



Clarion

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LABOUR RELATIONS

1. Introduction

In this series of articles I will discuss some aspects of labour relations. With the expression "labour relations" I do not refer in the first place to the work of the labour unions or the activity of the personnel department of a company. No, what I would like to discuss is the value of labour according to Biblical notions, the relation between labour and capital in the modern production process, the relation between labour and ownership, the responsibility for and the involvement of the labourers in the fruits of their labour. In this respect we will also trace how the Bible speaks about possession, ownership, wealth, riches, and stewardship. A closely related issue is the question of authority and obedience in labour relations: Where does the authority and the right of the employer end and what is the extent and the limitation of the required obedience as far as the employee is concerned?

These matters are in discussion today. We can hear all kinds of revolutionary ideas. At the same time we have to be careful that we do not stick to old traditions because they are old. In the past some people have tried to defend the employment of slaves on Biblical grounds. Nowadays most Christians agree that slavery is not a good Christian system, although it is a very old tradition, even mentioned as existing, to a certain extent, in the time of the early Christian churches.

At the same time we have to be aware of the danger threatening us in the modern approach of "human" and "equal" rights. Quite often it is based on a revolutionary concept, a system that wishes to get rid of all Biblical notions of authority and obedience. Every moral norm is rejected. Man becomes his own norm and everyone has to fend for himself. Few people care about the commandment of the Lord in respect to labour relations.

In this confusing development in modern life, specifically in respect to labour relations, we will study the Word of God to see and hear what the Bible teaches us in this respect. The purpose of this series is to give some food for thoughts and some Biblical guidelines which may be of some help to others. It is a rather complicated matter, as might be clear from the questions referred to above. It will take a number of articles to deal with the different aspects. I do not aim to exhaust the subject. Probably some points will need to be discussed in more detail. I will be quite pleased if these articles serve as food for thought and further consideration of this important matter.

2. Ownership and labour

Discussing labour relations and the value of labour according to Biblical notions, we first have to consider the relation between labour and capital as two of the main factors in the production process. We can also call it the relation between the labourer and the owner of the company or between labour and investment.

The production system in our country is sometimes

called a capitalistic system, as opposed to the communistic system. We can also call it the free enterprise system as opposed to the socialistic system.

There is a lot of confusion about these terms. What, exactly, do we mean by them? For a meaningful discussion about such matters it is always important first to define the terms, in order to make clear what we have in mind when we use certain expressions. As far as our topic is concerned, the basic difference between the systems is the question whether the production system is a matter of private ownership or national ownership and whether it is a system of free enterprise, ruled by the laws of supply and demand, or a system completely ruled by the government.

What is the meaning of the capital or investment factor in the production process? In our Bible translation we do not find the word "capital," but the matter itself is dealt with quite often. According to Webster's dictionary, "capital" means: "Any form of wealth employed for the production of more wealth; the wealth thus employed by a business or industrial or commercial enterprise, which can be in the form of manufactured goods, money, stocks or bonds, or relatively permanent assets as machinery or buildings."

The three main factors in the production process are labour, resources, and capital. It is clear that capital is an important factor in this respect. It has to do with wealth and the production of wealth. Although the Bible does not use the word "capital" as such, the matter itself is dealt with quite often. The Bible speaks in various places about wealth and the "production of wealth," about the possession of goods and the increase of someone's possessions.

3. The Scriptures on wealth and ownership

Possession of goods, ownership, and wealth are mentioned quite often in the Bible and certainly not in a negative way. The Bible does not condemn riches and wealth. On the contrary. We read in Gen. 13:2 that Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. We even read that the LORD had made him rich.

According to chapter 1:3, Job was the greatest or richest man of the people of the East. There was nothing wrong with that. He was tested by the LORD and tempted by the devil, not because he was rich, but to show the victory of God's mercy and grace in his life. After he had stood the test, the LORD gave him back all his possessions, yea, even twice as much as he had in the beginning.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read about people, members of the Church, who were owners of land and other possessions. Some sold their possessions to give the proceeds to the poor. Ananias and Sapphira were punished, not because they had personal possessions or because they did not give all their money to the poor. They were punished because they lied and pretended something which was not true. The apostle Peter says in chapter 5:4: "While it remained unsold, did it not re-

main your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” Their sin was not that they kept their own possessions for themselves, but that they “tempted the Spirit of the Lord” (cf. Acts 5:9)

In Matt. 19:21 we read about a rich young man who came to Jesus, wishing to follow the Lord. Finally he left Jesus unable to give up his possessions. His fault was not that he was rich and that he had many possessions. His downfall was that he trusted in his possessions and that he gave up Christ rather than his wealth. He did not possess his wealth but his wealth had taken possession of him.

The Bible teaches us that wealth and riches can be a blessing from the Lord, as it was with Abraham, with Job, and with Solomon. But we are also taught that it can be a danger. Those who are rich are in danger of being led astray by their possessions and of being captured by their wealth. The Bible warns us about bringing together many possessions without being rich in the Lord. Riches and wealth also involve the obligation of being good stewards.

4. Stewardship in the Bible

We have to be good, responsible stewards of the things the Lord has entrusted to us. The word “steward” has various meanings in our language and is used for different functions. Therefore it is important to notice the Biblical meaning. A steward, in the Bible, is not just a servant, as in a restaurant or in an airplane. Neither is he just a bookkeeper who looks after the business, as we find it with some landlords today. A steward in Biblical times was a very important person; he was completely in charge of all the possessions of his master. He acted on behalf of his master and ran the whole business. He had almost unlimited power and his master entrusted to him all his possessions, especially during the absence of his master.

In Gen. 39:4 we read about Joseph in the house of Potiphar. He was like a steward in the house of his master. He is called “an overseer of his house, in charge of all that he had.” In chapter 39:6 Joseph says that his master left all that he had in Joseph’s hand, having no concern for anything but the food which he ate. That is why Joseph said to Potiphar’s wife (chapter 39:9): “He has not kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife.”

That shows us the important position of a steward. The Lord has made us stewards. He has entrusted to us His possessions. All our wealth, all our possessions, are His. Whether it is a lot or a little, we are made responsible and we will be called to account for the way we have used it and put it to use.

That is a great responsibility for those who are rich and blessed with wealth and many possessions.

5. To acquire possessions

How do we acquire our possessions? Basically, there are two different ways to gather possessions: as a result of our own labour or as a gift we received. We can acquire possessions as a reward for our efforts or as a heritage. One grows rich as a fruit of his own labour, while another becomes rich because of his parent’s wealth. Both cases are mentioned in the Bible.

In the Old Testament we read very often about the latter: possessions received without any effort, just as a gift. About Abraham we read that the LORD had made him rich and that the LORD had given him everything. He did not even accept a gift from the King of Sodom, lest he should say, “I have made Abram rich” (Gen. 14:20-15:1). The LORD had made Abraham rich. He received the land and all other things as an inheritance out of the hand of the LORD. Also Job received back

all his wealth out of the hand of the LORD, yes, even twice as much as he had in the beginning.

The Bible speaks quite often about obtaining possessions without any effort, just as a gift or a heritage, sometimes in a direct way out of His hand, sometimes as a heritage from the parents. That is a legal way of obtaining possessions. Although today there is a tendency to condemn any acquisition of possessions without personal effort, the Bible speaks differently. The most important point is not how we obtain our possessions, but whether we take care of them in a responsible manner, as stewards over what the Lord has entrusted to us.

Apart from this ownership by inheriting, the Bible also speaks about obtaining possessions as a result of our labour. That brings us to our next point, and I will deal with that in the next instalment.

Burlington, ON

W. POUWELSE

— *To be continued.*



OUR ADVOCATE.

Anointed One! Thy work is done,
The slayer Death is slain;
And Thee, Thine everlasting realm
Of glory claims again.
Borne on a bright, clear cloud of light,
Thou dost the earth survey;
While, freed from thrall, behind Thee throng
The fathers' glad array.
The angelic host, in wonder lost,
The eternal gates fling wide;
And Thee, triumphant, God and man,
Throne at the Father's side.
There dost Thou wait, our Advocate,
Our Priest, the Prince of Peace;
Thy once shed Blood presenting still
With prayers that never cease.
Where Thou, the Head, O Christ, has sped,
Do Thou the body call,
And o'er the path Thy footsteps trod
Thy members one and all.
Jesus, to Thee all glory be,
Who dost to Heaven ascend;
With Father and with Spirit blest
Through ages without end.

William John Blew



FROM THE SCRIPTURES

“. . . for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content.” Phil. 4:11b

Christian Contentment

The apostle Paul seems to speak with unabashed boasting when he insists that he knows how to be content. The word he uses for “content” here was a popular notion of the day, and it formed an ideal which men were told to strive after. Among the Stoics, contentment signified a completely independent and self-sufficient lifestyle. That man was content who had no need of others, who was master of himself, and who was also able to accept his lot in life. While many pursued the ideal of contentment, few actually found it. Now Paul borrows the term, but plainly says that he has learned the secret of contentment. Is he trying to outdo the world?

The whole letter that Paul writes to the Philippians here is a testimony that the opposite was true. Paul is not defending the contentment of self-sufficiency. He is not defending a cold, unbending approach to hardships and set-backs. In fact, this is one of his most personal letters, and in it he candidly speaks about the ongoing process of learning to be content. His contentment did not arise by shutting the mind and emotions to the things that happened to him, trying in some way to block them out. Rather, he learned contentment through intense struggle, moment by moment turmoil and conflict regarding the things that the Lord had placed upon his path.

How did the apostle arrive at this contentment? How did he repeatedly come to a point of rest in his spirit, accepting the things that the Lord had laid upon him? Surely it was not through his own striving apart from Christ, a striving based on self-autonomy. He only found rest through *self-surrender*, as he says: “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord,” Phil. 3:7, 8. The balance sheet of personal assets and liabilities was completely overturned in meeting his Saviour and Lord. From then on, his life was no longer in his own hands. Imitating his Master and Lord, he became poor that others might become rich.

Thus, the Pauline contentment is not a display of self-mastery, or an example of the triumph of mind over matter. Indeed, he does not stand neutral and indifferent to the things that happened to him. Through great upheavals of spirit and soul he found rest and contentment in the Lord. In this letter he speaks of almost having “sorrow upon sorrow,” 2:27. So hard pressed is he that his mind and will fluctuates between life and death, 1:23. But his “sorrow upon sorrow” becomes “rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice,” 4:4 — a triumph of joy through faith and trust in Christ. In every new struggle, the Lord brings him to rest.

Neither does the apostle suggest in any way that he

has *arrived*. The same struggle to rest in the Lord stayed with him throughout his life. “Not that I have obtained this or am already perfect . . .,” he says to his readers, 3:12. But Christ dwells in his heart, and through Christ’s power he is brought to rest, learning and sharing the secret of inner contentment with what the Lord gave and took away. Paul discloses to us some of the things that happened to him, II Cor. 11:23ff, — things that make us shudder just reading about them. At the same time, he makes no secret of the inner struggles he had. He recounts how the Lord gave him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, sent to keep him from being too elated. He prayed and struggled with it, but had to learn the dictum of the Lord, “My power is made perfect in weakness.” Through self-surrender and self-denial, he found contentment and rest in the Lord.

This is the contentment which imitates Christ, who humbled Himself to death, even death on the cross, in order to receive a divine reward, Phil. 2. This is the contentment that discounts all selfishness, the contentment that is fully founded in Christ and so also seeks the well-being of others. Alone, Paul has found contentment in what he has, yet rejoices in the gift sent to him by the Philippians. His is the contentment that is able to give and to receive, to rejoice and to give thanks, even though the race is far from over.

And the same rule still applies today. “Our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee.” Everyone of Christ’s disciples must learn the same secret of contentment — confidently opening up to the leading hand of the Lord which so maneuvers the road map of our lives that *His* power is made perfect in weakness. For the Lord manifests His presence and power in human weakness. He shows His might in the midst of human helplessness. He exalts His power through our powerlessness.

And the way to this discovery is always through struggle, repentance, and prayer. No one easily submits his will to the will of the Lord. But our Saviour has shown the way, and he gives rest to all who submit to Him and His yoke. Then struggles may come, and turmoil may live within our hearts; but in the end —

“. . . I have set my soul at rest.
As, sheltered at its mother’s breast,
A child may linger quietly,
My soul is quieted in me.”

Ps. 131:2

J. DEJONG



OUR COLLEGE

Once more we have come to the end of an academic year, the fourteenth to be exact. We set out in September 1982 with four newcomers, students P. Feenstra, M.K. Marren, G. Peet, and R.A. Wynia (a member of the Christian Reformed Church who had expressed the wish to study at the College.) Two students, A. VanDelden and G. Wieske, entered their second year of study. Students D. Agema (who had already studied a couple of years in Kampen before his emigration), C. Bosch, W. DenHollander, J. Moesker, W.B. Slomp, and M.H. VanLuik began their third study year. Finally, two students, E. Kampen and G. Nederveen, started their fourth year.

As far as classes are concerned the first-year students study together in the so-called Freshman Course. The other students, whatever their year of study, take the particular course which is up for the year — either sophomore, junior, or senior — in the triennial cycle.

Br. Kampen and br. Nederveen went full circle and completed the requirements for their College degree. For Mr. Kampen, who was admitted to the College with a qualified B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) degree, this is the degree of Master of Divinity (M.Div.); and for Mr. Nederveen, who entered the College via the admission exam, the Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) degree.

When the courses started in September 1982 Prof. VanDam was still studying in Kampen on his leave of absence. This meant that his colleagues filled his hours, but then not with teaching material from Prof. VanDam's but from their own departments. When Prof. VanDam returned at the end of October he caught up with his program by teaching extra hours.

The same routine will be followed at the beginning of the new courses for Prof. VanDam who hopes to return from another study leave at the end of September and for the Rev. VanOene who hopes to attend Synod in November as a delegate from Ontario. Prof. Faber has become quite good at figuring it all out in such a way that the students get their full due.

Talking about members of the faculty, I should mention the Rev. VanDooren who stepped down as lecturer at the end of the thirteenth academic year in 1982 because he had reached the age of 71 at

which retirement becomes compulsory. However, that did not preclude his appointment as a temporary instructor, and so he lectured once more in the past year in his beloved subjects, and will, the Lord willing, continue to do so up till the time that a fourth full-timer takes over. That can be, if all the "ifs" are realized, at the beginning of 1984. Rev. VanDooren will therefore be the featured speaker at the upcoming Convocation and College Evening on Friday, September 9.

Looking back on the past College year, we have every reason to be thankful to our gracious Giver. In spite of the fact that most members of the faculty are not becoming any younger, to put it mildly, the teaching was not impeded by age or illness. As a matter of fact, students missed more often than their teachers. Not-so-merciful tongues sometimes tell that such an occasional student absence, in some instances, might have been caused by unfinished paper- or meet-the-deadline fever, but if it did, this fever did not become contagious at least.

Before the beginning of the academic year a rule was set concerning the submission date of written assignments. This rule was set for practical reasons. Whether it was the teachers' fault, being too exacting taskmasters, or whether the students were to blame, letting work pile up till the end, in any case students had trouble over the years getting their papers in on time to allow the marking to be completed in June. The fast workers managed, but for the not-so-fast ones, or the not-so-well-organized ones, it sometimes became August or September or even later before it was all done and the final results could be figured out. The rule now is that the papers should be in three weeks after the closing of the Course, and that within the following three weeks the papers should be marked. So no student-stalling, but no teacher-stalling either.

It worked! The staff was glad about it, but so are the students. They no longer have to play the catching-up game all summer but get time for other pursuits. Before June 10 (D-Day) was over, the last student had made it, out of breath, to the College, to hand in the final paper. I saw that student, but I was spared the sight of those students' poor wives who had been typing until the wee hours of the night. More than one of them ended up in the hospital. Fortunately, however, that was not because of exhaustion, but be-

cause of confinements. Congratulations! You may be sure that, in case these offspring will ever become students at the College, their assignments will have been completed before the due date.

In the meantime the faculty is meeting to consider the exam results. The staff is busy finishing the administration of the past year, completing reports for the Board of Governors, getting out the mark lists to the students, and preparing for a new year of study.

So far three students have applied for admission: P. Aasman of Burlington, ON, G. VanPopta of Langley, BC, and R. Schouten of Abbotsford, BC. Before we welcome them to the College we hope to relax a bit and to gather strength for a new season under the providence and blessing of the Lord.

L. SELLES



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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.

AMERSFOORT

The classis Amersfoort of the Christian Reformed Churches denied a request from the regio Harderwijk of the Netherlands Reformed Churches to have discussions with one another.

On behalf of the regio Harderwijk, the Rev. J.D. Houtman of Wezep had sent a request to the Christian Reformed Churches with the request to establish some further contacts. The idea was especially to send delegates to each other's classically, respectively regional assemblies.

The classis Amersfoort, however, calls the request premature, "because there first have to be sufficient instances of contact on the local level." The church at Amersfoort made known that it considers appealing the decision of this classis to the provincial synod. (ND)

* * *

AMSTERDAM

The federation of Muslim organizations in The Netherlands has asked minister Deetman for permission to establish an Islamic seminary at the University of Amsterdam. Those in favour of such an establishment — among whom the (synodical) islamologist Drs. J. Slomp, point out that the request of the Dutch Muslims can mean the rescue of the theological faculty at the Amsterdam University which is threatened with closure because of financial restrictions.

The Muslim organizations want to train their imams at their seminary. Until now there is such a training institute only in Yugoslavia, apart from the ones in Turkey and the Soviet Union. The Dutch Muslims, and especially those who

OUR COVER

Photo Courtesy Manitoba Government.

originate from Turkey, are now being taken care of by imams who come from Turkey. These imams come to The Netherlands for a period of four years and receive a special course for their work in The Netherlands which lasts approximately four months. (ND)

* * *

MADISON, WIS. (LCUSA)

A 10-person study group of lawyers, theologians and doctors — completing a 2½-year study of the moral and theological implications of what is popularly known as "test-tube" conception — has unanimously concluded the process "does not in and of itself violate the will of God as reflected in the Bible" as long as the wife's egg and the husband's sperm are used.

The study group, convened by the Lutheran Council's Division of Theological Studies, met recently at Sr. Benedict's Center here to put the finishing touches on a 42-page document that will be presented to the November meeting of the Lutheran Council. (CN)

* * *

PITTSBURGH, PA (RNS)

A recommendation that homosexuality "in and of itself" shouldn't be grounds for denying ordination of ministers will be put to a vote of delegates to the United Church of Christ general synod.

After six years of grappling with issues of human sexuality, a 10-member task force has finished its study and will present its recommendation to the decision-making general synod at its bi-ennial meeting here. It asks the 705 voting synod delegates to endorse the conclusion that "a person's heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual orientation is not a moral issue." However, sexual behaviour — how one conducts himself or herself — "does have moral significance," the task force said. (CN)

* * *

ALKMAAR

The Alkmaar court has acquitted a physician for heeding the request of a ninety-five-year-old woman to end her life. This is the first time in the history of The Netherlands that a case of admitted euthanasia has been declared legal. If the Court of Appeal upholds the opinion of the Alkmaar court, euthanasia will no longer be considered a crime and the uncertainty that has prevailed concerning its legality will end.

Dr. Harry M. Kuitert, Professor of Ethics at the Free University, has defended the court's decision. In his view the right of dying people to request an

easy death at the doctor's hand, as in the case of the ninety-five-year-old woman, is a "small piece of human freedom." "Today," he added, "there are no more natural deaths. From the cradle to the grave we are accompanied by medical technology. We keep ourselves alive through injections, vaccinations, medicine of all sorts, and so on. Without medical technology we would have died at a much earlier age. In euthanasia we only interfere in our own interference. (TB)

* * *

MOSCOW (KNA)

"In order to grow militant atheists, people who have hard materialistic convictions which are free from the prejudices of the faith, you have to bring them up from their childhood on." This was demanded by the chairman of the section for propaganda and agitation of the Communist Party of Kazakstan, Bodanov, in the Moscow periodical *Sovietska Kultura*.

For the first time since 1941 a slogan is promoted which Stalin abolished at the beginning of the "great national war."

Bodanov announces new forms of strategy in his article. With all local and regional party committees "Councils of Atheists" or "Atheist Sections" are to be formed. (ND)

* * *

HANNOVER, WEST GERMANY (RNS)

Private property is the original sin that leads to all forms of injustice, Nicaraguan cultural affairs minister Ernesto Cardenal told 10,000 cheering participants here for the annual Protestant church day, or Kirchentag.

"The church fathers agree with the father of scientific socialism, Karl Marx, that all persons should share the natural gifts of our world," said the speaker, an ordained Roman Catholic priest and a well-known poet. He spoke as a part of an all-day forum on Latin America. (CN)

* * *

WASHINGTON, (RNS)

When the general assembly of the World Council of Churches convenes in Vancouver, BC this summer, an international evangelical human rights group will hold its own conference there to protest the council's failure to place religious persecution on the agenda.

Two weeks before that, the largest evangelical group in the country will gather here with other critics of the mainline Protestant churches for a conference on religious freedom, where the record of American churches will be held up to scrutiny. (CN)

— Continued on page 299.

PATRIMONY PROFILE¹⁷

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

Predictably, all his efforts failed. They were doomed to failure beforehand: whatever he said or wrote would not change the minds of the powers that be. "We have a law, thus the ecclesiastical boards had always spoken, and according to that law he has to be condemned," Helenius de Cock wrote, and he could not have been more right.

The Provincial Board met on May 29, 1834. Without any hearing, without any further investigation, sentence was passed: Hendrik de Cock was deposed from office. The only ground for that sentence was that he had published Klok's booklet against the evangelical hymns

"Finally considering that, however much Christian love must endure, believe, hope all things, and tolerate whatever Mr. de Cock may write or say, also in this procedure all means of gentleness having been tried to the utmost in order to keep the pitifully misguided man, perhaps unknowingly the blind tool of the evil intentions of others, if possible, from the worst All this, however, has remained fruitless and now the preservation of order and concord, and the obligation to maintain supervision and discipline, make it necessary to proceed to the severest measure and to remove him altogether. He would, after his suspension, never be able to conduct public worship services without causing some clamour which, in his opinion, conflicts with God's Word, yea, promoting what in his eyes is false and untruthful doctrine and thus, again, be a bad and pestiferous minister."

Dutifully, copies were sent to the General Synod, the Minister of State charged with the affairs of the Netherlands Reformed Church, and to the Classical Board of Middelstum.

Appeals to Synod and to the King

Had the moment for secession arrived? Some were indeed convinced of that, but they did not find an open ear with the Rev. de Cock. He was convinced that not one possibility should remain unused, not one manner to find justice untried.

Unaware of the scheming which had been going on behind the scenes right from the beginning, he decided to put his case before the general synod, for he was convinced that it first should become unquestionably clear that the church had become so deformed that publicly maintaining and defending the doctrine and right of the church was being punished with deposition.

It is very likely that with his appeal to General Synod de Cock made use of a document sent to him by Mr. D. van Hoogendorp, a jurist who was very favourably inclined towards the reformation of the

church. On June 19, 1834, he wrote to de Cock, "Hereby I send you the Act of Appeal and the Memorandum of Defense I had drawn up for you amidst my many pursuits I request you, Reverend Sir, to read them with due attention and to make no ampler use of them than you are convinced you can and have to do. You are free, as far as I am concerned, to delete, add, change whatever you wish. I have tried as much as possible to put myself in your position I do not have to tell you that the documents which you will have to send to the Secretary of the Synod, are wholly to be written in your own handwriting Van der Kemp hopes to send you a Memorandum for the consistory one of these days That we have drawn up these documents is something we don't spread. I believe that it is not advisable that it becomes known that they have flowed from our pen before Synod has reached a verdict. We hope and trust that the Lord will show us then what we have to do."

Hendrik de Cock never divulged the name of van Hoogendorp, nor does his son in his description of his father's life and work. If the above-mentioned letter had been lost, we would never have known of the brotherly hand which was extended to help the lonely warrior in his battle against the all-powerful and determined ecclesiastical authorities.

The consistory sent a memorandum as well, most likely the one drawn up by Mr. van der Kemp. It is a small brochure showing irrefutably the invalidity of the various sentences passed upon de Cock. The general synod, however, does not appear to have dealt with this memorandum. It might have been too hot an item to handle, and they could always raise the argument that the consistory was not included in the sentences and that therefore its submission was out of order

Besides appealing to the general synod, Rev. de Cock addressed the King once more, enclosing two publications against Rev. van der Linde of Kantens from which the deep corruption should become clear to His Majesty. He tells the King that, since the audience, he did speak to "His Excellency Minister van Palland van Keppel about the cause of the Reformed religion, but with him I met with nothing but an intense aversion and opposition to the true Reformed doctrine," and de Cock questioned whether the King really knew what was going on and what was at stake.

"Your Majesty ought not to listen here to the multitude and blindly to follow the will of the priests, but diligently to examine everything yourself, to weigh my defense and the account I gave, and to judge the same by God's Word, in order that Your Majesty may not by your signature under my sentence leave or abjure the true service of God and thus destroy nation and people. I hope that God may keep Your Majesty from this, and may enlighten you by His Spirit to remain faithful to Your Majesty's oath to protect the true Reformed doctrine, and to restore

the faith of Your Majesty's ancestors and the true services of God."

As has been remarked before, it is a big question whether the King indeed saw and read all these submissions. He was an extremely hard worker and sometimes could be found in his office and study at 4:00 a.m. However, it is more likely that van Palland van Keppel and Janssen dealt with all submissions of the kind de Cock sent in. In another, non-related case, the Rev. D. Molenaar, who proved to know his customers, said to someone who was enthusiastic about having received a promise from the King, "Friend, you have the King's word, but that won't help you at all if van Palland van Keppel and Janssen are not favourably inclined towards you; those two sting like vipers." Also in that specific case Molenaar was right, and the King's promise did not help at all.

Ecclesiastical Reaction

How did things go at the general synod? In his submission to the highest church board, the Rev. de Cock already gave evidence that his expectations were not all that high to begin with.

It seemed as if there still was a possibility that things would change for the better. In spite of the declaration by the provincial board that it had been showing love and patience to the utmost, General Synod stated "that the measure of deposition from office ought not to have been applied to the minister H. de Cock without delay and in the first instance, and that therefore the sentence against him by the provincial board of Groningen was to be reformed." Synod gave de Cock half a year to prove to the provincial church board of Groningen his regret and sorrow because of that of which he had been declared guilty, that he considered it to be of such a nature that it necessarily must lead to the disturbing of the order and concord in the Netherlands Reformed Church. No proof at all that the accused deviated from God's Word or had acted contrary to it. The only thing was: give him some more time to repent.

Hendrik de Cock grasped the opportunity given him with both hands. On Thursday, July 24, 1834, he received the synodical decision. A week later he wrote a letter to the provincial board, requesting it to receive him with the consistory in its first regular meeting, namely, on August 6. The "elders and deacons, members of the consistory of Ulrum" sent a similar request on the same day.

The secretary of the provincial board replied, in consultation with the president, that de Cock's request would be discussed at the meeting of August 6, 1834, and that he would receive word about the board's decision after that.

What was the official reply? "The provincial church board of Groningen, having considered your submission of July 31 last, refers you to the decision of the synod of July 16, 1834, by which you as well as the provincial church board are bound."

With sadness and indignation de Cock read this letter. It prompted him to reply on August 12, 1834, and he declared to be willing to sign a statement and to observe

all ecclesiastical regulations and ordinances, but only insofar as he can do it with a good conscience before the Lord and as long as his "oath once sworn holly before God and the congregation to maintain the Reformed Religion be not injured and violated."

Also on behalf of the consistory de Cock "requests therefore your reply at your earliest convenience, the opportunity to be heard, or the sending of an act to be signed which, based on God's Holy Word, leaves free my oath sworn before an omnipresent, holy, and Triune God, and maintains the rights of the Lord as the only King of His church and congregation."

From a postscript to this letter it becomes clear how the enemies tried to make things as hard as possible for God's faithful witness. Even though no extraordinary meeting was held for his sake, he was informed on August 2, 1834, that the total costs (to payment of which de Cock had been sentenced every time) amounted to Fl. 242,00. It is an unreasonably high amount.

The postscript of de Cock's letter of August 12, 1834, reads: "N.B. I would kindly request you to have the letters to me delivered to the boat, for then I'll get them for two nickels, whereas it costs four nickels by your method."

It did not help. On September 2, 1834, he added another note: "Once again I would request you, also when you are writing to me officially, not to forget the brotherly love towards me, which one owes even one's enemies, and not to put me to twice as much expense as necessary."

On August 29, 1834, the Rev. de Cock received a letter from the secretary of the provincial church board, informing him that the regular meeting was scheduled for October 1 and 2, and that, if so desired, he would receive an opportunity to speak on Thursday, October 2, at 11:00 a.m. "The Consistory of Ulrum is not expected to be there (as is a matter of course) because it is not included in the synodical decision of July 16 last."

Both the minister and the other office-bearers responded on September 2, 1834. And on September 20, de Cock wrote another letter to the provincial church board, with which he also returned the various financial statements and bills "into which mistakes have slipped at my expense." In the same letter he again requests that they send him the document which he will be required to sign, and that they as yet decide to receive the consistory. In order to make sure that signing of such a declaration would mean the end of the suspension, de Cock wrote a letter to the secretary of the general synod with the request for further information on this point.

The secretary, J.J. Dermout, replied on August 18, as a personal gesture, and draws de Cock's attention to the fact that the synodical decision applied *only* to the point which had been appealed, namely, the *deposition*. Since the suspension had not been appealed, it would stand even if the deposition were undone by the provincial church board. . . .

— *To be continued.*

WASHINGTON (RNS)

Pro-life advocates voice new hope for a permanent ban on government funding of abortion following unprecedented action by the House Commerce and Energy Committee to strike abortion funding from a measure providing health insurance for the unemployed.

The committee voted 21-18 on May 24 for an amendment to the unemployment bill that, if approved by the full House, would mark the first time Congress has enacted a permanent ban on funds for abortion in an entitlement program. There will almost certainly be an effort on the floor to remove the amendment from the bill, which has wide support in the House. (CN)

* * *

NEW YORK

Some 100 New York City ministers, priests, and rabbis, have gone union. They said that part-time chaplains are receiving between \$4,900 and \$5,900 and those working full-time get between \$15,000 and \$28,000. A union organizer said that chaplains have no pay scales and no steady increases or benefits. At their first bargaining session with the city, the chaplains requested \$17,500 for

part-timers and \$35,000 for full-timers. They waived overtime, holiday and night differential pay, stating that these would be reflected in the pay rate. (CT)

* * *

The following has been taken from *Ministry*.

With dwindling congregations, and interest in secular things surpassing church meetings, some clerics are trying desperate innovations to attract people: A minister in Southsea, England has taken to delivering sermons through a ventriloquist's dummy. "We have to think of new ways of communicating with the congregation," he told reporters. "This is a good method."

Another planned a dance in the graveyard next to the church. His purpose? "We want to show that the church is not dead, but very much alive."

In White Sulphur Springs, Montana, one church raffles a case of whiskey each year at 50 cents a ticket, for a \$3,000 profit.

Meanwhile a Woolwich, England, church, not content to raffle whiskey, wants a license to sell alcohol to attract the sophisticated under-21 and teach them to "drink sensibly."

A service billed as "a special for

sportsmen" began with three blasts of a referee's whistle; a sermon on Jonah and the whale ended with a fish dinner and a prize for the one telling the tallest fish yarn.

One church in Somerset, England, is issuing "trading stamps" to children and youth in an effort to increase church attendance. When the stamp book is filled, its owner can swap it for a Bible or hymnbook.

A small-town minister brought a leather-jacketed motorcycle gang into his church for a special "blessing of the motorcycles." Several bikes were wheeled down in front of the pews. The service turned out to be lively, but permanent results were disappointing. The gang never came back. "All we did was get a lot of grease on the carpet," the caretaker remarked wryly.

The writer's answer to all this nonsense? It is an answer with which we can wholeheartedly agree. Here it comes.

We who have been entrusted with the whole counsel of God have no need to bless motorcycles or hold graveyard dances. We offer the Word that is able to make our hearers wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

VO

Farewell

Rev. D. DeJong

Calgary, AB



Sunday, May 29, 1983, Rev. DeJong held his farewell sermon in the afternoon service. The sermon dealt with Lord's Day 48; "Thy kingdom come," according to the order of afternoon catechism sermons.

Christ has come on earth to proclaim the kingdom of God. He is the King of all the earth, so the whole earth is the territory of His kingdom. All true believers are the population of the kingdom. At present the influence of the devil is still noticeable: the weeds (the unbelievers) grow up among the wheat (the believers), according to Matthew 13.

Nowadays the proclamation of the kingdom has to be done by the church. There is a close relationship between the kingdom of God and the church, although

the two cannot be equated. The church is the gathering and the meeting together of the population of the kingdom, gathered by the King. The church is the training-ground of the Holy Spirit, the household of God, where the children of the kingdom get their food. Therefore all are duty bound to join the church.

In praying "Thy kingdom come" we pray and have to work for the unification of all believers; we pray to be kept from desertion; we pray for the (home) mission. Since the whole earth belongs to the territory of the kingdom and there is no neutral part, we have to proclaim it in all spheres of life. However unimportant our work may seem, it can have great influence. God's Word is the constitution of His kingdom which should be strictly ad-

hered to since the kingdom is effective only where His laws are obeyed.

Today the kingdom is in the process of coming, the church is still growing. Children of the kingdom are still being called into the church; unbelievers are being excommunicated; the wheat and the weeds grow up together; it is not perfect yet. However, when the time of the harvest comes, it will all be finished. Then the number of subjects of the kingdom and the number of church members will be the same. Then the righteous will shine.

After the worship service Rev. DeJong was addressed by Rev. Wielenga from Coaldale as a delegate from Classis, as representative of the neighbouring church, and as colleague and personal friend. This was followed by a coffee get-together of congregation and guests.

The preceding Friday Rev. and Mrs. DeJong had participated in a farewell dinner in the family circle of the congregation. To keep the memory of Calgary alive, they received a painting by Eric Schaap, a member of the congregation, showing the city of Calgary.

G. BIKKER

Can Measures and Weights or Time in the Bible Be Translated?¹

Last year Rev. Van Dooren wrote two articles in *Clarion* about Bible translations (Feb. 26 and Mar. 12, 1982). He expressed his dissatisfaction with the English translations presently available; his main complaint was that none of them provides us with a complete, a 100%, translation. Up to a point, Rev. Van Dooren is right. The translating business is in a mess. There are all kinds of versions and they all differ!

But, is a 100% translation possible? Many a Hebrew word or expression in the Old Testament remains obscure; for instance, in the descriptions of tabernacle and temple and names of plants and animals. Modern research has produced some solutions, but much remains to be done. Rev. Van Dooren himself mentions the fact that it does not really make sense to translate all proper names. In the field of technology the same words are used for copper, bronze, and maybe brass. Sometimes it can be determined from the context whether copper or bronze is meant, but not always. Another example is the usage of the same words for silver and money. These few examples show that a 100% "transparent" translation is impossible.

From here to another subject — Measures and Weights in the Bible — is but a small step. Rev. Van Dooren dealt with most of them and listed a number of the more obscure ones in the title of his articles. He showed that translations differ widely in their interpretations. This is a regrettable fact and it is mostly caused, it seems, by unfamiliarity with the subject or maybe conservatism . . . or is it negligence? A case in point is the bath, the first measure Rev. Van Dooren mentioned in his title. The estimates in Isa. 5:10 vary all the way from one imperial gallon or 4.546 litres in the NEB to 10.5 U.S. gallons or 39.75 litres in the NASB.

The first example may be an attempt to "clarify" the meaning of the text by means of a dynamically equivalent expression; the second is probably extreme conservatism. Is it possible that the translators were completely unaware of the archaeological discoveries made since World War I, or did they not agree with the conclusions of the archaeologists? They do not justify their conver-

sions to modern measures, weights, and money. As a result, an "investigative" reader who wants to know more about the size and value of things is often left in the dark or misled, and will get confused when he consults a few of the modern translations. We will return to the bath and some other measures later, but let us first try to get an understanding of the terminology of our subject.

Terminology of Measures, Weights, and Money

In Rev. Van Dooren's articles the word "translation" is used for the technical term "conversion." When we deal with the comparison of quantities in different systems of measures and weights, in a technical sense the right word is "conversion." In book- and other stores we can buy a metric conversion chart, and metric converter calculators are plentiful and widely advertised. And, less well-known, the science of measures and weights is officially called "metrology." In money matters other terminology is used. For instance, we can exchange dollars for guilders (more popularly "change" or "buy"). Newspapers publish foreign exchange rates, etc. An expression one meets once in a while is "the (free) convertibility of currencies" in the Western industrialized world. As we all know, this is generally not the case in the Communist world.

Finally, an obsolete, but amusing, example in connection with this discussion. The following is quoted from the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Compact Edition): "The seventy Interpreters that converted the Bible into Greek" (The quotation is dated A.D. 1651). Today, of course, we would say "translators" and "translated."

This brings us back, full circle, to translation. Let us start with another amusing example, also from the *Oxford*. In this case the meaning of "to translate" is "to change in form or appearance or substance." One of the examples given runs as follows: "1543-4 Act 35 Hen VIII c. 8 No man shall cutt mynyshe (= diminish) or translate . . . any barreles kilderkyns or firkyns." The usage of "translate" in this example, of course, is also obsolete, but the meaning is clear. The changing of measures for one's own pur-

poses (to take advantage of others, obviously), was prohibited.

Ironically, this is what the present "conversions" of Biblical measures and weights into imperial, U.S., or metric measures sometimes amount to, as we will see. You may object that translators do not do this on purpose and to their own advantage. Perhaps not consciously, but if the translators had thoroughly researched this subject and similar ones in the field of technology, some translations might not have been finished yet and probably would no longer be published. (There are now at least eight competing versions in English: KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV, NEB, NKJV, TEV, and The Living Bible! There is also the Jerusalem Bible and several others that are not so well-known.)

Returning once more to the subject of translation, in modern English this verb should not be used for conversion of measures, weights, and money from one system to another. Yet, the names of some measures in the Bible are translated into modern languages and properly so. For instance, the handbreadth and the finger (width). The cubit is also a translation with its own place in modern English. But the meaning is not so obvious. It is derived from the Latin word *cubitum* which means elbow. This leads us to the word *ell*, now obsolete in English but still used in the present version of the Heidelberg Catechism. It is obviously the same word as the Dutch *el* and German *Elle*. This type of translation, when possible, is perfectly legitimate and easy to understand. Originally the length of the *ell* was the distance between the tip of the middle finger and the elbow of a grown man (about 18 inches).

The word "translate" has several other meanings. It is used in mathematics and physics for very specific operations. There are also expressions in church language and theology with specific meanings of the verb "to translate": for instance, "to remove a bishop from one see to another" or "a bishop's seat from one place to another"; and, surprisingly, (in Scotland) to transfer "a minister from one pastoral charge to another"; in theology: "to carry or convey to heaven without death." (All quotations are again from the *Oxford English Dictionary*.)

We will now turn to a few of the measures and weights found in the Bible and discuss the difficulties of converting them into the current systems: imperial, U.S., and metric.

The Acre and the Bath

Earlier, the widely differing values for the bath in Isa. 5:10 as found in the NEB and the NASB were briefly mentioned.

The NEB renders this text as follows: "Five acres of vineyard shall yield only a gallon"; and the NASB: "For ten acres of vineyard will yield *only* one bath of wine." The NASB translates literally (cf. KJV, RSV) and adds the words "only" and "of wine" in italics. In the marginal note for v. 10, we read "about 10½ gallons."

When these two versions are compared one immediately notices the difference. While the NASB translates, the NEB translates and converts if we can call the change conversion. In general, an acre is the area a team of oxen (a yoke of oxen) could plow in one day. In Babylon this was about 0.4 acres, later in the Roman Empire 5/8 or about 0.6 acres. In The Netherlands a land measure *juk* (yoke) still exists, and it is defined in the same way. Its area is about half a hectare or 1.2 acres. The gradual increase in area is probably due to the increased efficiency of plows, breeding and harnessing of animals, and other factors. The size of an Israelite acre may well have been about half an Imperial acre, midway between the Babylonian and the Roman acre. Therefore, if one must convert, five imperial or U.S. acres would seem to be a fair conversion of the ten acres in Isa. 5:10.

What about the bath? As we have seen, the NEB has one imperial gallon equal to 4.546 litres and the NASB 10.5 U.S. gallons = 39.75 litres. A now widely accepted value for the bath is approximately 22 litres (about 5 imperial or 6 U.S. gallons). The NIV, for instance, has this in a footnote on Isa. 5:10. I derived 22.8 litres (*Clarion*, Jan. 14, 1978) based on a mathematical and technical analysis of the molten sea, the large water reservoir placed in the court of Solomon's temple. Consequently, 22 litres or a little more is the closest we can get at present. Why then one gallon in the NEB and 10.5 gallons in the NASB?

As far as the NEB is concerned, it is probably a case of "dynamic equivalence" to explain the meaning; a sizeable tract of land will produce only a little wine. The change to five acres from ten Israelite acres is about right. Is it conversion then? If the translators tried to convert, why not convert also to the right number of gal-

lons? The reader is left in the dark! Another text where the NEB has changed the text to modern measure is Ezek. 45:10, where we read: "... your bushel and your gallon shall be honest." The RSV has a literal translation "You shall have . . . , a just ephah, and a just bath." So have the KJV and the NASB. It seems the NEB translators wanted to explain to modern readers who might not know about "bath" and "ephah," that measures must be honest, and so they used modern standards for it. In the next verses, however, they use the Hebrew measures "homer," "ephah," "bath," and "kor." Is this not confusing? How is a reader going to make sense out of it?

The NASB translates Ezek. 45:10 literally: "... a just ephah and a just bath," and there is a reference in the margin to Lev. 19:36, where we read: "You shall have . . . a just ephah and a just hin," with a marginal note for the ephah: "approx. one bushel," and for the hin: "approx. one gallon." This is interesting, because a bath could hold 6 hins, and it follows that the bath would measure 6 U.S. gallons = 22.7 litres, just about right! And yet, the marginal note on Isa. 5:10 states that a bath contained about 10.5 gallons.

It is possible to trace the origin of this 10.5 U.S. gallon bath. Before archaeologists determined the approximate value of the bath, the only readily available information was found in the writings of Josephus (*Antiquities*, VIII, II, 9). He tells his readers there that a bath contained 72 (Roman) *sextarii*. A *sextarius* contained about 0.55 litres which leads to 72x0.55 = 39.6 litres or about 10.5 U.S. gallons for the bath. Josephus' mistake was that he equated the *batos* of the New Testament with the bath used at the time of the building of Solomon's temple. Over the centuries people had nothing else to go by, although a serious study of Talmudic writings would have led to a bath of about six U.S. gallons. Obviously, nobody with any authority in the field dug deeper, and the true value of the bath before the Babylonian exile remained hidden. However, does this justify the 10.5 U.S. gallons of the NASB in Isa. 5:10 while it had already been stated in the Lev. 19:36 marginal note that a hin was approximately one U.S. gallon? To me it seems like a rather negligent way of dealing with the subject. It is a good thing that the NASB translators did not introduce these conversions in the text but only in the marginal notes! As you can see from the above discussion (if you are still with us, to borrow a phrase from Rev. Van Dooren), the subject of measures, weights, and money is a complicated one. We will deal with a few more items in this and the following arti-

cle and then try to reach some conclusions.

The Firkin

The firkin is the only imperial measure in the title of Rev. Van Dooren's article. Since this measure is hardly used any longer, an explanation should be helpful. Its history is also a good illustration of the sometimes strange wanderings of measures and weights over the centuries. The quotation from the *Oxford Dictionary* above shows it to be very old. The word "firkin" is derived from the old English word *vierde-kin* (cf. Dutch *ken* in *kinderkens* = little children). It means "little fourth" and is indeed equal to ¼ barrel containing 36 imperial gallons. The old Dutch word for firkin was *kinnetje*, also *kin*, a 39-litre dry or liquid measure. The *kilderkin*, also mentioned above, contains two firkins and therefore is equal to half a barrel. Consequently we find the relationship:

1 firkin = ½ *kilderkin* = ¼ barrel = 9 imperial gallons = 40.9 litres

The name "kilderkin" is thought to be a corruption of the old Dutch-Flemish word *kinderkijn*, an old form of *kinderken(s)*. *Kinderken*, as a measure, seems to have been derived from a Dutch corruption of *quintal*, spelled *kintel* (cf. *kin* above), another old measure.

You might wonder why there was such an intimate relationship between Dutch-Flemish and English measures. It probably originated in the trade across the North Sea. This trade was greatly advanced by the Hanseatic League which was founded in A.D. 1241. The league was an alliance between a number of Northwestern European and English cities which granted each other trading privileges. The origin of these measures can be traced back to the Romans who adopted the Greek metrological system with some modifications.

— Continued on page 309.

Church News

DECLINED to Brampton, ON
Lincoln, ON
and Smithers, BC

REV. B.J. BERENDS
of Winnipeg, MB

CALLED to Houston, BC
CANDIDATE E. KAMPEN
of Hamilton, ON

news medley

Surprise!

There is a news medley this time, after all.

A few bulletins came in after the previous medley had been written and they contained a number of items to which we could pay attention in order to prevent any disappointment because of the absence of your favourite column.

In keeping with the spirit of the season, we pass on a remarkable item from the report of the Langley consistory. "A holiday schedule for the elders is set up. The district elders are requested to notify their districts of their absences."

It is not so much the second sentence which draws the attention, although it is something to be remembered. Usually it is well-publicized when a minister goes on holidays. It is noticed in the schedule for preaching: either guest ministers appear on the pulpit or the elders get their — much appreciated and looked forward to (!) — chance to fill the pulpit and read a sermon.

But when the (poor) elders go on holidays usually all that is noticed by some is that brother so-and-so was absent this Sunday. The next Sunday it may not even be noticed that he is not there. And this, while the elders are also pastors. We'll come back to that.

It is a good thing when the elders notify their district-members of their planned absence. Perhaps even it might be good to mention it in the bulletin. I am glad that the Langley Church raised this point.

What bewildered me somewhat, though, was the fact that they set up a holiday-schedule for the elders. It could be that the meaning of this sentence is that they marked down when the brothers would be absent; yet there is something in this as well. I pass it on for the instruction of us all.

Speaking about pastoral work, I was somewhat puzzled by a sentence from a consistory-report (not Langley's!) "Home visit reports regarding fam. A. and fam. B. Reports regarding pastoral care are also heard."

In the first place: when are we going to cut out the Dutchism "fam. A., fam. B." and write the proper "A. family, and B. family?" I mentioned it several times in the past and it still has not disappeared. When it is done by someone who learned English after his immigration it is understandable; but when it is done by someone who received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Canada it is almost "unforgiveable." However, I have seen submissions by persons who received a Bachelor of Arts degree and one wonders how they ever got it considering their manhandling of the English language, their spelling- and grammatical mistakes. I know that what I write is far from perfect English and I am always grateful when someone cares to point out to me where I use wrong expressions or incorrect grammar. As I said before, the only thing I take ill of them is that they waited so long before telling me.

However, back to the original point I wished to make. Are home visits no pastoral care? When it is said that "reports on pastoral care are also heard," one gets the impression as if family visits are not considered to be pastoral care. I have a suspicion that by "pastoral care" the

specific work of the minister is meant. If that is so, I must say that it is wrong. Both the minister and the elders are pastors and it would be wrong to claim the title of "pastor" exclusively or predominantly for the minister and his work. When the apostle Paul speaks his word of farewell to the elders of Ephesus, he says to them, "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord. . . ." There is a trend among us to speak of the minister of the Word exclusively as the "pastor." This is at any rate one-sided, to say the least. It is a thought which has not come up as a result of better understanding of the Word of God and the givens found therein, but it is the fruit of a certain trend in modern theology which shows its influence all around us.

Speaking of the office-bearers, I may insert a little item here which actually does not belong in our column, but I see no other way of telling everyone that what I wrote a few issues back has not materialized: I had the hope that we could send copies of the definitive report on the revision of the Church Order to the Churches before the start of the holidays. This appeared impossible, seeing all the other things which had to be completed before



40th Wedding Anniversary



Mr. and Mrs. Eltje Dykema were married on July 30, 1943 in Haren, The Netherlands. In 1951 they emigrated to Canada and have resided in the Burlington area for over 30 years. Mr. Dykema has recently retired from Canadian Cannery. They both enjoy good health and hope to do some travelling in the future.



these glorious days arrived. I may tell you that we have succumbed to the urging from within the Churches to bring the Church Order into agreement with the Belgic Confession, as was originally the case, and will speak again of the Consistory as consisting of the ministers of the Word, the elders and the deacons. Hereby, we hope, the confusion of terms which are being used at present will also become a thing of the past.

The Church at Chilliwack discussed an almost age-old "controversy," namely whether "the elder who reads a sermon will use the word 'you' or 'us' in the salutation and benediction. It was decided to maintain the practice as usual."

Since we do not know what "the practice as usual" is, we are left in the dark. I presume that it is the use of the word "us." There are sufficient grounds to argue that the elder also use "you." For, in the first place, the elder not just "reads a sermon," but "conducts a service." This is different, I think. And, in the second place, salutation as well as benediction are literal quotations from God's own Word. When a minister speaks the benediction, he does not do so on his own authority but then he proclaims to the assembled people of the Lord the grace of their God as it is certain through Christ Jesus our Saviour. Is this less of an assurance when an elder conducts the service?

The Chilliwack Consistory also decided to bring the practice of the "house congregation" in the Okanagan Valley more into line with the practice regarding collections etc. of the "mother-church" at Chilliwack. Our readers know that the brothers and sisters in the Okanagan Valley belong to the Chilliwack Church and that Chilliwack takes care of them: whenever a minister fulfils a classical appointment in the Okanagan, an elder of the Chilliwack Church goes along.

We take a tremendous jump. Would this were possible in reality in such a short time. Toronto is next.

It will be old news to several of our readers, but I still mention that "From the missionfield we received the good news that the Government has cancelled the plans to establish a public school besides our Christian-Mission-School in Manggelum. They promised to support our Christian School." This is good news indeed, and we are grateful for the hand of the Lord which was protectively over the work in the missionfield. After all, it is His work and not ours. Yet it is encouraging when we are permitted to continue our work in His service.

Some consultation has taken place between the three Burlington Churches. Alas, they could not yet come to the decision to have a combined bulletin. There is progress, however. The Burlington South Consistory reports, "This committee also proposed that the three Burlington Churches continue with their separate bulletins, but that items of interest to all three congregations will be printed on an insert, identical for all three congregations. The Consistory accepts this proposal."

Here is the first step towards improvement. Perhaps, in due time, the conclusion will be reached that it is better to proceed even further. We shall wait patiently for this development.

There were more consultations, as said above.

The description of what has been going on differs from bulletin to bulletin, but the picture which arises is that the Dutch services were part of the topics discussed.

Burlington — as you may know — has a Dutch service every Sunday evening. Visitors come also from other congregations in the neighbourhood. With the completion of the Ebenezer Villa in Hamilton, the Church there, too,

instituted Dutch services. Apparently it was considered advantageous to investigate the possibility of combining what is done in these two places. One of the proposals put to the fore was "to alternate services with Hamilton." This stands to reason, for Burlington will have fewer members attending the Dutch services now that there are some in Hamilton as well. If these could be combined, the attendance might be increased, which makes it so much more pleasant for those attending and for the minister who conducts the service.

It never made any difference to me when preaching whether there were only twenty-five in Church or five hundred, as long as I knew that this was the size of the Congregation and that no more could come; but to conduct a service in a large building for twenty-five persons while knowing that they form only a very small part of the congregation is different, at least to me. I would find it sort of depressing. As far as this is concerned it might be best indeed to combine services and to alternate the places where they are conducted.

We end our journey this time in the center: Carman.

"The Consistory dealt with the question brought to their attention by one member of the Congregation. 'Should we vote by secret ballot to express one's agreement or disagreement with the calling of a Minister?' It is decided not to change the method now used in the Congregation in view of Art. 5 of the Church Order. It is not a voting for a person but rather a voting on a consistory proposal."

From this item I conclude that Carman has the custom of voting by show of hands when the consistory comes with a proposal to call a certain minister unanimously, at least without presenting two names from which one is to be chosen. I also conclude that one member of the congregation objected to this and prefers a secret ballot even when only one name is presented to the congregation.

Ofentimes regulations drawn up by consistories contain the provision that voting about persons shall be done by secret ballot and that voting about matters shall be done by show of hands. I consider this a wise provision.

The argument that the voting is a voting "on a consistory proposal" does not cut ice, for the consistory proposal is a proposal concerning a *person*. The question is not whether the voting is done on a consistory proposal or not, but what the *contents* of that proposal are.

Voting on a proposal to appoint a certain brother (single candidacy) to the office of elder or deacon, or a proposal to extend a call to a certain minister (single candidacy) is all in the same line: persons are involved. Thus voting by secret ballot is to be preferred.

Mind you, a consistory does not *have* to decide this. I only judge the factual situation and the argument used.

Well, then, this will be the last medley written before our holidays start.

I do not have to repeat my wishes.

I only underline them.

Sincerely and truly,
VO

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Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

A Ray of Sunshine



“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses’ (Matt. 6:14-15).

“And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses’ (Mark 11:25-26).

“Here Christ simply explains to what purpose the conditional clause had been intended, “Forgive us, as we forgive.” God will not be affected by our prayers if we do not in turn show ourselves ready to give pardon, if any have hurt us. Certainly, unless we are harder than iron, this exhortation should soften us and make us agreeable to remit offences. If God did not daily condone our various sins, we know that we should have died countless times. The only law of admission to His forgiveness is that we pardon our brothers for any sin against us. Therefore it is nothing short of voluntary dedication to destruction deliberately to make God implacable to them, when men refuse to forget the wrongs done them.”

Calvin’s Commentaries

A thought to ponder:

“Past experience should be a guide post, not a hitching post.”

I Cannot Hear or Speak

I cannot hear the birds sing in the tree,
But when they fly or play or build their nest, I see.
I see the flowers’ beauty and how peacefully they grow,
The trees, the forest where the mighty rivers flow.
I see the lightning flash but cannot hear the thunder,
And stand amazed at the Creator’s power, and wonder.
I see the stars, unmeasured firmament — Almighty
God is He!
And this great God who placed me here, also created
me.

Sometimes I am depressed, sometimes I feel alone —
Someday, I’m sure, I’ll hear and speak, and sing before
His throne.

JATH
Listowel, ON

The Lord willing, the following brothers and sisters will celebrate their birthdays in August.

PHILIP SCHUURMAN
P.O. Box 1000
Vineland, ON L0R 2C0

Philip hopes to celebrate his 24th birthday on August 5. He lives in Vineland in a home for the mentally retarded, but visits his family in Hamilton regularly. Have a nice birthday, Philip!

ROSE MALDA
Oakland Centre
53 Bond Street
Oakville, ON L6J 5B4

Rose’s 26th birthday is on the 9th of August and not on the 8th as I wrote previously (please correct this on your calendars). Rose loves colourful cards and expresses this by smiling happily. Rose cannot speak.



JACK DIELEMAN
307 Connaught Avenue
Willowdale, ON
M2R 2M1

Jack hopes to celebrate his 11th birthday on August 27th. He is active in wheelchair basketball sports. He lives at home with his parents, five brothers, and two sisters. Have a fun day, Jack! Did your team win?



FENNY KUIK
38 Rizzuto Bay
Winnipeg, MB
R2C 3Y8

Fenny will be celebrating her 31st birthday on August 18. She enjoys working at the print shop and has helped to put many Clarions together. She sent me a picture of herself last Christmas — I would like you to see it too. Fenny has to express her feelings through sign language.

* * * * *

Please send your requests to:

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

school crossing

A. What Do Parents Expect of Teachers?

(Reprinted with permission, from *The Christian Home and School*, March 1983.)

“O teach me, Lord, that I may teach the precious things Thou dost impart”

May that song be the prayer of every Christian teacher! When we parents send our children to school in the morning, we follow them with a prayer that, through the teachers, God will speak to them and unfold His plan for their young lives.

Those who have been called to teach young children have been given a special task. This responsibility cannot be carried by human strength, but only by depending upon our heavenly Father each day. Jesus Christ, the Great Teacher, set an example for every Christian teacher when He taught His disciples with love and compassion. Let us all be imitators of Him in the classroom and at home.

As parents, we expect teachers to deal with our children as God's possessions. God has a plan for each of them, and it is the teacher's duty and privilege to help them, along with their parents, to see God's will. Children spend a large part of the day in the classroom, so the teacher is a great influence in their lives.

As teachers discipline their students, let it be done with love, so they are corrected, not frightened into doing what is right. As children are taught facts, they must also be taught values. They must be given praise and encouragement when they do their best, and forgiveness and acceptance when they fall short of expectations. That is essential to establish and strengthen their self-esteem.

When problems arise, parents must be informed of what is happening and what can be done to help. If help is needed with homework, children do not always ask; the teacher then must make us aware of the problem. Maybe, at times, parents help too much; teachers should let us know if they feel we are in error. This is also true of discipline. When the teacher has unsuccessfully administered Christian discipline, it may be time for parents to take action at

home. We want and need to know of problems in any area.

Here is a poem which reflects the thoughts of a parent sending a child to school:

Dear Teacher

*I'm sending you my son today —
My son, who's like a mound of clay.
I'm molding him and you will too.
The task is great, the years so few.
He still is rough and lacks in much,
But he responds to gentle touch.
He's pliable: be sure you wield
A firm, kind stroke, then he will yield.
Let's ask the Lord how best we can
Shape "little boy" to "Christian man."*

B. Various Streams within a School

The last month of a school year is often filled with a number of discussions about student placement for the following school year. Some rather difficult decisions have to be made from time to time. We have to consider the child, the size and setup of the school, and also the teachers who must provide the proper learning environment for each child.

Many of our schools have made a good start toward making our buildings educationally practical, our curriculum educationally distinctive, and our methods more and more sound. Several schools have also set up remedial education facilities. This type of effort is to be commended. It was recently estimated by a local public school board that 15-17% of a school's population would benefit to varying degrees from a remedial instruction program.

It seems to me that as schools develop more and more special programs for students who do not seem to fit in the average ability range, two direct benefits would occur. First of all (and most importantly), the claim that our schools should serve *all* children from our own community would become a reality. Secondly, the discussions about student placement, which are sometimes no better than wishful thinking or hoping, might become more meaningful. Let's look more closely at the various streams within a school.

Remedial education often concerns itself with children with lower than average ability, but it need not

solely be so. Slow learners usually have difficulty in meeting ordinary school requirements, but many of them have potential for essentially normal emotional, social, physical, and motor development. Sooner or later, however, many of these youngsters encounter emotional difficulties. A large proportion of "troublemakers" in school are youngsters with low intelligence. However, their "troublesomeness" does not arise primarily because of a special bent for getting into difficulty; the trouble springs largely from the kinds of demands made on them. If pressure is put on slow learners to keep pace with others in the conventional curriculum, to learn faster than their ability permits, or to learn in a setting in which they soon realize that others are much better than they, it is difficult for them to avoid the feeling that they are not much good.

The main goals in an educational program for slow learners are much the same as those that should prevail in an educational program for *all* children; that is, to help the students, as far as possible, to use their resources and to develop the skills and attitudes that will enable them to achieve a healthy regard for themselves — dignity in their limitations; self-worth despite their limitations. In this way, these students also have a right (in school) to learn to live productive lives and to become useful members of society.

While many teachers and parents have discussed remedial education, very few have tackled the topic of *special education*. This can be broken down into a number of categories. Three of the most relevant ones are as follows:

(a) Education for the Gifted

Although gifted children are very resourceful in finding ways of putting their abilities to work, they cannot themselves create an environment that will bring out their full potentials. Such children need enrichment activities and, if possible, special classes from time to time.

(b) Education for the Mentally Retarded

We are not yet at the stage of making available Christian education

for the mentally retarded child. Unfortunately, these youngsters have been left primarily in the hands of the secular school system. As Christian school supporters our concern ought also to encompass this area of responsibility. We haven't even scratched the surface yet. Why not? On what grounds do we explain our "non-involvement"?

(c) *Education for the Handicapped*

This pertains to those children who suffer special disabilities. The same type of comment is valid here as under "b."

As Christian educators, we are daily confronted with exceptional children whose needs, by and large, we do not meet. The program of remedial instruction is a moral and financial responsibility which our school communities should willingly bear if they are to remain true to their commitment of Christian education. While the educational needs of the mentally retarded and handicapped present a different approach from our familiar routine, they are nevertheless needs which ought to be explored, defined, and brought to completion. Without taking away from what we have, let's encourage each other — teachers, parents, board members — to broaden our outreach, influence, and responsibilities in the entire area of "education other than normal."

Recommended reading on this topic:

- (a) *These Are Your Children* (Jenkins)
- (b) *Children Come First* (Morrow)
- (c) *Must Schools Fail*
(Byrne and Quarter)
- (d) *The Naked Children* (Fader)

C. *A Dress Code*

(from *News and Views* — John Calvin School, Smithville)

At school we are not in the habit of telling the students what they should wear or what should not be worn. The Staff is aware of the limits of their authority and also the responsibility of the parents. That is the norm. As far as that is concerned, the staff has not made any rules at all. But I think every parent is aware of the fact that the children are coming from over 100 different sets of parents. Not one is the same. But we all agree that there must be rules governing decency and neatness. In the interest of maintaining this decency and neatness the *Board* has made a rule, several years ago, forbidding girls from wearing *blue jeans*.

Personally, I feel that this rule is very minimal. In fact, in the higher



grades, the teachers can tell you that there is a paradoxical situation. Girls almost never wear anything but pants — that's part of the teenage identity — but when it comes to the other accoutrements of femininity (nail polish, eye shadow, mascara, even lipstick in some cases), these are the indispensable embellishments of teenage female identity! They haven't got the foggiest idea what it means to *sit* like a lady, but they could probably teach their mothers a few things about make-up.

Can we put femininity into a Reformed perspective? Are these decorations permissible within the framework of Christian modesty? Or are they part of the street and night-club scene? Shall we work at maintaining a level of modesty which is so fitting in our style as Christians? Or are all these concerns just the idiosyncratic ramblings of an over-concerned principal?

D. *Canadian Reformed Teachers' Convention*

On Friday, May 6, approximately 65 teachers met in Covenant Christian School in London for the annual spring convention. Sharing information and meeting old friends are always two highlights of such days. As

you can tell from the two pictures, the London trip was very worthwhile!

May all of you have a safe and relaxing summer!

Signing off,
NICK VANDOOREN

P.S.

Our heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Vandooren, who recently received his Master of Education degree from the University of Toronto. In spite of his busy schedule, Mr. Vandooren has been enabled by the Lord to continue and complete his studies with the result that he was awarded the Master's degree in his field. We are certain that the school which he serves at the moment will benefit from his studies, especially since his studies are not "theoretical," so to speak, but directed towards his daily work.

We also express the wish that the Lord may strengthen him to his daily task and that, via the "School Crossing," we may enjoy the results of his acquired knowledge and skill for a long time to come.

It is always pleasant for someone who writes a column to learn that what he writes is read by the readers. Furthermore, a writer can never keep it up unless he receives the cooperation of the readers and especially of those who are in a position to contribute something worthwhile. To keep our "School Crossing" — and who would want to lose it? — we need the cooperation of all our readers. Even the possession of a Master's degree does not mean that one's funds are inexhaustible. . . .

VO



Letter to the Editor

Dear Rev. Van Oene:

Now that summer has arrived, we expect some of our people to use the camping facilities in the Chatham area. Sometimes holidays are more enjoyable if one becomes familiar with the area's local history. Mrs. A. Robbins, a writer of books on the history of Kent County, supplied me with some facts on which I could base the following story. I also read Bible Students Commentary Genesis Vol. 1 by Dr. Aalders, pages 200-207. Perhaps this work will help the visitors to this area understand us inhabitants more fully.

I Was a Stranger and You Took Me In

Though Abby's brows were pulled tightly together, she did manage to convince her pen to form the lines of ink which shaped the beautifully written words *friends* and *neighbours*. Her feet, almost hidden by long skirts, tapped contentedly on the floor when the i's in the words were dotted without producing dark blots of ink. Now that she had completed the spelling exercise, the young girl had time to return to her bewildering thoughts.

The last day of school was usually an occasion for excitement, but today her good feelings seemed to have been dampened by the moisture that filled her eyes. The cause of the dying of Abby's pleasant emotions seemed to have been contagious; her classmates repressed their joyful natures and earnestly completed their lessons. Even Melody, whose voice would soar as soon as her feet touched the outdoors, did not seem to remember what the word "music" meant. For a whole week Linda had not counted in Latin while playing hopscotch. Ronald, who actually became a doctor when he grew up, had given up his search for the most stubborn of silvers. His tweezers remained in his pocket. When Math tests had been returned, they had all been hidden quickly in the desks, for everyone knew that Abby's mark would be the lowest, as usual. Kindness was a feeling that could be found in abundance in this school, a feeling that Abby had managed to add to her own meagre supply.

Abby compressed her lips in determination; she was going to believe what she had been taught, no matter how often the actions of the adults told her to do the opposite. She had been taught that Ham, the second son of Noah, had been the ancestor of most of her classmates. In Genesis 9 it was written that Ham, and seemingly his youngest son Canaan, had dishonoured Noah and thus were punished by him. The punishment was that Canaan and his children would perpetually be doomed to be the servants of Noah's other two sons. This pronouncement came to its fulfilment when the descendants of Shem defeated the Canaanites, and the land of Canaan became the land of Israel.

The other three children of Ham, — Cush, Mizraim (or Egypt), and Put — had not taken part in the dishonouring of their grandfather.

PRESS RELEASE

Classis Ontario-North, June 16, 23, 1983.

1. a. After Christian opening, the credentials are examined and found in good order. Classis is constituted. Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, chairman; Rev. R. Aasman, clerk; Rev. J. Mulder, vice-chairman.

b. The chairman welcomes the brothers, also the several guests. The representatives of the Burlington-South Church are especially welcomed, since this Church is represented for the first time. Also Rev. D. DeJong of Burlington-East receives a special word of welcome, and the Church at Burlington-East is congratulated on the fact that they have their own minister. In this respect also the Churches at Burlington-South, Orangeville, and Ottawa are mentioned, since, the LORD willing, they will receive their own minister in the near future.

c. The agenda is established.

2. The Rev. D. DeJong signs the Subscription Form, thus pledging his allegiance to the Word of God and the Creeds of the Church.

3. Preparatory examination of br. E. Kampen, M.Div. The documents are examined and found in good order. Br. Kampen delivers a sermon proposal on I Cor. 15:58 and the examen is continued. Rev. Aasman examines exegesis O.T., Rev. VanOene exegesis N.T., Rev. Mulder the doctrine of the Church.

After br. Kampen has subscribed to the Creeds of the Church, Classis declares him eligible for call by the churches.

4. The Churches at Burlington-South,

These three sons of Ham were not cursed, they were not doomed to be slaves, and they were not pronounced inferior to all of the other people of the earth. The descendants of these children were free to expand and become great nations, the early civilizations of this earth. They proceeded in a southerly direction and occupied the whole of Africa, and the southern peninsulas of Asia, India, and Arabia. Abby knew that her friends could be proud of the inherited abilities of their ancestors.

Abby had learned that her family had originated from the Huns in Europe, a people whose greatest skill seemed to have been a crude form of fighting and the rolling together of still existing boulders, in order to shape homes. Yet Abby did not consider herself to be inferior as a person, for she knew that she, too, was a human being created in the image of God. Then why did some adults demand that she should consider herself to be much better than the other children? They could never give an explanation. Abby was confused.

Today would be Abby's last day in the Buxton school. She had been sent to this place by her parents, for it had been well-known that the education offered here was superior to that given in the other schools of the Chatham area. The Buxton school had been the first school in Kent County that had expanded to include the high school grades. During this past year, a school within Chatham had finally reached the point where it considered itself equal in

Orangeville, and Ottawa request the approval of the calls extended to and accepted by Rev. J. DeJong of London, ON, Rev. M. Werkman of Lincoln, ON, and Rev. G.H. Visscher of Houston, BC, respectively. After the pertinent documents have been examined, Classis grants the requested approbations.

5. The Church at Burlington-West requests Classis to grant the Rev. W. Pouwelse, who accepted a call to the Church at Langley, BC, a Certificate of Release. After the documents submitted are examined, Classis grants this request, wishing Rev. Pouwelse the LORD's blessing on his ministry in Langley.

6. The Church at Brampton requests classical appointments once a month instead of once every two months. This request is granted and a schedule is adopted.

7. The Church at Orangeville reports on the financial arrangements for 1983 for the Rev. C. Olij family. Also a letter of Rev. Olij dealing with the same matter is read. Classis deals with this report and this letter in closed session.

8. An appeal of a member of the Orangeville Church is dealt with. It concerns a decision of the consistory to grant the request from a group of Seventh Day Adventists to rent the church building for their services.

After discussion Classis judges that

1. the use of the church building in this case by those who rent it, i.e. Seventh Day Adventists, is their own responsibility and not that of the consistory (I Corinthians 10:23-27);
2. the consistory should seriously consider whether it is wise in this situation

educational value to the school in Buxton. In September Abby was to enroll in the Chatham school. Why? Her parents said that since this school had finally become capable of offering education equal to that of the Buxton school, it was now a *superior* school. Abby was confused.

Abby's classmates adhered to the teachings of Scripture, not only in word but also in deed. Abby had come to them as a stranger who had not grown up in Buxton and its surrounding area. Tomorrow she would be forced to return to the ways of the stranger. She would not speak to her friends or even recognize them. But the children did not treat her accordingly; they did not punish her for her future misbehaviour.

The children followed the teachings of Matthew 25:34, 35. They had a high goal in life, a goal that was higher than pleasing only earthly people. They first of all obeyed their heavenly Father and lived as His children. By their actions they showed that they honoured the Creator. They heeded the teaching that the things done to their fellow human beings were things done toward God. They knew that their work was not done in vain. "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for . . . I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

Yours truly,
MRS. J. TILLEMA

to rent out the building, seeing the objections raised against it (I Corinthians 8:10-13).

9. In closed session Classis reads an appeal of a member of the Church at Fergus against decisions of the consistory. Several "exhibits" are attached which also are read. A committee is appointed which will draft a proposal to be dealt with in the next session of Classis, Wednesday, June 22, 1983 at 7:00 P.M. in the Toronto church building.

10. Rev. Pouwelse reads a report of a special church visitation held by him and Rev. Mulder in the Church at Fergus. Classis takes note of this report.

11. The Church at Brampton checked the archives of Classis and found them in good order. A copy of the Acts of Classis, September 16, 1982, which was missing, has been added.

12. A report regarding the Fund Needy Churches is read. The cash balance of the fund is \$2,151.71. The Church of Orangeville is appointed to check the books and report to the Classis to be held September 1983.

13. a. Classis advises the Church at Burlington-West to convene Regional Synod in 1984, unless matters are submitted which make a Regional Synod necessary in the fall of 1983.

b. Upon the request of the Church at Burlington-West, Classis recognizes the Rev. G. VanDooren as counselor of this Church.

14. The Church of Guelph, taking care of the Fund for Needy Students, requests \$2.50 per communicant member for the year 1983-1984.

15. The Church of Ottawa thanks Classis and the congregations for all the faithful help this Church received as to their regular pulpit supply. Rev. Aasman is appointed to represent Classis at the inauguration of the Rev. G.H. Visscher as minister of Ottawa's Church, July 24, 1983.

16. Convening Church for the next classis: Burlington-East. Date: Thursday, September 15, 1983, at 9:00 A.M. in the Toronto church building.

17. The Acts of this session of Classis are read and adopted; the Press Release is read and approved.

18. After the singing of Psalm 143:1, the chairman closes this session with thanksgiving.

19. On June 22, 1983, at 7:00 P.M., Classis is reopened with Scripture reading, Luke 12:35-49, singing, Psalm 112:2, 3, and prayer.

The roll call reveals that an elder from Brampton is replaced by his alternate. The Church at Ottawa is not represented.

20. In closed session the committee appointed in the previous session (Art. 9) submits a draft-reply to the appeal of a brother of the Church at Fergus. After discussion this proposal is adopted with some minor amendments.

21. The necessary appointments as to examinations, Fund Needy Churches, Needy Students, archives, etc., are made.

22. The Acts of this session of Classis are read and adopted. The Press Re-

lease is read and approved.

23. After the singing of Psalm 119:17, 19, and thanksgiving by Rev. Mulder, Classis is closed.

For the classis,
J. MULDER, vice-chairman e.t.

PRESS RELEASE

Continued session of the May 3 Classis of the Can. Ref. Churches in Alberta and Manitoba, held on June 15 and 16, 1983, in Edmonton, AB.

Art. 1. *Opening.*

The Chairman, Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar, calls the meeting to order and suggests that Ps. 147:1, 6 be sung. Thereafter he reads Eph. 3 and leads in prayer. He welcomes the brethren, guests, and especially Rev. A. DeJager who is present for his colloquium.

Art. 2. *Roll call.*

The churches are represented by the following delegates: Barrhead — Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar and br. W. Holwerda; Calgary — br. G. Bikker; Carman — br. S.F. Nap and br. T. Veenendaal; Coaldale — Rev. J.D. Wielenga and br. J.W. Van Dieren; Edmonton-Immanuel — Rev. S. DeBruin and br. A. Van Schubert; Edmonton-Providence — Rev. M. Van Beveren and br. C. Veldkamp; Neerlandia — br. S. Tuininga and br. E. Wierenga; Winnipeg — Rev. B.J. Berends and br. J. Jissink.

Art. 3. *Agenda.*

Classis decides to add to the agenda a request from the Church of Neerlandia to grant Rev. A. De Jager his colloquium as well as the classical approbation of Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer's call to the Church of Carman.

Art. 4. *Rev. A. De Jager's Colloquium.*

After reading the relevant documents Rev. M. Van Beveren leads of the colloquium by asking Rev. De Jager various questions about the authority of Scripture, the substitutionary atonement of Christ, the theology of liberation, the subscription form, the doctrine of the Church (Art. 28), the baptism of infants, the intermediate state, and about the classical custom in The Netherlands of reading the acts/minutes of the previous classis. Other delegates ask Rev. De Jager about divorce and remarriage, Art. 28 B.C., and about the relationship of New Testament times with our time.

Classis approbates the call of Rev. De Jager. The Subscription Form is read and is signed by Rev. De Jager. After some appropriate words by the chairman, the delegates receive the opportunity to congratulate Rev. De Jager and to wish him the blessing of the Lord.

Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar is delegated to represent the churches in this classical resort at the installation of Rev. De Jager on Sunday, June 19.

Art. 5 *Approbation of Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer's call to the Church of Carman.*

After reading the relevant documents, Classis approbates the call of Rev. DeBoer to the Church at Carman. The chairman expresses the hope that the Lord will bless Rev. DeBoer in his new congregation. Elder J. Jissink of the Church of Winnipeg is delegated to represent the churches in this classical

resort at the installation of Rev. DeBoer on Sunday, July 31.

Art. 6. *Delegates for Regional Synod.*

Ministers: Rev. B.J. Berends, Rev. M. VanBeveren, Rev. J.D. Wielenga; alternates: Rev. E. Tiggelaar, Rev. S. DeBruin. Elders: J. Kuik, S. Tuininga, T. Veenendaal; alternates: E. Harke, I. Veurink, W. VanAssen.

Art. 7. *Appointments.*

Rev. J.D. Wielenga is appointed to the committee for examination and to examine the sermon of future candidates. Rev. B.J. Berends is appointed to examine candidates on doctrine and creeds.

Art. 8. *Convening of next classis.*

The convening church for the next classis, to be held on Tuesday, Oct. 25, is the Church of Coaldale, AB. Suggested officers are M. VanBeveren, chairman; E.J. Tiggelaar, vice-chairman; B.J. Berends, clerk.

Art. 9. *Letter — Orthodox Presbyterian Church.*

Request by the Presbytery of the Dakotas Orthodox Presbyterian Church to interchange fraternal delegates between their Presbytery and Classis Alberta-Manitoba.

Classis decides to inform the synodical committee for contact with the OPC of this request and to ask its advice on this matter. A delegate is charged to take up contact with this committee and to report back to a classical meeting as soon as a reply is received. This delegate is also charged to respond to the letter of the Dakotas Presbytery and to inform this presbytery of this classical decision.

Art. 10. *Closed Session.*

Classis goes into a closed session to deal with a committee report on letters of appeal from the Immanuel Church at Edmonton.

Art. 11. *Adjournment.*

After the singing of Ps. 72:9, Rev. B.J. Berends leads in prayer, and the chairman adjourns the meeting.

Art. 12. *Reopening on June 16.*

The chairman asks the brethren to sing Ps. 89:1. After the reading of Eph. 4:1-16, he leads in prayer.

Art. 13. *Roll call.*

All the delegates are present. Br. W. Hoekzema joins the classis as second delegate from the Church at Calgary.

Art. 14. *Closed Session.*

The meeting continues its discussion with the above-mentioned letters of appeal in closed session.

Art. 15. *Personal Question Period.*

Various questions are asked and answered.

Art. 16.

Censura ad Article 43 C.O. was held.

Art. 17. *Adoption Acts and Press Release.*

The Acts and the Press release are adopted.

Art. 18. *Closing.*

Rev. Wielenga calls on the brothers to sing Ps. 84:6 and leads in prayer. The chairman closes the classis.

On behalf of Classis,
B.J. BERENDS, vice-chairman

The *quintal* was resurrected in Britain as a weight for the grain trade in Liverpool in 1879. The name was changed to "cental," and it was made equal to 100 pounds. but, 100 lbs. is the waterweight of 10 imperial gallons! We have come full circle, back to the firkin, at least to its approximate value. And, to complete the story, we are presently converting to the metric system and are now faced with the metric quintal of 100 kilograms, that is 220 lbs., imperial measure. And what is the origin of the word *quintal* or "cental"? It was derived from the Latin *centenarium*, with the meaning "consisting of a hundred." In the course of time this was corrupted to *quintal*.

The question remains why the firkin was used in the KJV (John 2:6) for the Greek *metretes*. In all likelihood, simply because the British firkin had the same approximate volume as the *metretes*. And, possibly, the KJV translators were aware of the fact that the measure they used had its roots in the Mediterranean world.

We have made quite a detour before coming back to the firkin in the KJV. The reason for going into these details is the fact that they provide an excellent example of what can happen to measures and weights over long periods. All these changes can still be documented, but this is not the case with Biblical measures and weights. As will be shown in the next sections, in many cases the facts are simply not available.

The Cubit

It is almost universally accepted that the common cubit of Israel was 17.5 inches (44.4 cm) and the royal cubit 20.4 inches (51.8 cm). Slight variations may be found and quite often the common cubit is rounded off to 18 inches = 1.5 feet. The NASB has "approx. 18 inches" in the marginal notes of I Kings 6 and 7, the chapters dealing with the building of the temple of Solomon. This figure is also mentioned in the corresponding chapter of II Chronicles, chapter 3. In the NASB marginal notes on Ezek. 40:5 we find "20.4 inches" for "the cubit and a handbreadth." Similarly, the NIV has "about 1½ feet (about 0.5 meter)" in a footnote on I Kings 7:31. Footnotes on Ezek. 40:5 give "about 1½ feet (about 0.5 meter)" for the "common cubit" and "about 3 inches (about 8 centimeters)" for the handbreadth. Adding these figures results in a royal cubit of about 21 inches or about 58 cm instead of 51.8 cm. This last result shows the disastrous results of unscientific rounding. But, more about that later.

In earlier articles in *Clarion* I have ex-

tensively shown that a 20.4 in. or 51.8 cm cubit should also be employed when dealing with the measurements of Solomon's temple and the tabernacle (see list of references). This view was accepted as a possible solution by the editors and reviewers of the *Biblical Archaeologist*, and it resulted in the acceptance of an article on the Molten Sea, which was recently published. Although several problems can now be solved, if the scholars in the field accept the 20.4 inch cubit also for the temple of Solomon and the tabernacle, a number of places in the Bible where cubits are mentioned remain out of reach. For instance, Noah's ark. It appears impossible to determine whether the common or the royal cubit was used when that large ship was built. Besides, an earlier cubit of a different length could have been standard in the time of Noah. In later times, cubits differing from the old Hebrew standard were used. Most likely this was the case in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and for the great statue that Nebuchadnezzar built. The New Testament cubit presents us with its own difficulties. In short, in many cases the true length of the cubit referred to remains obscure and cannot be determined with certainty.

There is one chapter in the New Testament, Rev. 21, where conversion in the body of the text should never take place. The reason is that the numbers not only describe dimensions but also have a symbolic meaning. The wall around the city of New Jerusalem was measured by the angel speaking to John and shown to be 144 cubits "by a man's measure," maybe the six-handbreadths-long cubit (v. 17). The number 144 itself, similarly, is a man's number; twelve squared. The whole city, as a matter of fact, is man's city, made for man with man's numbers. There are twelve gates, twelve foundations; its length, breadth, and height all 12,000 stadia. And we find references to the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Any conversion of measures here takes away the symbolic meaning. The NASB converts (in the text) to "seventy-two yards" and "fifteen hundred miles," where 1 cubit = ½ yard and 1 stadion = 1/8 mile = 660 feet. The last figure is not correct. A stadion was about 600 feet, as the marginal note has it! This also means that the 1500 miles figure in the text is incorrect. Rounded off to the closest full 100 feet, the correct figure is 1400 miles, as the NIV has it in a footnote. Not only have the NASB translators managed to let the symbolic meaning of these numbers disappear, they have also introduced an error in the text! Is this not a clear violation of Rev. 22:18, 19, where

it says that nothing may be added or taken away from "the words of the book of this prophecy"?

The Shekel

The principal weight and monetary unit of Israel was the shekel. The difficulty is again that the shekel varied in weight and value over that long period between the time it was first mentioned in Genesis and for the last time by one of the minor prophets, Amos. Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver. . . four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights current among the merchants" (Gen. 23:16). In Exodus we read continually "the shekel of the sanctuary." Absalom's yearly "crop" of hair weighed "two hundred shekels by the king's weight." Archaeological finds have shown that both a heavy shekel and a light shekel were in use, not to mention other variations. Many single and multiple shekel weights varying from about 11.08 to 12.25 grams with an average weight of about 11.38 grams, were found. This was probably the most common shekel. In most cases, however, the Bible does not specify which shekel was meant, and it is impossible to assign the proper value to each shekel mentioned in the Old Testament. In New Testament times other weights and monetary units were used. We will consider two, the denarius and the drachma.

The Denarius and the Drachma

In the KJV the *denarion* (Greek for denarius) is translated as "penny," "pence" or "pennyworth." In earlier times this was a more or less legitimate translation. The British penny was originally named after the denarius. Readers will have been 33 d. for 33 pence, for instance, where d. means denarius. Today, after the British monetary reform, the abbreviation is p (no period). But why designate that lowly copper coin, the penny, with the abbreviation for the silver denarius of New Testament times? It was the old enemy of monetary stability, inflation, that caused the change to copper, or more accurately, bronze. The penny was originally a silver coin. In A.D. 791, King Offa of Mercia, then the leading power in England, minted a silver coin of 22.5 grains = 1.46 grams. It was an honest coin of fine silver and became very popular throughout England. The pennyweight was literally the weight of a silver penny and the coins often served as weights. For centuries the weight of the penny did not vary greatly. In 1356 Edward III reduced the weight to 18 grains, and it eventually reached a low of 12 grains in the year 1527. Then Henry VIII (1491-1547) started to add copper to the silver.

It was finally so obvious that in the later years of his reign Henry VIII was nicknamed "old copper nose." What a contrast with his earlier-mentioned ordinance about diminishing the firkin, the kilderkin, and the barrel! Eventually, in 1797, the penny became a copper coin, but the KJV translators, who completed their task in 1611, certainly had a point in their time to translate the denarius as penny. The penny was obviously designed to become an equivalent silver piece. Whether they were aware of the real value of the denarius may be questioned. In its best days the silver denarius weighed 70.5 grains = 4.57 grams, a little over three times the weight of the original penny of King Offa. Just like the penny, the denarius was debased more and more and also ended up as a lowly copper coin.

— *To be continued.*

A. ZUIDHOF

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BOOK REVIEW

The Drama of Christianity: An interpretation of the book of Revelation by S.L. Morris, D.D., Baker, 1982, 147 pp., paperback, \$4.95. (Reviewed by L. Selles.)

The book is not a regular exegetical exposition of the Apocalypst but an interpretation; i.e. the exegesis is restricted to the main tenets of the book as it unveils "the purpose of God in the Christian Dispensation" (Preface). The reading of Prof. W. Milligan's treatise *The Revelation of St. John*, made the book of Revelation, once the most confused and confusing to the author of "scriptural writings," "... a new book clear as crystal" (Preface). Prof. Milligan had pointed out in his treatise that Revelation "consisted of a series of visions, each in the form of a panorama, not occurring in historic succession but as repetition of the same events in entirely new settings from different angles, each having a distinctive object in the various presentations."

The free adaptation of this interpretation led the author to the rejection of the so-called *preterist* view, according to which Revelation reflects the events of the first century, either the approaching of Jerusalem's fall in 70 A.D. or the persecutions under Domitian in the last decade of the century.

Another view, the *historical*, which sees the entire church history mirrored in the Apocalypse, is also rejected. And so is the *futurist* view which finds the events shortly preceding the coming of the Lord exclusively portrayed in the Revelation to John.

The true view, according to Dr. Morris, is the *synchronistic* one which, in agreement with Milligan's interpretation, sees in Revelation "a series of panoramas in the form of visions, successive in presentation but not in consecutive historic relation. Each panorama covers the entire period of the Christian Dispensation" (p. 26).

One who is acquainted with Prof. Greijdanus' writings on Revelation hears something familiar in Morris' interpretation, but he also finds a difference. Although Greijdanus saw the whole world history portrayed more than once (from the beginning of our Christian era till the great day of the Lord, [Korte Verklaring, p. 18], he did not state that each panorama

covers the entire period of the Christian Dispensation. Greijdanus proceeded from 1:19 where John is told to write *what he saw*, i.e. the vision of Christ's appearance 1:9-16; *what is*, namely, the condition of the seven churches (chapters 2 and 3); and *what is to take place hereafter*, i.e. what follows in chapters 4-22. If Morris had followed this division as given by the Lord Himself, he would probably not have divided Revelation into seven rather arbitrary cycles, of which the first one, dealing with the seven churches, presents "Types of Spiritual Life" (p. 29) which steers the exegesis in a dangerous direction.

As a matter of fact, Morris himself does not stick to his thesis that each panorama covers the entire period of the Christian Dispensation. "It must be kept in mind," he writes, "that while the cycles themselves are synchronous and each presents in turn the Christian Dispensation, yet the events are not strictly parallel" (p. 94). "As the vials are represented as containing 'the seven last plagues,' it would be reasonable to infer that this panorama presents events taking place largely toward the close, after Apostacy had corrupted the church" (pp. 94, 95).

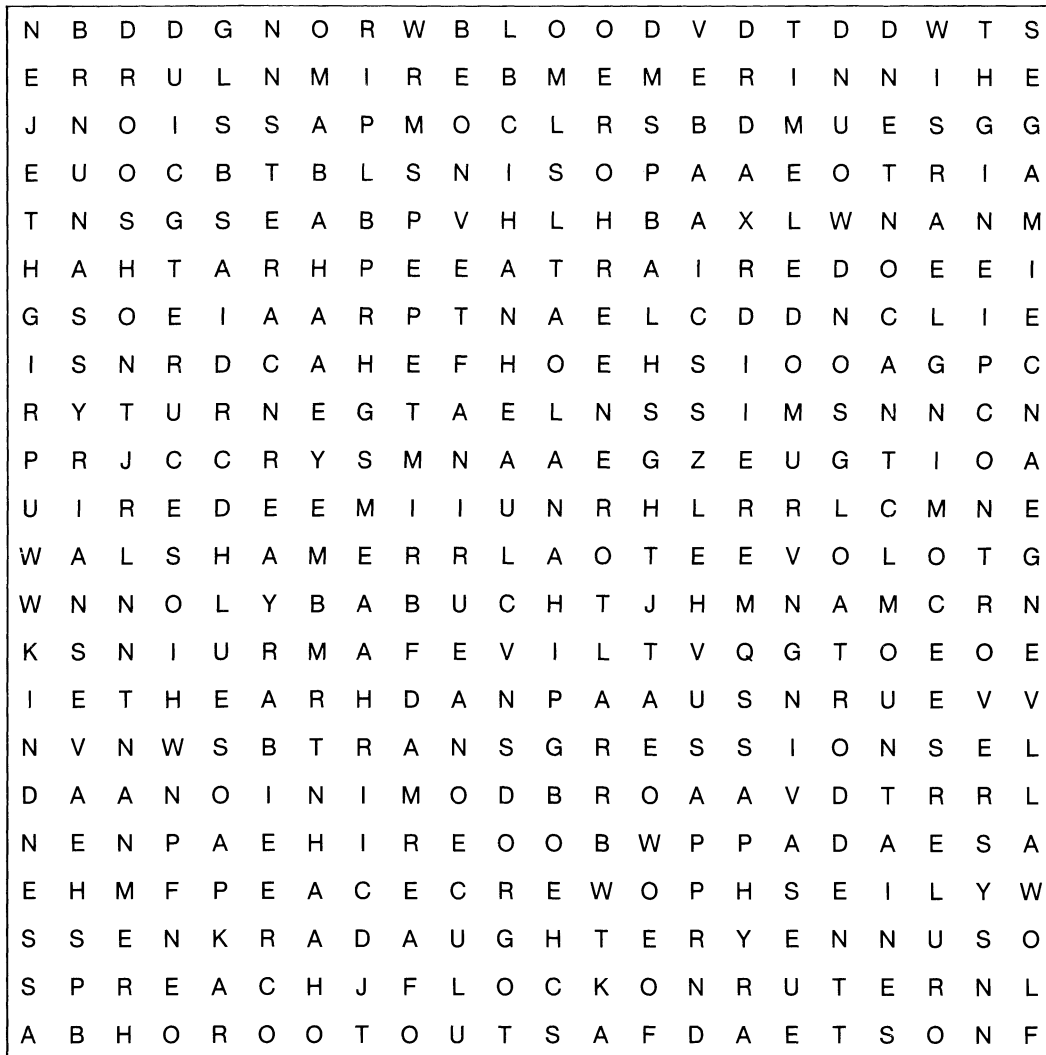
For the rest, the book is helpful for a better understanding of Revelation. Summing up the characteristics of the Apocalypst as divinely inspired, symbolic in form, marked by its Christology and Eschatology (the last things), S.L. Morris showed himself to be an orthodox theologian. To be more exact, from 1901-1933 he was executive secretary of home missions for the Presbyterian Church in the United States. His book was first published in 1928. The 1982 paperback is a reprint of this first edition. Apparently the book is still in demand and that is merited, too, because of its firm stand against pre- and post-millennianism, but especially because it wants to stress the Consolation offered by Revelation and expressed by the heavenly choruses. "The conflicts, trials and woes are earthly — upon the inhabitants of the earth — but its chorus in heaven always sings of triumph, blessedness and glory. The object is to sustain the faith of the church in the midst of the fiery furnace of affliction and during the fierceness of the fight" (p. 32).

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Word Search Puzzle

MICAH



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|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------|---------------|-----------|
| abhor | darkness | flow | kindness | pass | saving | vengeance |
| Abraham | daughter | | | peace | scorn | |
| Ahab | deliverance | gather | Lachish | plan | sea | wall |
| Assyrian | desolate | gloat | law | plowed | secure | war |
| | dew | | lion | power | shame | woe |
| Babylon | disgraced | heap | love | preach | sheaves | wound |
| bald | dominion | hear | | prophets | shepherds | wrong |
| Bethlehem | dust | hire | melt | | sins | |
| blood | | | Micah | redeem | steadfast | Zion |
| bribe | eat | images | mire | remember | | |
| | Ephrathah | Israel | Moresheth | remnant | taunt | |
| coming | evil | | mountain | return | time | |
| compassion | exile | Jacob | | rise | transgression | |
| contend | | Jerusalem | night | root out | trodden | |
| controversy | faithfulness | Judah | no | ruins | turn | |
| conqueror | fear | justice | none | rulers | | |
| cry | flock | | | | | |
| | | | pardoning | Samaria | upright | |

W. AIKEMA