fines be forgiven them which the Director General for the Affairs of the Netherlands Reformed Church provides in an appendix to a report of the Minister of Public Worship to the King, d.d. March 20, 1824, we have to think of what the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "We have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the offscouring of all things," I Cor. 4:13.

Here follow a few samples of the qualifications given to the brothers and sisters in Axel. They have been taken from official documents.

"A. and his wife B. are people without wealth; the man is a stubborn and inflexible person and more than once had forbidden relations with other women; his wife is an insignificant being that blindly follows her husband.

"C., a grocer, and his wife D. could figure on having approximately Fl. 10,000 when her father passed away but through mismanagement he has nothing left; his wife is a person who distinguishes herself only by the neglect of her duties as a wife and mother.

"E., a tailor, is an insignificant and conceited person. F., a deliveryman, and his wife G., H., miller, and his wife I., are dumb and rude people, without money. J. has his own bakery, is rude and conceited; he is generally suspected of having had too intimate relations with the wife of his brother at some time in the past."

Thus far the "information."

"Not many powerful, not many were of noble birth, but God chose what is foolish in the world."

"The offscouring of all things."

Hermann Friedrich Kohlbrügge

Before we proceed to the Secession of 1834, we should pay attention to one more person. That person is Hermann Friedrich Kohlbrügge. He was born on August 15, 1803, in Amsterdam. His mother belonged to the Reformed Church and that's where young Hermann was baptized. His father was a non-communicant member of the Restored Evangelical Lutheran Church at the Kloveniersburgwal in Amsterdam.

Young Kohlbrügge was brought up a Lutheran, studied theology, and passed his proponent examination in the Lutheran Church in 1826. Appointed assistant-minister in the Amsterdam Lutheran Church, he right away impressed the people by his preaching. Not only Lutherans, but also Reformed people, came to listen to him, for he preached what was almost totally absent in contemporary sermons: justification through faith alone, the gospel of sovereign grace.

The work in Amsterdam was broken off soon. On a Sunday in May 1827, Kohlbrügge attended a service conducted by the Amsterdam minister Rev. R. Uckerman, and he was shocked by the Arminian thoughts in the minister's sermon on John 16:5-15. Conversion, Rev. Uckerman said, consists herein, "that with the reading of God's Word we are filled with noble thoughts and good intentions, and thus through the development of our mind come to better insight." Justification through faith, reconciliation by Christ, and other basic truths of the Christian faith were totally missing. In consultation with one of Uckerman's colleagues, Kohlbrügge lodged a complaint with the consistory, but as is so often the case in the history of the Church, the end result was that in July of the same year Kohlbrügge was deposed as proponent in the Lutheran Church. The minister who deviated from the truth remained in office unhindered.

Although the majority of the Congregation was on his side, Kohlbrügge acquiesced in the deposition. His friends of the Reveil, after some consultation, advised him against secession, and he himself was of the opinion that the fact that he was only a proponent and not an ordained minister was decisive for his course of action. On May 3, 1834, he wrote in a letter to Hendrik de Cock, "Had I been a minister, that is, had I received the imposition of hands just like you, I would have continued in my ministry Non-suspended you *were* the minister of the congregation of Ulrum; suspended you are the minister of the congregation at Ulrum and of all congregations that wish to hear you. I do not say that you therefore would also do it that way, but *I* would do it if I had been a minister of the Reformed congregation and had been suspended."

It is always difficult to say what *would* have happened if conditions had been different, and thus it is equally difficult to predict the course of events if Kohlbrügge had been an ordained minister. Judging by the course which he did follow, we have our doubts. Initially he was very favourably inclined towards de Cock and his striving, but his attitude changed when de Cock seceded from the Netherlands Reformed Church and was therein followed by many others.

Upon his deposition Kohlbrügge went to Utrecht to continue his studies. He received his Doctor of Theology degree in 1829 with a thesis on Psalm 45. In the course of his studies he became more and more convinced of the excellency of the Reformed doctrine and confession over and above the Lutheran doctrine and confession, and for that reason he decided to apply for membership in the Reformed Church at Amsterdam. For almost three years he was kept waiting, and finally, in August 1832, his request was denied. Allegedly the reason for the denial was that he could not show an attestation from the Lutheran consis-

tory, but the real reason was well-known; it was expressed very clearly and succinctly by the President of the Provincial Church Board of North Holland in a discussion with Kohlbrügge: "Sir, we must have rest in our Church, rest we must have."

In March 1833, he published all the correspondence exchanged between him and the ecclesiastical authorities under the title *Membership in the Reformed Church in this Country Arbitrarily Denied to Me*. That book raised a storm. On the one hand, the enmity grew; on the other hand, it brought him new friends. The main figures of the Reveil, however, did not help him in any way: they were too indecisive.

Kohlbrügge went to Elberfeld in Germany, returned to Utrecht, and in 1847 became minister of a Reformed congregation in Elberfeld. He visited The Netherlands regularly. Once, on one of his visits to Vianen, the Reformed minister there asked him to conduct a service for him. People came from far and near, and the collection which usually amounted to approximately one guilder this time yielded the princely sum of six hundred guilders.

Although the ecclesiastical boards discussed Kohlbrügge's preaching in a Reformed Church, no action was taken, and the result was that from then on he conducted services in several places. He was especially happy when he was permitted to preach in the Cathedral Church in Utrecht.

Towards the end of his life Kohlbrügge was permitted, for the first time after his deposition as a proponent, to preach in Amsterdam. It was Dr. A. Kuyper who yielded the pulpit to him on November 12, 1871. The service was held in the church building on the Kloveniersburgwal, right across from the Restored Lutheran Church from which Kohlbrügge had been expelled some forty-five years earlier

On March 5, 1875, he completed his earthly journey.

Kohlbrügge's sermons were widely distributed and used, not only for personal use but also for reading services. My maternal grandfather for many years was an elder in a Netherlands Reformed Congregation. During the Depression, he had to sell his business and to rent a house that belonged to the Diaconate; he never again was nominated for the office. Apparently he then no longer belonged to those members of whom the Regulation of 1816 says that, in order to be eligible for the office of elder, persons are to be "irreproachable in their confession and morals, known supporters of the public religion, and no opponents of the existing ecclesiastical ordinances . . . belonging, as much as possible, to the most prominent members of the congregation." I recall that, whenever he had to read a sermon in a service, he invariably chose one written by Kohlbrügge.

(To be continued).

A Ray of Sunshine



"But who am I . . . ? For all things come from Thee . . ."

I Chronicles 29:14

The Bible is not a book which gives an answer to every question or problem; we should not use it as such. In the Book of Psalms we read that it gives counsel and works as a light upon our path. It gives direction and is a pathway to life. If we are well-versed in God's Word, we will experience that it will guard us; it will keep us from wandering away from its truth, and it will prevent us from sinning against the Lord. It will give us delight, much more than many riches. It will make our minds meditate on God's blessings and will fix our eyes on His ways. We will live and observe the goodness of the Lord and we will be strong in spirit. It will give us confidence. The author of Psalm 119 said, "Even though princes sit plotting against me, Thy servant will meditate on Thy statutes. Thy testimonies are my delight, they are my counselors."

God's Word will provide us with a trust unknown to unbelievers. We are not supposed to use it for exemplary teaching, but we may draw valuable lessons from people's attitudes. One attitude of which we can learn is that of David. I am not referring to the bad examples he gave, but to the ones in which he was ruled by the Spirit, the Word of God. We must realize, of course, that our attitudes are often sinful, as was David's but when we read II Samuel 16 we learn how David reacted to a very trying situation. David and the people had to flee for their lives when Absalom, who "stole the hearts of the men," proclaimed himself to be king. On the road to the Jordan River, David was harassed by Shimei, who cursed David with the following words: "Begone, begone, you man of blood, you worthless fellow! The LORD has avenged upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your ruin is on you; for you are a man of blood."

Imagine how deeply this must have hurt David. Had not the LORD been with him from the beginning? It was by David's hand that God delivered Israel from all their enemies.

How did David react to this assault? What was his attitude? The words of advice given by Zeruah, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head," were shrugged aside. David had nothing to do with people — his concern was God's Word. His answer, therefore, was, "If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'" If David's own son sought his life, how much more reason would Shimei have? He told them once more to leave Shimei alone, and let him curse, "for the LORD has bidden him." "So David and his men went on the road, while Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, and threw stones on him and flung dust." David allowed Shimei to follow him.

In II Samuel 19, we again read how David showed mercy to Shimei, when others advised him to execute him, "because he cursed the LORD's anointed." But, David was ruled by a higher authority.

Later we read how David grieved for his son Absalom. And, at the end of his reign, we notice that David, through the knowledge of God, and consequently through the knowledge of his own unworthiness, can humbly advise his son Solomon: "Be strong and of good courage. Do not fear or be dismayed; for the LORD God will be with you and will not fail you or forsake you." David gave God the glory for everything. The words, "But who am I?" reveal to us a very humble attitude; they show us a contrite spirit. They also show us that David's strength was in the awareness of God's help, which he knew was available for the upright in heart. This strength is still available for all upright people who are aware that God knows the intentions and purposes of the heart.

David gave us an example by his deeds — actions and reactions. Paul in his letter to the Galatians used the spoken word to teach us how to live. We are to live by the Spirit, to react according to what the Spirit has taught us. "But let each one test his own work . . ."

David twice answered the men who advised him, "What have I to do with you?" (II Samuel 16:10 and 19:22). He did not want to be led by the "flesh." He was aware of his greater responsibility: to live according to the Spirit.

O LORD, in truth enshrined,
Test Thou my heart and mind,
Prove all my ways, examine me.
Let me not fall and perish,
Thy steadfast love I cherish,
I walk in faithfulness to Thee.

Psalm 26
A Psalm of David

For several years Mrs. Ruiter was able to enjoy the many best wishes and greetings she received for her birthday. This year, the Lord in His wisdom took Mrs. Ruiter away from us after a brief illness, ten days before her 65th birthday. I have been requested by her family to sincerely thank you, brothers and sisters, for the many joyful moments you have given her in the past years. It was greatly appreciated!

We have received the following note:

"By way of 'A Ray of Sunshine,' could you thank everyone who sent cards to my sister Liz Koning? She does appreciate it very much. The cards are saved in an album and shown to her many times.

Presently Liz is able to spend one weekend a month at home. She needs much extra care and attention but is so happy and thankful for (in our eyes) "little pleasures," that we all really see her as a special blessing."

MRS. PAULINE DE HAAS
R.R. 1
St. Albert, AB

Thank you very much, brothers and sisters!

A thought to ponder:

When snow is deep and toes are numb,
When aches and pains make faces glum,
It's odd to think you've only got
Four months to wait to feel too hot!

Send your requests to:

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

news medley

The previous issue of *Clarion* came just in time for this medley, for from it I learned that brother and sister J. Buikema of Burlington will have been married for half a century on March 3rd. This also gives us time to be on time with our congratulations which we hereby offer from the heart. Seeing one's children's children is already a great blessing; they are also allowed to see the children of their children's children: four of them. When the text which is printed in the advertisement was the text used at their wedding, they certainly have experienced that those who do expect all their help from the Lord will never be put to shame. May they experience this further as well. Have a good and pleasant day, a day of happiness and thanksgiving.

From the Burlington South bulletin I learned that one month earlier, that is on February 3rd, brother and sister N. Torenvliet were married for forty years. To them as well we extend our heartfelt congratulations, even though it is almost a month after the fact. This does not take away any of the nature of our wishes or of the well-meant contents of them. We wish them many more years in good health. We may do so, I am convinced, for a long life is a blessing which has been promised to those who walk in the ways of the Lord.

I mentioned here the bulletin of Burlington South. Not much news is to be reported about this new Congregation. Things are still in the stage of organizing, and seem to be taking shape without a hitch. I still deplore it that now I have to go through three bulletins from Burlington, and that now I can read three times that the Fellowship of Reformed Students will have a retreat, and that I have to read three times messages meant for the Burlington people in the same area how beautiful and pleasant the Ebenezer Villa is. I am still wondering whether it is really impossible to combine forces and to issue one bulletin for all three Churches in Burlington. Now I read three times that the course which the Rev. Van-Dooren gave was well attended and that it is not for the younger or for the older people only. How much time and effort could be saved if there were one bulletin; then those messages would have to be typed only once. This apart from the cost of paper and ink. We could work much more economically. Having a combined bulletin also prevents alienation and promotes the bond between the brothers and sisters who until recently or until some years ago met regularly on Sundays and at society meetings.

These thoughts are also given to other places for their serious consideration. I know that I said it before, but when I go through the various bulletins I think, "How much could we save and how much easier could we make it for ourselves and for one another!"

Let us make a big jump and go "out West." No, not all the way, for there is nothing to be reported from beyond the Rockies; at least I have not received any bulletin or *Church News* which brought me the news. Thus we remain in Alberta.

First about Calgary.

Remember what we quoted the other time about a whopping 66% rent increase faced by the Church there?

"It appears that a Danish Church can be rented for \$400 a month with the same kind of facilities as we have now. It is decided that the committee will contact the United Church as well. When the rent for the United Church can be brought down to \$400 a month, we will rather stay in the present building."

I can well understand the decision of the Consistory, for they are used to this place now and it will cause possible visitors problems if they move to another building, perhaps in another part of Calgary. It may be wisest to stay where they are if their conditions can be met by the United Church. My personal inclination would be to leave anyway, even if they should match the other offer; however, this may be my stubbornness and, perhaps, a wee little remnant of the old nature.

Rev. D. DeJong mentions that he "received the bulletin of the First Christian Reformed Church of Lethbridge. Its consistory decided to approach the 1983 Synod asking 'that we discontinue pulpit and table fellowship with the Gereformeerde Kerken.' (The Synodical Reformed Churches in the Netherlands). This overture will be first sent to classis, asking classis to adopt it and send it further."

It is a step into the good direction and something may come of it. We should not say right away, "O well, it won't help anyway." Yet we realize at the same time that this is only one point; there are many more points at which similar action to remedy a situation has to be taken. May action follow there as well.

Going down south, we quote from the Home Mission report made to the Coaldale Consistory.

"Third is the newest project. We are looking into the possibility of visiting the inmates at the local jail as well as babysitting the children of the visitors."

What is new here is not so much the projected or suggested visits, but the babysitting part. As we could read from *Reformed Perspective*, contacts with prisoners are not new to our people here and there. I do pass on, however, especially this new idea of babysitting the children of those who go and visit inmates at a jail. Perhaps other Congregations could benefit from it as well.

Yes, and then we have to return to Ontario for further news. Some of it is rather old already, but still new for our readers in other places.

The Brampton Consistory decided that the names of "persons to be remembered in prayer should be announced with particulars before the actual prayer. Consistory will try to remember to ask the ministers to do so."

I don't think that the Consistory will have many problems in remembering, for when you — unfortunately — don't have your own minister, a guest minister will always have to be told when there is something special that should be remembered. It goes without further saying that I wholeheartedly agree with the decision made.

Here and there contact is being had with other groups or Churches. One of the places where such contact takes place is Toronto, although it is not confined to Toronto. Officially, however, I know only of contacts which the Toronto Consistory had and has within the limits of their huge metropolitan area.

"Reports were received on the meetings with the (Korean) Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church. Contact will be maintained with both groups."

In a later bulletin we read the following.

"A letter was received from the (Korean) Reformed Presbyterian Church expressing appreciation for our will-

ingness to assist them and stating some comments on the discussion held in November. They intend for the time being to remain an independent Church in order to have a stronger appeal to the Korean Christians in Toronto."

I do not know whether there are any bonds between this Korean Reformed Presbyterian Church in Toronto and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Perhaps there are bonds, perhaps all they have in common is the name.

Reading "Reformed Presbyterian Church" I looked at two records which I have standing here in my study. The title is "Scottish Metrical Psalms" and these Psalms are sung by an Irish choir. A brother in the Congregation here bought them at a garage sale, and asked whether I would like to hear them. I did listen to them, but the result was that I became even more grateful for the sturdy and richly-varied Genevan tunes which we are enjoying all the time. It is not only the meter (which is mostly the same); there are also the tunes which, in my opinion, show rather little variety. There were only a few which I found beautiful. One is the well-known Psalm 23: "The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want, He makes me down to lie . . ." As for the rest, I would rather not exchange our Genevan tunes for them. Even though the children are all out of the house, we continue together our singing after the evening meal, using the new rhyming of the Psalms. There are some tunes which are unfamiliar, but when we have sung them a few times, we begin to love them. There is only one tune in which we cannot discover a line. That is the tune of Psalm 120. However, perhaps this will come as well as we continue our practice.

We conclude our trip this time in London.

The London Consistory decided "The deacons will continue to meet with the elders as consistory. A proposal that the deacons begin to meet separately was not supported."

Quite a while ago I made some remarks about the demand made on one of our Consistories, that they should "start maintaining the Church Order," and this could be done apparently only by splitting up the Consistory and starting to meet separately.

I would rather go along with London. As I remarked that time, we always meet together in Fergus, although the deacons do meet once in a while for the more specifically "technical" aspects of their work.

When we discussed the report on the revision of the Church Order, we also spent some time on the articles dealing with the Consistory. Our conclusion was that it would be best to provide that the Minister of the Word, the Elders and the Deacons together form the Consistory of the Church. In any case, we felt, it would be best to drop the words "Where the number of elders is small" the Deacons may be taken to the Consistory.

It certainly is not my intention to make an article out of these remarks, but the item from London's Consistory gives me the opportunity to say a few things about this point.

Gradually I have come more and more to the conclusion that what we find in Acts 6 is not a description of the institution of the office of *deacon*, but the institution of the Jerusalem Church as such. If, I said in a discussion, the Seven who were chosen and ordained were deacons in *our* sense of the word, they were not very deacons, for Stephen apparently did not much more than preach. In any case they did not confine themselves to what we understand the office of deacon to comprise. And Philip is travelling here and there — even upon the express command of the Holy Spirit! — to preach the Gospel.



55th Wedding Anniversary



Mr. and Mrs. H. Leffers were married in Lutten, Overijssel on March 8th, 1928. In 1951 they immigrated to Coaldale, Alberta and have resided in this area to this day. Although both over eighty years old they are in reasonably good health. They have eight children, 41 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren all of whom are still alive.



The Seven were, in my opinion, the first Consistory of the Jerusalem Church, taking over the care for this Church from the apostles whose specific mandate it was not to have the oversight over the Church at Jerusalem or any local Church, but to go out and be witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ unto the ends of the earth.

It would be beneficial in this connection also to read the articles of Rev. Pouwelse again in which he published his introduction given at the Office Bearers Conference in the fall of 1981.

It is remarkable that the first Synod of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands which was held in 1571 provided that the Ministers, Elders, and Deacons together form the Consistory of the Church. Thus they spoke in the line of the Belgic Confession which also provides this.

Hereby, I hope, I have given some food for thought.

In any case: even though the fare was lean you won't go hungry till we meet two weeks from now, the Lord willing.

Greetings to all of you.

VO

school X crossing

A. *The Strap, Anyone??*

Public school boards in both the Hamilton and Hamilton/Wentworth areas have decided that hitting students with a strap when they misbehave, is "suitable behaviour" for principals and teachers. The strap will therefore stay.

In a recent article in *The Hamilton Spectator*, this decision was attacked. In an editorial, parents and students were told to say: "No, thank you." According to the article, hitting children is wrong, because according to the new Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof, except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice." That is supposed to indicate that teachers and principals simply do not have the right to strap a child.

The article goes on to say that when a child is hit by a strap, he definitely gives up security, the state of being free from fear, anxiety, danger, doubt or "something that gives or assures safety and tranquility." It therefore is not fundamental justice for school authorities to hit a student inside the school, without the student's having access to a lawyer, an impartial adult friend, a child expert, or a fair hearing before a family court judge. Hitting children in school is also wrong because:

- it suggests that physical violence is a suitable way of conduct;
- It takes away from children the opportunity of being shown an example of more effective and humane ways of handling problems;
- it causes students to feel hopeless and humiliated;
- it's just not plain nice and not very loving.

So much for the editorial. I'm sure that the strands of humanism can easily be recognized by the reader. If a child is put on a pedestal, or if the position of a teacher is seen as being merely the source of information (equal in all ways to the students), then the editorial would make sense. However, in the Christian school a different sense of purpose motivates our actions. I am not suggesting that we therefore have a licence for phys-

ical punishment or even abuse. Perhaps that should be looked at somewhat more closely in some of our schools!!! The Word of God gives us guidelines which define the proper roles of teachers and students. It provides us with the meaning of such key words as *respect* and *discipline*.

We might not have all the answers in this respect, but, thankfully, we do have the proper framework which extends far beyond the boundaries of the Canadian Bill of Rights!

B. *Private School Campaign*

Another item from a local newspaper provided some interesting data. The Ontario Association of Alternative and Independent Schools is gearing up for a three-year campaign, climaxing in the next provincial election. The aim is to get "public money" for private schools. At the moment, five provincial governments in Canada provide direct funding to alternative and independent schools. Others give indirect support in the form of grants for textbooks, audio-visual equipment, or transportation. In Ontario and New Brunswick, the educational tax dollar does not follow the child.

The efforts of the OAAIS are based on the fact that Canada supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that parents "have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children." This choice, in Ontario entails a financial penalty which (to me) is most unfair. If the unique Reformed character of our schools can be maintained, and if the only government requirement is inspection to ensure proper standards and quality education (something that the OAAIS aims for), then the work of this organization is not only to be encouraged, but should also be financially supported!

C. *How Canadians Grade Their Schools*

A poll taken last summer provided some interesting statistics about the Canadian public school system. One of the questions was: "What is the single most important problem facing public schools today?" The answers were as follows:

- lack of discipline 31%
- problems with teachers, difficulty getting good teachers, teachers' lack of interest 17%
- lack of finances 12%
- use of alcohol or drugs 11%
- poor curriculum, poor academic standards 10%
- overcrowding, lack of proper facilities 5%
- lack of interest on the part of parents and pupils 4%
- other 10%

Let's change this question slightly. *What in your opinion, is the single most important problem facing our schools today?* If I receive sufficient response by March 15, a similar survey will be published in "School Crossing." Please give this some thought and mail a reply. I'm not looking for long letters containing a number of grievances — just a few comments will do.

Until the next time, the Lord willing!

NICK VANDOOREN
John Calvin School
607 Dynes Road
Burlington, ON L7N 2V4

Consulaat-Generaal Der Nederlanden CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

10 Kingstreet E,
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1C3
Phone: (416) 364-5443

OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

REILMAN, Andreus Antonius Jan, geboren op 3 december 1918 te Groningen. Laastbekende adres Nederland: Krocht 12 ZW, Haarlem. Naar Canada vertrokken op 24 mei 1955.

SARS, C.B.H., geboren op 7 november 1938.

VERSCHOOR, Pieter, geboren op 30 januari 1918 te Rotterdam. Laastbekende adres: Taandersstraat 135, Rotterdam. Naar Canada vertrokken op 24 april 1958.

De Consul-Generaal,
voor deze:-
Mevr. G. SCHNITZLER
Fgd. KANSELIER

BOOK REVIEW

Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, Crossway Books, Westchester, IL, 1981, 157 pp., US \$5.95. Reviewed by J. De-Jong.

Although he insists that this work grows out of all his former publications, this new book by Francis Schaeffer is in many ways quite different from anything he has done before. While his former books generally moved in the realm of philosophy and the world of ideas, with this book Schaeffer breaks into the world of law, politics, and action. This book also announces the forthcoming publication of his *Complete Works* and is thus obviously intended to be taken as a final, definitive statement of the author's position. In terms of its detail and depth it is a better book than his usual, particularly better than his last book, *How Should We Then Live*, which for all its good points, faltered on the first page by not accurately reproducing the sense of the Bible passage quoted in the title.* That type of slip is perhaps characteristic of Schaeffer: he tends to work with ideas and concepts much more than he works with the Bible, and prefers to expose the poverty of humanism rather than the riches of the gospel. That, to a certain extent, is also true of this book.

That Schaeffer wants to make his final statement an imperative rather than either an indicative or an interrogative is clear from the title of the book, apparently chosen in response to the publication of three humanist manifestos since Marx and Engels wrote their Communist Manifesto in 1847. As an expatriate analyzing the developments in his former homeland, Schaeffer states that America is now at the crossroads, and the time is coming to *act*. The original Judeo-Christian foundation of the country has given way to a materialistic concept of reality, and unless effective protest is soon forthcoming, the country will fall into the grips of elitist authoritarianism.

Thus Schaeffer is attempting to define and awaken Christians to what he calls the *bottom line* for both concerted protest and the use of force against the authorities. Listening to Schaeffer justify the duty to disobey the state and practice civil disobedience makes for interesting reading, since it not only shows us a little more of Schaeffer's own background, but also presents us with a Christian defense of the American Revolution — something which Reformed Canadians are not used to hearing. Schaeffer draws his line of the Reformation from John Knox to the Scottish Covenanter Samuel Rutherford, and from him to the more secular John Locke and the authors of the Declaration of Independence. As he puts it, the basic thesis

of both Knox and more especially Rutherford was that if a law is wrong you must disobey it, and any state or office which acts contrary to God's law abrogates its authority. It need no longer be obeyed. And, says Schaeffer, this is the point we are coming to in America today.

While one may raise some objections to the way Schaeffer looks at the American Revolution, he does present an argument worth listening to. The problems of civil disobedience and the limits of authority are simply too complex to rule out all active resistance. For example, one cannot conclude that Knox was a revolutionary because of his occasional fiery outbursts; and the history of the struggle for religious freedom in The Netherlands also has its dark pages. But one would have expected Schaeffer to present a clearer Scriptural argument for his position, for example, by explaining Paul's words in Romans 13:1-7. And one can raise serious questions about the jump from Knox's and Rutherford's day to our own, as if the social and political conditions are just as bad as they were then.

It is this rather remarkable turn in the book that makes one ask, "Where is Schaeffer going with this book?" Is this manifesto a necessary and legitimate call to arms, or is this simply an attempt by Schaeffer to capitalize on the present swing among evangelicals to the concerns of social justice, politics, and the poor? That we all have a duty to speak up is clear, but to call for civil disobedience and the use of force in self-defence seems decidedly remote today — at least in our country.

In this connection it might be worthwhile to note that the Reformed confessions specifically raise the point of civil disobedience with regard to the regular meeting together of God's people in public worship — a point Schaeffer has never been too strong on. In our confession (Belgic Confession, Art. 28, 37), civil disobedience always arises in connection with *obedience* to the yoke of Christ, particularly in His church-gathering work. If this theme had occupied a more important place in Schaeffer's views, perhaps his manifesto would not have had such a mixed and confusing sound. As it is, Schaeffer's final statement falls flat and leaves the Reformed believer without clear guidance. In terms of its historical material, however, this book is quite interesting and worthy of further consideration and study.

*In Ezek. 33:10, the people of Israel are really saying, "How can we live," i.e. they feel further life is hardly possible for them under the weight of punishment and transgression. In their despair they do not see the way, but the LORD shows them the way, v. 11.



Dear Mr. Editor,

When some one in our circle celebrates an anniversary or a birthday, often it is said to him or her: "Now brother, sister, I wish you many, many more years!" When it is a 25 or 30 years anniversary, it sometimes is said: "I wish you another 25 or 30 more years!"

When I read or hear such a wish, I often wonder: "Is this phrasing scriptural?" We certainly wish our brothers and sisters all the best and I for one always will be glad to belong to the wellwishers. But I doubt if the wording above mentioned is correct.

As church of Jesus Christ we always must look forward to the Lord's coming. In the book of Revelation the apostle John writes: 22:7, 12: "And behold, I am coming soon." In verse 17: "The Spirit and the Bride say: "Come." Verse 20: "Surely I am coming soon. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

In all these words the longing and the promise for the coming of our Lord is expressed. And do we not often say, that the footsteps of our coming Lord can be heard in wars and calamities in the world around us? In the light of these Bible words I repeat my question: "Is it scriptural to wish to our brothers and sisters that the coming of the Lord should be postponed for at least another 25 or 30 years?"

Now it would be very rude, when on the wedding day of a young couple, who together look forward to a happy married life, on the reception after the church service, we would say to them: "Well, folks, congratulations with this day, but I hope, that it will not last long, and that your marriage soon will be dissolved!"

I believe that it would be better to say e.g.: "Congratulations with this day, and I hope, that the Lord will give you a happy married life together." I believe that a wish in that vein will be closer to the Scriptures than we often express ourselves.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." Matt. 24:36.

JOHN DE HAAS Sr.,
21753 - 52 Ave,
Langley, B.C.

**Advertise
in
CLARION**

PRESS RELEASE

Classis of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Alberta and Manitoba, held on November 16 and 17, 1982, in Edmonton, Alberta.

Art. 1.

After opening on behalf of the convening Church at Calgary and examination of the credentials, Classis is constituted. Executive Committee:

Rev. D. DeJong — chairman
Rev. J.D. Wielenga — vice-chairman
Rev. S. De Bruin — clerk

Art. 2.

Signing of the Classical Subscription Form by Rev. M. Van Beveren, newly installed minister of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton.

Art. 3 Reports.

1. Committee for Financial aid to Students for the Ministry.

Per capita contribution will have to go to the \$5 - 6 level to cover the increased need. Committee members T. Vandenbrink and S. Tuininga are no longer available for reappointment.

2. Committee for Needy Churches.

A request for support to the amount of \$2150 is granted.

3. Inspection of Classical Archives.

The Immanuel Church at Edmonton reports that the archives are in good order.

Art. 4 Instructions.

The Church at Neerlandia requests pulpit supply, with a restriction to one of the ministers of Classis. This request is declared inadmissible on the ground of Art. 46, C.O.

Art. 5. Closed Session.

- Advice is given in a discipline case.
- A decision is made in a matter of appeal.
- A report on a special church visit is adopted.

Art. 6.

Convening Church for the next Classis, to be held on Tuesday, March 15, 1983: the Church at Carman, Manitoba. Suggested officers:

Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar — chairman
Rev. D. DeJong — vice-chairman
Rev. J.D. Wielenga — clerk

Art. 7. Appointments.

- Classical Treasurer: br. A. Nauta is reappointed.
- For auditing the books of the Classical Treasurer: Edmonton (Providence) Church is reappointed.
- For the care of the Classical Archives: Edmonton (Providence) Church is reappointed.
- For the inspection of the Classical Archives: Edmonton (Immanuel) Church is reappointed.
- Rev. M. Van Beveren is appointed as church visitor, taking the place of Rev. J. Van Rietschoten, who was called to another classical resort. (The present

church visitors are Rev. De Bruin, Rev. DeJong, Rev. Van Beveren, and Rev. Wielenga).

- Committee for Examination (Art. 4, C.O.): Rev. DeJong and Rev. Van Beveren.
- Examiners for Examinations:
Rev. DeJong and
Rev. Van Beveren — for the sermon
Rev. Van Beveren — for Old Testament Exegesis
Rev. De Bruin — for New Testament Exegesis
Rev. Wielenga — for Knowledge Holy Scripture
Rev. DeJong — for Doctrine and Creeds
Rev. Berends — for Church History
Rev. Van Beveren — for Ethics
Rev. Wielenga — for Church Polity
Rev. De Bruin — for Diaconological Subjects
- Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry: br. C. Veldkamp is reappointed. In the place of the brs. T. Vandenbrink and S. Tuininga the brs. A.L. Hamoen and W. Vogelzang are appointed.
- Committee for Aid to Needy Churches: the brs W. Gortemaker and P. Groenwold are reappointed and br. J. Harthoorn is appointed to take the place of br. C. Poppe.
- As deputies for contact with the Governments of Alberta and Manitoba, Rev. DeJong is reappointed for Alberta and Rev. Berends is appointed for Manitoba.

Art. 8.

Classis is closed.

For Classis,
J.D. WIELENGA

PRESS RELEASE

Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College Association Jan. 21, 1983.

The chairman, G. Nordeman, opens the meeting in the usual Christian manner. The minutes of the Dec. 17, 1982, meeting are adopted, and business arising from these is dealt with.

Outgoing correspondence is read. Among the incoming mail is a letter from Mr. A. Witten in which he informs the Board that he accepts his appointment as full-time lecturer as of Sept. 1, 1983.

Again the treasurer has submitted his monthly financial report for the Board's review. We may thankfully conclude that the income comes in steadily and is sufficient to meet the present expenses. Included in the income were two sizable anonymous donations; these are gratefully received.

The principal also presents his report. It appears that enough interest is shown

for the lectures by Prof. Dr. J. Faber and therefore these will commence as scheduled Jan. 28, 1983. Mr. VanderVen further reports that some enquiries for enrollment for the 1983-1984 school year have already been received for both the one-year and the three-year courses.

Remuneration for part-time teachers was again discussed. A formula was developed that appears to be fair for all concerned. This formula takes into consideration the number of lecture hours and the qualifications and experience of the lecturers. This formula is adopted retroactive to Sept. 1, 1982.

On the agenda is the proposal to change Article VI of the Constitution changing the present wording "Enrollment is open to members of Canadian Reformed Churches. Enrollment of others is subject to the approval of the Board of Governors" to "Enrollment is open to members of Canadian Reformed Churches and sister Churches." All governors were polled by registered mail regarding this. The proposal is defeated since the required 2/3 majority is not obtained.

The date for the annual meeting is set for Apr. 9, 1983. A provisional agenda will be sent to all governors. The next meeting of the executive committee is set for Feb. 18, 1983, D.V. The meeting is adjourned and closed in prayer.

On behalf of the Executive Committee,
C.J. NOBELS



CALLED to Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington, ON
REV. D. DEJONG
of Calgary, AB

CALLED to Orangeville, ON
REV. M. WERKMAN
of Lincoln, ON

ADDRESS of the
Canadian Reformed Church
of Burlington South
P.O. Box 433
Burlington ON L7R 3Y3

ADDRESS of the
Providence Canadian Reformed Church
Box 3235, Station D
Edmonton, AB T5L 4J1

ADDRESS CHANGE:

Rev. C. Van Spronsen
1214 Manitoba Street
Box 3868
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Are you looking forward to spring?
And the spring break of course!
We liked the snow, and now we like to watch spring
come back.

Keep your eyes and ears open!
In the meantime here are things for you to do while
you're inside.

Have fun, Busy Beavers.
Keep busy!

* * *

But first let's wish all the Busy Beavers celebrating
their birthday in March, a very happy day and many happy
returns!

May the Lord bless and keep you all in the year
ahead.

And here's hoping too, that you have a wonderful
time celebrating with your family and friends!

March

Lyan Van Ellenberg	March 4	Joanne Doekes	March 15
Yolanda Van Spronsen	4	Debbie Aikema	23
Anne-Marie Jonker	6	Melanie Werkman	23
Gerald Schoon	7	Wayne Breukelman	26
Gwendolyn Werkman	11	Irene Hoeksema	27
Nancy Lodder	14	Gordon Van Woudenberg	28
		Jane Wiegers	31

Here's a good game to play at your birthday party. Or
anytime, really!

Here's how to play it:

Choose a timekeeper. The timekeeper can also play.

Give each player a sheet of notebook paper. Have
each player draw a chart with 25 boxes as shown below.

Tell the players to write the word GAMES above their
chart, one letter to a column.

Decide on five categories such as: food, animals,
cities, jobs, flowers. Players write one category to the left
of each row of boxes.

When the timekeeper says "Go!" each player writes
down the names of things that belong in the categories.
The names go in the boxes. Each name must begin with
the letter that shows at the top of the column.

After ten minutes, the timekeeper calls "Stop!" The
player who has written the most names wins the game.

For variety, change categories or write a different
word across the top. Use the chart below for an ex-
ample.

Games

Bodies of Water	Gulf of St. Lawrence	Atlantic Ocean	Mediterranean Sea	Euphrates River	Sea of Galilee
First Names	Gail Greg	Alice Adam	Mary Mike	Edith Edward	Suzy Sean
Sports and Games	golf	anagrams	maze	eights	sailing
Mammals	giraffe	antelope	monkey	elephant	seal
Countries	Ghana	Australia	Mexico	Egypt	Scotland



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beavers Club *James Teitsma*. We are very happy to have you join us. We hope you will like joining in all our Busy Beaver fun! Do you practise your piano every day, James? Thanks for your letter. Write again soon!

Hello *Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg*. It was nice to hear from you again. Sounds to me as if your family had lots of fun visiting, Mary-Ann. How is school coming? Are you making anything in sewing class? And have you had any snow yet?

QUIZ TIME

Bible Matching Quiz

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. | a. Abraham |
| 2. I am _____ your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. | b. Isaiah |
| 3. I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. | c. Paul |
| 4. I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. | d. Moses |
| 5. I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me? | e. Solomon |
| 6. I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus | f. Jeremiah |
| 7. I am a man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. | g. Joseph |
| 8. I am . . . of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink . . . | h. Job |
| 9. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan. | i. Hannah |