

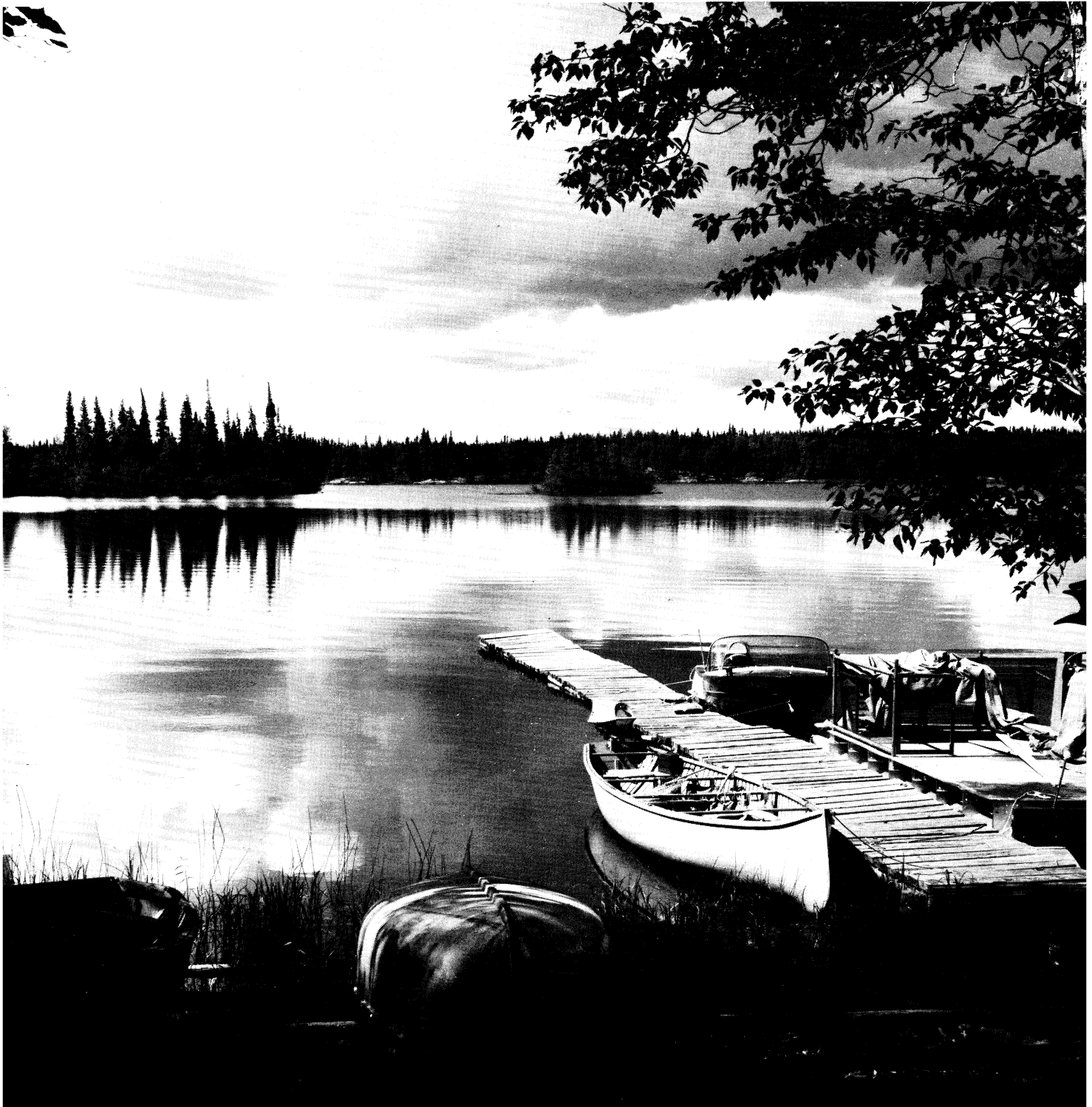


Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Vol. 32, No. 12

June 17, 1983



MARRIAGE and FAMILY LIFE₂

5. Mixed couples

A point of special attention in this respect is what often times is referred to as “mixed couples” — a date, an engagement, or a marriage in which one of the two is a believer and the other is not. The question has often been asked: What is wrong with an engagement to someone who is not a member of the church? We do not have that much choice. Especially in small congregations the young people can have difficulty finding a friend. Sometimes they even consider it a matter of evangelism to have a friend from outside the church. You never know whether you can bring someone to Christ. Does not the apostle Paul himself say in I Cor. 7:12-16: “. . . if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is consecrated through her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy”?

That seems to be a strong point. If you leave each other free, if the other consents to living together without hindering the partner in serving the Lord, what is wrong with that? The unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife and the unbelieving wife is consecrated through her husband. And the children are holy. That is the reasoning we can hear very often.

When we reason along this line, it even appears to be preferable to seek for a date, a boyfriend, or a girlfriend outside the church. That is evangelism; that is the way you can bring others to Christ.

Such reasoning is wrong, however. Evangelism is an important thing, and we should try to bring others to Christ wherever we can. All kinds of methods can be used. But we should not use marriage or engagement as tools of evangelism.

It is an incorrect use of the Bible to quote the above-mentioned text to defend such a case. The apostle does not speak about dating, engagement, or a preparation for marriage. What he is referring to is a couple who married while they were both unbelievers. Later one of them became a Christian. What were they supposed to do now? Break up the marriage, because the partner was not (or not yet) a believer? No, the apostle says. If the one becomes a Christian, the other should be given time to think it over, to make up his mind. Don't rush and don't push too hard. Don't separate from each other all of a sudden. If the other agrees to stay together and in the meantime leaves you free to serve the Lord, you should stay together as long as possible. You never know whether God will

bring the other to Christ as well. It took you a while to accept the gospel; therefore bear patiently with your partner. If the other becomes a hindrance to your serving the Lord, if he no longer accepts your serving the Lord, if he becomes hostile, you may be forced to separate, for Christ's sake. But don't do it too hastily.

This has nothing to do with getting engaged with someone who is not a believer. As far as that is concerned the apostle has another message. To those who are believers and who are about to make an arrangement or a choice to get married, the apostle writes in II Cor. 6:14-18: “Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, ‘I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’ ” That should be our attitude. “Do not be mismatched with unbelievers.”

We do not say that all cooperation with unbelievers is impossible *per se*. If that were the case, we would have to go out of this world. In our daily work, in our job, in our vocation, we have to work together. That can create problems. We have to defend our point of view and our faith wherever necessary. Sometimes we have to fight. In other cases we have to withdraw, because it can be made impossible for us to comply with certain rules or regulations. A job can bring with it requirements we cannot meet as Christians. But still we have our task and mandate in this world.

However, in the married state husband and wife have to be one in faith. They have to support each other in every respect. They have to live together in holiness, according to the Word of God. In I Cor. 6:19 the apostle Paul says: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” A temple of the Holy Spirit, that is what we are supposed to be. It is clear that you cannot begin such a relation when you are not one in Christ.

In the previous instalment we mentioned the necessity of communication. That is extremely important in this respect. These matters have to be discussed right from the beginning. When young people go steady for a long time, it can be very difficult to keep the relationship pure and holy, according to the Word of God. Decisions

have to be made, temptations have to be overcome and resisted. Then it is very important to be one in faith and to know and agree about what the Lord asks from you. Therefore a couple should discuss these matters right from the beginning, or, even better, you should know about someone's relation with the Lord before you start any personal relationship in this respect.

Too often these matters are postponed. "We will talk about it later. Don't bother right now. Don't worry, we will solve this problem. Because we really love each other, we will be able to straighten it out when the time comes." But don't forget: faith is not something you can give to someone else or something you can agree on of your own accord. When a relationship develops, you will grow closer, and it will be more difficult to quit if the other does not become a believer.

We have to be aware of a danger in two directions. It is possible that someone, to avoid problems with relatives, agrees to join the church, without being convinced. That is not right and it is not honest and fair either. No one should become a member of the church to satisfy others. To join the church should always be a matter of personal faith and conviction.

It is also possible that the believer gives in and leaves the church. If you are not able to wait with building up a relationship until you are sure about someone's relation to the Lord, it will be almost impossible to break up the relationship later when you do not agree about joining the church. Too often it happens that these matters are dealt with in a rush, without really straightening them out. The consequences will become manifest later.

Of course, there are also cases where someone joins the church and becomes a faithful member, even an example for others. Such people may see the hand of the Lord in their life.

There is a tendency among our people to consider members who have a different cultural background as second-class members. That is absolutely wrong. Our churches are called the Canadian Reformed Churches and we should show the meaning and the truth of this name in our whole attitude. We call ourselves a Canadian church. Therefore Canadian people should feel at home in our church. Some people seem to think that a Dutch cultural background is equivalent to a Reformed background. But we are not a Dutch church in Canada, although we are often referred to in that way. We have to admit that we give reason for that. Our aim should be to be a Canadian Reformed church, the church of Jesus Christ in this part of the world.

When people, from whatever origin they may be, join our churches because they believe in Jesus Christ, they are full-fledged members of the church. Sometimes they are even better members than those who have never thought about their membership. We have to be humble and we have to acknowledge that some are members simply because they are too lazy and too indifferent to do something else; they take it for granted and they don't like any trouble, but they are not interested or involved in church life at all. We are not talking about numbers; it does not matter how many or how few cases like this there are. It is a fact that they exist. Let us therefore not look down upon members of the church with a different background who joined the church just a couple of years before they got married.

There is one thing we should keep in mind and that is that the membership of the church has to be a matter of

priority. I am convinced that those who joined the church before they got married and who became faithful members of the church are the ones who discussed these things right from the beginning and who oftentimes agreed beforehand that it could come to a marriage only if they really, by their own conviction and as a matter of voluntary choice, wholeheartedly would join the church and together become one in faith.

6. Prayer

The time of engagement is a preparation for marriage. The two parties are trying to get better acquainted with each other. They have to learn how to get along, not only at a party, not only during a nice evening of entertainment, but also when they have to face problems and when they disagree. They have to fight together against the temptations of sin. They have to accept each other's weak points, shortcomings, and bad habits. They have to learn how to share joy and sorrow.

Nowadays young people feel freer than in the past when they are together. They are no longer all that shy, especially not as far as mutual conversation is concerned. In the "world" we see the other extreme. There seem to be no secrets or inhibitions at all. The slogan is: Do just what you like, as long as you do not hurt the other, either physically or spiritually. In this situation it is very important that our young people develop a sound relationship in another direction. To be able to stand firm in all kinds of temptations, they really need the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

When young people are together, discussing their plans for the future, preparing for the married state, getting acquainted with each other, they should also make it a custom to pray together. Some consider that to be strange: a young couple, not yet married, praying together? But don't forget that the time of engagement is a preparation for the married state. After the wedding you have to do everything together. Together bringing before the throne of God everything in your life can be of great help in living in holiness before the Lord and in overcoming temptations during your engagement. To pray together brings you closer together in your love for one another and makes you one in the Lord. It will give you strength to stand firm and keep your body a holy temple of the Lord.

Isn't it strange that so many people anticipate their married state in the way they live together during their engagement, while they are scared or too shy to pray together? It should be just the other way around. Praying together belongs to the necessary spiritual preparations for marriage.

7. The wedding ceremony

The married state is an institution of the Lord. He has said from the beginning: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen. 2:18). The Form for the Solemnization of Marriage puts it this way: "Since the Lord forbids immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman should have her own husband, so that our bodies may be preserved as temples of the Holy Spirit and we may glorify God in our body."

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and he shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24 and Eph. 5:32).

The married state is an institution of the Lord and a marriage is basically an agreement between two persons

to live together as husband and wife, according to the ordinance of the Lord. It is, in the first place, something in which the parents have to be involved. The young people will leave their respective parents to become one flesh, to make their own family. That has to be done with the consent of their parents. A marriage is not a decision of the church, neither is it a pronouncement of the civil government. It is, in the first place, a family matter. However, the church and the civil government each do have their own responsibility in this respect.

When a child is born, it has to be registered in the files of the civil government and in the administration of the church. A child does not exist because it is legally registered, but it has to be registered because it exists. It is the same with a wedding. A marriage has to be registered. In some countries that can take place only in the city hall. In Canada a marriage can be legally registered by a church minister who is recognized by the provincial government for that purpose.

The minister does not “marry” the couple. No, the couple, in the presence and with the consent of the parents, marry each other, and the minister fulfils the legally necessary steps to register this marriage. He pronounces them husband and wife because they are husband and wife. The couple has to declare publicly that they have accepted and do accept each other as husband and wife; they have to give their vows publicly, because their married state has consequences also for their position in public life. During the wedding ceremony they have to promise that they will live according to the commandments of the Lord. In the Form it says: “Do you promise . . . to live with him/her in holiness, according to the holy gospel?”

According to the laws of the civil government a marriage can easily be dissolved by a divorce, but according to the Word of God husband and wife have to stay together; they promise never to forsake one another. They have to live together “until death will part them” (as the Form puts it).

The wedding ceremony in the church is not a sacrament. In our churches it is oftentimes a private meeting of the family, with the minister conducting the ceremony, although according to the Church Order it can be done also in an official worship service.

In this respect the question can be asked whether a marriage can be solemnized in our churches when one of the parties is not a member of the church. Some argue that, because a wedding is not an ecclesiastical matter, a minister is free to do so. However, the Church Order says in Article 70: “Since it is proper that the matrimonial state be confirmed before Christ’s Church, according to the Form in use for that purpose, the consistories shall see to it.” Concerning the question whether the ceremony should take place in the presence of the whole congregation, the General Synod of Homewood 1954 decided that the maintaining of Article 70 of the Church Order should be left to the discretion of the churches. So it is up to the consistory (and not to the minister or the family) whether it will be done in a private meeting or in a worship service. However, the Form should be used anyway.

The General Synod of Smithville 1980 approved a new Form for the Solemnization of Marriage. According to this Form one of the questions that has to be asked of the couple is: “Do you promise to live with him/her according to the holy gospel?” Before this question can be

asked and answered honestly and in all fairness, it has to be made clear that bride and groom understand what the holy gospel says in this respect. They have to make a commitment to live according to the holy gospel. They promise not only that they themselves are willing to live according to the gospel, but that they also will guide and assist one another and help each other to live according to the Word of God. That is a commitment and a responsibility, even more comprehensive than the promise given upon profession of faith. It is a promise to live according to the Word of God and to take care that also the other one will live in that manner.

It is impossible and not fair and honest to ask this question, to let this question be answered or to answer it, if the persons involved do not really know what it means. Therefore someone who is not able or willing to commit himself to serve the Lord and to join the church as a communicant member, cannot answer this question. We can also put it this way: someone who is able to answer this question honestly and in all fairness, should be able to join the church as a communicant member and should act accordingly. Therefore the question is not in the first place whether the marriage of a member of the church and an unbeliever can be solemnized in the church, but whether the persons involved are able to answer the question.

That brings us to another point, and that is the question what to do when one of the two is a non-communicant member. We will deal with this point in the next instalment.

Burlington, ON

W. POUWELSE

— *To be continued.*



OH! WHAT IS MAN?

Oh! what is man, great Maker of mankind!
That Thou to him so great respect dost bear,
That Thou adorn'st him with so bright a mind,
Mak'st him a king, and e'en an angel's peer?

Oh! what a lively life, what heavenly power,
What spreading virtue, what a sparkling fire
How great, how plentiful, how rich a dower
Dost Thou within this dying flesh inspire!

Thou leav'st Thy print in other works of thine,
But Thy whole image Thou in man hast writ:
There cannot be a creature more divine,
Except (like Thee) it should be infinite!

But it exceeds man's thought, to think how high
God hath raised man, since God a man became:
The angels do admire this mystery,
And are astonish'd when they view the same.

Nor hath he given these blessings for a day,
Nor made them on the body's life depend:
The soul, though made in time, survives for aye;
And though it hath beginning, sees no end.

Sir John Dabies
(Born 1570 — Died 1626)



“On Her Lips the Psalms. . .”

The French Reformed Church of the sixteenth century suffered greatly at the hands of the Roman Church. Torture and burning of the believers was the order of the day. A once flourishing church was devastated.

“Such, then, is the estate, the picture of the Church,
With shackles on her feet, placed
on the rack of Hell,
Around her neck the rope, and the
inhuman iron —
But on her lips the psalms and in
her hand the lute.”

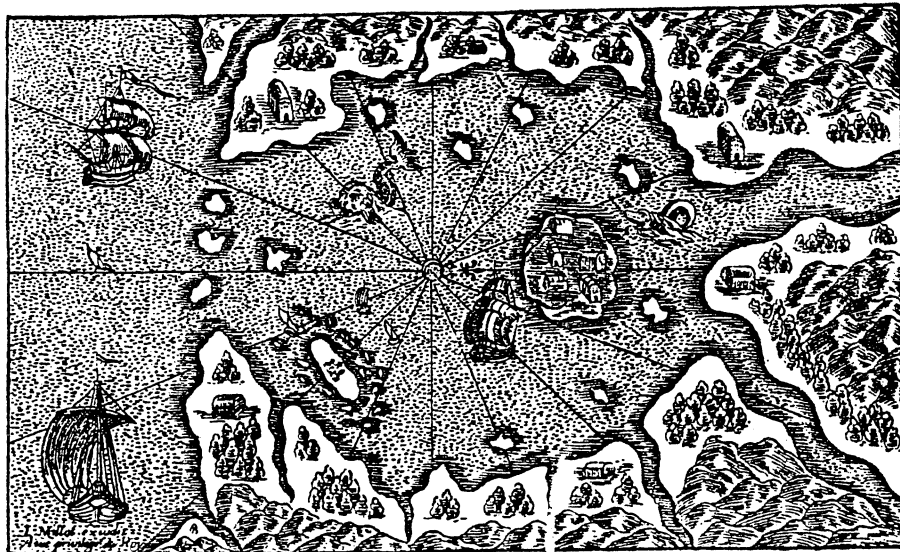
So wrote the French Protestant poet, Agripa d’Aubigné, at the height of his country’s persecution. The Huguenots

Geneva in the Wilderness

The Brazilian settlement seemed to offer the sought-for escape and the dreamed-of peace. The island Coligny in the Bay of Rio de Janeiro, settled by Villegagnon in 1555, was in need of colonists. For that reason Villegagnon wrote letters to France and to Geneva. “When the letters had been received and read, the Genevese, desirous of the advancement of their religion, gave public thanks to God that they saw the way prepared to establish their doctrine in those parts, and to cause the light of the Gospel to shine among these barbarous tribes, who were without law, without religion.”

charge of the expedition. The company, including the theological students capable of doing mission work, set sail and arrived in Brazil on March 7, 1557.

In his word of welcome Villegagnon restated the purpose of the colony, and that was “to establish a retreat for the poor faithful who may be persecuted in France, in Spain, and in other countries beyond the sea, in order that without fear, whether



The Island Coligny in the Bay of Rio de Janeiro

driven from their homes sought to escape.

“O shelter, Lord, this voice hoarsened by the rains
And make these fingers free that
on your lute would play.”

The recently discovered American continent offered such a shelter, and several attempts were made to establish a safe haven for the persecuted Huguenots.

The Genevan consistory decided the following, “In consequence of receipt of a letter requesting this church to send ministers to the new islands, which the French had conquered, M. Pierre Richer and Guillaume Charretier were elected. These two were subsequently commended to the care of the Lord and sent off with a letter from this church.” On the urgings of Admiral de Coligny and the Genevan churches, Monsieur du Pont took



THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
Published bi-weekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, MB

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

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

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION
P.O. Box 54,
Fergus, ON, Canada N1W 2W7

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
1249 Plessis Road
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2C 3L9
Phone: (204) 222-5218

SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 1983

	Regular	Air Mail
Canada	\$21.00	\$38.25
U.S.A.	\$24.00	\$38.25
International	\$31.75	\$53.25

Second class mail registration number 1025.
ISSN 0383-0438

IN THIS ISSUE

Marriage and Family Life2	
— W. Pouwelse	256
“On Her Lips the Psalms. . .”	
— S. VanderPloeg	259
From the Scriptures —	
The Earth Speaks	
— J. DeJong	262
Patrimony Profile15	
— W.W.J. VanOene	263
Press Releases	265 and 269
Paralipomena — Whose Peace. . . ?	
— Chronieler	265
News Medley — W.W.J. VanOene	266
International — W.W.J. VanOene	267
A Ray of Sunshine	
— Mrs. J.K. Riemersma	268
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty	270



Caspar de Coligny

of king, or of emperor, or of other potentates, they may be able to serve God with a pure heart according to His will."

After the ceremony the company "entered into a small hall in the centre of the island, and sang the 5th Psalm which in Marot's translation begins: 'Aux paroles que je veux dire,' which was followed by a sermon, in which the Minister Richer took for text these verses of the 26th Psalm: 'One thing have I desired of the LORD, that I will seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life.'"

For a while things went well. Everyone was engaged in the building of the fort, the daily struggle for survival, and the initial exploration of the mainland.

One day, Jean de Lery, accompanied by several Indians, travelled from the island to the mainland to fetch supplies and other necessary things. De Lery gives the following account, "We passed through a great forest. The many different, green and sweet smelling trees, plants and flowers, together with the songs of the countless songbirds amid the sunlit trees, moved me. I thought, 'What an invitation to praise God for all these things.' Filled with happiness I began to sing in a loud voice Psalm 104: "O bless the LORD, my soul, and praise His name.'"

His companions, delighted and impressed, complimented him on his singing, but not having understood

the words asked for an explanation. "I was very glad to hear this and I explained as well as I could that I had not only in general praised my God for the beauty and government, but also in particular had ascribed all this to Him; that He alone gives food to all men and animals; that He makes the trees, fruits, and plants grow all over the world. Moreover that this song, dictated by the Spirit of this God, was first sung by one of our great prophets, who left it for us to be used for the same purpose."

The Indians listened attentively. After half an hour or so they gave the following comment: "O how happy you Mairs (Europeans) are to know so many secrets that are hidden from us poor, miserable people."

A complete about-face by Villegagnon, from a protector of the persecuted Protestants to a zealous champion of the Church of Rome, brought the colony, begun in hope, to a disastrous end. The same people he had welcomed as "my children" were now persecuted as heretics and rebels. Three of the colonists — Pierre Bourdon, Jean du Bordel, and Mathieu Verneuil — were sentenced to death by drowning. "Thus Villegagnon was the first to shed the blood of God's children in that newly discovered country; and he has been called the Cain of America."

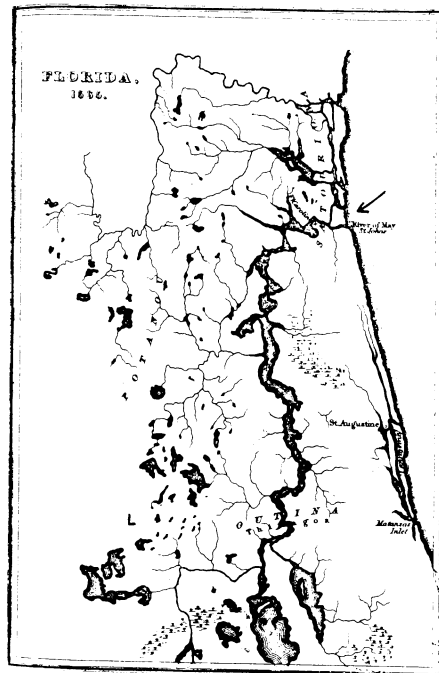


Rénatus Laudonnière

Florida, the Promised Land

In 1562 Admiral de Coligny sent out two ships with colonists under the command of Jean Ribaut. He set

tled his people at Port Royal in South Carolina and returned to France for reinforcements. In his absence the colonists revolted and made their way back to France in a home-made leaky craft. Ribaut's attempts to interest the English Calvinists in the



Florida, 1566

settlement failed, and the scheme for a Protestant colony in North America was temporarily abandoned. In 1564 a new company, this time under René de Laudonnière, sailed to Florida. On arrival, the company gathered to thank God. "There we sang praises to the Lord, beseeching Him that of His holy grace He would be pleased to continue His accustomed goodness to us, and henceforth help us in all our undertakings, in such wise that the whole might redound to His glory, and the furtherance of our faith. Prayers ended, each one began to take courage."

The next day "they were raised at daybreak by the sound of trumpet and after singing a psalm they set themselves to their task." The first task was the building of a fort, Fort Caroline on the St. John's River. The work must have been accompanied by much psalm singing judging by the account of the colony written by Chaleux "The simple-minded children of the forest were especially captivated by the sonorous singing in which the

Huguenots perpetually indulged.”

The location of the fort, on the route taken by the Spanish treasure ships, and the presence of the hated heretics near Spanish possessions, brought an end to the happiness. Philip II ordered Pedro Menedez de Aviles to wipe out the French colony. In August 1565 the Spanish and the French met. Menedez asked, “Are you Catholics or Lutherans?” and “Is there any among you who will do confession?” Ribaut, who just recently had rejoined the colony answered, “I and all here are of the Reformed faith.” The French company sang Psalm 59. After that Ribaut continued: “We are of the earth and to the earth we must return; twenty years more or less can matter little.”

In the ensuing battle Ribaut was killed and most of the French colony slaughtered. Laudonnière was one of the few who escaped to get back to France. The hoped-for “promised land” turned out to be yet another desert. Even though the colony had been destroyed, the memory of the French, especially their songs, lingered for a long time. “Europeans, cruising along the coast or landing upon the shore, would be saluted (by the Indians) with some snatch of French Psalm uncouthly rendered by Indian voices.”

Nicholas Le Challeux (1579) writes that the Indians “yet retain

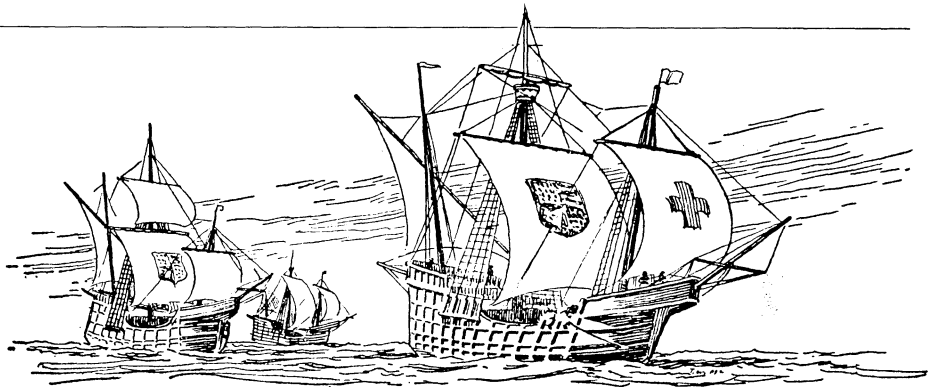


“... after singing a psalm they set themselves to their task”

such happy memories that when someone lands on their shore the most endearing greeting that they know how to offer is ‘Du fond de ma pensée’ (Ps. 130), or ‘Bienheureux est qui conqués’ (Ps. 138), which they say as if to ask the watchword, ‘Are you French or not?’”

A Matter of Principle, Canada

Although the French settlements in Canada were commercial, there is



Huguenot ships off the shores of Canada

historical evidence of psalm-singing on and off the shores of Canada. “Many of the ships that visited the fishing banks or cruised along the shores of the St. Lawrence, were owned by Huguenot merchants and manned by Huguenot sailors, whose loud voices were often heard, to the indignation of all good Catholics, as they joined lustily in singing Clement Marot’s psalms.”

The Reformed worship services on board the ships were held publicly. The prayers and the singing of the psalms, done in the forecabin, were loud enough to drown out the chanting of the priest as he was saying mass in another part of the ship. This practice brought Guillaume de Caen, who had received the trade monopoly of New France in 1622, into difficulties with his stockholders and the new viceroy, Duc de Ventadour. His Lordship “was dissatisfied with Sieur de Caen, owing to the report which had reached him that he had caused the prayers of their so-called religion to be said publicly within the river St. Lawrence, and had desired the Catholics to attend them, a thing which His Lordship had forbidden him to do.”

On the return to New France, Guillaume, forced to stay behind, passed the viceroy’s instructions concerning the singing of the psalms in the St. Lawrence River on to his brother Emery. Champlain gives the following account: “We weighed anchor and set sail with favourable wind. In the evening the said Emery assembled his crew and informed them that His Grace, the Duc of Ventadour, did not wish them to sing their psalms in the Great River, as they had done at sea. They began to murmur and say that they ought not be deprived of that liberty.” The result was the first recorded “strike” in Canadian history. Cooler heads, however, prevailed, and a compromise was reached. As Champlain writes: “Fi-

nally it was agreed that they should not sing their psalms, but that they should assemble for prayers, since nearly two-thirds of them were Huguenots. And so out of a bad debt one gets what one can.”

An American Postscript

Many Huguenots had found a safe haven in The Netherlands. This country’s proximity to France, however, gave some of them a feeling of insecurity. It was for that reason that a number of families, under Lois du Bois, decided to immigrate to the New World. They settled in Dutch-held territory near the Hudson River.

One day their village, Wiltwyck, was attacked by the Indians, and many of the inhabitants were taken captive. After three months a rescue party succeeded in freeing them. Charles Baird writes in *History of the Huguenots*: “Tradition represents the pious Walloons as cheering the tedious hours of their bondage with Marot’s psalms. When rescued by their friends, just as the savages were about to slaughter them, they were entertaining their captors, and obtaining a momentary reprieve, by singing the 137th Psalm;

“Along the streams of Babylon, in sadness

We sat and wept, remembering
Zion’s gladness,

.....
For there our captors did our
songs require.”

S. VANDERPLOEG

Bibliography

- Baird, Charles, *History of the Huguenot Emigration to America*.
De Champlain, Samuel, *Voyage de la Nouvelle France*.
De Lery, Jean, *Histoire de l’Amérique*.
Le Challeux, Nicholas, *Bref Discours et Histoire d’un voyage de quelques François en la Floride*.
Lescarbot, Marc, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*.

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

“... and the earth will disclose the blood shed upon her, and will no more cover her slain.”

Isa. 26:21

The Earth Speaks

In announcing the long-awaited redemption and resurrection of God's children, the prophet Isaiah also speaks of a time when justice will reign over all the earth. Whereas the earth at one time covered all the blood shed upon her, and, as it were, kept it hidden, a new time will break through in which everything will be revealed. All the wrongs will be put right, and what previously was covered up will now be made public and manifested for all to see. What time does He speak of?

More than once the prophet Isaiah calls on the earth as a witness to his words; in fact, his prophecies begin with this call, Isa. 1:1. But throughout the history of his people, and also in his own time, the earth seemingly had been a poor witness to the truth of God. Indeed, as most commentators say, Isaiah himself was a victim of injustice, violence, and oppression. He, too, was one of the prophets murdered without cause. And this had continued in Israel for years. The earth seemed to be a silent partner in these crimes of violence and hatred. As the Teacher in Jerusalem says, “All go to one place, all are from the dust and all return to dust again. Who knows whether the spirit of a man goes upward and the spirit of a beast goes down to the earth?” Eccl. 3:20ff. The earth swallowed up the righteous and the wicked alike and seemed to respond only with silence.

Yet Isaiah announces a change; the hour of redemption draws nigh. The longing, plaintive cry of Job (16:18) at the beginning of the Old Testament history finally is answered — in God's time and God's way. He wept, “O earth, cover not my blood,” and the LORD heard his prayer, and so sent the Messiah into the world. What Job longs and prays for, Isaiah may see and announce: resurrection and redemption for those who remain faithful and steadfast in their trust in the living God. Injustice may reign for years, but the LORD has revealed His standard of justice, and this revelation is maintained and confirmed in Jesus Christ.

For Job was sinful, and later had to admit his own sin in pleading his case; and Isaiah also admits that he shares the guilt of the people, 26:17, 18. But the Saviour was completely innocent, without any shame or dishonour. Yet as a perfectly innocent child of the LORD, as perfectly innocent before His Father, He was brutally murdered. The earth also drank up

His blood. But now the Father could not be silent any longer! For now blood that was in all respects perfectly innocent was shed on the earth. Now the Father had to ensure that justice be done and that truth be spoken!

And because Christ did His work on *earth*, *earth* must speak. Now the earth *cannot* be silent any longer. Now it must give up her dead, v. 19; not it must disclose all unrighteous blood. The day of Christ's death implies justification of all who were mistreated, abused, and killed for the sake of their trust in God. Now the promise is fulfilled, and faith in the promise is fully rewarded! It begins with Christ's resurrection, but carries through to the final day of Christ, the Day of Judgment, when all violence done to the LORD and His elect will be disclosed, and the sentence of *perfect* justice will be passed in Christ.

With every cry for justice today, whether religiously coloured or politically motivated, *injustice* only seems to increase. The wholesale massacres in Lebanon and India indicate that the earth still drinks her blood. Still she appears as a silent partner to the most atrocious crimes, and all the boards of inquiry and commissions of investigation cannot restore the damage that is done. Still the earth never seems to say, “Enough,” Prov. 30:15, 16. And who will answer for the injustice? Who is able to pay for the loss of hundreds and millions of lives?

Yet we know that the change has come. *His* blood has been shed! And this is the pivoting point which takes all *lasting* injustice away. To be sure, men are still the same today. Being pillaged and ripped open are still contemporary news events which are only too real (cf. II Kings 8:12, 15:10, Hos. 13:16, Amos 1:13). But the basis of truth and justice has been laid in Christ's death. And He who is our victorious King carries out the judgments of the Father and will carry them out fully at the last day. Then all those who have recognized and believed in the LORD and His Anointed will be justified, even though they were victims of oppression and death; but all who openly rebel against our exalted King will be rewarded with eternal punishment. Then we may know of the perfect justice of God which endures forever!

J. DEJONG

PATRIMONY PROFILE ¹⁵

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

Thus, also on December 23, 1834, a letter was sent to the Governor and Deputed States of Groningen. In this letter de Cock states that he is well aware that in ecclesiastical matters he has to seek his right with the Church, and he informs the Governor and the States that he has done so. The names which he gave to Brouwer and Reddingius are hard indeed, but our fathers said, "Whoever attacks the righteous one has to hear hard words," and I am willing to defend what I wrote anywhere you want me to. De Cock requests the Governor and the States to guarantee freedom and maintenance of the Reformed religion, and to urge the Classical Board to lift the suspension.

As could be expected, the reply of the civil authorities was that it was not in their province to take note of those grievances and objections.

Would a letter, sent by the Consistory of Ulrum to the Minister of State, van Palland van Keppel, on December 23, 1833, have more results? They request a free and unhindered practising of their religion and a speedy lifting of the suspension. De Cock declares that he can never rescind what he wrote, if he is not convinced of his wrong from the Word of God. "Oh, that Your Excellency may soon now hear the right, the truth, and the voices of God's children who are weeping mournfully, and may now build the oppressed Zion and raise up Jerusalem that is bowed down." That petition was sent to the minister upon whose instigation Mr. J.D. Janssen had written to the president of the Classical Board of Middelstum to get the ball rolling. What could be expected of him ???

And what could be expected from a petition sent to the King on December 22, 1833? In that address de Cock complains that he has been fined because he sold some booklets published by him, and asks the King to protect him against unreasonable treatment from the side of Roman Catholic officials. He further complains about his having been suspended unheard and without delay. "The Lord Jesus received the opportunity to be heard in the hall of Caiaphas, although the Pharisees and Scribes had already decided upon the sentence; Paul was allowed to defend himself before Festus and Agrippa; Luther was still admitted in Worms, in order to defend and uphold his cause; but they refused to let me do so upon my request and, without warning that a sentence would be passed upon me,

this sentence was sent to my home the next evening." Rev. de Cock besought the King to do right and to maintain justice, to take to heart that the flock in Ulrum was being dispersed, went hungry — all because their "big crime is the faith of the fathers." All we ask of Your Majesty is "freedom of conscience, and justice over against all unlawful oppressors of the Lord's true Church and congregation."

The same van Palland van Keppel who was the first instigator of the action against Rev. de Cock now reports to the King about this and other addresses and requests. Now, all of a sudden, His Excellency is of the opinion "that the whole case should be left to follow the ecclesiastical course, without any measures being taken against minister de Cock by the government, which otherwise might have been taken into consideration."

As for the suspension, de Cock wrongly makes it seem "as if he had been attacked because of his specific sentiments, whereas he always had all possible freedom to present those" and the Classical Board did "not punish him because of his ideas, but for reasons of disturbing the order and openly slandering respectable colleagues." That had been done upon the advice of Mr. Janssen, who wrote to Damsté in his letter of December 10, 1833, "One should not attack sentiments or dogmatic systems — therein de Cock ought to have as much freedom as any other minister of our Church; all appearance of compulsion in matters of faith, all restriction of the Protestant Christian freedom — also for mystics — must be avoided."

Men have always avoided letting the conflict break out on the real issue: the Scriptural doctrine or the wisdom of man. Disturbing the order is always the point brought to the fore when the faithful ones are to be "cast out of the synagogues." Hendrik de Cock experienced it, as did so many others.

What was the minister's advice to the King? In the first place, to receive and file the booklets which de Cock had sent to the King. And concerning the complaints about suspension, the advice read that they should be told "that his objections to the actions of the Classical Board of Middelstum are to be judged and decided upon by the proper ecclesiastical assemblies, according to the ecclesiastical regulations."

A Letter from Scholte

Again, Hendrik de Cock received not only disappointing decisions and slanderous communications; he also was encouraged and comforted by letters from brothers and sisters everywhere, including some of his colleagues. There was the Rev. C.C. Callenbach of Nijkerk, who wrote de Cock a very cordial letter and later received the despised and persecuted preacher with joy, although he never went along with the Secession. De Cock received

even more benefit from a letter from the Rev. H.P. Scholte. Although they both defended the truth, Scholte appears to have possessed a more analytical mind. The positions which he was to fill in later years in Pella, Iowa, also give evidence of that.

On January 9, 1834, Scholte wrote a letter in which he expressed his dismay at receiving de Cock's letter in which the latter informed him of the suspension. He urges de Cock to count it all joy to bear Christ's reproach. However, Scholte writes, you certainly have to be innocent as doves, but also wise as serpents. That is a command of the Lord. Thus Scholte has a few questions. "Did you receive an accusation in writing, as provided in the ecclesiastical regulations? Did you receive two weeks to reply to that? Did you see the law which forbids teaching and baptizing? Let them produce it; I don't know of any. If an ecclesiastical Synodical law does exist, I would advise you to follow it, I Cor. 1:14-17. They cannot and will not dare to forbid you teaching; but is there also a law against receiving people as members? If so, then I would advise students from other places to make profession of the hope that is in them with their own ministers. We are not only all allowed to, but we must do that even if the devil himself were minister and that will cause those black gentlemen more grief than if they did it with you yourself; and thus they hear at the same time that they are not totally masters of the field but that the complete doctrine of salvation is taught also there in the Christian Church; if, for the sake of the truth they do not wish to admit such persons, then they are the ones that have to be accused as men who abridge the right of the congregation enormously and disturb and break down the Reformed Church; and then your case would be reduced to the matter of Brouwer and Reddingius alone, and I can hardly imagine that they would be so dumb and blind as to have you deposed, unless the Lord delivers them wholly to hardening, in order to work out through His enemies something which I cannot see as yet, but which His hand and counsel have determined beforehand."

Scholte has more questions. "How is the stand of your congregation? Is it prepared unanimously, together with consistory and church wardens, to lodge a protest against your deposition and to declare itself independent from the Synodical Reformed Church and as a separate congregation, if need be, financially to support its own pastor and teacher as much as possible and thus to become a refuge for all oppressed and hated children of Zion in the vicinity?"

"You have little to expect from provincial or general synods, for there it is as we read in John 9:22. The Provincial States cannot and presumably will not become involved; the Minister will be well-acquainted with your case before your letter gets there, and even if that were not the case, you would

not find much comfort there."

"I hope to publish a piece on the psalms, as soon as possible, and then, the Lord willing, a sermon will follow on 'The Saving Folly,' in which I hope to remember by name Brouwer, Reddingius, and Laurman, and probably also the president of the Great Sanhedrin D(onker) C(urtius). Tell me at the same time whether you are married and have any children, and how your wife is under these conditions."

Scholte appears to have been less naive than de Cock and to have had a better idea of what could be expected from both the ecclesiastical and the civil authorities: Nil.

Suspension Sustained

Hendrik de Cock appears to have learned something from Scholte's letter and also to have discovered that the required two-thirds of the Classical Board were not present when he was suspended.

As he had not heard anything from the Provincial Board in reply to his letter of December 23, 1833, de Cock wrote another letter at the beginning of February 1834. In that letter he complains about the silence on the part of the Board. He also sets forth some formal objections to his suspension. Art. 20 of the Revised Regulation for Supervision and Discipline was violated, he says, because "I did not receive a written accusation before the time I came before the classical board, so that even at the moment when I was there, I was unaware of the main accusation against me, and thus did not receive the opportunity to defend my cause; when I asked for it, it was refused and denied to me." Art. 14 of the Regulation is mentioned: only four of the nine ministers were present plus one elder. That is not two-thirds. The manner in which his cause was dealt with was therefore unlawful and tyrannical. Thus de Cock requested the Provincial Board to reply soon to his request for revision.

Although no reply had been received from the Provincial Board, its president did write already on December 25, 1833. Mr. J.D. Janssen did not have to worry about "Papa Hendriksz," for the latter was of the same spirit as all the rest, even though he was "no friend of Damsté's." "According to this minister, the submission of December 23, 1833, had to be "laid aside," because de Cock was no president of the consistory for as long as the suspension lasted; if the consistory should decide to send such a protest, the Counsellor had to chair the meeting and sign it if it is to be dealt with by the Provincial Board. If Rev. de Cock wished to appeal, he had to follow the way of the Regulation.

— *To be continued.*

PRESS RELEASE

Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Teachers College Association, May 20, 1983.

The chairman, G. Nordeman, calls the meeting to order and begins in the customary Christian manner.

After the agenda is established, the minutes of the annual meeting are read and approved.

A letter was sent out to the Board of Governors of the Theological College requesting them to consider the possibility of sharing future new facilities.

The financial report for the month of April is presented. The treasurer points out to the board that the month of May will have high expenses and that it appears that the year (i.e. end of August) will end with a deficit. The board urges everyone who has not yet paid their dues for the 1982/83 year to forward these to the local representative as soon as possible. Donations can also be sent directly to our national treasurer, J. Gelderman, 491 Karen Drive, Burlington, ON L7R 3J2. More news of the financial picture will be presented in the newsletter to be published during the next month.

Mr. VanderVen presents his principal's report. Students are presently writing their final examinations, May 26 being the last school day for the present year. Preparations for the 1983/1984 school year are well underway; the third year of the three-year program requires special preparation as this will be the first year it will be offered. A workshop for associate teachers (those that receive student teachers in their classroom in the practicum program) is planned for early September.

The general question period is held, and following this, after closing prayer, the meeting is adjourned.

For the executive,
C.J. NOBELS

Church  News

CALLED to Brampton, ON
Lincoln, ON
and Smithers, BC
REV. B.J. BERENDS
of Winnipeg, MB

PARALIPOMENA

WHOSE PEACE. . . ?

From Russia With Love

Recently two highly placed Russians travelled through our country and were allowed to make propaganda for the so-called peace movements and protest marches against the guided missiles. The two gentlemen were received with honour. I even saw and heard a leading Canadian ask them how Canada could serve best as a buffer between the U.S.A. and Russia.

And, oh! they were so peaceable and lovable. In case you don't know, Russia is the greatest champion for peace. President Reagan is the opposite.

Russian Peace

I just finished reading *The Hill of Summer* by Allen Drury. If you want to know what Russia means by peace, read that book. And especially read the many literal quotations from official Russian documents in which that "peace" is proclaimed explicitly. It is nothing new. For seventy years already communism has openly declared that their only and unchangeable goal is to destroy the capitalists and to build the communist paradise on the ruins of the free West. Russian peace is in perfect harmony with their expansion of all kinds of offensive weapons. While they talk of peace, not a week passes in which no new missile is produced and aimed at any free country on this globe. Only in this way can the goal of world domination be realized.

Of course, Russia does not want a nuclear war, as long as the West remains strong enough to pay them tit for tat, meaning the destruction also of their own country. But they hope — and, alas, with good reason — that they will outstrip the West so far that in the end all nations will say with the late Pearson: "Rather Red than dead." Then peace will descend upon earth, the peace of communism, that is: ultimate slavery.

Western Peace Propaganda

The two Russians had a hayday in Canada. The general assembly of the United Church has declared that, in case the government goes ahead and permits the testing of guided missiles,

civil disobedience will be allowed, and may even be demanded by a Christian conscience. Communist-supported peace movements proclaim war against the "warmonger Reagan." Also among us one hears criticism: "Reagan is going too far; he makes the Russians mad . . . a dangerous game. The press in the still-free countries is leaning towards the left, if not openly undermining the strength of the freedom by whose grace they can write their destructive ideas.

No one seems to be thankful that, after a president who started a war without wanting to win it (Vietnam), and another president who gave away computer secrets to Russia and closed his eyes when communism overran greater parts of Africa, no one, I repeat, seems to be thankful that finally there is a president who dares to stand up to the communist threat, even though many of his own people would not hesitate to crucify him for that.

Western peace — it seems to me — is not much different from ostrich policy: Hide your head in the sand; then you don't see a thing. The fools think that, if the U.S.A. only would start destroying its nuclear power, Russia would be moved to tears and do the same.

"My peace I give to you. . ."

That is what our Saviour said, John 14:27, and still says. He added: "not as the world gives peace." That is our comfort, the only one, even if the worst would happen: a nuclear war. It is a peace that no one can rob us of. Peace on the basis of His blood. Peace with God. Peace for ever.

This peace does *not* cause us, I hope, to join the peace marches which are never directed against the communist powers! This peace of Christ knows its responsibility for fatherland and following generations. It sticks to the old adage: "If you want peace, then prepare for war"; the old adage: "Trust in God and keep your gunpowder dry!" Only such people, such governments and nations, deserve peace, real peace.

Does the West still deserve it?

CHRONICLER

news medley

When I saw the large number of bulletins which I had to read and to work my way through for this medley, I was convinced that it was going to be a long medley this time. Now that I have worked my way through them, I am not so certain any more.

Add to this that at this very moment I still have not received the June 4 issue of *Clarion*, and therefore cannot mention any couples who celebrate a wedding anniversary which should find a place in our column, and you can see that the harvest is quite meagre this time.

However, let us set sail.

One thing which returned in quite a few bulletins this time was the "building-problem."

It is very nice when a Church has its own building to meet in for worship. It is also nice for a Church when it has its own parsonage. The advantages of this are frequently offset by the disadvantages with which each and every home owner has to struggle. In the case of personal possession of a house the owner himself will try to fix and repair as much as possible; and if he wishes to make any changes, he will be able to do most of it himself or otherwise perhaps has a friend who will help him. When a house belongs to the Church, one does not expect of a minister that he pays for and plans the changes or that he does it himself. He is not even allowed to make changes in the house, strictly speaking. There is a committee which takes care of it and has to give account to the consistory. So many people have to talk about it and to decide about it that frequently it takes a long time before anything is done.

When a minister moves from the one place to the other, he also has to move into another house, a house which may be nicer or less appealing than the house he lived in before. In the former case he will be grateful for the improvement. In the latter case he may have his wishes or his wife may have her wishes for change. If any changes have to be made, the "new" Church will be most willing to cooperate as much as possible. Yet, the ministers should bear in mind that it is not their own house and that they sometimes have to be content with what they find. They should take care that they do not put an extra and unnecessary burden on the congregation, with the possibility that a new minister after some years will want to have some more changes made or even likes the previous set-up better, so that everything has to be changed back to the original condition. When you build your own house you can order it to be done as you want it. With the set-up as most Churches have it, ministers have to bear in mind that the house belongs to the Church and that they only live in it for some years; thus they should let the consistory or the appointed committee decide after they have made known their preferences and wishes.

Anyway, now about the buildings and the "problems" with them.

In Brampton the consistory made it impossible for people without the proper key to enter the Church building. Listen: "As you may have noticed the church doors

have been supplied with new door locks which cannot be opened with knives or other items than keys."

The Guelph Church made a fire exit through a kitchen window. As there is only one narrow stairway leading from the basement to the upstairs level and thus to the outside door, it was realized that, in case of fire or another emergency, there would not be much of a chance that those downstairs could escape. This has been provided for now.

The change of ministers also gives consistories the opportunity to re-evaluate their various parsonages.

In London it was decided not to sell the manse at this present time.

In Calgary the parsonage needs repairs, since the roof is leaking. Repairs will be made now that the Rev. D. DeJong has left for Burlington East. The consistory will also look into the desirability of selling the parsonage and buying another one or of renting the present one out.

In Burlington South the question when Rev. J. DeJong will be coming there can be answered only on "how soon a house can be found and purchased."

I was wondering how much freedom the Burlington South Church has in the building that they are renting. My wondering was caused by what I read, "A sound system for our building was discussed again. Expert advice will be sought to improve the system." I was asking myself, "Would there not be a sound system in the building? If not, would our sister Church be allowed to put one in? And: if there is no sound system, what is the reason why our ministers do need one? Don't they speak up?" More such questions came up in my mind. Perhaps we'll get an answer in due time.

In Carman the consistory decided to enlarge the present study and relocate it downstairs.

Thus far the "building problems." Agreed: they are not all that important but once in a while it may be a comforting thought that others are struggling with the same problems which we ourselves have.

At times people think that I am too "picky." A while ago I got a letter in which this was stated, be it in a very friendly manner. Don't worry: I can well appreciate this.

On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that deviations never begin with great and important things. Deviations begin in the little things which may be hardly noticed. And whenever I see a reason for lifting a warning little finger, I do so.

One of the expressions which I have criticized oftentimes and shall continue to criticize until it is no longer found is the term "the meeting of classis." In one of the bulletins I found the sentence that "a meeting of classis will be held . . ." and in another bulletin it is said that the "consistory is informed that the next classis meeting . . ."

Both expressions are wrong. If used in this manner, the impression is given as if classis is a body which meets once in a while. Once this thought has gained a foothold, the rest will come automatically, and the end is a hierarchical system.

We can speak of various "sessions" of a specific classis, if a classis lasts longer than only a morning or only one day. Then we can speak of the first session, the morning session, the session of Thursday, the session of Friday. If a classis is just a one-day affair we should not speak of "meeting of classis." Then the proper expression is that a classis will be held. A consistory can meet; a classis does not meet when it comes to the point, but is convened and then held.

Use of the adjective would be proper. We could speak of a "classical meeting" as distinguished from a regional-synodical meeting; use of the noun is wrong.

However let us put a stop to meditations for this time and conclude with some other news items.

In the Fraser Valley the readers of *Church News* — how beautiful that there is one bulletin for all five Valley Churches! — are exhorted to come to an evening of Psalm singing. It is past by now, but there will be repeat performances. "In time, all 150 Psalms will be recorded on tape and will be used for radio broadcasting of the Gospel in the English language. This cannot be accomplished in one evening, of course. Therefore, the program is not too long, and there will be a few interludes of music. Coffee will be served after."

I am very happy with this, for however nice it may be to frame the messages with all sorts of beautiful music, yet the outside world should hear in the first place how we praise and glorify our God in songs of praise in our worship services. I am still wondering how they will be making out with Psalm 120. I cannot discover a line in that tune, however much I try.

A few items from the individual Churches.

Abbotsford reports that "if things go according to plan you should see new donation boxes on the doors of the main auditorium today. Purpose of the change is to avoid the problem which other churches had, namely theft during the service when the doors of the auditorium are closed."

The Chilliwack Consistory received a "letter from a brother and sister of the congregation requesting a worship service on Ascension Day. This request will not be granted since the Consistory is of the opinion that calling the congregation to worship on Ascension Day

would greatly inconvenience many who work or have children who go to school the following day."

Already at the first general synod of the Churches the point of ascension day came to the fore: the date of commemorating the ascension of our Lord was left in the freedom of the Churches. I, for one, can see no good reason why we should not commemorate this fact on the Sunday, when the whole congregation is together and when the gifts of the ascended Lord are bestowed upon His people.

From various Consistory reports it becomes evident that the preparation of Synod Cloverdale 1983 is gaining momentum. The revision of the Forms has reached our consistories and the proposals of the relevant committees have the attention of the brothers. Then there is one consistory which is going to address Synod concerning a change in the Apostles' Creed, concerning which another document has reached the consistory tables as well. Within a relatively short time the consistories may also expect to receive a copy of the definitive report on the revision of the Church Order, so that they can see what the definitive proposals to Synod are. We hope to have it out before the holidays start.

As you see: although the summer months are not the months which show the greatest activity among our people, yet there is enough to do.

For this time, however, I wish to take leave of you.

Enjoy yourselves with the preparations for the holidays.

And think of those who keep working to make your holidays possible.

VO



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.

JERUSALEM (RNS)

Jerusalem's Mount Scopus is now called Mount Scopus — a whimsical allusion to a recent debate there over the origins of life.

The debate was weighted on the side of Orthodox Jewish champions of "scientific creationism," cheered on by a leading American proponent of biblical creation, Dr. Duane Gish

from San Diego.

As evolution lost in the 1925 trial of Tennessee schoolteacher John T. Scopes, evolution lost in the recent Jerusalem debate, too. More precisely, the First Congress on Inquiries into the Origin of Life found that the concept of evolution "fails to meet the standards of a scientific theory."

At the end of the week-long congress, the majority voted that the present Darwinian theory of evolution is scientifically deficient because:

1. Probability statistics demonstrate that life is too complex to have evolved naturally during the period of 500 million years since the Cambrian epoch.

2. Experiments demonstrating that amino acids, the building blocks of life, developed spontaneously a billion years ago are based on inconclusive assumptions of the earth's atmospheric and surface compositions at that time.

3. Paleontological remains are too fragmentary to verify a continuous evolution of life forms through gradual mutation. (CN)

ROME (ANP)

The Swiss priest Walter Bühlmann who lives in Rome launched the idea that the pope should declare Gandhi a saint. Bühlmann, who made a name for himself as the author of books on religion which have been translated into many languages, thinks that he has good grounds for his suggestion. Pope John Paul II twice declared in his encyclical "*Redemptor Hominis*" that also non-Christian religions can be the work of the Holy Spirit. (ND) and John Paul II can know . . .

VO

OUR COVER

Whiteshell Provincial Park, Manitoba. Photo Courtesy Travel Manitoba.

A Ray of Sunshine



"Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?"
Romans 8:33

God's children still have many sins and weaknesses which may plague them and constantly assault their confidence of faith. Who of God's children does NOT commit any sin and does not daily transgress God's commandments? We all know for ourselves that we do not have to point our finger towards our neighbour on account of his/her sins. Our hearts condemn us. Paul also experienced that by nature we are miserable people. He himself knew more than anyone else how weak he was. We can read about this in Romans 7:21-24: "So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am!" But Paul did not stop there; he did not keep feeling miserable and downcast. In the following verse we read: "Who will deliver me from this body of death? THANKS BE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!" Paul believed in the forgiveness of sins and, consequently, in being made righteous before God. That is why he can comfort Christians of all ages with the following confession: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." God's wrath against mankind's sin has been stilled; we may now have confidence again. For, "if we have been united with Christ in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His" (Romans 6:5). Death no longer has dominion over Christ. "The death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God" (Romans 6:10). (Note how the sentence structure changes from past to present tense!) Christ died and so did we; "so we also must consider ourselves dead to sin." Christ also lives; "so we must also consider ourselves alive to God in Christ Jesus."

We may live securely and peacefully in this wonderful knowledge. We do not speak of the security and peace of which Paul writes in II Thessalonians 5:3. We may live as children of light. We know that "God has NOT destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we wake or sleep we might live with Him."

*"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"
Nothing! Not even the devil himself will be able to pluck us out of His hands, for Christ has conquered all!*

*"Hold on, my heart, in thy believing —
The steadfast only wins the crown;
He who, when stormy winds are heaving,
Parts with its anchor, shall go down;
But he who Jesus holds through all,
Shall stand, though heaven and earth should fall."
"Hold out! There comes an end to sorrow;
Hope from the dust shall conquering rise;
The storm foretells a summer's morrow;
The Cross points on to Paradise;
The Father reigneth! cease all doubt;
Hold on, my heart, hold on, hold out."*

* * * * *

MISS JENNY HANSMAN
19890 - 55A Avenue
Langley, BC
V3A 3X5

The Lord willing, Jenny will be celebrating her 36th birthday on July 7. She loves to read and will greatly appreciate some extra attention.

Eighteen years ago Jenny was stung by an insect and since then has suffered from encephalitis (a form of sleepingsickness which affects the brain). She is confined to her home most of the time.

Brothers and sisters, shall we make this a memorable day for her? Have a happy day, Jenny!

CHARLIE BEINTEMA
401 Park Street
Chatham, ON
N7M 3S7

*The Lord willing, Charlie will be celebrating his 8th birthday on July 20. Charlie is looking forward to receiving many best wishes for his big day. He keeps a scrapbook. His family also greatly appreciated the attention Charlie received last year. He has suffered much illness; he had a heart attack at one month of age. The doctors call him a miracle child. Charlie attends church services regularly and in the summertime enjoys going camping with other handicapped children. (You may see his picture in **Clarion** again.)*

JIMMY WANDERS
Huron Regional Centre
P.O. Box 1000
Orillia, ON
L3V 6L2

For several years Jim's name has been published in our "Ray of Sunshine." Jim lives in a home for the mentally retarded, and although he does not communicate very well, I am certain that he enjoys the extra attention. He hopes to celebrate his 22nd birthday on July 28. Shall we send him some colourful cards for his birthday, brothers and sisters?

We have been requested to send some messages of cheer and support to a young father from the Orangeville congregation. Bob has been battling Hodgkin's disease for the past two years. He has been on treatments for a whole year, and although he has improved since last winter, the disease still has not gone into remission. There is still hope that the disease will be conquered, but it takes much patience and courage on Bob's part to face the unpleasant treatments. Bob is 42 years old, and he and his wife Thea have four children. It has been a great disappointment for Bob to give up his work and not be able to make a living for his family.

Shall we remember this brother in our prayers and give the whole family joy by sending encouraging messages? Bob's address is:

ROBERT ONDERSMA

RR 1
Shelburne, ON
LON 1S0

Send your requests to:

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

P.S. Brothers and sisters, sometimes I receive a request of which I do not know whether it is meant for one time only, or if you want me to add that name to our calendar. Therefore it is a good idea to remind me in good time. Updated information is also greatly appreciated.

H.R.

PRESS RELEASE

Classis of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Alberta and Manitoba, sessions on May 3-5, 1983.

On behalf of the convening church at Carman the meeting of delegates is called to order by br. W. VanAssen. He welcomes the delegates and guests, reads I John 5, and after the meeting has sung Psalm 25:1, 2 leads in prayer.

In his opening words he congratulates the Church at Neerlandia on the acceptance of the call by Rev. DeJager. He mentions the disappointment of the Church at Calgary whose minister will leave for Burlington-East, and congratulates Rev. D. DeJong with this call. The Church at Carman is congratulated on the acceptance of the call by Rev. DeBoer.

The credentials are all found in good order. It appears that the Churches at Calgary, Edmonton (Immanuel), and Neerlandia have an instruction for their delegates.

Classis is constituted. Officers: Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar, chairman; Rev. D. DeJong, vice-chairman; Rev. J.D. Wielenga, clerk.

The agenda as prepared by the Church at Carman is adopted after some items have been added.

The following reports are on the agenda: a) Report on the inspection of the Archives by the Immanuel Church at Edmonton is not available, and will serve at next classis. b) Providence Church at Edmonton reports that it has audited the books of the Treasurer and found them in good order. c) A report of the Treasurer is accepted with gratitude.

The Church at Calgary requests Classis for an honourable release of Rev. D. DeJong, per May 31, 1983, 11:59 MDT, at which time he will be the responsibility of the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church at Burlington-East (ON). There is an instruction for the delegates of the Church

at Neerlandia in connection with this matter. The classis decides to grant a most honourable release to the Rev. D. DeJong, as requested. On the request of the Church at Calgary Rev. J.D. Wielenga is appointed as its counsellor. Also Calgary's request for classical preaching arrangements for two Sundays per month is granted, and the counsellor together with the consistory will draw up a schedule. Rev. Wielenga is appointed to represent Classis at the farewell service of Rev. DeJong on Sunday May 29, 1983.

The Church at Calgary asks the advice of Classis whether it should right away call another minister, or wait for half a year, seeing its financial difficulties due to increased and increasing unemployment among its membership. Classis advises the Church at Calgary to do its utmost to come to grips with the present financial needs and then inform the next classis as to what would be required in assistance from Classis in order to be enabled to call its own minister again.

During the Question Period ad Art. 41 C.O., the Church at Calgary asks and receives advice in a matter of discipline. The Immanuel Church at Edmonton requests that Classis deal with its letter dated April 19, 1983, during this Question Period (which is held in closed session). A report of a special church visitation to this church is read and taken note of. In connection with this also two letters of appeal are read.

After ample discussion it is decided to appoint a committee to further prepare the matters for another session of Classis on Wednesday June 15, 1983, at 1 p.m. Rev. B.J. Berends, Rev. M. VanBeveren, and Rev. J.D. Wielenga are appointed as members of this Committee. The church visitors, Rev. D. DeJong and Rev. J.D. Wielenga, are instructed to pay another visit to the Immanuel Church at Edmonton.

It is noted that Rev. DeJong will not be present at the next session of Classis,

due to his departure for Ontario. With a view to this the following appointments are made: Vice-chairman: Rev. B.J. Berends; Examiner Doctrine and Creeds: Rev. M. VanBeveren; Deputy for Contact with Government of Alberta: Rev. S. DeBruin.

Personal question period is held, but no censure according to Art. 43 C.O. is necessary. The Acts and the Press Release are adopted.

The chairman speaks a word of farewell to the delegates, especially to Rev. D. DeJong who is leaving the classical resort. He refers with gratitude to the many years of dedicated work by Rev. DeJong as minister at Edmonton and Calgary and as classis delegate and deputy in many functions.

The chairman thanks the convening church for the preparations for this classis and the host church for its hospitality, especially the ladies for the excellent way they served the meals.

Rev. D. DeJong speaks a word of farewell to the delegates in the midst of whose churches he was allowed to serve for so many years, with good and bad experiences. He expresses Christian wishes to the churches, in particular to the churches at Edmonton and Calgary.

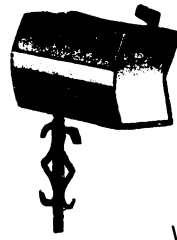
Classis is adjourned (provisionally closed) after the singing of Psalm 121:2 and 4 and prayer.

On behalf of Classis,
D. DEJONG, vice-chairman

Advertise
in . . .

Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

our little magazine



From the Mailbox

Dear Busy Beavers,

Guess whose day comes next!

Did you make something to give your Dad on Father's Day?

How about a card with pictures of his favourite things?

Did you put this message inside?

Dad,

I think you're the greatest Dad because . . .

That gives me an idea, Busy Beavers!

Let's have a little opinion poll.

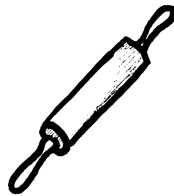
Let's hear from you all why you think your Dad is the greatest.

Just put it this way:

I think MY Dad is the greatest because . . .

Send in yours right away to:

Aunt Betty
Box 54
Fergus, ON
N1M 2W7



Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Cynthia Van Raalte*. We hope you'll like joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. You are lucky to have a baby sister, Cynthia. Do you help look after her? I think she likes that. Am I right?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Teresa Oosterhoff*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already, sending us a big quiz. Thank you! Are you allowed to help out on the farm, Teresa? And are you looking forward to summer and swimming?

And a big welcome to you, too *Sylvia Van Bodegom*. We are happy to have you join us. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver fun, Sylvia. Bye for now.

Of course you may join our Club, *Jeannie Barendregt!* We are happy to have you join us. Have you had your class bike ride yet? And will you share with us some of your own poems, Jeannie. I think the Busy Beavers would like that!

How did you enjoy your trip to the airport, *Rose Peters?* And how did your school do on track and field day? Are the potatoes in your garden coming along nicely? Thanks for a nice chatty letter and your riddles, too, Rose. Bye for now.

Hello *Valerie Gelderman*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for the letter and pictures. I hope you have a very nice holiday, Valerie.

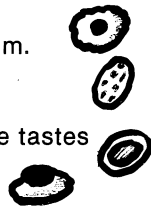
Here are a poem and matching puzzle for you, from Busy Beaver *Linda De Boer*.

Baking

Here is a poem about baking.

Homemade cookies are made from batter
Filled with love up to the brim
That's why most any child will say
Homemade ones taste the best to him.

You see, they really aren't the thing
That causes him to decide it,
"Cause no matter how good a cookie tastes
It's better with love inside it!"



Here are some food items needed for baking your favourite cookies.

baking powder
baking soda
butter
chocolate chips
cocoa
coconut
dates
eggs
flour
margarine
milk
nuts

oatmeal
pecans
raisins
salad oil
salt
shortening
spices
sugar
syrup
vanilla
yeast



S	Y	R	U	P	X	Z	Y	O	T	L	A	S	K	P
S	H	O	R	T	E	N	I	N	G	L	K	L	J	E
R	U	O	L	F	X	O	X	Y	Z	G	I	F	T	C
S	L	O	B	V	E	T	O	A	K	M	L	J	T	A
P	E	H	R	A	I	S	I	N	S	E	T	A	D	N
I	G	L	B	A	K	I	N	G	S	O	D	A	S	S
H	J	F	K	E	N	I	R	A	G	R	A	M	O	X
C	O	C	O	A	B	T	N	A	K	E	A	T	O	X
E	L	M	O	X	U	R	A	G	U	S	B	S	Z	Y
T	S	T	U	N	J	S	C	O	P	O	C	A	K	B
A	K	L	O	M	N	O	E	J	K	O	D	E	S	U
L	J	C	O	A	Z	Y	H	C	I	J	W	Y	G	T
O	O	K	L	M	T	Q	Q	O	I	X	O	D	G	T
C	S	R	C	M	P	M	Z	L	K	P	O	Q	E	E
O	O	O	J	K	L	N	E	J	Z	X	S	Z	Y	R
H	P	R	A	D	D	O	V	A	N	I	L	L	A	O
C	Q	Q	Z	L	I	O	D	A	L	A	S	X	X	O