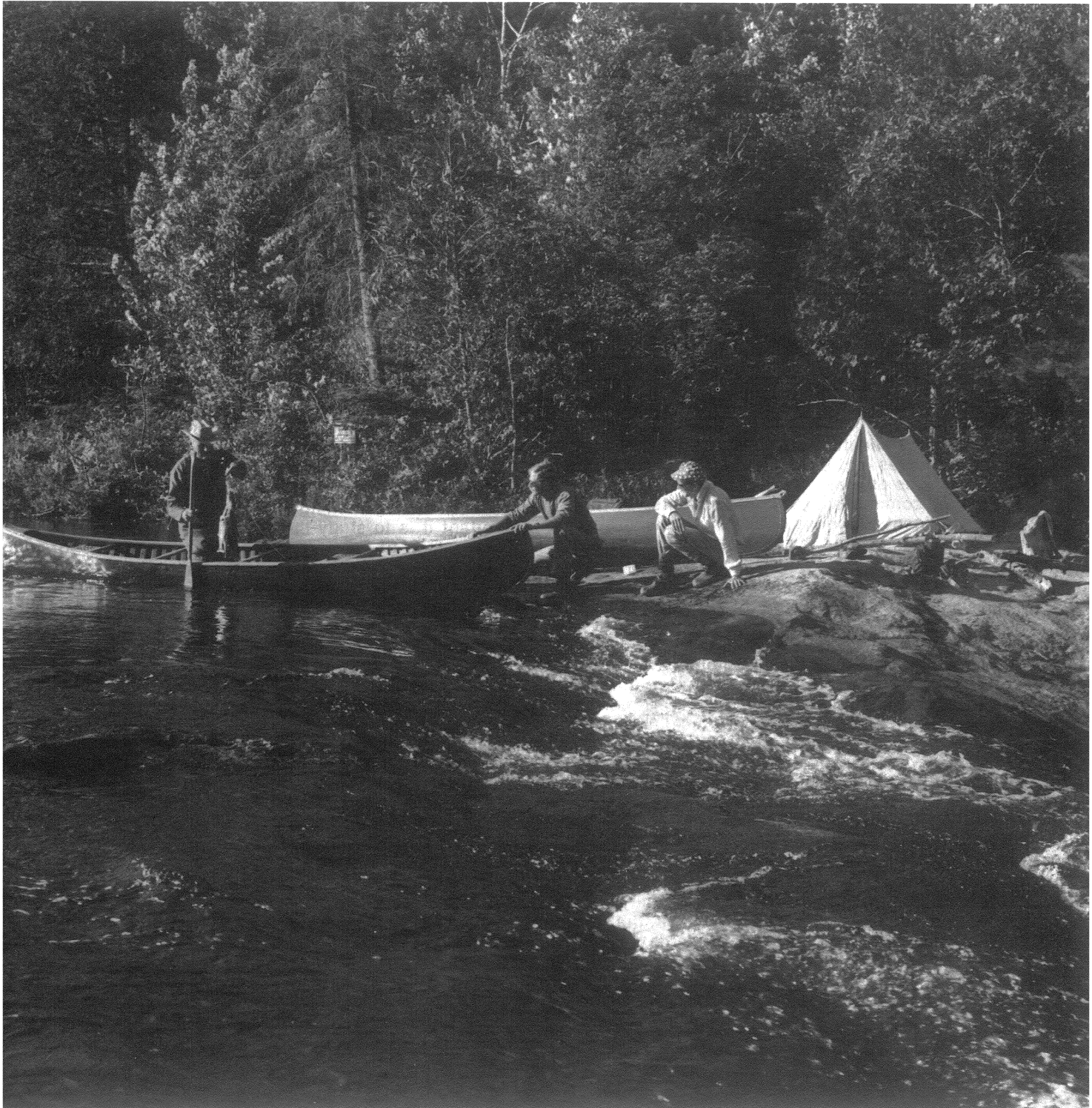


# Clarion

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# Confessions Concerning the Church<sup>1</sup>

*Comparison of the Belgic Confession with the Westminster Confession of Faith, especially with respect to what they say concerning the catholic or universal Church.*

## 1. The importance of the Westminster Confession

In this article we should like to pay some attention to the Westminster Confession of Faith. What do we mean by the Westminster Confession? Do all of us know what it is? I am afraid we do not. I am not even sure whether all office-bearers have read and studied the Westminster Confession. Still it is a very important document and we all should know about it.

In 1977 the General Synod of Coaldale, Alberta, decided: "With thankfulness to recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession."<sup>1</sup> This Orthodox Presbyterian Church has as its doctrinal standard the Westminster Confession of Faith. The General Synod decided: "To offer the Orthodox Presbyterian Church a temporary relationship called 'ecclesiastical contact' with the following rules:

- a. to invite delegates to each other's General Assemblies or General Synods and to accord such delegates privileges of the floor in the Assembly or Synod, but no vote;
- b. to exchange Minutes and Acts to each other's General Assemblies and General Synods as well as communications on major issues of mutual concern, and to solicit comments on these documents;
- c. to be diligent by means of continued discussions to use the contact for the purpose of full correspondence."<sup>2</sup>

It is called a temporary relationship, and the purpose is to discuss intensively the differences between their and our confessional standards. But then we should at least read and study these documents.

Recently an International Conference of Reformed Churches was held in The Netherlands, or, to be more precise: "The Constituent Assembly of the International Conference of Reformed Churches," held from October 26 to November 4, 1982, in Groningen, The Netherlands. The Rev. M. van Beveren and the Rev. J. Visscher participated in this conference on behalf of our churches. A report on this meeting and the result of it can be found in the Year-End Issue 1982 of *Clarion*. There the Rev. J. Visscher gives extensive information on that matter. In his article we read that the basis of the Conference was: "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort) and the Westminster Standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechism)."<sup>3</sup> That means that we, as churches, are working together with other churches on the basis of, among others, the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The contents of the Westminster Confession and the difference between the Westminster Confession and the Belgic Confession have been discussed by the deputies of our General Synods, and you can find the results in the *Acts*, especially in the *Acts* of the General Synod of New Westminster 1971 (among others, p. 61) and the General Synod of Coaldale 1977 (especially p. 94 and following pages).

Our churches have never made an explicit statement about the question in how far we agree or disagree with the Westminster Confession of Faith, but our sister churches in The Netherlands did. In the *Acts* of the General Synod of Amersfoort 1967 we read that the General Synod agreed with the judgment of deputies of the Regional Synod of Groningen, that the Westminster Confession of Faith is a thoroughly Reformed confession (een voluit gereformeerd belijdenis geschrift).<sup>4</sup> In the *Acts* of the General Synod of Groningen-Zuid 1978 we read in a report of a committee, dealing with these matters, that the Westminster Confession of Faith at some points speaks a little bit differently than our confession. However, that is no impediment for ecclesiastical correspondence.<sup>5</sup> In a series of articles in *Clarion*, Prof. Dr. J. Faber has discussed these statements of the Dutch sister churches extensively.<sup>6</sup>

We are mentioning these matters to show how important it is to study the contents of the Westminster Confession of Faith. It is even more important for us than it is for the churches in The Netherlands, because we are living in a country in which most churches do not have the Three Forms of Unity, but this Westminster Confession. We have to be very thankful for our Reformed inheritance and we should preserve it. The book of the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, *Inheritance Preserved*, can help us in this respect. But at the same time we should also pay attention to what actually happens in this part of the world and we should become acquainted with the confession of our "neighbour next door."

It is not the intention of this article to deal with all thirty-three chapters of the Westminster Confession, although it would be worthwhile to do so. For the time being we should like to confine ourselves to one aspect, and that is what the Westminster Confession says about the Church and what the Belgic Confession says about it.

There are lots of misconceptions in this respect. We all are supposed to know our own Confession, and especially, as far as the Church is concerned, Articles 27, 28, and 29 of the Belgic Confession. But there seems to be a lack of knowledge. Many of us do not really know what the Westminster Confession of Faith says in this respect, but also quite a few do not even

know what our own Confession says, or, at least, they do not understand the meaning of it. Take, for instance, the expression in the Belgic Confession that "outside of it there is no salvation." Does that mean that only those who are members of the Canadian Reformed Church can be saved? It is remarkable that we can find a similar statement in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Speaking about the Church, the Westminster Confession says "outside of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."<sup>7</sup>

There are more questions. What do we mean, or rather, what does the Westminster Confession of Faith mean by the invisible Church? Can there be more than one true Church in one place? Some say: no, that is impossible. Others say: yes, that happens once in a while. Are there true believers outside the true Church?

Recently a classis in The Netherlands had to deal (in four consecutive sessions) with the opinion of a certain minister. According to him, the Belgic Confession speaks only about members of the true Church. Outside of the true Church there do not exist true believers, so one cannot urge them to join the Church either. The statement in Article 28 that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with the Church means that the true believers, the members of the true Church, have to behave as members of the Church and that they continually and time and again have to join the Church (zich voordurend weer en metterdaad voegen bij de Kerk). The classis, after four consecutive sessions, rejected this theory as conflicting with the Bible and the Confession.<sup>8</sup>

However, if it takes a classis four meetings to deal with such a matter, and after that the minister concerned is still not convinced, no one should be surprised that some of us do not really understand what it is all about. That is why, in this article, we will try to discuss some aspects of our confession and compare what our Belgic Confession says with what we read in the Westminster Confession.

## 2. *The origin of the Westminster Confession*<sup>9</sup>

The Belgic Confession was written by one man, Guido de Brès. He wrote this confession as a defense of the Reformed faith in a time of persecution. He defended the Reformed confession over against the doctrine of the Roman Catholics and the heresy of the Anabaptists. That determines the character and the set-up of the Belgic Confession.

The origin of the Westminster Confession of Faith was different in more than one respect. The development in the Churches in England in the sixteenth century was not the same as on the European continent. In 1531, Henry VIII was excommunicated by Pope Clement VII. From that time on, Henry VIII proclaimed himself the head of the Church of England. He had the full support of Archbishop Cranmer of Canterbury. First he tried to cooperate with the leaders of the Reformed Churches in Germany, but that did not work out too well.

A draft was made of a confession for the Church of England. Originally it consisted of thirteen articles. During the government of his successor, Edward VI, the draft was worked out by Archbishop Cranmer into a confession of forty-two articles, later reduced to thirty-nine, and, during the government of Queen Elizabeth I, accepted by the parliament as the official Confession of the Church of England.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the ne-

cessity was felt of a revision of these articles. However, the Church leaders did not succeed in their effort, because neither Queen Elizabeth I nor King James I allowed them to do so. King James I considered himself to be the defender of the true religion and the right middle between the extreme Roman Catholics and the very strict Puritans. As a result of his despotism many left the country as emigrants to America, among them the Pilgrim Fathers.

King James I was in favour of the hierarchical Roman Catholic system rather than the presbyterial system of church polity. In 1625 his son, Charles I, succeeded him as King. He married Henriette Mary, daughter of the Roman Catholic King Henry VI of France, and made a secret promise to protect the Roman Catholics.

In the meantime there was an increasing desire in the Church to have an official General Synod called together to work on the revision of the thirty-nine articles. In 1641 the parliament again sent a request to the King to convene a general synod "of the most grave, pious, learned, and judicious divines of this island; assisted with some from foreign parts, professing the same religion with us, who may consider of all things necessary for the peace and good government of the Church, and represent the results of their consultations unto Parliament, to be there allowed of and confirmed, and receive the stamp of authority, thereby to find passage and obedience throughout the kingdom."<sup>10</sup>

The King, however, denied the request. Therefore the Parliament decided in 1643, without royal approval, to convene a synod, consisting of 121 delegates, among them 10 members of the House of Lords and 20 members of the House of Commons. This Synod began its meetings on June 1, 1643, in Westminster Abbey in London, and the agenda was finished on February 22, 1649. It took a total of 1163 sessions.

The first and most important task of this general synod was a revision of the thirty-nine articles, the official Confession of the Church of England since 1571. Every chapter of the Confession was extensively discussed. It took seven days of executive meetings, for instance, to establish the first article, dealing with Holy Scripture. There was good reason to conclude: "The consideration given in the Assembly itself to the several heads was very careful and the scrutiny of every clause and word searching. Recommitments, ordinary at least to special Committees, were frequent: final dissent on the part of individuals was sometimes entered. In a word, time, pains, and scrupulous care were not spared for perfecting the instrument."<sup>11</sup>

Finally, on December 4, 1646, the work was finished, and the new Confession was presented to Parliament for final approval. The work of the General Synod of Westminster had come to an end and the Westminster Confession of Faith was officially accepted as the doctrinal standard of the Church of England.

In the rest of its meetings, the general synod also established the two other doctrinal standards of the Church of England: the Larger and the Shorter Catechism.

## 3. *Difference in set-up*

From what we have seen in the previous paragraph it will be clear that there is a great difference in set-up between the Belgic Confession and the Westminster Confession of Faith. They were established and adopted under completely different circumstances. The Belgic Confession was written by one man, Guido de Brès,

while the Westminster Confession was the work of an Assembly of 121 members, of whom often 70 were present at the meetings. The Belgic Confession was written in a time of persecution, to defend the Reformed doctrine over against the false doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church and the Anabaptists in the second half of the sixteenth century. The Westminster Confession of Faith was the result of a careful scrutiny of all aspects of the doctrine in an established Church in England in the first half of the seventeenth century.

We can notice the difference already in the language and the formulation. The Belgic Confession begins every article with the words "We believe" or "We confess." That is really a personal confession of faith. The Westminster Confession, however, is written rather as an explanation or a dogmatic treatise. Although there is a similarity, as we will see later, there is also a great difference in set-up.

As a result of this difference in set-up and character, the Belgic Confession puts more emphasis on our personal faith, the way true believers feel and confess, and the way we are supposed to live. During the making of the draft of the Westminster Confession of Faith all kinds of existing situations and established opinions were considered and, if possible, incorporated. It was the result of a discussion covering many years in an assembly of almost one hundred delegates. That is why the Belgic Confession sometimes puts more emphasis on what it should be and is supposed to be, as a matter of principle, while the Westminster Confession of Faith has the tendency to take into consideration the practical situation. This does not necessarily mean that the Westminster Confession of Faith is less strict or less principled. It simply is a consequence of the fact that the Westminster Confession was written eighty years later, under different circumstances, in a more settled situation. It is a more practical approach, dealing with the actual situation as it existed in an established Church. That is what we have to keep in mind when we compare the contents of the two confessions.

As we have said already, there is a great similarity, too, even in the heading of the chapters. The Belgic Confession, in Art. 1-7, begins with the Holy Scripture, and so does the Westminster Confession of Faith in Chapter I. In Art. 8-11 the Belgic Confession deals with the Holy Trinity, and so does Chapter II of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Art. 12 of the Belgic Confession deals with the creation, and so does Chapter IV of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Art. 13 deals with the providence of God, and so does Chapter V. In Art. 14, 15 the Belgic Confession speaks about the fall of man, and so does Chapter VI of the Westminster Confession. There certainly is a great similarity, throughout the whole Confession.

There are also differences. In the Belgic Confession we can find a great influence of Calvin. Guido de Brès will undoubtedly have used the example of Calvin. Although the brothers in Westminster used the Belgic Confession, they did not follow this example exactly; they did not try to make a carbon copy of it, adapted to their own situation. They preferred to go their own way in their specific situation and according to their local circumstances. They took advantage of the Belgic Confession, but they still acted as an independent Church with their own background and their own tradition.

This will become clear and must be kept in mind when we compare the two confessions, especially with respect to the doctrine concerning the Church.

#### 4. *The invisible Church*

One of the main points of concern in our Churches is the way the Westminster Confession of Faith speaks about the invisible Church.

In Chapter XXV, Sections 1 and 2, we read:

"1. The catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

2. The visible Church, which is also catholic and universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, outside of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."

In March 1972, our committee for contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church sent a communication on behalf of the General Synod 1971 of our Churches to the Thirty-ninth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The committee wrote, among other things:

"A.1 Westminster Confession of Faith Ch. 25, par. I, II, IV; Larger Catechism Question and Answer 64-66, re: The Church.

"Studying these paragraphs and answers we realize that we should not read them in the light of the downhill-trend which Reformed Theology showed in the post-Reformation era. On the other hand we live in a time in which the visible Church, as manifested in its institutional form, is set in sharp contrast to the invisible Church, as represented by all the elect of past, present and future, a Church which is not institutionalized, but which is gathered together out of all the institutes. The result of this polarization of the visible and the invisible Church has been a low esteem for what is called the visible Church, a weakening of church-consciousness, a lack of understanding of the seriousness of the calling 'to separate from the false Church and to join the true Church' (The Belgic Confession of Faith, Art. 28) and the rise of the *theologoumenon* of the pluriformity of the Church which is neither taught by the Scriptures nor by the Reformed Confessions and which proved to be an undermining factor in the fight against the sins in the Church and for the reformation of the Church."<sup>12</sup>

On April 14, 1976, the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church answered as follows:

"A-1 does not question the legitimacy of a distinction between the church visible and the church invisible as such but calls attention to the dangers inherent in the distinction. The Heidelberg Catechism (Qu. and Ans. 54) speaks of 'a church chosen to everlasting life,' 'out of the whole human race,' 'from the beginning to the end of the world.' In terms of Qu. and Ans. 52, this chosen church appears to be composed of chosen individuals. We discern here the beginning of a definition of the church in terms of the doctrine of election. The Canons of Dordt, First Head, Article 7, present, in effect, a more elaborate description of this church, speaking of 'a certain number of persons' who were 'chosen, from the whole human race.' The Westminster Confession in Chapter XXV, written after the Synod of Dordt, reflects the doctrinal development of the Reformed community by defining the church, in part, in terms of election. Since the identity of the elect is known only to God, this church is, to the human eye, invisible.

## WHICH BIBLE IN AUSTRALIA ?

In this month of May the Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia will be held, D.V. The Rev. Brüning writes in *UNA SANCTA* of Feb. 19, 1983, that:

It can be expected that an important and heavy agenda has to be worked through, and that far-reaching decisions have to be taken.

Items such as English Bible translation, Mission, International Conference, Church visitation, Church Order, Church Book belong to the most sig-

nificant subjects in Church life.

It goes without saying that the work of a Synod should take place in the midst of the congregations. The members of the Churches must have the opportunity to know what is going on in the Churches, and which topics will be discussed and which decisions must be taken. . . .

The magazine *Una Sancta* will also try to inform the people as much as possible. This time attention is given to the issue of the English Bible translation. The Synod receives a report on this matter. . . . The lengthy report will

be published in two or three issues of *Una Sancta*.

It happened to be in two issues. And this report is interesting for us. The Australian report comes to the same conclusion as we have come to. I take over almost all of this report.

### *Historical Background*

The Synods of the Free Reformed Churches have attempted to deal with this matter from the beginning.

Synod 1954 expressed the desir-

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“Although it can be argued that viewing the church from the perspective of election does tend to depreciate the authentic churchly character of the church visible, and may even lead to complacency with the existence of a diversity of geographically overlapping denominations within the one church of Jesus Christ, we would simply point out that the position of the Westminster standards does not differ radically from that of the Forms of Unity. We would respectfully suggest that the covenantal understanding of church with its focus on the church as visible, in the Canadian Reformed Churches today, reflects more precisely the perspective of the Heidelberg Catechism than the Canons of Dort, while the Westminster formulation reflects both Dort (church as invisible) and the earlier Reformation (church as visible).”<sup>13</sup>

This answer might not convince everyone, but it at least shows the different background of those two Confessions, the Belgic Confession and the Westminster Confession of Faith.

We don't like the expression “invisible Church” at all. We have had enough troubles with what Dr. A. Kuyper made out of it in his Common Grace concept and his theory concerning the Pluriformity of the Church. The result was, as our Committee in 1972 has put it: a weakening of church consciousness, a lack of understanding of the seriousness of the calling “to separate from the false Church and to join the true Church.”<sup>14</sup>

We should not underestimate the danger of this development. Many did not care about membership of the Church because they considered themselves to be members of the “invisible Church.” This doctrine of Kuyper's has had a disastrous effect in our Churches and upon the development of church life in many other Churches.

However, we should not overdo it either. Once I heard the statement that the influence of Dr. Kuyper's theory was evident even in the Westminster Confession

of Faith. This, of course, is an anachronism. The Westminster Confession of Faith was written almost 200 years before Dr. Kuyper was born.

We have to be aware of the fact that the expression “invisible Church” can be used in a different way than Kuyper did. I believe that Kuyper has given an interpretation and meaning to this expression which was never intended by the Westminster Synod.

Therefore, although I personally don't like this expression at all and avoid the use of it as much as possible because of the implications of Kuyper's concept, we have to realize at the same time that the term can be used in a different way, with a different intention than Kuyper had. The passage quoted above from the letter of the OPC Committee can make that clear.

Burlington, ON

W. POUWELSE  
— *To be continued.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Acts General Synod Coaldale 1977*, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. J. Visscher, *Clarion*, Year-End Issue 1982, p. 514.

<sup>4</sup> *Acta Generale Synode Amersfoort 1966/7*, art. 241, p. 288.

<sup>5</sup> *Acta Generale Synode Groningen-Zuid 1978*, p. 531.

<sup>6</sup> *Clarion*, Vol. 28, no. 10-13, May/June 1979.

See also Prof. Dr. J. Douma's reaction in *De Reformatie*, Vol. 54, Nos. 44, 45, 48, 49; and Vol. 55, Nos. 1, 2, Aug./Sept./Oct. 1979.

<sup>7</sup> *Westminster Confession*, Chapter XXV, Section 2.

<sup>8</sup> See *Nederlands Dagblad*, March 12, 1983, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> For this paragraph of our article we have gratefully used an essay of Prof. Dr. L. Doekes in the *Almanak 1970* of “Fides Quadrat Intellectum,” p. 145-192.

<sup>10</sup> B.B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, p. 11, via Doekes, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61 and p. 155 resp.

<sup>12</sup> *Acts General Synod Toronto 1974*, pp. 103/4.

<sup>13</sup> *Acts General Synod Coaldale 1977*, pp. 95/6.

<sup>14</sup> *Acts General Synod Toronto 1974*, p. 104.

ability of unity of practice with the Canadian sister churches (Acts, Art. 16).

Synod 1956 decided to adopt the King James Version (KJV) for use in the Churches since there was no doubt as to its fidelity to Scriptural truth. At the same time the Revised Standard Version (RSV) was rejected because of serious doubts as to its reliability (Acts, Art. 36, and Report).

Synod 1966 recognized the need for a "usable English translation." This indicated that Synod was dissatisfied with the decision of Synod 1956 that the KJV was a "usable English translation" (Acts, Art. 50).

At Synod 1972 objections were again voiced about the RSV and deputies were appointed to find a "good English translation" (Acts, Art. 47). They were to concentrate on the KJV II translation and the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

Synod 1975 decided to reject the New International Version (NIV) because of its so-called "dynamic equivalent" method of translation, and the KJV II because of serious deficiencies. New deputies were to assess the KJV, the RSV and the NASB and recommend one of these for use in the Churches (Acts, Art. 52).

Synod 1978 decided to abandon evaluation of the NASB and to concentrate on the RSV and a new, updated KJV (Acts, Art. 42).

In the meantime, Synod 1972 of the Canadian Reformed Churches decided to leave the use of the RSV in the freedom of the churches and to continue evaluation of this translation. Deputies of this and following Synods carried out this evaluation, until 1980.

Synod 1980 decided to recommend the RSV as the designated version for use within the churches, in worship services and catechism instruction, as well as for Scripture quotations in the Creeds and liturgical forms.

From the foregoing the following is clear:

1. The KJV is not considered to be a satisfactory translation for use in the Churches today;
2. Unity of practice with the Canadian sister churches is deemed desirable.
3. The RSV, in spite of earlier objections, keeps returning as a possible replacement for the KJV.

In the light of these historical developments, and in line with the research carried out by the Canadian sister Churches, Deputies decided

to limit their investigations to the following 3 Bible translations:

1. The Revised Standard Version
  2. The New International Version
  3. The New American Standard Bible
- Deputies did not consider any other translations, because of various reasons of practice and principle: for instance the New (updated) KJV by Nelson was omitted because it shared many of the deficiencies of Jay Green's KJV II. Also, its attempt to fit 20th century word usage into 17th century style and sentence structure creates more difficulties than it solves. It cannot be considered a real improvement over the (old) KJV.

#### *Evaluation*

What follows is an evaluation, based on information available, of the three translations which were the object of the Deputies investigations.

#### *(NOTE: re Methods of translation)*

At this point it may be valuable to insert a few remarks on the two different methods of translation as they are used in Bible Translation work.

- a. The Formal Equivalent Method (F.E.). This method concentrates almost exclusively on the *literal text* of the original. It results in a word-for-word translation, retaining the sentence structure and typical idiom of the original language, Greek or Hebrew.
- b. The Dynamic Equivalent Method (D.E.). This method concentrates on the *meaning* of the original, and attempts to express in another language the thought expressed in the original. This method is, by definition, fairly interpretive. It does not, as a rule, bind itself closely to the sentence structure of the original, but places a greater priority on clarity and good sentence sense.

In practice, a pure F.E. translation does not exist. It would be virtually unreadable. Nor would pure formal equivalence be able to do justice to the numerous shades of meaning supplied by the context in the original. The translations considered can best be placed on a scale, with the NASB offering the most literal F.E. translation; the RSV close to it, still basically F.E. but less rigidly so (as also, incidentally, the KJV); and the NIV tending more towards D.E.

#### **I. The Revised Standard Version**

To provide a thorough revision of the Scriptures in the English lan-

guage which will stay as close to the KJV as possible in the light of present knowledge of the original texts.

Translators aimed at a scholarly review rendering the meaning of the original in good, formal, up-to-date English.

Translators are not, as a whole, known to be conservatives regarding their view of Scripture.

#### *Sources*

The RSV is a revision of the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901, which in turn was a revision of the KJV, taking into account new developments and discoveries in the study of ancient languages and manuscripts.

The Old Testament translation is basically a translation of the Masoretic text.

The New Testament translation is generally based on the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament, although in numerous places alternate readings from different manuscripts were used, if, in the judgement of the translators, this gave a more accurate rendering of the original text.

#### *Method of Translation*

Basically Formal Equivalent, though less rigidly so than, for instance, the NASB.

#### *Advantages*

1. The RSV is a scholarly, word-for-word translation, based on a large body of reliable research in ancient texts and manuscripts. Where its rendering departs from the accepted manuscript, this is carefully footnoted. Where alternate readings are possible, these are also included in the footnotes.
2. The English is formal and dignified, and well suited for liturgical use.
3. The RSV follows the tradition of the KJV in its language use and sentence structure.
4. An objective reading of the RSV will lead to an accurate formulation and a sound defence of all points of Reformed Doctrine (as expressed in the 3 Forms of Unity).
5. The Translation Committee of the RSV has proved to be receptive to suggestions for improvements and corrections. Deputies reporting to the Canadian Reformed Synod of 1977 stated that: "... (we) have come up with some recommendations for the Standard Bible Committee. These recommendations are taken seriously and are appreciated." Similar re-

marks can be found in Reports to the 1974 and 1980 Synods.

- The RSV has been accepted by the Canadian sister churches for use in the worship services and in catechism instruction, and is the designated source for Scripture quotations in the Creeds and liturgical forms in the forthcoming Book of Praise.
- The RSV is available in a large variety of formats and prices.

#### Disadvantages

- The translators of the RSV are not, as a whole, committed to the Divine Inspiration or infallibility of Scripture.
- Certain passages contain ambiguities or omissions in translation. E.g.
  - Sometimes (e.g. Romans 5:5) though not always (e.g. Romans 8:16) the Holy Spirit is referred to with "which."
  - Some inconsistency in referring to Christ variously as "you" and "thou."
  - Luke 22:43-44 has been placed in a footnote.
  - An unacceptable rendering of Romans 9:5.

In some cases also the translation departs from the generally accepted reading of the original, without this being strictly necessary. This may be a reflection of liberal bias on the part of the translators, but this cannot be conclusively shown. More information on this point can be found in Reports to the 1974, 1977 and 1980 Synods of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and in the Report to the 1975 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches.

## II. The New International Version

### Basis and Aims

The translators are committed to the belief that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and to the authority of Scripture as confessed in a.o. the Belgic Confession and the Westminster Confession.

Their aim in translation is to provide in clear, up-to-date English, as accurate as possible a rendering of what is said in the original texts.

### Sources

The NIV is an entirely new translation. While building on historical developments, it is not a revision of any previous translations.

The Old Testament is taken from the Masoretic Text, with occasional variations, usually footnoted, based on other ancient texts.

The New Testament translation is an eclectic one, with choices made from all available manuscripts. It generally agrees with the Westcott-Hort Greek text.

### Method of Translation

Tending toward Dynamic Equivalent.

### Advantages

- The NIV proceeds from conservative assumptions regarding the Divine authority of Scripture.
- Full account is taken of contextual meaning in translation.
- It is generally an accurate rendering of the meaning of the original text.
- It is an extremely clear and readable translation, in fluent contemporary English, with a sensitivity for literary style.
- An objective reading of this translation will lead to an accurate formulation and a sound defence of all points of Reformed doctrine, as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity. (The Report to the 1975 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches states: "the NIV is a faithful version, and in no part detrimental to Reformed teaching. . . ." and the Report to the 1980 Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches states that it cannot be considered unscriptural, and recommends its use be left in the freedom of the churches.)

### Disadvantages

- The translation is at times quite free, and fairly interpretive. Sometimes the priority given to clarity interferes with a strictly reliable rendering of original detail, especially as regards sentence structure, e.g.:
  - Exodus 20:5: "punishing the children for the sins of their fathers" instead of: "visiting." etc.
  - The translation usually rendered by "the Lord of Hosts" as in Isaiah 1:9 is given as "the Lord Almighty."
  - Philippians 4:17 (and other places): "dear friends" instead of "beloved."
  - Isaiah 8:7 "to put my trust in Him" instead of "to wait for."
- The NIV is a fairly new translation. Its general acceptance is not (yet) assured.
- There may be considerable resistance to the use of "You" and "Your" when addressing God and Christ, even though this is a faith-

ful translation.

- The RSV is the designated source for Scripture quotations in the forthcoming Book of Praise of the Canadian sister Churches.
- The English used in the NIV, tends to be less formal than e.g. the RSV or the NASB, is therefore likely to be less suited for use in worship, and is also likely to date faster than a translation in more formal English.
- There is a limited number of formats available, all of which are rather large and bulky, as well as being relatively expensive.

J. GEERTSEMA

— To be continued.



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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

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

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### SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 1983

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## FROM THE SCRIPTURES

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*“On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth.”*

Isa. 24:21.

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# Heavenly Visitation

Isaiah’s prophetic words at this point have caused many commentators to wonder what he is speaking about. Bringing the word of the LORD, he speaks of a violent judgment that will come over the earth, a judgment that has cosmic proportions similar to the judgment of the flood. Even though the LORD had promised that He would never again punish the world with a flood, Isaiah’s language in this context points to a recurrence of that kind of judgment. Obviously, the LORD brings a *final* judgment here, a *definitive* judgment. For its scope is even broader than the judgment of the flood; this time, earth and *heaven* are included in the visitation of the LORD. The host of heaven will be punished in heaven. Who form the host of heaven?

Many alternatives have been suggested, but if a choice must be made, much can be said for thinking of the *angels* in this passage. More than once the Scriptures indicate to us that the angels are intimately connected with the course of human history and also play a role in the unfolding of events. For example, the book of Daniel speaks of “princes” of different nations. And the book of Revelation describes how Satan and his host of fallen angels make war on the Church, standing before the woman who was to bear a male child, Rev. 12. Through the rulers and princes of the nations, Satan makes his attack.

Here, however, the prophet speaks of the hour of judgment, a day of reckoning. This day ushers in a dramatic change in the whole heavenly order. Battle and final judgment take place *in heaven*. What day does the prophet speak of? Who cannot but think of the day of Christ’s *ascension*, after He completed His work on earth and laid the groundwork for the mission of His apostles?

Why the ascension? Well, this day signals a dramatic change in the course of the LORD’s salvation history. Both faithful and unfaithful angels are affected by this change, but primarily the evil angels shudder under its impact, James 2:19. Having fallen from their former glory, they did all they could to stop the LORD’s anointed from taking His throne, as Psalm 2 states. They incited the kings of the nations against the Chosen One of God, the Messiah. But they failed in their bid to destroy the LORD’s Anointed, and He who was to rule the nations with a rod of iron won the glory that was promised to Him. And the day of His ascension marks the *public demonstration* of His victory over Satan and his host.

Indeed, that is why the Lord Jesus *had to* ascend into heaven. The fruit of His death covers more than just all relationships on the earth. The fruit of His death extends into the highest heavens and also requires and effects a reformation of heaven’s order. He spoke of that heavenly visitation Himself and actually saw the result of His work when He said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven,” Luke 10:18 His death constituted the deathblow to all the devil’s forces. And the ascension gives us the *proof* of this. His ascension confirms what the apostle says, “He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a *public example* of them, triumphing over them in him,” Col. 2:15. So, too, Peter says that Christ proclaimed His judgment to the spirits in prison, the doomed angels, through His ascension, 1 Pet. 3:19.

Thus we can understand the judgment Isaiah speaks of. It is the *final* judgment. This begins with the work of Christ, His death and resurrection, for this work lays the basis for the final judgment of angels and men. Christ Himself said, “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out” — speaking of His own coming death — John 12:31. Through the cross, final judgment begins; for the cross represents the final speaking of God to the world.

Therefore, the ascension of Christ strengthens and accentuates the *warning* of the gospel. Judgment begins with the household of God, and the hour of judgment is here. What is our present attitude to the risen and ascended Lord? Is our life a life of service to Him?

At the same time, the ascension heightens the *comfort* for Christ’s Church. It proves the cosmic scope of Christ’s victory and so assures us of our victory in Him. Satan and the powers of evil may still amass their forces against the Church, and the means at his disposal can be so great that we can only despair of any victory. On earth, all the odds are against God’s people. But Christ has ascended, and He reigns over the kings of the earth! The hour of public triumph has already been revealed in heaven! Earth cannot but follow — and the time is short. Soon He who reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem will manifest His glory over all the earth. Then all evil will be past, and we will live in eternal blessedness, forever. Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus!

J. DE JONG



# Preaching Christ or Confessing Christ<sup>1</sup>

A Response to the Article,  
“‘With Life and Lip’ — A Critique from Scripture and History”

## 1. Introduction

Let me first express gratitude for the fact that the Rev. G. VanDooren begins his “Closing Remarks” of his article “With Life and Lip” (*Clarion*, Vol. 32, Nos. 4 and 6, pp. 97-99 and 120-122) in which he responds to my article “Evangelism or Home Mission” (*Clarion*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 11 and 15-16) by writing, “These articles were not written to fight against persons. Names were left out.” Even though the name of the Rev. G. VanDooren has already been mentioned, it is also my sincere intention, when now again writing about the same matter and responding to his article, to do it in a brotherly but frank way. The matter is too important to let go. It concerns obedience to the Lord.

Let it further be known that there is no “fear for competition, that the ministerial office be ‘overshadowed,’ pushed in a corner. . . .” It is not a fear for “competition” which must concern us. It is fear for not expressing our gratitude in obedience to Christ’s covenant demands that must concern us all. It is for this reason that we must continue to carefully search the Scriptures for what the Lord teaches us there. The Confessions in which the Church has withstood the many attacks against it can be of much help.

## 2. Undue Limitations?

There are indeed limitations to what we must and may do. This limitation is expressed most clearly in Article XXXI of the Belgic Confession: “Therefore every one must take heed not to intrude himself by improper means [into an ecclesiastical office], but is bound to wait till it shall please God to call him; that he may have testimony of his calling, and be certain and assured that it is of the Lord.” The Rev. VanDooren mentions this article of the Confession in his “Closing Remarks.” He says, “While writ-

ing these two articles as a protest against the Jan. 14th article, I have honestly been bothered by those ‘conclusions’ quoted in the first article, and then especially by the third one, which wants us to believe that in Art. 31 of the Confession of Faith we confess ‘evangelism’ (evangelism is preaching!) is prerogative *only* of ordained ministers and missionaries, and that there the Lord *forbids* others (yes I quote . . .) to ‘overshadow’ the office of the minister of the Word by ‘evangelizing’ as common believers, ordinary members of the church.” It is too bad that the Rev. VanDooren does not go further into how Art. XXXI forbids anyone to intrude himself into an ecclesiastical office by improper means. The impression which is given, from what he writes, is that there is no clearly defined distinction between the office of all believers and the special offices instituted by Christ. If there is such a distinction between the office of all believers and the special offices, the Rev. VanDooren does not tell us where that distinction is, nor how it is to be maintained.

Most commentators on the Belgic Confession agree that Article XXXI was against the Romanized Church and the Anabaptists. To quote J. Van Bruggen: “Against the Romanizers the phrase ‘by a lawful election by the Church’ is written. They, when appointing the higher curia, left the Church entirely outside of the matter. And against the Anabaptists ‘and in that order’ because they, whenever they thought themselves called, imposed themselves as office-bearers” (my translation of the Dutch: “Tegenover de Rooms en geldt: ‘door wettige verkiezing der kerk.’ Zij sluiten bij de benoeming door de ‘hogere curie’ de kerk immers geheel en al buiten. En tegen de Dopersen geldt: ‘(met) goede orde.’ Want bij hen wierp ieder, die zichzelf geroepen achtte, zich op tot ambtsdrager”).<sup>1</sup> Besides the Anabap-

tists, A.D.R. Polman says that this article was also written against “Independence.”<sup>2</sup> C. Vonk seems to be historically correct when he informs us that in the Belgic Confession the Church on the one hand objects to the Roman Catholic hierarchy of a clergy who claimed to have the final right to interpret the meaning of Scriptures and could therefore impose their interpretation on the laity, and on the other hand to those who over-reacted to the Reformational objection to this clergy/laity distinction by rejecting the special offices completely. He says, “De Brès pointed out that since the apostolic times there were not only apostles, prophets, teachers (I Cor. 12:29)”; he continues (now quoting de Brès): “‘Each Christian may read God’s Word and speak about it. But it does not yet follow that all Christians are preachers or ministers of the Word, but only those who are lawfully called.’ Yes, de Brès speaks about the matter in a whole chapter, entitled, ‘Concerning the true and upright calling to Office’” (My translation of: “De Brès wees erop, dat reeds in de apostolische tijd allen maar niet apostelen, profeten en leraars waren, I Cor. 12:29, en vervolgde toen: ‘Een yechelick Christen mag Godes Woordt wel lesen ende daervan spreken. Maer daer wt en volcht nochtans neit, dat alle Christenen predicanten oft dienaers des Woordt zijn, maer alleenlick deghene, die daer Wettelicken toe beroepen zijn.’ Ja de Bres liet toen een heel hoofdstuk volgen getiteld, ‘Van de ware ende oprechte beroeping des Dienst’”).<sup>3</sup> That it is the intention and meaning of Article XXXI to forbid anyone to take up a special office in the Church in an unlawful way, is also the meaning which J. Van Bruggen gives it when he says that “each office is a given task. No one may take this honour upon himself, Heb. 5:4” (my translation of: “elk ambt is een opgelegde plicht. Niemand mag zichzelf die eer aannemen, Heb. 5:4”).<sup>4</sup> Here J. Van Bruggen rightly leads us from the Confession of Scriptures back to the Scriptures as our only foundation. He, along with others, refers to Heb. 5:4. There in Heb. 5:4-5 we read: “And no man takes this honour [of an office] unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten Thee.” The point is: No man, not even Christ Himself, ventures to take an office upon himself.

The New Testament maintains a

clear distinction between the office of all believers and the special offices, especially in the pastoral letters. Already in Acts 1 we read that because the young Church lost one of those who was to be an apostle (Judas), a replacement had to be found. He had to have special qualifications. In verses 21-22 we read: "Wherefore of these men [who believe] which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection." Besides the qualifications he required — there was more than one with these qualifications — he also had to be *ordained*.

The office of apostle, to be sure, is no longer possible because no one meets those qualifications. It is for this reason that theologians have always been careful to preserve that title "apostle" for that temporary office. Before the apostles were taken away from this earth, they, through the Spirit, made arrangements for this work to continue in an orderly way. In II Tim. 2:2, Timothy is not told to entrust and lay the continuing work of preaching the gospel upon the shoulders of everyone. The Lord through the apostle Paul says, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." It is on the basis of this text that our Churches built the theological college.

That there is a distinction between the office of all believers and the special offices is also shown from I Tim. 3. There, in verse 1 we read: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a noble task." Notice that we read here of a "desire for office" which is not yet the office. Further on, in verse 2ff., we read about the qualification required for a "bishop": "he must be blameless, the husband of one wife . . ."

Even when the desire and qualifications are all there, a person is not yet an office-bearer until he is ordained. This ordination was done by the laying on of hands. In I Tim. 5:22 the apostle Paul warns Timothy: "Lay hands suddenly on no man." In other words, "Do not ordain someone on the spur of the moment." In his second letter to Timothy the Lord through the apostle Paul tells him to put into "remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by

the putting on of my hands."

In all this, the given qualifications for the special offices and the ordination, the Church as a whole is taught its task to see to it that these offices are maintained. Notice how in Acts 6 the apostles, along with the Church, have the responsibility to appoint and ordain the special offices.

It should be clear from all this that there is a limit to what all believers must and may do. The term "limitation" is perhaps misleading. The term "distinction" is better. The Rev. G. VanDooren gives the impression that, in maintaining the distinction between the office of all believers and the special offices, there is a limited way in which we may express our faith. He writes, "There is the limitation 'confess Christ *in your own vocation*.' I assume with reason that a believer may not go outside that vocation, because of the words, 'The Lord forbids . . .'" Let me quote the text from which the conclusion of my previous article to which the Rev. G. VanDooren here refers, is based on: I Cor. 7:21-27: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Are you called being a servant? care not for it: . . . You are bought with a price; be not servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God . . . Are you bound to a wife? seek not to be loosed . . ." In I Cor. 7 we read how the Lord has given various gifts to different men. Already in verse 17 we read: "But as God has distributed to every man, as the Lord has called every one, so let him walk." H.J. Jager says that we must understand verses 20 and 24 in the light of verse 17. He furthermore says, "F.W. Grosheide again thinks here about remaining a Christian. This is of course true; man must remain a Christian in every circumstance of life; but the question is whether Paul says this in this context. I agree with P. Bachmann who notes that 'All are equally called in what place one happens to be, the one as a slave, the other as a circumcised person, etc. The admonition is: each one remain, which also means that everyone must stay in his present life-situation and not change sporadically'" (my translation of: "F.W. Grosheide denkt weer aan het christen-blijven. Natuurlijk is het waar, dat men in alle omstandigheden van het leven christen moet blijven, maar het is de vraag, of Paulus in dit verband dat zegt. De concrete voorbeelden wijzen in een andere richting. Ik stem in met P. Bachmann, die a.w., S. 276 noot 2, opmerkt: 'Die

allen gleiche Berufung war in einem Falle die eines Sklaven. Im anderen die eines Beschnittenen etc. Die Mahnung, in ihr zu verharren, bedeutet also, dass man jenen Lebensstand nicht willkürlich ändern soll'").<sup>5</sup>

What H.J. Jager writes indeed does the most justice to the context. What is written in I Cor. 7 we therefore understand in this way: The Church at Corinth consisted mainly of those who had recently been added to the Church. They thought that their life situation, now that they confessed Christ, had to change entirely. The Lord through the apostle here emphasizes that it was not their life situation that had to change. In fact, they were not to seek to change it. It was they themselves who were changed within the same life situation in which they had always lived. Their calling in Christ to a new life was to be a *Christian Jew*, a *Christian slave*, a *Christian husband*, etc. This means that the slave (cf. the letter to Philemon) who knows Christ must let his confession live right there, as a slave. His life effort must be to be a *Christian slave*. Even though most of us have been born in the covenant and Church of God, what we learn from I Cor. 7 is that we are not all given the special task to preach in order to confess Christ. When we read about the diversity of gifts in verse 17 (quoted above) and are told not to sporadically leave the life situation in which we live, what else does it mean but that we must confess Christ in the life situation in which we are? In the previous article, the word "vocation" was used instead of "life situation." The choice of words here is a little difficult. "Vocation" is generally understood to mean the "occupation" by which we make our livelihood. However, "vocation" literally means: "calling." The word "vocation" is preferred over "life situation" because it shows more clearly that no "life situation" is a chance situation. It is the Lord who has placed us in a certain situation. To be a husband, once committed to a wife, is a "vocation." Once living in a particular neighbourhood, to be a neighbour to those among whom we happen to live, is a "vocation." It was in this wider sense that "vocation" was meant also in the previous article.

The point of I Cor. 7 is that it is in our vocation (life situation) that we must confess Christ. Let me give an example: A farmer must defend the Scriptures by being a Christian farmer. What does he do about the de-

mand to ship milk on Sundays? How does he respond to marketing boards that restrict buying and selling? What is his responsibility in using pesticides and fertilizers? Furthermore, this farmer lives among neighbours: How does he respond to his neighbour who inquires about how he runs his farm? How does he relate to his neighbour when his neighbour has trouble or when some spray blows onto his neighbour's crop? Besides being a farmer, this same man has a family: How does he respond when the government tempts him or his children to buy lottery tickets? What does he do when a medical doctor suggests that his wife have no more children? etc. These are only a few examples. No answers are given here to all these questions; it is beyond the scope of this article. The farmer must confess Christ in all these situations. He must search out what the Lord's will is in all these situations. Limited? No! There are unlimited ways and opportunities to confess Christ in the vocation (life situation) in which Christ has been pleased to put us. The point now is that, even though the distinction between the office of all believers and the special offices is to be maintained, it certainly does not imply that the way in which Christ can be confessed is limited.

P.K.A. DE BOER

— *To be continued.*

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>J. Van Bruggen, *Het Amen der Kerk* (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre B.V.), 1975, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup>A.D.R. Polman, *Onze Nederlandsche Geloofsbelijdenis* (Franeker: T. Wever), publication date is not given. Vol. IV, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>C. Vonk, *De Voorzeide Leer* (Barendrecht), 1956, Vol. IIIB, pp. 162-163.

<sup>4</sup>J. Van Bruggen, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>5</sup>H.J. Jager, *De Eerste Brief aan De Korinthiërs* (Copieerinstelling v.d. Berg, Broederweg 6, Kampen), 1978, p. 156.

## Church News

ACCEPTED to Carman, MB  
REV. P.K.A. DE BOER  
of Watford, ON.

\* \* \* \* \*

CALLED to Langley, BC  
REV. W. POWWELSE  
of Rehoboth Canadian Reformed  
Church, Burlington, ON.

# Fourth Conference of Reformed Mission Workers in Latin America

CURAÇAO (NETHERLANDS ANTILLES). From the 9th to the 16th of March, 1983, the fourth Conference of Reformed Mission Workers in Latin America was held on the island of Curaçao. The participants in the Conference included the two missionaries from Curitiba, Brazil (sent out by the Reformed Church in South Assen), the two missionaries sent out by the Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey, the two mission aid workers from Canada, and the seven workers on Curaçao (including the two local workers). Due to the late arrival of one of the planes, the conference began later than was originally planned.

The conference could be characterized as a work-and-study conference, in which attention was particularly paid to the missionary method developed and worked out by John L. Nevius in the last century. Among other things, this method strives to let the people among whom the mission works take the initiative in their worship of the LORD. This means that in many areas much is left for the people themselves to do. The good aspects of this method were discussed at length. Some aspects that do not seem to be correct were also pointed out. The general feeling was that much of this method is worth applying also in Latin America.

Several other topics also received attention: "Christian Presence... A Missionary Method?" (This topic was particularly concerned with certain modern theological trends which seek to address the relationship between word and deed on the mission field), divorce, the tunes of the Genevan Psalter in non-West-European cultures, what the Bible says about the rich and the poor, and, lastly, mission work among young people.

The work on the various mission fields represented was discussed at length. The work done in Paramaribo

by one of the Curaçaoan missionaries was also discussed. All shared the hope that this work may in due time be continued with a missionary of its own. Further, it was generally agreed that this kind of mutual discussion of the work on the various fields is most beneficial. Indeed, one of the characteristics of these conferences is that by this manner of talking things over with one another, all are served in the work which the Lord has given to do.

Several theses were adopted by the conference:

1. The Bible nowhere gives a complete missionary method, although it does give normative principles and historic examples. It is important for our own method of working, not only that we apply the normative principles, but also that we seek to learn as much as possible from the historic examples.
2. Mission work should be structured in such a way that from the beginning the "congregation" is able to take care of its own worship to the Lord.
3. The Nevius Method deserves to function as a guideline for missions in Latin America, more so than has been the case until now. The method can, however, be applied differently in each place, depending on the situation.
4. It is lamentable that, until now, so little has been done in (Dutch) Reformed Missiology in the area of developing a concrete and positive missionary methodology.
5. It is questionable whether it is wise to introduce the tunes of the Genevan Psalter into the mission fields in Latin America without making distinctions. Calvin's criteria are still valid. A tune suitable for worship is one that is pleasing to the ear and reflects respect and worship.

RALPH F. BOERSEMA

# news medley

At first I thought that all our congratulatory messages today would be confined to the Burlington area, but the latest issue of *Clarion* came to the rescue. However, we do have to start with Burlington.

On April 26 there were two 55-year celebrations there.

Brother and sister Th. Hart celebrated theirs as well as brother and sister A. Vander Veen. As for the former couple, in the advertisement it was already expressed that the mercy of the Lord was shown in that they were permitted this celebration almost contrary to expectations. Health conditions in the past were such that serious doubt existed whether our brother and sister would ever reach this day. For themselves as well as for children and their children it is a great blessing when we are left together for so many years. We express our gratitude for this as well in the communion of saints.

Brother and sister A. Vander Veen enjoy a relatively good health as far as I know. Brother Vander Veen served many terms as elder and never made much noise but went his way quietly and in faithfulness to his Lord. To them we extend our congratulations, too, and we express the wish that their life may continue to be fruitful for the upbuilding of the Church.

Since we are in Burlington anyway, we mention the fortieth wedding anniversary of brother and sister G. Plantinga. Among us it does not matter that we are so late with our congratulations, for they celebrated on the 21st of April. We would almost say it in dialect, "‘Eel’ artelik gefillisetert." This is supposed to be a transcript of the Kampen dialect which both the celebrating couple and I understand and speak so well, although it will have changed in the course of the years since we left that old Hanseatic City on the IJssel. In any case: on behalf of all of us: heartfelt congratulations.

From Burlington we move to the center of the country.

Brother and sister F. VanderMeulen in Carman celebrate their fortieth wedding anniversary on May 6th. This is still a matter of the future at the moment when these lines are written and I have a slight hope that we'll be on time with our congratulations. This week, surprisingly, I received two consecutive copies of *Clarion* within a few days. Thus I have good hopes for the future. Anyway: we congratulate our brother and sister and their children and grandchildren with this day. For some years they lived on the Lulu Island and belonged to the New Westminster Church. Then they moved to Carman, there to farm. That's where they are still living and are occupying their place in the midst of the Congregation. Not only from Carman but also from other places congratulatory messages will reach you, I'm sure. We gladly add ours to those you have received and will receive.

In the above paragraph I wrote about receiving two copies of *Clarion* in one week. I must make an apology. It is my fault that the "Ray of Sunshine" column in the issue of April 22 was published so late. I misplaced it at home and thus it came too late for the issue for which it

was intended. Sorry that this happened.

It appears time and again that our periodical is read far and wide. From reactions I receive from far-away regions it can be learned that what is written is followed with much interest. This strengthens the bond between the brotherhood all over the world. It also is evident that the Churches everywhere have the same questions to answer and the same problems to solve. One of the points which is being discussed is the relation with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the meaning and character of the Westminster Confession of Faith. I had already received the articles by Rev. Pouwelse and had already passed them on to Winnipeg, when a letter arrived from Australia in which was also enclosed a copy of an introduction on the Westminster Confession, delivered at a meeting of the Men's Club in Kelmscott. Thank you for sending it to me and also for the kind words which accompanied it in the letter. We always appreciate hearing from the brotherhood wherever it may be found.

Coming closer to home, and still speaking about contact with others, I think it is worthwhile and interesting to pass on to our readers what Rev. P. Kingma writes about his experiences at a Classis of The Reformed Church in the U.S. (Eureka Classis). We mentioned it before and therefore shall give the floor to Rev. Kingma right away.

## *Impressions*

"Upon invitation of the Rev. P.H. Trieck, minister of the Peace Reformed Church in Napoleon, Ohio, your pastor went to Sutton, Nebraska, on Monday, March 14. The purpose of the trip was to attend Classis Eureka of the Reformed Church in the U.S. (RCUS). We, my son Peter and I, were warmly welcomed by the President Rev. V. Pollema. I was introduced as the pastor of the American Reformed Church Affiliated with the Canadian Reformed Churches. It was the first time that the delegates heard of the existence of the American Reformed Church. Our presence served a twofold purpose: a mutual acquaintance. There was ample opportunity, especially at dinner and supper each day for several people to contact us, delegates as well as members of the two local churches in Sutton, and for us, in turn, to approach others too. All in all, we met many people of various professions and occupations who had one thing in common: the strong desire to hold fast to the reformed faith in order to keep the reformed heritage. This came out in personal talk, in discussion of matters on the floor of Classis, in reports of committees, in the examinations of five men for the ministry of the Word. In a personal letter to me, Rev. Trieck stressed this also.

"Their desire to hold to the reformed faith showed its strength in their rejection of the finalized union in 1940 between the Reformed Church and the Evangelical Synod of North America. The Eureka Classis officially declared itself, in 1940, to be the *continuing* Reformed Church in the U.S. The matter of 'fraternal relations' they take in this sense that 'a denomination must be very close in faith and practice before these relations are established.' Relationships, such as 'churches in ecclesiastical fellowship,' etc. they consider secondary. The RCUS does not have any of them. They have fraternal ties with the OPC and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) only at this time.

"The RCUS are observers at NAPARC, but have not joined, primarily because the CRC is a member and is

considered to have departed to such a large degree from the Reformed faith and are not disciplining the erring ones. The PCA (Presbyterian Church in America) is, in their opinion, too broadly evangelical which allows for Arminian methods and sometimes Arminian teaching. For that reason they have trouble with the recent trends at Westminster Seminary since it is largely controlled by the PCA. The Report of the Special Committee to visit Westminster Theological Seminary, February 1983, gives more details. Since they do not have their own seminary, they are investigating to send their young men to another one. Needless to say, I mentioned our Theological College at Hamilton.

"A Special Committee to confer with Dordt College, where some students of their churches are enrolled, expressed criticism of Dordt College.

"Here I could not offer an alternative, although I mentioned our Teacher's College at Hamilton. Their concern for an education which is in full agreement with the standard of their Church reaches even the college level education, and appears to be so strong that they have special committees appointed to keep a watchful eye on the education given at Westminster and Dordt. There is no binding decision that youth of their churches have to attend these institutions of learning. From the historical review you could learn that these churches had their own seminaries and colleges but lost them due to a reformation or liberation in 1940. The President's Report presented to Classis Eureka 1983 about education said: 'The committee to confer with Dordt College and Westminster Seminary shows our concern and interest in Biblical and Reformed teaching at both the college and seminary level, a concern and interest that must constantly exist.' Youth of the church are educationally cared for by the church at all educational levels."

Thus far Rev. Kingma's report in *Pro Ecclesia*, the weekly bulletin of the Grand Rapids Church. We might say, in a somewhat playful manner: "Dutton went to Sutton, where Sutton discovered Dutton."

Let's go on with other news.

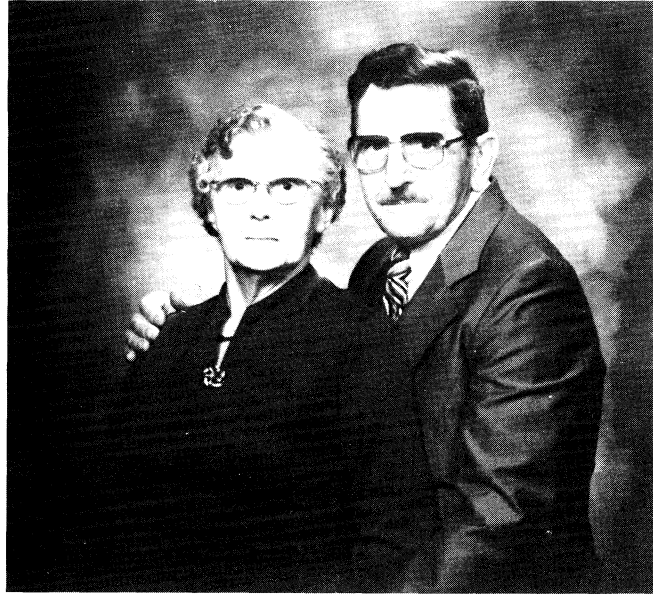
From the same Grand Rapids Church we quote from the Consistory report: "In response to the request for assistance of several brothers and sisters who live in Florida during the winter months, the consistory decided to offer assistance to them and obtain advice from classis on this matter." Although we are left in the dark as to what precisely this assistance is going to be, we may learn more after classical advice has been obtained.

Coming up, we pass through Chatham.

"The consistory has discussed different ways to shorten services during Lord's Supper celebrations. Since none of these proved satisfactory, and because of objections, the decision is to maintain the format of the Lord's Supper as before, including a short sermon."

For several years I, too, did deliver a brief sermon before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, but it was not customary to do so in Fergus, and I am happy with the present arrangement. In the ten minutes or so which are allotted for a brief sermon one cannot but make a few remarks about a text without going deeply into it. This does not really edify the Congregation, unless there is an especially gifted preacher. Besides, the Form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper is in itself a sermon on the Lord's Supper. If anyone should come with the argument that we should not have the Lord's Supper without a sermon, I answer that we do have a

## 50th Wedding Anniversary



*Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Jongs*

*They were married on May 18, 1933 in Winsum, Groningen, Holland. On April 24, 1951 they came to Canada with 9 children and settled in Coaldale Alberta. Later in 1954 they moved to Langley, BC where they farmed for many years. Both are in good health and they are now enjoying their retirement years in Cloverdale, BC.*

sermon, even an ecclesiastically approved one: the Form. I always try so to read the Form that it does not become monotonous and that it speaks to the Congregation. When read and listened to with attention, we do have a beautiful sermon there. Besides, we should take into account the fact that a service in which we celebrate the Lord's Supper is already by its very nature much longer than the regular services and we don't have to make it unnecessarily longer. That's why I am happy with the manner in which we do it in Fergus. However: each one is perfectly free to prefer another course.

In Orangeville "the brethren deacons report on their decision regarding a suggestion made at the congregational meeting to issue receipts for gifts for the needy. They are not in favour and neither is the consistory."

Personally I would not consider it all that much out of line if receipts were given for regular contributions for the support to the needy members. I doubt, of course, whether these receipts would do much good for income tax purposes: most of our members — when taking their contributions to the Church and to the School together — are well above the allowable 20% deduction for income tax purposes. I can see nothing wrong with it when we make use of the right which the government gives us to deduct that much for charitable donations. Mind you, the Consistory of Orangeville nor

the deacons there said that it was *wrong* to do so; they only say that they are not in favour of it without saying, however, why they are not in favour.

Something which may have to have the attention of more Consistories is the following question, asked during the question period at Carman's Consistory meeting. "Have the organists received their token of appreciation? Yes they have."

In one of the Neerlandia bulletins I found this: "A letter from the 'Stichting Bralecta' asking support for the year 1983. It is decided to sent \$100.00 like last year, with a letter asking for information whether we could also profit from this work, if necessary, in the English language."

I mention this, for from this sentence it becomes clear that not everyone is aware of it that an extension of the work of "Bralecta" is found in our own country. Rev. and Mrs. Pouwelse (more the latter than the former) do much work for it. Mrs. Pouwelse, e.g., "speaks" articles from, among others, *Clarion* "onto" the tape, and these tapes are sent to brothers and sisters who cannot read them themselves. As far as I know the mailing is free, and the equipment that Mrs. Pouwelse is using for this has been paid for by the "Stichting Bralecta" in The Netherlands. Thus the benefits can be enjoyed here as well. Mrs. Pouwelse undoubtedly is willing to give more information if asked for it.

The Immanuel Church at Edmonton reports "The construction of our new church building is progressing well. When you take a drive down then you will note that the foundations are completed and that framing is about to begin, or by now has already been started. The next month will reveal quite a difference as the actual structure is built."

We reach the Fraser Valley.

As general news we may pass on something from the Resthome Society.

"We, as Board, appreciated the fact that our last Annual Meeting turned out to be a very nice 'gezellige' evening which was also of a constructive nature. The constitution of the Board remained the same, so we can continue on as normal.

"The Board received the mandate to look elsewhere for property. We went one Saturday and toured the surrounding area between Clearbrook and Newton but came to the conclusion that only Cloverdale had suitable properties within a 'suitable price range.' We narrowed our choice down to 3 or 4 properties and now we are working out the developing costs. We hope to make an offer to purchase soon. Sorry to disappoint you but this all takes time."

## PRESS RELEASE

of the Men's League Day, March 26, 1983, held in Lincoln, ON.

At the council meeting early in the morning it was quickly established that the societies wish to continue supporting the Men's League. We as board had about given up: two societies resigned this year, so we are down to five societies again, the same number as when we started. In order to run the I.L.P.B. we need a healthy Men's League. It was said that it should not just be the Young People's League that is running things. So, we carry on.

The I.L.P.B. report shows a revival of

that part of our organization. More was accomplished in this past year than in the previous four years. The typing classes at "Guido de Brès" are also involved. It was further reported that the distribution of study material may be back in the hands of the I.L.P.B. We will then again sell study material to member societies at cost. All others can buy from book stores or from Premier Printing.

In the General Meeting we had the biggest turnout in a long time. Rev. M. Werkman's speech on "Marriage and Divorce" was well worth listening to and a flood of questions were answered. It would be nice to have this speech published in *Clarion* for those who could not attend this meeting.

Anyway, there is action.

As for the individual Churches, we take them alphabetically.

Abbotsford comprises members living in Canada and members living in the United States. "An introductory discussion was held on the possibility of church institution in the U.S.A. This discussion will be continued." Sorry that I cannot tell you any further particulars as yet. The growth of the Congregation will also have some influence on the discussions, I presume. It would be nice if there could be another American Reformed Church.

Many contributions are made to the local Church-life without those who make the contributions being recognized or even mentioned. To honour all of them who unobtrusively but faithfully give their time and effort to serve the Church, I mention the following brief passage from Chilliwack.

"It is proper that we yet express a public thank-you for the work of two brothers in making furniture for the church. Br. A. spent numerous hours constructing a number of tables for use in the Catechism room. Br. B. displayed his talent in woodworking by making a kneeling bench which doubles as a rack for the collection bags. Your efforts are very much appreciated, brothers."

And so are the efforts of all who, in similar fashion, contribute by using the talents they have received.

Cloverdale's Church is busy with the preparations for the forthcoming General Synod. "The 'Prayer Service' for this Synod is scheduled for D.V. October 31st. Rev. D. VanderBoom will be asked to lead this service."

Surrey apparently is considering acquisition of another manse. We conclude this from the following. "Also the matter of more suitable living quarters for our minister's family is dealt with. A mandate is given to look for alternatives and to come with a proposal." As you will understand: this was at a meeting of the Consistory with the Committee of Administration.

Rests me to mention that there seems to be some growth in the Okanagan Valley, that after having been vacant for nineteen years the Church at Ottawa expects to receive a minister this summer, that the Church at Neerlandia may look forward to having their own minister again as well, and that all of a sudden today the weather here changed and spring finally seems to have arrived. Which makes one look forward to the holidays. Patience, brother, patience! There is a promise that the seasons will continue to follow one another in regular order for as long as this dispensation lasts.

VO

Lincoln's Ladies' Aid looked after and served an excellent lunch.

We hope next year's meeting (to be held in Smithville) will again see an increase in attendance. The poor turnout in the last few years may be partly to blame for the problems we as board have had in arranging speakers. It seems impolite, to say the least, to find a handfull of people showing up for a speech that some busy person spent a long time in preparing. There is still time to send suggestions for next year's topic and speaker to the board. So far no one did. Apart from money, very little was contributed to the League; and without input, how can you expect output?

For the Board, Wm. C.V.

## PATRIMONY PROFILE<sub>12</sub>

By Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene

Three years later a son would be born to Rutgers who was to receive the names Frederik Lode-wijk. Dr. F.L. Rutgers is a man whose name we mention with great gratitude. In the second Reformation of the nineteenth century he would occupy an important place, and he is still being honoured by the true sons of that Reformation as the man who thoroughly knew and faithfully defended and propagated the good, old, Reformed Church Polity.

### *Two Wolves*

There is little doubt that the Classical Board of Middelstum was more or less saved from an embarrassing situation by other events which gave it a stick in its hands with which to discipline de Cock. What could they have done if the only complaint against the man had been that he baptized children from other congregations? From Molenaar's letter it was clear that there was no article in any regulation forbidding such practice. Thus it was a welcome thing that de Cock wrote a booklet in which he attacked two ministers, L. Meyer Brouwer, minister at Uithuizen, and G. Benthem Reddingius, minister at Assen.

Why did Hendrik de Cock attack them? Both ministers had published a booklet in which deviation from the true doctrine was obvious and in which the God-fearing were ridiculed and slandered.

The Rev. Brouwer had published two sermons with the title *Necessary Warning and Salutary Advice to My Congregation*. In his sermons he opposed brute unbelief as well as passiveness. He described those who were really concerned about their sins as people who seek security within themselves, their spiritual condition, and their inner emotions. De Cock describes Brouwer's opinion regarding faith as follows, "He thinks that someone can and may himself appropriate the boldness or permission to believe because God has declared in the gospel through His Son that everyone who believes shall be saved, but he does not know or does not consider that faith is a gift of God, that all flesh has to be regenerated by the Spirit of God if it is to see life, and that there are many who walk with such an appropriated faith as with a lie in their hand, with such a faith of which James says that it is dead, because it does not have the works, and such people deny its power."

Having shown from Scripture and Confession

that Brouwer does not promote, but rather denies, the truth, de Cock concludes that that minister, by his writing, has violated the promise made when he signed the Subscription Form.

While Brouwer's sermons were more or less an open attack, the booklet by Dr. Benthem Reddingius was meaner than his colleague's publication. Reddingius wrote in the form of letters containing replies to fictional letters from a friend who asked him several questions. Allegedly, that friend complained that so many people in the congregations were discontent and more or less revolted against their ministers. What should one think of such people? How should one deal with them? And what will be the result if they so obviously separate themselves from the others?

The answer which Reddingius gave was: In the first place, they are mostly ignorant people. The best way to deal with them, Reddingius declared, is to ignore them. And as for future effects, they will slowly but surely become extinct or start disagreeing among themselves.

That Brouwer's second sermon was directed against de Cock and those who flocked to him is clear, among other things, from Brouwer's remark, "That nowadays in various places also among us there are such people is well-known to you, Beloved." One does not need any imagination to figure out to whom the reverend writer alludes.

Before discussing Reddingius' answer to the three questions posed, de Cock answers them himself. What are we to think of them? By the fruits we shall know the tree. That they don't go to church with modernistic ministers is wholly in accordance with what the Lord Jesus said, "A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him." In reply to the question how one should deal with them, de Cock's says: "They should be nourished with the Word of God."

Initially de Cock had no intention of writing against the two above-named publications. He hoped that someone else would take up the pen to defend the true doctrine and the faithful believers against such open and slanderous attacks. That he nevertheless did write against them was the result of a challenge. At a classical meeting de Cock spoke with Brouwer about the two booklets, but he was the only one to speak against them: all the other ministers present declared that they agreed with the writers. A complaint against Brouwer, accusing him of deviation from the Reformed doctrine, got nowhere. Brouwer, in turn, challenged de Cock to write publicly against them if he was of the opinion that things were really that bad.

That's what Hendrik de Cock did.

### *Acknowledging the King*

The booklet which he wrote against Brouwer

and Reddingius was not his only publication. It was preceded by a new publication of the Canons of Dort, of which de Cock also sent a copy to the King, accompanied by a letter in which he urged His Majesty to stand up for the freedom of conscience in the line of his illustrious forefathers, especially William the Silent and Maurice, who also upheld the true service of God. He further explained to the King why he decided to provide a new printing of the Canons: for they are no longer known by almost anyone, and in those Canons have been branded as lies and have been rejected according to God's Word "the lies which nowadays are generally peddled as the truth."

Another booklet which de Cock had reprinted was the so-called *Brief Summary*. That is a booklet with questions and answers, largely derived from the Catechism, and intended to be a guide for instruction and examination of those who wish to be admitted to the Holy Supper, issued as a result of a decision of the Synod of Dordrecht 1618/1619. Of this publication he sent a copy to the King as well, again with an accompanying letter. As the other time, so this time he urged the Sovereign to defend the true, Reformed religion in the line of William of Orange, Father of the Fatherland, that the enemies of God — who at the same time are enemies of the fatherland — be terrified and dispersed.

At the same time he told the King about the difficulties of those parents whose children remained unbaptized — some already for more than three years — "because of the total corruption in the doctrine of their ministers." He mentioned that he consulted the Rev. Molenaar and that he did not dare to refuse, "because of which I got some trouble, even though I cannot find any provision about that in the ecclesiastical regulations." On the contrary, God's Word gives me freedom to do so, as is also evident from Articles 27, 28, and 29 of our Confession.

Also in this case, we do not know whether the King really took note of everything which de Cock sent him. It certainly did have the attention of the Minister of State, van Pallandt van Keppel. He wrote to the King in a letter dated November 13, 1833, that it seemed strange to reprint the decisions of Dort which are widely distributed and known; but the Preface of de Cock makes clear what the intention of the republishing was: from that Preface "the clear aim of the writer became evident: to contribute by this small booklet towards a renewing of the disastrous controversies of the 17th century." The writer appears in an even more unfavourable light "by the hateful manner in which he tries to expose as false shepherds and teachers all his colleagues who do not agree with his strict ideas. Everywhere the goal shines through: to sow distrust and to arouse the urge to charge with heresy."

He is, the Minister wrote, a young man "who

since his arrival in Ulrum has acquired a large following among the villagers by his fanatic way of preaching. He seems to have gotten quite a high opinion of himself: the circle seems to be too small for him and he considers himself competent to act as the head of the ecclesiastical opposition party or movement as well." His style is bad, was the Minister's judgment, and his knowledge of history very defective. "The undersigned will not have to add anything to the above in support of his advice: that His Majesty could lay aside both the letter and the booklet."

And the King did accordingly . . . .

#### *Some Scheming*

To his booklet in which he refuted Brouwer and Reddingius de Cock gave the following title: *Defense of the True Reformed Doctrine and of the True Reformed People, Contested by Two So-called Reformed Ministers, or: The Sheepfold of Christ Attacked by Two Wolves and Defended by H. de Cock, Reformed Minister at Ulrum*. It appeared on November 15, 1833.

The title is already sufficient indication of its contents. No wonder that the brochure soon became the object of discussion and the occasion for slander and hostility against its author. Even before any ecclesiastical assembly occupied itself with it, the machinery was put into motion by the highest civil authorities.

On the 30th of November, 1833, the well-known J.D. Janssen wrote a letter to the Rev. J.J. Damsté of Uithuizermeeden. In this letter he tells Damsté that the Minister and he had heard of the booklet which "the now already so notorious *H. de Cock*, minister at *Ulrum*," published. Janssen had not read it as yet but had ordered it. It is a big question, he writes, whether such things can be done with impunity. The Minister was of the opinion that it was out to "cause unrest in ecclesiastical governments, and I share that opinion."

"Ideas," Janssen writes, "and systems are toll-free; de Cock is perfectly free to reel off his 'paleology,' but the public slandering and inveighing against honourable colleagues, the raging to cause revolt, does not belong to mysticist fanaticism but to *moral misconduct*. Even though the Minister is assured that, *if* the above mentioned writing is indeed so harmful, the Classical Board of Middelstum will deal with the writer according to the ecclesiastical ordinances, His Excellency asked me to write to you confidentially, as it is of an offensive and sensational nature, and to request you to let me know what the situation is and what the Board has done. As my letter is wholly *private and confidential*, the reply which I await will be dealt with in exactly the same manner."

— *To be continued.*





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.

## CALGARY

A Baptist pastor who's been running an "illegal" school for more than two years is battling the Calgary Public School Board for the right to control his children's education.

The school board brought truancy charges against Pastor Larry Jones whose three daughters are among 26 children from kindergarten to Grade 11 attending the Western Baptist Church School.

Jake Longmore, chief superintendent of the school board, says his department isn't trying to persecute Jones, but is simply administering the School Act. (CI)

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## MEXICO CITY (UPI)

The Mexican government has ordered the Summer Institute of Linguistics to withdraw immediately from the south-eastern state of Oaxaca.

President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado decided to do so after a special commission had investigated the work of the missionaries. According to the daily *La Opinion de Oaxaca* the missionaries interfered with the language, religion and morals of the Indians.

Already in 1979 Mexican ethnologists and anthropologists warned that the missionaries were destroying the Indian culture. (ND)

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## LOUISVILLE, KY. (RNS)

The Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky has turned back conservative moves to excommunicate homosexuals and criticize the National and World councils of churches for alleg-

edly funding left-wing revolutionaries.

The actions came during the 155th annual convention of the diocese, which includes 46 parishes and missions in Louisville and the western half of Kentucky.

After lengthy consideration, nearly 100 clerical and lay deputies voted down a motion offered by a Louisville layman who asked that homosexuality be declared sinful and that "impenitent avowed homosexuals" be barred from receiving sacraments of the Episcopal Church. Instead, the convention voted to express concern for "all our brothers and sisters, regardless of race, creed, political orientation or sexual preferences." (CN)

\* \* \*

## WASHINGTON (RNS)

Making 1983 the "Year of the Bible" was a Christian fundamentalist and Roman Catholic ploy to sidestep Supreme Court decisions upholding the constitutional separation of church and state, a noted legal scholar told a gathering of secular humanists here.

Leo Pfeffer, a law professor and special counsel to the American Jewish Congress, addressed some 200 people attending a conference called to counter the proclamation adopted last year by both houses of Congress and signed by President Reagan. Speakers challenged the proclamation's assertion that the U.S. was founded on Judeo-Christian values.

But, one non-humanist speaker at the conference, noted Columbia University history professor Richard Morris, said that while the notion that the Founding Fathers were trying to establish a Christian nation and that the principles underlying the U.S. system of government are "merely extensions" of Judeo-Christian traditions are "simplistic propositions," they "cannot be dismissed out of hand."

He noted, for instance, that the Founding Fathers were known to have taken "almost daily inspiration" from the Old Testament and that many Americans at the time saw the new nation as the "new Israel." Dr. Morris added that some of them would have also dissented from recent Supreme Court decisions seeking to uphold "the notion of a wall of separation of church and state." (CN)

\* \* \*

## NEW YORK (RNS)

Since the National Council of Churches does not clearly define

what a church is, the NCC's 32 Protestant and Orthodox members must each decide separately on the membership application of a homosexual church based on their own ecclesiology, says a report by NCC's faith and order commission.

"As presently stated, the preamble and purpose of the NCC could be interpreted to allow either a positive or a negative on this matter," said a report by theologians of the member communions that commented on the application by the predominantly homosexual Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. NCC's faith and order commission began the study 18 months ago. (CN)

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## GHANA

When a young Christian man marries in Ghana, he is expected to provide an "Engagement-Bible," along with the traditional bride price. Bible Society Distribution Secretary *Alex Mensah Teinor* explains: "Because this is traditionally linked up with marriage, Christians always want to have the Bride's Bible added to the bride price that is paid. If they get married without that, they will be sad." Until recently only English Bride's Bibles have been available; now small quantities — which will have to be rationed — are available through the Bible Society of Ghana in five local languages. They have white covers, and a special dedication page on which the bridegroom can inscribe the name of his bride. (CBSQN)

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## UGANDA

Two plane-loads of Bibles — 100,000 in all — were air-freighted to Entebbe in time for Christmas distribution, to help relieve the desperate shortage of Scriptures there. UBS spent \$360,000 (U.S.) on air freight, rather than cheaper but much slower sea shipment, because the Bible Society in Uganda had virtually no Bibles in stock. The 69 tons of Bibles were printed in England, loaded in containers, transported by lorries and ferry across the channel to Holland and then to Frankfurt, whence they were flown in two Boeing 707 cargo planes to Entebbe. (CBSQN)

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THE U.S. APPETITE FOR VIDEO GAMES SEEMS INSATIABLE. From the first computerized game, Atari's *Pong* in 1975, to today's some 250 different game cassettes, Americans

## A Ray of Sunshine



### SO EASY

*It's so easy to criticize what other people do: to stand aside condemning if a thing looks wrong to you . . . It's so easy to pass a judgment from an easy chair — weighing up a burden that you never had to bear.*

*It's so easy to give directions to the other chap — his difficulties to dispose of and his life to map . . . It's so easy to see where other people lose their way — pointing out just how and where and why they went astray.*

*It's so easy to throw a stone at someone else's back. It's so easy to moralise, to blame and to attack. It's so easy to talk, but it's a harder thing to do — to lend a helping hand and take a charitable view.*

### YOU NEVER CAN TELL

*You never can tell when you send a word  
Like an arrow shot from a bow  
By an archer blind, be it cruel or kind,  
Just where it may chance to go.  
It may pierce the breast of your dearest friend,  
Tipped with its poison or balm,  
To a stranger's heart in life's great mart  
It may carry its pain or its calm.*

*You never can tell when you do an act  
Just what the result will be,  
But with every deed you are sowing a seed,*

*Though the harvest you may not see.  
Each kindly act is an acorn dropped  
In God's productive soil;  
You may not know, but the tree shall grow  
With shelter for those who toil.*

*You never can tell what your thoughts will do  
In bringing you hate or love,  
For thoughts are things, and their airy wings  
Are swifter than carrier doves.  
They follow the law of the universe —  
Each thing must create its kind,  
And they speed o'er the track to bring you back  
Whatever went out from your mind.*

*Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

**Albert Dorgeloos** sent us a thank-you note. He had a very nice birthday. He received many cards, went out for supper, and was treated on a chocolate birthday cake at the Home. Albert is already looking forward to his next birthday. Thanks, brothers and sisters. It made Albert very happy!

**HERMAN WEMEKAMP**  
131 Brenda Blvd.,  
Orangeville, ON L9W 3L5

*Last year we published Herman's name for his birthday. This year we are again requested to do so. Brother Wemekamp has multiple sclerosis and had to undergo several operations last year. He is home again and is feeling a lot better. His birthday is on May 21, the Lord willing! Shall we make this a memorable day for our brother?*

*Please send your requests to:*

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

have gorged themselves on modern technology's latest innovation. In 1981, Americans fed 20 billion quarters into arcade machines and spent an amazing six billion dollars on video games. The number of game computers in the home is expected to double in 1983 and, according to industry forecasts, will continue to increase until 1985, at which point nearly half of all US homes with TV sets will own a video game machine. (TB)

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ABORTION FOES AND MANY OTHER RESIDENTS OF MADISON,

WISCONSIN, are upset at six live-birth abortions in the last 10 months in Madison. All six babies died within 27 hours after they were aborted. All the pregnancies were in the second three months of development, a time during which few infants survive natural delivery. Madison General Hospital has banned all abortions after 18 weeks unless the woman's life is in danger. The University of Wisconsin Hospital now requires an ultrasound test for women whose pregnancies are more than 20 weeks old. Ultrasound is the most accurate means to determine fetal age. (CT)

### FRANKFURT, WEST GERMANY (EWNS)

It has been learned that a secret document outlining the Ethiopian government's plan to bring the church under state control and for the eventual elimination of religion in that country is being used in the classrooms to train future government workers.

The West German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* recently printed the full 29-point text of the document which was smuggled out of Ethiopia. Students at the 12 Yekatit political schools in

Addis Ababa have been using the manual during a three-month course. (Comm.)

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#### **KHARTOUM, SUDAN (SIM)**

During a recent four-day holiday, young people from the SIM Chapel and other evangelical churches here distributed 2000 New Testaments in this Islamic metropolis.

The distribution effort is part of a program, under supervision of the Khartoum Bible Society, to distribute 5000 New Testaments in the tricity of Khartoum, Khartoum-North, and Omdurman. (Comm.)

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**A UNITED METHODIST TASK FORCE** will recommend that the terms 'Lord' and 'King' no longer be used generally as synonyms for God since the words assume God has male characteristics. The task force may recommend the Aramaic word 'Abba,' instead. 'Abba' which means 'Daddy,' connotes an earthly image different from 'father,' according to the task force. It was assigned in 1980 to revise guidelines for eliminating racism, sexism, and ageism in church materials. (CT)

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#### **DENVER (RNS)**

A regional United Methodist Church panel has refused a congregation's request to remove Denver Bishop Melvin Wheatley Jr. from office because he has backed homosexuals.

The episcopacy committee of the Western jurisdiction said it doesn't have the power to remove the bishop from office and also that the congregation in La Veta was raising complaints against the bishop which have already been considered and rejected.

The 130-member La Veta congregation had appealed to the episcopacy committee "to involuntarily retire" Bishop Wheatley, saying the appointment of gay pastor Julian Rush to a Denver church and the bishop's statement that homosexuality was not a sin violate the Methodist Discipline. (CN)

VO

#### **OUR COVER**

Stoney Lake, Ontario. Photo Courtesy Ontario Ministry of Industry and Tourism.

# **PARALIPOMENA**

## **GRADING AND GRADUATIONS**

### *Conflicting Information*

If I am not mistaken, there have appeared in our *Clarion* two statements regarding the Hymn Section of our *Book of Praise*. The one came from the Publication Committee which, according to my book, has the copyrights of the *Book of Praise* plus appendices. The other came from the office of the printer. The first said: no more hymn books in stock, and because the definitive Book will appear in the near future, no new ones will be printed anymore; help yourself for the time being. The second informed readers that new hymn books will be printed and become available soon.

That, to say the least, is lack of communication in higher regions. It is also bad publicity, causing confusion in the lower regions of us, average church members.

[Publisher's Note: Even though the new hymn books have not yet been published, the printer received the permission of the new Committee for the Publication of the Anglo Genevan Psalter to proceed with a reprint of the hymn books].

### *Different Reactions*

From what I hear and read, I must conclude that the reactions to this contradicting information are different. In one place it was deplored that the new hymns could no longer be sung, for the time being anyway. Elsewhere no tears were shed: they hadn't sung from the new hymns yet anyway. Now they got an extra excuse.

Okay, we live in a free country. But . . . , in this relatively unimportant matter, an aspect of the life of our churches comes to the surface. If I am not mistaken, our Editor has already put his finger on the strange attitude that some churches did not yet use the green booklet with the hymns nor the grey booklet with the new

version of the Liturgical Forms. Both have been provisionally accepted and adopted by General Synod 1980. Request: that the churches test them (of course by using them) before the final print of the complete *Book of Praise* can be prepared. But, as pointed out, some churches did not yet use them, obviously to the chagrin of several members. Other churches readily and thankfully started using them, happy that they now, finally, can sing a bit more of the mighty acts of God in Jesus Christ in the terms of the New Testament.

Okay, we live in a free country.

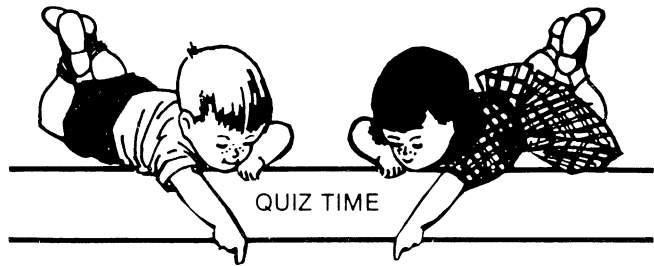
### *But now: the "Grading"*

One gets the impression that the former attitude ("not so fast in using new things") is considered more pious, more Reformed: "We stand as watchmen on Jerusalem's wall!" The happy users of all that "new stuff" are considered a bit "lightweight"; they do not seem all that seriously concerned about the truly Reformed attitude in such matters that touch on the future of the churches. And thus (I hardly would have believed it some years ago) another hallmark is added to the ones we have already and by means of which the local churches are weighed and graded.

No, no, we don't all have to be alike. A bit of pluriformity within the federation of churches, and even within the one local church, is fine. Never a dull moment! But one wonders: How long will it take (I now think in terms of the coming of our Lord) . . . how long will it take till we finally "in humility count others better than ourselves." That's even a word from the Bible! Paul wrote it to the Philippians, and I think it is also meant for us.

CHRONICLER

# our little magazine



Hello Busy Beavers,

Isn't Spring great?  
No more heavy coats and boots, no more cold.  
Warm weather to play out, even after supper!  
Pretty flowers and bushes all around.  
Isn't spring great!  
Now it's time for baseball games, Mother's Day and gardening.  
Let's hear what YOU are doing to keep busy this spring!

Here's the address:

Aunt Betty  
Box 54  
Fergus, ON N1M 2W7

\* \* \*

## FOR YOU TO DO

Did you make a pretty card at school to give your Mom on Mother's Day?

Good start!

Are you planning to make her something?

Or are you planning something special for her on Sunday morning?

Let's hear from you Busy Beavers how you treated your Mom on Mother's Day!



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beavers Club *Angela Brouwer*. We are happy to have you join us, and we hope you'll really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Thank you for an interesting cross-word puzzle, Angela. Keep up the good work.

Welcome to you, too, *Karen Harsevoort*. I see you're a real Busy Beaver already! Thank you very much for the riddles and the puzzle. Write again soon, Karen.

And a big welcome to you, *Jessica Linde*. We are happy to have you join the Club. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver activities! Will you write and tell us about yourself and your hobbies?

## RIDDLES FOR YOU

Thanks for sharing Busy Beaver *Karen Harsevoort!*

- Why couldn't anybody drink pop at the double-header baseball game?
- What is a boxer's favourite drink?
- When does the fastest runner lose the race?
- What does a polite jogger say when he leaves?

Answers:

- The home team lost the opener!
- Punch
- When he wears socks guaranteed not to run.
- "So long. I've got to run now."

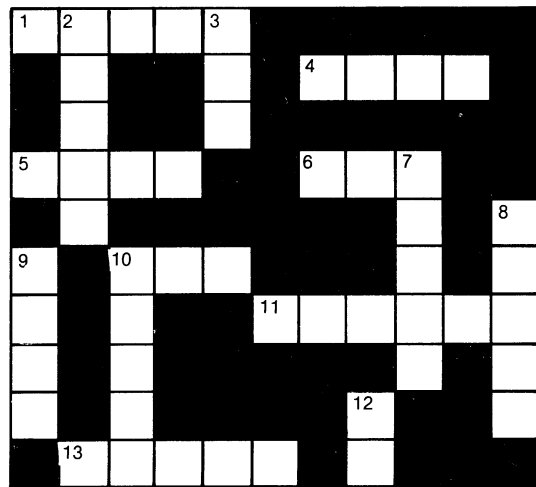
Here's a good Bible quiz for Mother's Day. Can you match?

## Mother and Son

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. Salome     | a. Timothy |
| 2. Hannah     | b. Jacob   |
| 3. Eunice     | c. John    |
| 4. Rachel     | d. James   |
| 5. Eve        | e. Samuel  |
| 6. Sarah      | f. Obed    |
| 7. Jochebed   | g. Solomon |
| 8. Rebekah    | h. Joseph  |
| 9. Ruth       | i. Moses   |
| 10. Bathsheba | j. Abel    |
| 11. Elizabeth | k. Isaac   |

## CROSS-WORD PUZZLE

by Busy Beaver *Angela Brouwer*



## Clues

### ACROSS

- We read the \_\_\_\_\_ every day. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the Word of God.
- Another word for God. The \_\_\_\_\_ is my Shepherd . . .
- What did Jesus say to Mary? Small round pieces of ice.
- Another word for the Lord. Hint: It's in #4.
- \_\_\_\_\_ was a man who served God. Another word for occupation.
- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ is the Son of God. . . . of whom Jesus was born, who is called \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 1:16).
- \_\_\_\_\_ is the Son of God. Now when \_\_\_\_\_ saw great crowds. . . (Matt. 8:18).