



Clarion

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REMEMBRANCE

Remembrance Day — and we forget!

This issue of our magazine pays attention to what we ought to remember and how we should do this to our true benefit. We are grateful to Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff for her instructive article "Lest We Forget" and its important conclusion, also published in this issue.

November 11 is Remembrance Day! Every year again we remember, lest we forget. We remember those who gave their lives for our freedom. They went into the First or the Second World War. They fought. They were killed. But the enemy that tried to expand its territory was defeated. Occupied nations were freed. Soldiers and citizens gave their lives for freedom. Therefore we remember in thankfulness.

War is awful. War brings terror. It kills and causes endless suffering. The Second World War came to an end through the use of two atomic bombs, one on Hiroshima and one on Nagasaki. The development of nuclear weapons continued. Recently the leaders of both the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics declared, and warned people of, what everyone knows: that a nuclear war would destroy the world and would only show losers.

The horrible picture of such an all-destroying war has caused many people, also more and more Christians, to the support and promotion of peace movements, crying for disarmament and the freezing of further buildup of weapons, even unilaterally. Many are of the opinion that even if the USSR does not stop the arms race, the USA should do it anyway.

But many do not understand that Russia and the United States are not just two similar world-powers, as is suggested and stated from the socialist side. Sure, we do not deny that the USA tries to defend its own world-wide interests. We do not deny that often the mighty dollar plays a dominant role. We acknowledge that the motives of Western politics to maintain its sphere of influence, are not always pure. Also Western politics is not ruled by the Word of God and Biblical, Christian principles.

Nevertheless, Soviet Russia is different. This power is the aggressor. It is clear that its aim is to conquer the world. "We have a world to win," is the slogan of Socialism since Karl Marx, who died one hundred years ago. In communist Russia we have to do with a leadership that is ruled by a ruthless ideology that seeks to conquer the whole world. Sure, the Russian rulers are for peace. They seek peace for the entire earth. But that is only the Russian communist peace. And those who do not agree are "peacefully" (that means: violently) removed from

the scene. They are treated as mentally insane and placed in psychiatric hospitals, where they are fed overdoses of drugs, or they are put away in slave camps or in prisons.

As for the quantity of conventional and nuclear weapons, Russia is winning. But the weakness of the West is not a matter of weapons. *The West has already lost the battle of the mind.* Communism/Socialism is an evolutionistic, materialistic, humanistic philosophy. It denies the existence of God. Man is seen as the result of billions of years of evolution. Man's spirit or soul or mind is a matter of brain waves. And mankind's history is ruled by social and economic factors: history is the history of enmity between mainly two social economic classes: the rich and the poor, the capitalist and the labourer.

However, although those who believe that the Bible is God's infallible, inspired Word know that this socio-economic conflict is an important aspect of our history, it is not the main enmity. The first and main enmity that rules all history is that enmity which God put in paradise and has since maintained. It is the enmity between Christ and the devil, between faith and unbelief, between righteousness and iniquity, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. And the defeat of the West is that this Spiritual enmity is no longer seen.

By far the majority of the people in the West have taken over the basic socialist line of thinking that the East-West conflict is a controversy between two opposing political and (especially) economic systems. Also our Western world does not accept the fact that there is the enmity put by God, the spiritual warfare. Now we can expect this from Western humanists. The terrible thing, however, is that the majority of Christians, as organized in the World Council of Churches, for instance, do not want to see history in the light of Genesis 3:15 either, and, instead, have adopted the humanistic socialist view that our world is ruled by the socio-economic struggle between the rich and the poor, between the capitalist and the (claimed to be better) socialist system.

In my opinion, *this* is the root of the fact that so many Christian people and organizations are involved in the peace movement and promote the "freezing" of further weapons buildup. And it is for this reason that they do not see in and behind the Russian expansionist power the spiritual power that is opposing God and what belongs to God.

Do we remember on Remembrance Day? During the years before the Second World War a strong pacifist movement conquered the Western nations. They wanted peace. They called for disarmament. They said, "War is so horrible!" In the meantime Hitler did not stop arming Germany and making it strong. And because the Western nations had become weaker and

weaker through disarmament and military neglect, they had no power to resist the expansion policy of Hitler-Germany. They gave in time and again. And Hitler knew he could do it; he knew the weakness of the others.

Remembrance Day . . . do we remember? Only a strong West is able to resist the communist expansion. A weak West will increasingly have no choice but to give in . . . and lose. Is it true that it is better to be Red than dead? For millions being under a Red regime meant to be dead. We are still alive. We are still free. But spiritually we have lost the battle. Denying the spiritual enmity of Genesis 3:15 is placing oneself on the side of the seed of the serpent. That is what the West has done. Its humanistic, socialist philosophy is its weakness, its principal defeat, its principal *unity with* communist Russia. May God give wisdom and strength to President Reagan and those who stand behind him. May God open the eyes of many, in order that they see the history also of our days in the light of Genesis 3:15: "I put enmity . . ." We have a Remembrance Day each year. But we have forgotten the TRUTH. Remembrance Day: May it be a call back "to the Law and the Testimony. If they do not speak according to this Word, they have no light of dawn" (Isaiah 8:20, NIV).

The Synod of Cloverdale 1983

By the time you read this the Synod most likely will have started. I have in front of me the second provisional agenda, with the points to be dealt with. More can still come. Most of it is well-known from the short reports of consistory or council meetings informing the churches about incoming mail. Time and again there were reports for the synod on consistory tables.

After the introductory points of opening and examination of credentials, etc., the agenda mentions, in the first place, matters regarding the Theological College, nominations for the Board, and reports. There is also the possibility of a proposal to appoint another professor. In the report of the Board of Governors to Synod of Smithville 1980 we read (Acts, page 136): "It remains the intention of the Board and the Faculty to come with proposals to your successor, the Synod 1983, to appoint a fourth full-time professor who is to take over the Diaconological Department . . ."

A large part of the agenda is formed by reports that deal with our Church Book, our *Book of Praise*. The "Translation and Revisions" of the Prayers and Forms, of the Belgic Confession, of the Canons of Dort, of the Heidelberg Catechism, as well as a final draft of a revised Church Order, will all be on the table. Some may expect that this synod will finalize the "Translation and Revisions," so that soon we shall have the final edition of our *Book of Praise*. However, I hear voices that whisper: let us not be hasty. Here and there those voices express some dissatisfaction with the result of the translations, or rather: the revisions.

There is a report on contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church which does not tell much news. We also have an overture from the Church at Ottawa that our churches seek contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Ottawa's church had some contact on a local level. These churches have their origin in Scotland. They adhere faithfully to the Westminster Standards. Will there be a similar overture regarding Reformed churches in North America (Eureka classis) of German origin with which the Church at Grand Rapids had contact?

There is also a report from the committee for Contact with Churches Abroad. It reports on contact with the sister churches and on the International Conference of Reformed Churches held last year in Groningen, The Netherlands, and it recommends our involvement. It will mean a relationship with more churches, especially Presbyterian Churches: in Korea, in Scotland, and in Ireland. The question has been asked: Are the



Do We Remember?

rules for correspondence as we have them now still truly functioning, and can they function in our contact, e.g. with the Korean Presbyterian Churches? We do not understand their language. How can we take heed of each other?

There is also a report again on "Women's Voting Rights." The conclusions are the opposite of the report that was placed on the table of the previous synod. I have read that some consistories do not agree with the conclusions and that they will make this known to the synod.

There is also a request from the "Reformatorsche Politieke Federatie" (Reformed Political Federation) regarding the seal hunt. I may be mistaken, but I think that our synod will consider this inadmissible on the basis of Article 30 C.O. (Article 30 says that at our ecclesiastical assemblies only ecclesiastical matters may be dealt with.) But we shall see.

More than likely more matters will come up. The closing date for incoming mail will be set by the Synod itself. We wish the brethren God's blessing; loving care in their hearts for the churches, for the brotherhood; and wisdom and strength to make the right decisions through clear insight into God's Word and a right understanding of the matters that will be placed before them, so that they serve the "peace of Jerusalem."

J. GEERTSEMA

Sojourners or Citizens₃

GENESIS 11:4

*Come, let us build ourselves
a city,*

and a tower with its top in the heavens,

*and let us make a name for ourselves,
lest we be scattered abroad upon the earth.*

HEBREWS 11:10

*For he looked forward to
the city*

which has foundations,

whose builder and maker is God.

7. Biblical guidelines

In the previous installments we have discussed the points of view of modern futurologists and we mentioned the culture-optimism of Dr. A. Kuyper as opposed to the culture-pessimism of the Anabaptists. Before we can draw final conclusions and try to take our own stand in this matter, we will first listen to the instruction of Holy Scripture in this respect. We will hear what the Bible tells us about our cultural mandate, what the development of mankind has been in respect to the fulfilment of this mandate, and what the Bible says, in a prophetic way, about the future. In this way we will learn what we can expect. It will give us comfort and encouragement to continue, and it will make us understand many aspects of what others see as an unpredictable development.

The first instruction given to mankind with respect to the cultural mandate, is what we read in Genesis 1:28

And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every moving thing that lives upon the earth.

God has made man in His image. What does that mean? When this question is asked in a catechism class, many different answers are given. Some say: It means perfect, according to God's plan or "blueprint." But that answer is not correct. Also the angels were made perfect and according to God's plan, but they were not created in God's image. Others say: It means without sin and able to serve the Lord in perfect obedience, but again, that applies also to the angels. Some might say: We look just like God. But that is not correct either. The Bible teaches us that God is not like a human being. He is a spiritual, invisible Being. That is the way it is expressed in Article 1 of the Belgic Confession.

To be created in God's image means that God has given man authority and dominion to rule and govern the earth and all creatures. The LORD has made man His representative on earth and His ambassador. Psalm 8 says that God has made man "little less than God." That shows us our task and responsibility. We have to develop and subdue the earth and all that is in it — not as slaves, but as rulers, with dominion over all things.

That is how it all started. But man did not fulfil his task. He did not honour his responsibility. On the contrary. He became rebellious against the LORD Most High and he forsook his task. He denied his Creator and took sides with the enemy. That is the worst thing an ambassador can do: to take sides with the enemy!

A covenant had been established. A covenant of darkness. An agreement between the man and the serpent. The high

state of man seemed to have come to nought. He was made, according to Psalm 8, "little less than God." But now he had lost everything. The only thing he deserved, according to his desertion, was the eternal wrath of God. The communication between God and man was cut off, at least as far as man was concerned. He fled from before the countenance of the Lord.

However, God, in His mere grace, restored the communication and promised a Saviour who would make satisfaction. That is what we read in Genesis 3:15

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

The Saviour was promised. Reconciliation would be made. Man would be restored in his office through the perfect obedience of the Messiah who was to come. However, the consequence of sin would become evident. The curse of God came upon man. We can read about it in Genesis 3:17-19

And to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

As a result of the rebellion, the ruler became a toiler. He was not able to execute his dominion any longer, at least not in the proper way. In the sweat of his face he had to work, and to dust he would return. The earth, over which man had to exercise dominion, would not be submissive any longer. The earth would bring forth thorns and thistles. That was the curse of God upon man and upon the whole creation. It was because of his fall into sin. The majesty and the grandeur of this ambassador was gone. The ruler became a slave, a slave of sin. The viceroy had deserted his office and was no longer able to fulfil his mandate. He was expelled from the garden. We read in Genesis 3:22-24

Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" — therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden He placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

God had broken the covenant of darkness. Instead of this covenant between man and serpent, the LORD had set enmity, but still the curse of God would be felt. The cultural mandate re-

mained. God maintained the position of man as His ambassador, created in His image, but man was not able to fulfil this office in the proper way. The LORD did not come with His full wrath right away, but He provided an opportunity for man to continue. The history of mankind went on, not as a matter of "common grace," but because the Christ, the Messiah, was promised and had to be brought forth. People were looking forward to His coming. The LORD postponed the execution of His judgment until the Messiah would have come to save all those whom the Father had given Him. The LORD said in Genesis 8:21, 22

I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.

The flood had swept away the evil people from the face of the earth, but the heart of man had not been changed. As far as man was concerned, time and again such a flood would have to come to destroy the wicked people. But the LORD gave the guarantee that it would not happen again this way.

Before the flood the cultural development reached a surprisingly high level. In the house of Lamech there was prosperity. In Genesis 4:20-22 we read about Jabal, the father of those who dwell in tents and have cattle. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. And Tubal-cain was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. Apparently, in their cultural development, they had already passed the "Stone Age" and had reached the "Bronze Age" and the "Iron Age." But the Lord threw them away and caused a setback in the cultural development.

After the flood the LORD gave the promise that there would be a continuation of the seasons without interruption. The LORD made further development possible — a blessing for those who, in true faith, would believe in the Saviour who was to come, but an increasing responsibility and condemnation for those who would continue in their opposition against the LORD. They would make their condemnation heavier.

Man did not learn the lesson. Rebellion was on the increase. We read about it in Genesis 11:4-8

Then they said, "Come let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth." And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of man had built. And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth; and they left off building the city.

From this text we can learn what the development was in technology and art. They were able to build a great city, a city with a sky-scraper. That was really something to be proud of. But this technology and art was used against the LORD. The instruction given by the LORD was: subdue the earth and develop it; have dominion over all things. The people had to spread over the whole earth. They had to fulfil their mandate, trusting in the LORD and His protection. They had to do it to His glory. But they neither served the LORD, nor trusted in Him. They stuck together, trusting in their own strength, and building their own city as a manifestation of their own power.

The population of the world grew. But sin and lawlessness grew as well. The LORD did not destroy all the people of the world through a flood again, saving His people from the midst of it. This time the LORD took a different approach. He took

His people and set them apart. We can read about that in Genesis 12:1-3

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you will be cursed; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."

The LORD took Abram, He set apart His people, to save them and, moreover, to safeguard the coming of the Messiah who was to be brought forth by the offspring of Abram. Abram had to withdraw from the actual development in the world and its cultural life. He had to live as a sojourner. Although he was the heir of the promised land, he still had to live as a stranger and a sojourner. He counted on the promises of the LORD, and he knew that he was more than a conqueror through Him who was to come.

His withdrawal was not a matter of dereliction of duty. It was a matter of obedience to the Lord. The cultural mandate remains the same, but priorities have to be set. To live faithfully in accordance with the commandments of the Lord and to trust



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in His help and the fulfilment of His promises is more important than the execution of a comprehensive cultural program. The mandate remains, but the possibilities are restricted, and priorities have to be set.

It would be interesting to follow this line through the whole Old Testament. However, that would bring us beyond the scope of these articles. Therefore we will now turn to the New Testament. We read in Hebrews 11:8-10

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out of a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in a land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Abraham knew that he was an heir to the promised land, but still he lived as a stranger and sojourner. He could do so because he looked forward to the future, which would bring the complete and perfect fulfilment of all God's promises. He did not expect the city of Babel or Babylon, the mighty city of man, with all its luxury, (empty) pomp, and glitter. He expected the city of the LORD, even more glorious than the city of Babel and Babylon; not a city with empty pomp and glitter, but with real dignity, splendour, and glory: streets of gold and gates of pearls; a city whose builder and maker is God. Therefore we read in Hebrews 11:13-16

These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city.

That is the proper attitude. Although Abraham became very rich, living in a fertile land in prosperity as a great man, he knew he was expecting a better, a heavenly, homeland. That is why he could live the way he did; that is why he could overcome all problems. It was by true faith that he overcame. It was by faith in the Lord who had given him His promises, and by faith in the Messiah who was to come, Jesus Christ the Lord.

That is also the way we have to live. We read in II Peter 3:11-13

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to His promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

We have to fulfil our task and mandate in this world. We know we are heirs to the world, yes, even to the new earth. The whole world is our Father's world. But we still feel the consequences of sin, and that brings with it limitations and restrictions with respect to our activities. Paul says in I Cor. 7:31 that those who deal with this world have to live as though they had no dealings with it. For the form of this world is passing away.

As history goes on and comes closer to the end, our position as strangers and sojourners will become more evident and will be more emphasized. What has been said of Abraham can be said of us today, and it applies to the Church of Jesus Christ probably in an even stronger way than it applied to Abraham. We read in Revelation 12:12

"Rejoice then, O heaven and you that dwell therein! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

We won't have to seek isolation and the antithesis. We won't have to go into hiding voluntarily. We will be forced into it. We can read a prophecy in this respect in Revelation 13:16, 17

And it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

That is the boycott we can expect. That is the future of the Church and its members. But let us not worry too much about it. We have to do our work; we have to fulfil our task, no matter how difficult it may be. Sometimes we may think that it does not make sense or that it does not serve any purpose, at least when we see how weak we are, how little we can achieve, and how strong the enemy is. But our work and labour is not in vain. We read in Revelation 14:13

"Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them!"

That is a wonderful promise. Our work, our labour, will be used and will appear to have value. It will bear fruits even in the new Jerusalem which is to come. Our deeds will follow us, provided that they are done in true faith, in obedience to the Lord and to His glory. That is a strong incentive. There are limitations in the present time. We have to withdraw and we will be forced to withdraw more and more. The warning comes to us in Revelation 18:4, 5

"Come out of her, My people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

We have to withdraw from certain areas of science, technology, and art, not because we have no task and mandate in this respect, but because we cannot cooperate with the world, "lest we take part in her sins, lest we share in her plagues." We cannot work together with unbelievers in certain areas, and we do not have the means available to do it on our own. The mandate "have dominion over the earth and subdue it" remains, but the fulfilment is hindered and restricted, at least for the time being and for the near future. But we know that we will be restored in our office to fulfil our task in perfection. That is what we learn from Revelation 21:5

And He who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Also He said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Now we are still strangers and sojourners, in the same way as Abraham was a sojourner, though living in the promised land. We are sojourners, though living in the Father's world as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Finally we will be allowed to live upon this earth, the new earth, that is; and then we will feel perfectly at home. That is the homeland we are waiting for.

Now our possibilities are limited and restricted, but then we will be able to fulfil our mandate as it was in paradise and it will be even more glorious.

Then there will be no restrictions at all.

That is what Holy Scripture tells us about our cultural mandate and the fulfilment of it. That is what the Bible tells us about the instruction given by the Lord about the development in the history of mankind and about the promises given to us in this respect.

Within the framework of these Biblical guidelines we will try to find an answer to the questions mentioned in the previous installments. In this way we will try to make an analysis of the present development and the conclusions of the futurologists, and to formulate our own expectation with respect to the future.

— To be continued
W. POWELSE

Langley, BC

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

“ . . . and he did not fear God.” Deuteronomy 25:18b

“ . . . and you shall not forget.” Deuteronomy 25:19b

Lest We Forget

The special injunction of the LORD to blot out the memory of Amalek is very unique in the book of Deuteronomy. As the final words of Moses, the book of Deuteronomy is a call to remembrance throughout, a call in which the blessings and curses of the covenant are clearly outlined to the people again. But the section on Amalek is the only place where the LORD explicitly calls Israel to wipe out the memory of another nation, and Amalek is the only nation singled out in this way. What is the significance of this unique law concerning warfare, and what does it say to us today?

The composition of the piece gives us the clue. The section has a uniquely parallel structure, almost as if it were a song. It was obviously written in a way to help people remember it. In each of the two sections to the “song” the two short lines quoted above form a kind of *refrain*. Looking into the *past*, summarizing the wars with Amalek and the kind of people they were, Moses concludes: “he did not fear God.” Then, looking into the *future*, Moses explains the command of the LORD, and concludes: “you shall not forget.” The final words refer back to the beginning of the injunction, reminding Israel that they must *never* forget — even if Amalek is wiped out.

Clearly, Amalek receives this special note in Deuteronomy because it was a nation that did not fear God. The battle referred to here is obviously the one recorded in Exodus 17, and there Moses is even told to write down the will of the LORD in a book, “that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” Their cruel strategy and pattern of warfare indicated that they not only hated the people of Israel, but, worse still, hated Israel’s God even more. Here was a people who *knew* about the God of Israel but openly and ruthlessly demonstrated their hatred and contempt of Him. Hence they attempt to deal a death blow to a near-defenseless people, hitting hard while they are down. No wonder the LORD gives this directive to them, a command applicable to the time that they are on their feet again, and have entered the land of promise.

The central point, however, was that this people knew about the LORD and His covenant promises. Some of Esau’s descendants were grafted into this people, cf. Genesis 36:12, and one may see in the conflict between Amalek and Israel a part of the ongoing struggle between the two brothers Jacob and Esau. That is why David ends up using the same battle cry that inspired Moses when he fights with Edom and Moab, cf. Psalm 60.

However, Moses and David do not bring an end to this

warfare. Each in his place foreshadows the great King, Jesus Christ, who was to deliver the real death blow to the enemy. David’s great Son also could not forget, and therefore had to take up the same battle, to fully wipe out the remembrance of the oppressor. And He won the victory in battle, through His death on the cross. Through the cross He disarmed powers and principalities, and made a public example of them, triumphing over them, Col. 2:15. In His death, He delivered the decisive blow of judgment to all God’s enemies, especially those who knew of Him, and yet hated Him.

In Christ, we may also see how this call to remembrance still speaks to us today. In Christ, we have received the fulfillment of the promises, the inheritance from above, the eternal rest. But the battle is not over. The perpetual war that the LORD decreed with Amalek points to the enduring *antithesis*, the continual struggle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The same antithesis carries on in the new dispensation, and still shapes and explains the forces of conflict and strife in the world today. Only today, with the inauguration of Christ’s universal and heavenly reign, the same antithesis and conflict has taken on *global* proportions.

Hence we can say that all battles and wars today, and in particular, the conflicts of the two World Wars are really part of the same antithesis. The nazi philosophy of race and blood, which led to the Second World War, was diametrically opposed to the gospel of Christ. Many will recall how the evil one attacked on all fronts — social, political and ecclesiastical — in order to bring the people of God and the whole world under the yoke of hierarchy and tyranny. In heaven, our Saviour heard the prayers, and graciously granted deliverance.

Therefore, the same call applies to us. Only in these days, with Christ’s work behind us, the battle has become more intense. Do we still remember, or have we forgotten? Have we forgotten that the Lord used many of what we may now regard as our own countrymen — fellow Canadians — who lost their lives in battle that *we* might live in religious and political freedom?

The signs of the times are clear enough. The enduring antithesis is not over: the battle continues. Still He calls us from heaven to understand His cause, hearken, and enlist — lest we forget! Still today this is what our coming King seeks: a people with their lamps burning, and a people who do not forget.

J. DE JONG

Lest We Forget

The year 1983 is a year of anniversaries. We commemorate, for example, the five hundredth birthday of Martin Luther, remember that a century ago Karl Marx, the father of communism, died, and that it has been fifty years since Adolph Hitler established his national socialist "millennium" in Germany.

It is the last of these anniversaries that gives rise to this Remembrance Day article. On November 11th we once again celebrate the defeat of the national socialist or fascist regimes in Germany, Italy and Japan, and remember the evils that these movements brought to Europe and the entire world. We do so lest we become complacent and fail to be on guard if a similar danger should arise once more. For although defeated, national socialism and fascism are not dead. On various occasions during the post-war years, in Germany and elsewhere, they have raised their ugly heads. They have found public defenders even in Canada, as we discovered this past year, when the papers reported on the attempts of an Alberta history teacher by the name of James Keegstra to whitewash national socialism and portray the fact of Hitler's mass-extermiation of Jews as a myth, the product of an international Jewish conspiracy.

One sincerely hopes that the Keegstras of this world will remain few, and that the neo-fascist demonstrations outside our country will also prove to be mere incidents, but one cannot be sure. It has been said that fascism (the term I will use from now on also when referring to the national socialist or German branch of the movement) was a disease typical of the period between the two world wars. That is true, but the situation of those years is not unique. Our own times bear an uncanny resemblance to the interwar years, which were a period of economic ups and downs, inflation, ideological struggle, international and domestic unrest, crime, anarchism and revolution. They were also a time of profound spiritual malaise, which came to the surface because of the horror of the war and the disillusionments of the post-war years, but which had as a deeper cause the rejection of Christian-

ity in the previous centuries, and the bankruptcy of the systems that for a while had filled the gap left by the disappearance of the Christian faith: humanism and the belief in unlimited progress.

The appearance of fascism in the twenties and thirties of our century is to be explained with reference to that complex background. The unstable political and socio-economic situation, and the demoralization caused by war and defeat, facilitated its rise. The widespread instability invited communist infiltration in several European communities, and in countries like Italy, Germany and a number of others, fascism presented itself as the only system vital enough to stem the Marxist threat. It indeed accomplished what it had promised: it prevented a communist take-over, restored stability, and in some cases brought back a measure of prosperity. As a result it won the acceptance and support of an impoverished middle class, of soldiers and generals, industrialists and other conservative elements, and even of clergymen, prelates and the pope himself.

Nevertheless, fascism was supported not simply as a defence against the red peril, as the lesser of two evils. It was also embraced for its own sake: because it promised to fill the spiritual emptiness and give people again something to believe in and live for. Both these factors must be kept in mind if we want to make the rise of fascism intelligible. And since material and spiritual ills similar to those that prevailed half a century ago plague our own world, it should not come to us as a surprise if we should see more manifestations of a fascist revival than we have witnessed so far. For that reason it is well to be aware of the essence of fascism, and to know about the soil from which it sprang.

What does the movement stand for? In spite of profound differences in theory, fascism has much in common with its arch-enemy communism. They both arose out of the spiritual crisis of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and promise their followers a man-made heavenly city on earth. Both are Darwinist, subordinating the welfare of the in-

dividual to the interests of the group, and glorifying struggle (whether it be class, racial or international strife). Both are anti-Christian and totalitarian, which means that all of society and the entire man — body, soul, mind and possessions — are subject to the state. No rival loyalties are allowed, neither to God, nor to the family, nor to a different philosophical or political order. Furthermore, both are one-party dictatorships that gain power by terror and are kept intact by social regimentation, brainwashing and police brutality. State control of church and school, of scholarship and the arts, of labour, production and consumption, are characteristic of the fascist as well as the communist paradise. So is the prevalence of concentration camps.

There are also important differences. Communism is a radical left-wing movement. Its avowed purpose is to destroy the existing structures of society — the state, the capitalist system, and also the Christian Church — and to replace them with something entirely new. The promised result, after much struggle, will be a classless society where state and government have faded away and where everyone is free and equal, living a life of perpetual bliss.

Fascism, which has been called the radicalism of the right, does not want to alter the basic economic and social structures. On the contrary, it attempts to strengthen them against the dangers posed by economic depressions and political radicals such as socialists, communists, and anarchists. Fascism favours big business and the social elites; it supports class interests and is opposed not simply in practice, but in theory as well, to the forces of liberalism and democracy.

It is also rabidly nationalistic, again in opposition to Marxism, which at any rate in theory preaches the brotherhood of the workers of every country. The nation, however, is the idol of the fascists; namely, the community or "folk," together with the "organic" state, which is a law unto itself and is led by a Führer who inspires and demands unquestioning obedience. In Germany, racism was added to this ideology as one of its guid-

An Anniversary

ing principles. It became the mission of the Germans to purify their community by removing racially inferior elements such as Slavs and Jews, and also the chronically ill, the mentally handicapped, and the aged. Having restored the health of folk and race, the organic state, which required room to grow, prepared to enlarge its territory at the expense of the inferior neighbouring races. We have witnessed the process.

What is the appeal of this ideology, and what are the possibilities that in times of anarchy and serious crisis a silent, passive, essentially conservative majority will once again allow fascism to make a bid for power? In the Germany and Italy of the interwar years many conservatives of standing, leaders of their people who should have known better, allowed fascism to take power, both as an antidote to Marxism and as a cure for the ills which their societies suffered. Lest this happens again it must be said, repeated and reiterated, that fascism is *not* conservative but regressive, reactionary. It does not attempt to preserve and build upon what is best in the past — that is the aim of true conservatism — but it idolizes the past and resurrects its evils. As a result, it is at the same time regressive and radically revolutionary: its aim is to uproot and destroy Christian values and to replace them by their opposites, by those of pre-Christian times. For fascism stands for the revival of paganism. In its idolatry of folk and community it makes a conscious effort to return to the infancy of the race, to the nation's dimly remembered pagan past, even though it substitutes for the germanic gods of earth and sky the idols of folk and soil, blood (race) and leader.

For that reason the unspeakable horrors of which fascism was guilty should not have come as a surprise to anyone. Because it constitutes a reversal to the dark ages of heathendom, because it is a neo-paganism planted in a soil where once Christianity flourished, it cannot but spawn a society and regime that are more strongly devoted to the powers of darkness than was the case even in the pre-Christian past of the germanic peoples. This is the result of God's judgment, which is reserved for nations that were once enlightened, have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then commit apostasy. His judgments came upon Germany in the past. They threaten every nation that rejects the living God, breaks the covenant, and turns to serve idols.

F.G. OOSTERHOFF



We do not expect that the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene will congratulate himself and his wife in "News Medley" on their fortieth wedding anniversary and his forty years in the ministry. What he will do privately is not our business. That is why I take the privilege. We heartily congratulate the VanOenes on the fact that the LORD gave them these forty years together in both their marriage and their ministry. "Ministry" must be taken here in two different ways: the ministry of the Word and the ministry (the service) of a minister's wife to her husband and family and in and for the congregations.

The VanOenes were married on November 2, 1943, and candidate VanOene became Reverend VanOene on November 7 of the same year. It was during the difficult war years. It was also during the struggle that led to the Liberation in August of the following year. Their first congregation was at Oud-Loosdrecht. At the beginning of 1948 they moved to their second place, Schiedam. From November 1952 (31 years ago now!) till January 1970 they served the church of New Westminster as well as the other churches in the Fraser Valley that developed out of "New West." It is understandable that Rev. and Mrs. VanOene know so many people in the "far West." In January 1970 they and their family (except their son, the oldest) moved to Fergus. In the meantime the children have moved out and live in both provinces, British Columbia and Ontario.

The Rev. VanOene attended all the general synods as a delegate, with the exception of the Synod of Smithville (Toronto 1974 as alternate). The days of celebration, D.V., this time will be during the Synod of Cloverdale. Can we say that this is perhaps not such a nice, but certainly a fitting, occasion? Rev. VanOene has always been actively involved in the life and history of the Canadian Reformed Churches, especially also in the work for our Canadian Reformed Magazine, that later became CLARION. Who does not read his News Medley, whether with or without approval? Besides the ministry and his role as chief or managing editor of CLARION, he was given the task of teaching Church History and Church Polity at the College in Hamilton when the Rev. H. Scholten could no longer do it.

We thank the Lord for the work that Rev. VanOene has done and still is doing for the churches with the indispensable support of his "helpmeet" beside him. Our wish for them is that the LORD will give them many more years together for each other, with their children and grandchildren, in the midst of the churches, even when retirement comes after some time.

*On behalf of the Editorial Staff
and the readers of CLARION,
J. GEERTSEMA*

The Church in China

This Press Review focuses attention on "the Church in China." The July issue of *Covenanter Witness*, the magazine of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, devoted five articles to this topic. The editor, Donald J. McCrory, wrote in his introduction:

God is working there in observable ways. The house church phenomenon is one example. In fact, Jonathan Chao, director of the Chinese Church Research Center in Hong Kong, declares that "the house church movement in China today is one of the most exciting developments in Christianity in this century."

You wouldn't want to miss out on that, would you?

Chao calls house churches "the mainstream of Protestantism in China. This style of church, which has arisen in China since 1951, greatly resembles that of the New Testament church. It is a diffuse religion that can survive and even thrive under the social structures of contemporary China."

It's clearly evident that Christianity has shown remarkable growth in China since the removal of all foreign mission groups in the late 1940s. The RPC expended tremendous energy, talent and finances in mission work in South China and Manchuria for over 50 years (1895-1950 roughly). At least 50 Reformed Presbyterians were sent to China during that time to serve as teachers, medical missionaries, pastors and mission helpers.

For the tiny Reformed Presbyterian Church, the South China mission field was a significant and exciting venture. One might say that it flourished. Certainly it captured the prayer life and undivided attention of the entire denomination. Three Chinese congregations were established and a number of mission outposts in remote regions were maintained. A school for girls and a school for boys were started early in this century. A number of the missionaries served in medical capacities. Some served in orphanages.

Conversions and baptisms were recorded. The Chinese Presbytery in 1927 reported 517 communicant members in South China. By 1938 there were 615. The church at home rejoiced.

But the rise of Communism placed a stop to all foreign mission activity in China by 1950. Our missionaries, along with others with whom they had been laboring, fled to friendly ports. Despite this disappointment, Communism could not erase the influence of these men and women of God. The Gospel Chinese believers loved was real and the power of Christ was greater than that of any government force.

Chinese Christians, for a time, enjoyed relative freedom to meet for Bible study, prayer and fellowship. Much of this activity took place in private homes, and the house church phenomenon began to take deep root. Increas-

ing government oppression in the '60s, however, drove the house churches underground, but the Spirit of God continued to save.

The remarkable statistics coming from China thirty years later indicate the unmistakable moving of the Spirit. The Chinese Church Research Center estimates that there are between 25 and 50 million Christians in the house churches in China today. Fifteen counties in Henan Province — which as 111 counties — have an average of 100,000 believers each.

Such figures are astounding. And they show how the seeds planted by missionaries who lived and died without seeing much fruit for their labors, have sprung forth in our generation to the glory of God and for the sake of His church in China.

The first informative article is written by the Rev. Richard L. van Houten, a missionary of the Christian Reformed Church. He is Associate Director of the Chinese Church Research Centre (CCRC) in Hong Kong. This organization attempts to gather information about Christians in Communist China, and also promotes the preaching of the gospel and the spreading of Bibles and Christian literature in Communist China. He says that there are two sources of information about the church in China: one is the official government source which gives a wrong picture; the other is the information that comes from travelers who visit the country and letters written by Christians in China to relatives and friends in the free world, especially Hong Kong. Then we read:

What has become clear from these two kinds of information is that Christian activity in China is broadly divided into two categories. There is an official, state church recognized by the government and managed under the auspices of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM).

Secondly, there is an unofficial church. The unofficial church consists primarily of groups which meet in people's homes and are therefore known as "house churches." These churches are loosely organized; at best they have contacts or communication with a few others in their region, and operate without state supervision or permission.

The State Church

Plans for the state church, or at least government control of Christianity, were made very early. Even before the communist victory in 1949, the government had formed a Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) to organize and direct the activities of all religions. In mid-1950 the RAB held a meeting with a number of Christian leaders at which Zhou Enlai was also present. Out of this meeting came a document called the "Christian Manifesto." It was a stridently anti-

foreign document, intended to cut off the Christians from all contacts with foreigners.

Subsequent meetings eventually led to the formation of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Although its expressed goals were primarily political in nature (to support the Communist Party, to foster patriotism, to support socialism), it nevertheless became an umbrella organization for the churches, and by 1958 there were no organized churches except for those of the TSPM.

Those leaders who staunchly resisted the attempts of the TSPM to have them join were persecuted Of course, at that time, as today, China claimed to have freedom of religion and so the charges were criminal ones, often dealing with sex or money. These leaders were never charged with religious deviation.

Even today it is impossible to be imprisoned or persecuted for one's religion, according to the government. The new constitution, passed in December, 1982, spells out that legitimate religious activities are those which are approved by the eight "legitimate" religious organizations. Therefore, house church meetings, no matter how apolitical they may be are automatically illegal so long as they do not operate under the "shelter" of TSPM.

The state church then had a period of decline, the number of churches in China were gradually reduced, so that by 1964 Christianity appeared virtually dead in China. When Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966, all churches were closed, and the RAB and TSPM stopped functioning. . . . After Mao died in 1976, his followers lost out in the power struggle. . . . As Deng Xiaoping's faction established control over the Party, they re-instated the policy of the 1950's. That policy provided religious freedom within the limits of the officially approved organizations, which could be controlled.

What we see here is the same as what we see in other communist countries: there is an officially recognized church that is controlled by and cooperates with the government. And over against it are underground churches. The TSPM tried to accommodate the underground house churches and bring them into their organization. Some were willing. Others were not, remembering the bad treatment they had received from the TSPM in the fifties.

One of the functions of the TSPM is to represent China to the outside world. The Rev. van Houten writes:

They always claim to represent all of Chinese Christianity. Their message abroad is this:

1. The Chinese Church is unified. It is post-denominational and therefore all reports about dissident Christians are nonsense. There are some internal differences, but these are minor matters.
2. Chinese Christians all support socialism and patriotism. They have a positive view of the world and are eager to join their fellow countrymen in building up New China.
3. The Chinese Church is now independent of foreign influences. This was a great stumbling block in the past, but now that Christianity's foreign character is removed it is more acceptable.

4. The Chinese Church needs no help from the outside except prayer. Those who mistakenly try to send in Bibles cause more harm than good. The Chinese will do their own evangelizing. Of course, at this stage in history the Chinese Church needs nurture more than outreach.

This campaign abroad has been very successful. The liberal elements in Western Christianity have been eager to accept the TSPM point of view, and recently a number of evangelicals have also been defending them. I will discuss responses to TSPM below, but first let us look at the development of the house churches and see how they respond to TSPM.

However, most of that message is deceptive. In each case the following conclusions can be made:

1. The Chinese Church is not unified in form, nor can the TSPM claim to represent it.
2. Although the Christians in China are not rebellious, their first loyalty is to God and not to socialism.
3. The Chinese Church is now independent, but it is still young. There is no need to accept TSPM's insistence on all foreign help being forbidden.
4. It is true that Christians around the world should pray for China, but there is not any scriptural reason to leave all the evangelizing to the Chinese. Christ's commission to go to all the world is given to all, irrespective of nationality.

About the "house churches" we read:

The House Churches

The current house church is a continuation of the Independent Church movement that arose in China after 1911 and the "indigenous church movement" which developed during and after the persecution of Christians in the years 1922-27. These churches were characterized by freedom from missionary control, with financial and administrative independence. The movement to indigenize also emphasized that the Chinese churches must have genuinely Chinese characteristics.

Practically all of these independent and indigenous churches began from small prayer meetings which developed into regular worship services. They began with fellowships, prayer, and Bible study. Then came evangelistic work, and some type of organization. There was often a pattern of independent congregational growth in the early stages. The term "house church" was seldom used prior to 1949, since these meetings eventually joined a larger organization and began regular church life.

The house churches became an important feature of Chinese Christian life again in the late 1950's. As TSPM's control of the official churches and harassment of their opponents increased, many Christians began to use private prayer meetings as their primary form of worship. For those with an indigenous church background, this was a natural transition.

Because of the economic problems stemming from the Great Leap Forward of 1958 and from the withdrawal of Russian support in 1960, there was some confusion in government, and religion became a low priority of the government. As a result, the private meetings

enjoyed a period of relative freedom. In south Fujian, Christians recall that they even held public revival meetings in this period.

After 1962, when the Socialist Education Campaign was begun, the government once again clamped down. A part of this campaign was the Atheist Education Campaign which tried to persuade people to renounce religion and superstition. This campaign was followed by the Cultural Revolution in 1966. In the Cultural Revolution religion was severely attacked, and the house churches were driven underground.

After the intensive persecution ended around 1968, Christians were able to meet quietly. There was no overt religious policy, nor any active government organization to deal with religion. Although there were no signs of churches that outsiders could see, except for two in Beijing for the foreign community, believers were finding ways to continue worshipping God.

The period from 1970-78 was a period of strong growth. Many people lost their faith in socialism after the Cultural Revolution and found that Christians really did believe in something. Christian strength under persecution was a brilliant testimony and was looked on with admiration and wonder by many non-Christians.

House Churches Emerge Openly

In the period of relaxation of government controls from 1979-1980, the house churches began to come to public knowledge. The relative freedom of speech in that period probably contributed to even more rapid growth. News of the house churches began coming to a surprised Christian world outside. In mid-1980, TSPM issued a resolution recognizing house churches as legitimate, in an effort to reduce suspicion on the part of the house church Christians. Many house churches began operating even more openly and some co-operated with TSPM or became members of TSPM.

However, in 1981, restrictions began to fall into place once again. Local officials of the RAB or its superior organization, the United Front Work Department, began instructing house churches that they could not meet so often, that they could have no contacts with outside, and that they could accept no Bibles from abroad.

In 1982, TSPM provincial committees began issuing instructions about the conduct of religion. Christians were to meet only in TSPM buildings and at times approved by TSPM. They were not to pray in small groups. They were not to travel outside their immediate home area to spread religion. They should not solicit funds for religion. A few cases of outright persecution arose in which a number of people were beaten and arrested with the co-operation of local TSPM personnel. Many leaders who had brought their congregations into TSPM found that TSPM gradually usurped their authority or replaced them.

Today, the spirit of friendly co-operation with TSPM has waned, and the house churches are now stiffening their resistance to the appeals of TSPM. Some have gone to the extreme of passionate denunciation and even public demonstrations against TSPM. However, the

majority presently follow a policy of quiet non-co-operation. They are taking care not to give any excuse for charges of disobedience to civil authority, but are also standing firm against the persuasive arguments of the TSPM.

We currently estimate the number of Christians in China to be around 50 million. Of these, at most 1/2 million are attending the state church.

"The Ten Don'ts" of the TSPM, which clearly shows their true nature as a government agency, is also interesting:

1. Do not organize a church without the government's approval.
2. Except for government approved clergy, nobody should baptize.
3. Do not have contacts with foreign religious bodies or buy books from abroad. Violators will be prosecuted.
4. Do not print or reproduce Bibles or other religious books without approval.
5. Do not travel from commune to commune to spread religion.
6. Keep religion to yourself.
7. Do not pray every day, only on Sundays.
8. Do not convey religious thought to persons under 18 years of age.
9. Do not sing (religious) songs to youths under 18 years of age.
10. Do not solicit contributions for the promotion of religion, increasing believers' burdens.

In another article in this July issue of *Covenanter Witness* an interview with a leader of one of the house churches is printed. From this interview I take over the following part. It shows the oppression from the side of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. The "they" with which it starts are people of the TSPM.

Q: How did they discourage house meetings?

A: They started by oppressing the itinerant preachers. They forbid lay preachers and pastors to go outside their villages, and if they do they will be punished. They threaten ordinary believers by saying they will clear out their house and arrest everybody.

They accuse them of not adhering to the "10 Don'ts." These threats have been partially effective. The TSPM also forces the believers to pray faster (pray shorter prayers) or not at all!

Q: How do they deal with you if you still have your meetings?

A: The TSPM uses scare tactics and fines. They release news of Christians being arrested, along with threats of arresting all house church worshippers. They announce that they will arrest so and so on a certain day. But the day comes and the believers are still with us. The Lord protects his believers.

This gives us an idea of what is going on in China. The Word of God is not bound. Through Spirit and Word Christ continues to gather, defend, and preserve His church. The gates of hell cannot overpower her. That is a great comfort. It also urges us to be faithful in His service, faithful in being the light of Christ for the world: a light that shines.

J. GEERTSEMA

news medley

Did I mention brother and sister R. Grit of Orangeville already? I don't think so. Well, then, let's do it this time and right at the beginning. This brother and sister celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary on October 5. They live near Marsville, Ontario, and belong to the Orangeville Church. Whenever I have to go to Orangeville I pass by their place. I am sorry that I am so late with mentioning it, but I did not learn about it any earlier, and could not mention it the other time. Therefore, as yet our heartfelt congratulations. The LORD has given you many blessings, above all a heart that loves and fears Him and is willing to follow His directions. May the blessings be continued upon you and your descendants.

I do not know when this medley will reach our readers. There seems to be a mix-up at the Winnipeg Post Office once in a while. Even first class mail takes sometimes a week to get here from the center of the country. For fear that I shall be too late with my congratulations, I mention now already that on November 2nd, brother and sister R.A. Schaap of Langley, B.C. will celebrate their forty-fifth wedding anniversary. Don't ask me how I know so well that this will be on November 2nd. That is secret between us. In any case: I have known the Schaap family ever since they alighted from the train which brought them to New Westminster, B.C., for I belonged to those who met them at the station. Together we have gone through joy and sadness, and this gives a special bond. Several of their children's marriages I was privileged in solemnizing.

We realize that they do not wish to be in bright daylight and under the glare of spotlights on this occasion. Yet I think that we should offer our congratulations to them also in the usual place reserved for such special occasions. May the LORD continue to give you good health and strength and make you see all His blessings and rejoice because of them.

Let us work our way towards Ontario starting in British Columbia.

It appears that more and more contacts are sought with groups of Christians who give evidence of it that they desire to live according to the Word of our God. The Langley Consistory reports, "The Consistory is informed that the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church has regular Sunday worship services in Langley. It is decided that an initial contact with them should be made."

Several Consistory reports mention that a submission has been received from the Ottawa Church also dealing with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (the "Covenanters"). This matter will serve at the forthcoming General Synod.

The Immanuel Church bulletin of Edmonton shows that the progress with erecting the new church building is nearing its completion. Plans are already being made for the official dedication of the building. There are no stairs, which will be welcome news for our brothers and sisters who have trouble walking or who are using a wheelchair even. You can avoid stairs when you have a sufficient area for auditorium and meeting rooms at parking-lot level! It is not that I am jealous, for I am quite satisfied with the building we have, but I can well see the advantages of having everything on one level.

The Immanuel bulletin also contains a brief report on the meeting of the deacons. As reason for insertion of this brief report is given that, generally speaking, the congregation does not know much about the work of the deacons and, in fact,

whether the deacons do anything else than just collecting the moneys on Sundays. That's what the membership sees. It is, therefore, a good idea when the work of the deacons is brought to the attention of the congregation also in other ways and by other means. Whether the brief report on their meetings achieves the purpose is something which I venture to doubt. In order to say something the report might have to contain information of which it is not desirable that the congregation knows something.

Yes, and for the rest we have to travel on to Ontario.

In Chatham — we make our trip somewhat erratically — the Consistory discussed the use of the personal pronoun for the Lord during the worship services. This was a topic of discussion in more churches. In Chatham, however, a decision was made on — as far as I can see it — extremely practical and valid grounds. Let me pass it on to you.

There is a development noticeable in the way the personal pronoun for the Lord God is used. In some Bible translations the pronoun "you" is used, while others render "thou." So in public prayers there is a tendency to replace "thou" with "you." With respect to this the elders decided that since we use the Revised Standard Version (1971) which has the pronoun "thou," we should maintain uniformity in public reading of the Scriptures and the public prayers. Whoever leads in the worship service is expected to maintain this uniformity by using the pronoun "thou."

The Consistory of Orangeville "received an invitation as a church to have our worship services televised on Sundays without any cost to the congregation. The Consistory has no objections to this, but would like to give the congregation the opportunity to voice their objections if there are any. All we have to do is come up with some people (2 or 3) who will take a little training that will be provided so that they (as members of our congregation) will be able to handle the video equipment to record the service. We will not change any part of the services at all. This is another way of having the Word of the Lord heard in our world, in addition to the radio broadcasts."

This is a beautiful opportunity. I have oftentimes toyed with the idea to purchase some of the equipment of our own and to record a service every Sunday. I am certain that the cable T.V. will be most willing to broadcast it over their channel. I have an idea that for some \$3,000.00 we have all the equipment we need. Most likely the broadcasting will be free. Even IF it costs a "ten-spot" per Sunday, what is that still when compared to the wide reach we achieve?

The Ottawa Church experiences that it has a minister of its own. This is not only experienced in that they have the same minister on the pulpit every Sunday, but also in the change of the bulletin cover. And: is it the fruit of Ottawa having its own minister that there was the following sentence in the Consistory report: "A letter from a family in Alberta regarding the possibility of moving to Ottawa."? It is always said that a "good minister always brings his own stipend with him." Perhaps this comes true also in this case. We certainly hope so. Ottawa also has babysitting services now during both the morning service and the afternoon service. This will help boost the attendance to the services. Does this have anything to do with the fact that a minister never can baby sit during a service?

From the three Burlingtons we have something that should be mentioned.

Starting with South: regarding the "Baptism procedure — The consistory decides to have the parents remain standing at the front while the congregation sings a song, glorifying the faithful promises of the Lord." I was happy that I did not read "the parents *with the minister*," but only "the parents." I have no objection to it when the *parents* remain standing at the baptismal font after baptism, but I do have objections when

I am required to do so. Burlington South has taken away this difficulty from me, and I am thankful for that.

Then we go to West.

The Home Mission Committee had quite an extensive report in the bulletin. From this report a few items are well worth being passed on.

"We have decided to start a Saturday School to continue to teach children on a more regular basis instead of just two weeks in the summer with Vacation Bible School. We invited the children who attended VBS, but we have not received any positive response yet. We have now printed up a flyer which will be distributed and hopefully we can get this Saturday School off the ground."

When you look at that flyer, you are almost compelled to tell the committee that you are bored on Saturdays and that you would love to attend such a Saturday School. I hope that much response will be received. It is a fact that two weeks contact with other children during the summer months may not achieve the purpose. Perhaps this new set-up will.

Another passage from the Home Mission Committee report be passed on for the comfort and encouragement of broadcasting committees everywhere.

"We would also like you to know that 'The Voice of the Church' does get some response. We have recently received several requests for written copies of particular addresses. We have also received letters from people just to tell us how they enjoy our program on Sunday."

Gather courage from this, brothers and sisters everywhere, who are giving time and effort to prepare the programs, to "drum up" support from ministers and who, in some instances, are burdened with the task of scraping together the finances necessary for this work. There is response, and the Word does work, whether we notice it or not. Keep going!

Now we come to Ebenezer Church of Burlington, the "old" one on Dynes Road.

"Several letters were received in the mailbox of the federal address of the Canadian Reformed Churches. It will be checked what the mandate of our church is with respect to such letters. If there is no such mandate, then the forthcoming General Synod will be requested to provide a mandate." Another point which will have the attention of the brothers, to be assembled in Cloverdale.

Our journey concludes this time in Grand Rapids. The Grand Rapids bulletin lately contains all sorts of information regarding contact with others. We recall that the Rev. Kingma made a trip to one of the classes of the Reformed Church in the U.S. (Eureka Classis) and that he had contact with a minister who considered it necessary to break the bond with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. It is about the latter that I found some more information in *Pro Ecclesia*.

There is a rather lengthy piece about the contact with the Rev. Hofford and his congregation, now called the Tri-County Reformed Church at Burtonsville, Maryland. Rev. Kingma accompanied by Rev. Stam went there. The brethren found that the Rev. Hofford and an elder seceded from the local Orthodox Presbyterian Covenant Church in that place and are convinced and consider themselves to be "the true spiritual succession of the Burtonsville Church." About twenty-five people heeded the call to reformation, but they do not wish to be all on their own. That's why they sought contact with the American Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, MI. Rev. Hofford also visited Grand Rapids and was taken along to a Classis Ontario South.

As this was not the first contact which was made via the Grand Rapids Church, the question came up in Grand Rapids whether not "the time might have come for the American Reformed Church to seriously consider whether Christ calls us to fill an existing growing need of sending out a 'labourer'

for His Church-gathering work in the U.S.A. We are not in a position to carry out this task without financial support from elsewhere, but the need of a 'missionary at large' seems to become more evident."

This is something to think about.

And "Lately more requests have been received from 'outside' to receive tapes with sermons preached in our church." This, too, is a heart-warming thing.

More than once we are accused of being introvert, having little attention and love for all that is outside. Perhaps we are in some respect. However: if the true preaching of the Gospel and holding on to the confessions passed on to us from the fathers are not the reasons why people are attracted, or if, for the sake of having more contacts, we should let go of these treasures, we are going the wrong way. It is only when people notice and experience that we have something to give, that we have some treasures which are guarded most jealously — not in order to keep them from others but in order to give to others that which is really valuable — that they are attracted for good and valid reasons. And then we still uphold the promise, made by our forefathers in the *Act of Secession*, that we desire unity with all who stand on or have returned to this very same old and venerable basis.

I would have loved to say more about other points I found in the bulletins, but there is a limit to the time *and* to the space available to me. Thus I have to stop for now.

Hold fast your confession.

And say then,

*With all who fear Thee I keep company —
Those for Thy precepts veneration showing.*

(Psalm 119)

VO



PSALM 34

1. Through all the scenes of life, As well in
trou - ble as in joy, The prais - es of
my God shall still My heart and tongue em-ploy.
His good - ness I'll de - clare, Till all who
are with woes op - pressed, From my ex - am -
- ple com - fort take And be with glad - ness blessed.

book of praise





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.

SYNAGOGUE FOR HOMOSEXUALS

LOS ANGELES (RNS) — The ten-year old liberal Jewish congregation Beth Chayim Chadashim (House of New Life), which lists 140 homosexual men and women as its members, has constituted itself as synagogue by choosing a married woman as its rabbi.

According to the former chairman, Gary Vogel, this synagogue is the first in the world, and in the history of Judaism, which has been instituted only for homosexuals. Vogel considers the Jewish congregation to be special in this respect that the members do not have "traditional families," so that the synagogue is a center for both spiritual and family life.

The new rabbi, Janet Marder, says that she herself is not homosexual and is also of the opinion that the Jewish Talmud condemns homosexuality. But, she adds, "A liberal Jew is free to choose those sections from the Bible and the Talmud which he/she wishes."

ANDROPOV WRITES LETTER TO LUTHERANS

GENEVA (ANP) — "The Soviet Union favours a constructive and flexible manner of negotiation, but every flexibility has its limits." The above quote is contained in a letter of Soviet chairman, Yuri Andropov, in a letter to the Lutheran World Council in Geneva. The letter of Andropov is an answer to a letter which the Lutheran Council sent to both the USSR and the USA "to show more compliance" in negotiations. According to Andropov, flexibility is no longer determined only by the interests of the Soviet Union and its allies, but by the entire world community. Not only must the USSR show its willingness, but also the United States. Andropov considered the American attitude in the Geneva talks to be negative.

The Soviet leader expressed the hope in this letter that "all peoples in both the East and the West will see their desire

fulfilled that an atomic catastrophe will be prevented, and that this desire will bring the United States to a different attitude."

EAST GERMAN BISHOP AGAINST EMIGRATION TO WEST

WITTENBERG, EAST GERMANY (EPD) — "The Church in the DDR (German Democratic Republic) principally favours that citizens of East Germany do not request immigration to the West." Bishop Gottfried Forck of Berlin-Brandenburg (DDR) made this statement at the close of an "evangelical church day" in Wittenberg.

He made a plea to those who would rather leave "to reconsider their arguments and take up their responsibility in the DDR." He reminded the 15,000 participants of the meeting that the Synod of the Evangelical Church in East Germany had asked the East German government "to facilitate travel between the two German states."

Nederlands Dagblad reports that 400,000 Germans have left the Soviet dominated states since 1976. Many of these are young people of German origin (who hardly speak German) coming from Poland, the Soviet Union and Rumania. The "immigrants" are integrated relatively easily into the West German society. It is estimated that almost 3.5 million Germans live behind the Iron Curtain.

ANGLICANS TO ORDAIN FEMALE PRIEST

SYDNEY (RNS) — Within not too long a time, the Anglican Church will experience quite a new happening: a woman will be ordained into the priesthood. Miss Joyce Bennet, former mistress of a girls school in Kowloon (Hong Kong), is expected to be ordained as priest to serve the Church of St. Martin in the Fields, in London, England.

In 1948 a bishops conference at Lambeth declared the ordination of a (Chinese) woman to the priesthood to be invalid.

The new task of Miss Bennet has been described as "pastoral care for Chinese speaking immigrants in London."

SOVIETS BAN BOOKS

MOSCOW (RNS) — The authorities in the Soviet Union have removed 49 books out of a series of 1000, which had been brought to Moscow by the Association of Jewish Publishers in the U.S. The Association is allowed to partake in a bi-annual exhibition of literature.

Two years ago only two books were removed by authorities.

Among the books banned are the *Memoires of Jimmy Carter*, the *American-Jewish Yearbook*, and the book titled *The Many Forms of Antisemitism*.

C.I.S.

PRESS RELEASE

of the Executive Board of the ILPB held in London on Oct. 11, 1983.

Opening: The meeting was opened in the customary Christian manner with the reading of II Tim. 2:8-15. The chairman Mr. Hoff then led in prayer.

Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on Sept. 9th were read and approved. It was noted that the stationary that was ordered has been received. The insurance for the books stored in the church building has also been looked after. The minutes of the meeting held on Oct. 1 were read and approved.

Planning Department: Since we have not received any notice from Australia as to what they are working on, we are in a difficult position as to planning. We do not want to duplicate the translation of books. A letter will be sent to Australia again asking them for this information.

Personal Department: Three progress reports have been received.

Public Relations: Letters and pricelists were sent to all the societies. Interest has been shown in our work by the school societies, therefore a letter will be sent to them along with a pricelist. It was decided to charge the school societies the member price.

Sales Department: We have sold study material for approximately \$400.00. Orders for books are coming in quite regularly.

Projects Department: Ruth and Messianic Motherhood is now available. James and Peter are ready for the computer. Numbers, Minor Prophets, and Luke 1 are being edited. We have encountered some problems with the translation of two chapters of Daniel. These chapters have been sent to another translator.

General: We have received permission to buy a computer. We will all meet at Computerland one more time before deciding which components to buy.

Budget: The budget was approved after a few questions.

Closing: Mr. J. Koolsbergen closed the meeting with prayer.

On behalf of the ILPB,
(Mrs.) J. KOOLSBERGEN

Did you
remember to
hand in your
family greeting
for our "Year
End" issue?

PATRIMONY PROFILE²⁴

By Rev. W.W. J. VanOene

"We only returned to what was before," Synod wrote, "and therefore cannot put before Your Majesty any new regulation. And in order to prevent any ambiguity we present herewith to Your Majesty our Forms of Unity, together with the Liturgy, and we declare again solemnly by means of these our signatures, that, convinced that they are based on God's Word and agree with it, we do not wish to undertake or construct anything that would conflict with it, as appears from the accompanying Acts of our meeting.

"We do not wish to infringe upon anyone's possessions, income, or titles in any way.

"The kingdom of our Lord is not of this world; through our sins and prolonged aberrations we have forfeited everything; if our adversaries can and dare approve of unlawfully keeping the church building in their possession, and therewith to await the judgment of the Judge of all the earth, we wish humbly to acquiesce in the disposition of the Most High and will provide for our buildings ourselves. We do not need such beautiful temples to serve the God of heaven and earth; and the highest title we can ever possess on earth is that of believers and children of God; we ask for no other rights than those to which, as citizens of The Netherlands, we have a right according to the Constitution, and therefore also the right to exercise our religion publicly."

In all congregations a prayer service was held. A committee consisting of A. Brummelkamp, H.G. Klijn, and V. Koningsbergen handed the document to the King on March 16th during an ordinary audience.

We shall not relate all that can be read about consultations behind the scenes and about correspondence conducted, but proceed to the King's reaction to the above document.

What was the King's reply? His Majesty was very upset by the fact that the appellants did not act in accordance with his directive of December 11, 1835, but continued in their own way. *De facto* they were a new denomination under the government of a general synod. However, the ministers were former ministers of the Netherlands Reformed Church who were deposed and thus assumed to themselves an authority which they did not possess at the moment. The King declared that their so-called Reformed Church existed illegally and declared it dissolved. Their gatherings were forbidden. If they wished to form a congregation of Seceders, they were to send an *individually signed* address, accompanied by their regulations. If they desired to come together with more than twenty persons in a house, they should approach the local government which could give permission and order

the necessary supervision.

The only body to which this royal reply gave great pleasure and satisfaction was the general synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church. The Seceders, however, were very disturbed by it. Now it became clear to them that the King, whom they had always seen as alien to the persecutions had a hand in them. They had proved that they upheld the old doctrine; their Regulations were laid down a few centuries before in the Church Order of Dort; they could not *form* a congregation of Seceders, for they had been living in ecclesiastical fellowship all the time; and a request signed individually was a denial of the *office* in the Church. It was an impossible demand.

Personal Permits

In some places the Seceders requested and obtained the required permission, although not for long.

One such permit read as follows.

Proof of Admission for . . .

pursuant to the decision of the Burgomasters and Aldermen of the City of Utrecht of this date, and under the conditions and provisions mentioned by them *in extenso*, to come together for conducting religious exercises in the house named the Dommelaerspoort, occupied by H.G. Klijn Junior, Section C, No. 36, on Sundays at 9:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m., as also on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 o'clock.

Utrecht, November 10, 1836 The Secretary of the City of Utrecht

Some permit-holders felt like the *Libellatici*, church members who, during the days of the persecutions under the Roman emperors, secured for themselves a document stating that they had brought the required sacrifices to the emperor, whereas, in truth, they had done no such thing.

On May 29, 1837, H.G. Klijn wrote to the city government of Utrecht to tell them that he had acted wrongly by giving in. "The undersigned, H.G. Klijn Jr., occupant of the dwelling named Dommelaerspoort, Section C, No. 36, herewith informs you with due respect that, compelled by his conscience, he is obligated to confess before you that by making his dwelling available for the gatherings held since November 10, 1836, he has acted in direct conflict with his Reformed confession.

"With many of his fellow-believers he was under the delusion that the measures then taken had only this intention: to connive at the worship services of the congregation; and this delusion brought them to accepting these permits. Experience taught us, however, that it was nothing but imagination, since we had to experience continually that people who wished to join us in these services were barred by the police because they did not have a card. That differentiation between us and our fellow-believers has taught us most forcefully that by our proceeding we actually formed an *association* which was deprived of the service of pastors and teachers and of enjoying the sacraments. As the undersigned does not belong nor wishes to belong to *any association* but solely wishes to behave in confession and conduct as a member of the Christian Reformed Church in The Netherlands, he can

no longer agree to make the house occupied by him available for such an association, for which reason he respectfully terminates the permit given by you on November 10, 1836. This denunciation is done with the permission of the overseers of the congregation and of the larger part of its members.

"At the same time I declare openly to you herewith that from now on I will open my house for every assembly with the purpose of having worship services of the *Christian Reformed congregation*, at whatever time this congregation might wish to meet, and I hereby take the liberty of requesting you to order the necessary supervision and protection which the Constitution guarantees to our *Reformed persuasion* as well as to other persuasions, and which protection has been guaranteed repeatedly by our competent judge in the last resort. I trust that also in this respect you will give to us, as well as to the other citizens, an example of respect for the laws of the country and the freedom of its inhabitants, since it is the serious desire of me as well as of my fellow-believers to live a quiet and secure life in all godliness and honesty also with respect to the practising of our religion under the protection of our magistrates."

The authorities were a little concerned because of decisions by appeal courts which were favourable for the Seceders. It was even suggested to change the districts so that most of the cases in this field would be taken away from the court in Amsterdam!

The Council of State urged the King to bring matters to a solution "In order to soothe the feelings in our own country as well as to counter the misjudgment of Your Majesty's intentions abroad."

The Council of State did have reasons for reminding His Majesty of his reputation abroad. In a magazine which appeared in Paris we read, among other things, in the issue of March 17, 1837: "Holland, which owes its glory and prosperity to this that it received with love into its bosom all Christians who were persecuted for their faith, now is the scene of fierce persecution. It is deeply distressing to see such things happen under the government of the House of Orange-Nassau which rendered so many services to the Gospel and the freedom of religion. May the prayers of the Christians ascend to Him who has the hearts of the kings in His hand."

And — to mention one more thing — in August 1837, a letter with a request for freedom of worship for the Seceders was sent to the King by no fewer than one hundred and twenty-three Swiss ministers.

Various concepts were drawn up, but the matter dragged on until the government was helped out of the impasse by the request of Utrecht for permission to have a *Christian Seceded Congregation* in Utrecht, which request was granted on February 14, 1839.

Utrecht's Request for Recognition

Utrecht was the first congregation which requested and received official recognition. This was mainly the result of Scholte's view on church federation and church government. He was an individualist and did not care too much

about organization and procedures.

There were already some difficulties in Utrecht, as may be evident from a letter which J. Vermeulen, a member of the Utrecht Congregation, sent to his consistory. The letter is dated April 11, 1838. In it, Vermeulen complains that a letter, sent by him to Rev. Scholte, was not read at the consistory meeting, although Mr. Scholte "knew very well that it was my intention that the elders, deacons, and congregation should not remain ignorant of it."

Mr. Vermeulen has various objections to his minister's preaching and other actions. What hinders him much is that Scholte's preaching "does not proclaim the full counsel of God," as Scholte "does not wish to address the dead sinner and to call him outwardly on behalf of God." Secondly, he objects to the fact that Scholte does not administer holy baptism to *all* children.

"Although it is of less importance, yet it is very offensive to me," Vermeulen writes, "that Rev. Scholte does not wear the special minister's garment but dresses in the manner of the world. However, although Scholte is ashamed to show by his clothing who he is and to confess thereby the Name of his King, he is not ashamed to wear, even on the pulpit, the sign of the Ten-Day Campaign," (Scholte received it because he served as a volunteer in the military campaign against the seceding Belgian provinces in 1830).

In the fifth place: "I have belonged to the Seceders for four years now, but Rev. Scholte has never been at my place yet." "And now they want to discipline us. But if he does not come and visit me, I don't have to attend his sermons. Besides, I would rather have elder Klein read a sermon of one of the pious writers than listen to Scholte's sermons which don't do a thing to me. If we will continue to be bothered, this letter will be published in the Utrecht newspaper."

The troubles within the congregation became more or less known to the authorities. On May 18, 1838, the Minister of Justice wrote to the King that in the latest report of the Director of Police in Utrecht the following passage could be found: "Various Seceders begin to get into conflict with their minister Scholte, complain much about him, and withdraw from his leadership. We predict for ourselves much good from this discord and cherish the hope that at least in this city their number will diminish gradually."

Under the leadership of a new prosecutor, a service was disturbed after three doors of the newly dedicated church building were forced. Scholte did lodge a complaint with the Utrecht court, but apparently grew sort of tired of the persecutions, and shortly after this an application for recognition was submitted to the King. The name "Reformed" was not used, for the king had given the Seceders to understand that this was a name belonging to "The Netherlands Reformed Church which is recognized by Us." Thus they requested to be recognized as a *Christian Seceded Congregation*.

— *To be continued.*

Welcome Evening Rev. and Mrs. Pouwelse

On September 6, 1983, the congregation of the Canadian Reformed Church at Langley welcomed her newly installed minister, the Rev. W. Pouwelse and his wife, with an evening of song, music, skits and speeches. The master of ceremonies was the vice-chairman of the consistory, br. D. Doesburg. After the opening song, Psalm 111:1 and 5, followed by the reading of this psalm, and prayer, br. Doesburg spoke a word of welcome. He mentioned that the congregation had ample reason to be thankful since the vacancy (brought about by Rev. VanderBoom's retirement) had been so rapidly filled.

The song of welcome that followed this introduction was accompanied by accordionist br. C. Admiraal.

As guests were noted Rev. Pouwelse's brother and sister-in-law on a visit from Australia and br. VanderSluys of Grand Rapids.

Among the variety of musical contributions should be mentioned the Vivaldi selection played by Cheryl Hansma (organ) and Theo Kobald (cello), and two trumpet voluntaries of Greene and Stanley played by Ken Linde, accompanied by Cheryl Hansma.

The ministers of the neighbouring sister churches in the Fraser Valley, the Reverends J.M. VanderWel of Abbotsford, J. Visscher of Cloverdale, C. Bouwman of Chilliwack, and J. Geertsema of Surrey,



C. Admiraal accompanies the welcome song



Ken Linde and Cheryl Hansma — Organ and trumpet duet

conveyed best wishes and congratulations on behalf of their respective congregations.

Performing a skit on how to run a minister's household, members of the Young People Societies, decked out in the garb of their different trades, carried gifts associated with his/her occupation in daily life.

Mrs. D. Jansen and her daughter Brenda played a piano duet.

On behalf of the Women's Society, Mrs. J. VanWoudenberg and Mrs. O. Welfing recited a versified welcome, after which the members of the society presented Mrs. Pouwelse with a wide variety of preserves and home-canned delectables.

Responding to the evening's proceedings, Rev. Pouwelse observed that it was about three months ago that he and his wife made their acquaintance visit to Langley and that he was happy to announce that they shortly could move into their own house because his offer had been accepted. He remarked facetiously, that he could now freely draw on the trades of the young people, to get himself set up in his home.

In expressing his thanks he pointed out that "When we perform our tasks in Christ's Church, we may rely on His guidance."

After the congregation had sung Hymn 59, Rev. J. Geertsema closed this part of the evening with thanksgiving.

Refreshments were served in the meeting hall, where the conviviality of the evening was extended for about another hour.

In brief: this was a happy and noteworthy event in the young history of the Langley Church.



Rev. and Mrs. Pouwelse and Mr. and Mrs. Pouwelse visiting from Australia

R. KOAT



Summary of Rev. Pouwelse's Inaugural Sermon

During the afternoon service of Sunday, August 28, the congregation of Langley worshipped for the first time officially under the ministry of the Rev. Pouwelse. Installed by Rev. Geertsema in the morning service, Rev. Pouwelse had selected I Cor. 3:5-23 for Scripture reading. The verses 11-17 formed the text of his inaugural sermon:

For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw — each man's works will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.

In a short introduction, he pointed to the fact that this was an important day for both him and the Langley congregation. In reference to Rev. Geertsema's installation sermon (Scripture reading I Cor. 2:1 to 3:4; text I Cor. 2:12, 13), he underlined the importance of cooperation. "God allows us to work together in His vineyard. We are all fellow workers and builders in the service of the Lord." As the new

Langley minister, he does not start a new programme but continues the work of the only bishop, Jesus Christ. There may be a changing of the guard, but the King and Master remains the same. He is our only true foundation.

Having said this, Rev. Pouwelse came to formulate his theme: the divine instruction for builders in the service of the Lord. His tripartite division was as follows:

1. The foundation of the building (vs. 11)
2. The nature of the building (vs. 12-15)
3. The resident of the building (vs. 16, 17)

What does Paul mean when he says in verse 10 that he laid the foundation? Is he the founder of the church? To answer these questions one must look at the context. In I Cor. 2:2, we read what the theme of Paul's programme as builder in the service of the Lord is: "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Jesus Christ is the foundation; He is the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). Those who deny the Son of God and Him crucified, John calls the antichrist (I John 2:22). They take away the foundation on which the whole building depends.)

The verses 12-15 show the nature of the building and indicate that not all materials employed are equally enduring. Hay, wood, and straw cannot stand the test of God's purifying fire.

We should ask ourselves the question: Will our work be fireproof when it is tested? Do we live on the one foundation laid by our Lord? Through Him is the only way to salvation. We must all build on this foundation and let ourselves be used as living stones in the hands of the Great Builder (I Pet. 2:5).

The last two verses of the text contain a wonderful conclusion: we are made the Temple of the Holy Spirit. That brings with it a great responsibility. We have to live in such a way that we do not defile God's Holy Temple. Our programme as builders in the service of the Lord should be determined by that. Personal and congregational life must be of such a nature that the Holy Spirit can dwell in it.

Let us, therefore, work together as fellow builders, used as living stones in the structure of God's Holy Temple.

PIM SCHÖN

PRESS RELEASE

Board meeting of the Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped.

Minutes of the meeting of the board of "Anchor" C.R.A.F.T.H. held on September 23, 1983 at 8:00 p.m. in the Hamilton Church. The chairman br. G. Witten, opens the meeting by asking us to sing Psalm 32:1, after which he led us in prayer, and read from the Scriptures, Romans 5:1-11. The board members are welcomed and the agenda for the meeting is established.

1. *Press Release Committee:* The functions of the Press Release Committee are discussed. Among these are: looking after the press releases and articles in Clarion, providing films for those interested, and arranging for speakers.

Summer camp in 1984 will be the last two weeks of July. Br. H. Bouwman will represent the board on the Summer Camp Committee.

2. *Correspondence:* Br. W. Godschalk received a reply from sr. Zijp in The Netherlands, in which she indicated her willingness to interview the applicants applying for the position of foster parents.

Br. Godschalk will send a reply to this sister in The Netherlands expressing our appreciation. The board has appointed a brother and sister from The Netherlands as foster parents. Upon confirmation from the applicants their name will be published.

3. *Logo:* Br. Godschalk received some suggestions and examples of logos for the Association from The Netherlands. These, along with the two we have from our local churches, will be given to the P.R. Committee for consideration.

4. *Building Committee:* Five people have been found willing to serve on the building committee and the chairman will arrange a meeting. They are: Betty Bouwman, Herman Faber, Jerry Hart, Bep Hoogland, Norm Schuurman.

5. *Coordinator:* The need for a coordinator is discussed and it is decided that at this time the board will try to complete its work without a co-ordinator.

6. *Contract:* Br. W. Godschalk will draw up a contract for Mr. Zomer.

7. Next meeting will be, D.V., October 21, 1983, at 8:00 p.m. in the Hamilton Church. After singing Psalm 32:6 br. H. Bouwman leads us in prayer, and the chairman adjourned the meeting.

For the Board,
K. BROUWER, Vice-All

Subscribe To . . .

Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

school crossing

A. A Profile of the Christian School Student

From time to time, this column has dealt with various aspects of the curriculum which we use in our schools. Behind this frequent exposure and in the work which is done to develop a unique, Reformed curriculum, lies the search to develop a profile of a desirable Christian school graduate. In other words, what do we expect from our children after eight or twelve years of Christian education? Although such a profile is difficult to compile, it is nevertheless an essential element for the orderly and meaningful growth in Christ-centered education.

Basic to the structure of this profile, is the fact that the school has definable areas of *input*, *process* and *output*. Input has to do with such factors as school personnel, environment, the home, curriculum resources and objectives. The process includes the teaching/learning activities and the various interrelationships among parents, teachers and students. Output refers to the school product sent into society at the end of the school career. It also includes the day-by-day outcome, as the student encounters *life* during his/her school years.

The school is one of the vertices of the triangle along with the home and the church. All three have a duty in the development of a mind which is in line with the infallible Word of God. It is an outlook upon life, a view and attitude of the heart, a body of basic ideas, a direction of thinking and living, that has been redeemed through the sovereign grace of God in Jesus Christ. This great change, which is not only a "once for all time change," but also a daily renewal, is effected through the Word of God. Apart from total submission to this Word, an intellectual perspective would be of little use in our school.

In the development of the Christian mind, we teach three awareness themes:

a. About God

- to have a working knowledge and understanding of God's Creational and Scriptural revelation;
- to have an awareness of the deepest possible understanding of life — the Bible, Creation, Man, Sin, Christ, the Kingdom of God, the purpose of education, the role of the parents, the teacher and the purpose of the school;

- to know that life is a struggle between obedience and disobedience to God.

b. About Self

- to have an awareness of who he/she is — a servant serving, a child of God;
- to have knowledge of his/her mandate in this world;
- to develop a deep faith commitment with which today's problems can be met;
- to have a good, general knowledge with which the student can perform his/her every day tasks.

limitations of this individual person. I consider the following characteristics/reactions of our students. We are dealing with young people with a very wide range of individual differences. They will go to extremes, sometimes show emotionally unstable tendencies or, often demonstrate a "know it all" attitude. We can expect marked differences — to degrees of antagonism — between boys and girls. Some of our students will be overcritical, changeable, rebellious, and uncooperative.

We are dealing with students, who are searching for ideals. They are developing a high interest in philosophical,

The school is one of the vertices of the triangle along with the home and the church. All three have a duty in the development of a mind which is in line with the infallible Word of God.

c. About Others

- to have a critical evaluation model of life;
- to have an awareness of the spirit of this time;
- to develop a sense of "historical consciousness";
- to develop a knowledge of "what time is";
 - (i) a consciousness of today's society;
 - (ii) to develop a redemption outreach to today's world;
- to develop an awareness of man's mandate to subdue the earth and have dominion over it.

Before the teacher can have a complete overview on the profile of a Christian school student, he must also have an awareness of the potential and thus the

ethical and religious problems and we can capitalize on this in our search for what they "should be like." We are dealing with students, who are striving for acceptance as young adults with their own (untested) opinions. They have a horrid fear of being ridiculed and of being unpopular. They will sacrifice personal convictions to avoid both. They will also attempt to assert independence from the family structure.

What the students need, among other things, are knowledge and understanding of physical and emotional changes. They need:

- opportunities to assert their independence;
- assurance of security and respect;
- opportunities to make relevant decisions;

- directives for “communal” living and a social perception;
- information on how to handle their sexual attitudes;
- an opportunity to strengthen their reasoning;
- to be shown how to compete and yet to cooperate.

May our heavenly Father provide us, as parents and teachers, to find the correct Biblical guidelines which will bring this about. May the education which is provided at our schools help to prepare our children to take up their proper station in life!

B. Dress Code Revisited

The following paragraph was found in the bulletin of one of our schools:

“At our last membership meeting this (dress code) was discussed again and the decision was made to uphold the established policy. This means that there are *absolutely no blue jeans* allowed for girls. The striped variety are also blue jeans and are therefore not allowed. Comments were made about jogging suits as well. It is not our intention that we spell out in every detail what is suitable or not but may we suggest that jogging suits are used for the purpose of jogging and not as regular school attire. (This particularly applies to Grades 7-10.) The emphasis should be on neat and clean also in how we dress for school.”

I realize the concern with which we view various dress styles, but *please* let's leave the responsibility with the home where this obviously belongs. Some of our schools are spending *far* too much time on a so-called proper dress code. Every new rule that is put into place, usually creates a new set of problems.

The role of the school should only deal with a lack of taste or an obvious lack of Christian lifestyle. Some examples of unacceptable standards are as follows:

- a. obvious grubbiness or sloppiness;
- b. exaggerated or excessive makeup;
- c. the wearing of T-shirts that glorify some rock groups or that contain slogans that can be taken in two ways (preferably in the wrong way);
- d. and yes, from time to time, teachers have to tell students that deodorant has been invented and that the wearing of the same pair of socks for a number of days is rather offensive to the rest of the class.

In summary, I feel that when we compare the standards of how our students are dressed, with those of other school systems, we have little to complain about. Dress codes will change from time to time and a change by itself shouldn't always

be judged as being good or bad. I suppose that a fundamental rule is to teach our children what is truly proper, suitable, and tasteful, instead of stressing personal prejudices (e.g. no jeans for girls — no jeans of the striped variety). This doesn't only hold true for school clothing, but also for what is to be worn on Sunday, or to a birthday party, or for on the beach. Let's make *that* the “established policy.”

Your reactions are invited. If some feedback is received, it will be dealt with again, in a future column.

C. Neutrality in the Public Schools?

Advocates of the public school system claim that education should be neutral, taking into consideration the background of all its students. How about the following?

You probably didn't know that a teacher in a public school in Texas can be fined up to \$500 for not teaching “patriotism” for ten minutes each day (and up to \$200 for not teaching Texas history). In California, teachers in public schools are legally required to report under oath that they have complied with all rules and regulations pertaining to their teaching, before their final pay cheques of the season can be approved. In New York, funds can be withheld from local public school districts that do not conform to “patriotism and citizenship” requirements.

As a matter of fact, thirty-eight states in the US, have statutes requiring the inculcation of specific values and attitudes, and at least a dozen of them hold teachers responsible for “molding the moral character of their students.” Among these regulations are California's requirements to teach students to avoid “idleness, profanity and falsehood, and to instruct them in manners and morals.” At the other end of the continent, a Maine statute requires educators to “impress on the minds” of students “the principles of morality and justice and social regard for truth; love for country, humanity and a universal benevolence; sobriety, industry, frugality; chastity, moderation and temperance.”

Although I have not been able to find any official Canadian documents in this regard, the same feelings exist in many parts of our country. Is there anyone who *still* believes the myth that *any* educational system is, or can ever be, NEUTRAL towards moral and spiritual values?

D. And finally . . .

“Hardly worthy of Christian curriculum theory is the idea that the school prepares the primary student for the intermediate level, the junior high student, or

senior high student for college or university. *Schools prepare students for life*; the Christian curriculum, hopefully, prepares them for life in God's service. If implemented properly, the student with academic ability will also be ready to pursue further studies. The principal aim may never be to prepare students for subsequent educational institutions (or for a better paying job). Such preparation is at most a by-product of an educational program aiming to help students take up their calling in life.”

from “Shaping School Curriculum — a Biblical View” (p. 16)

Until next month, the Lord willing!
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PRESS RELEASE

of Regional Synod Ontario, held on Friday, October 7, 1983, in the Rehoboth church building, Burlington, Ontario.

1. On behalf of the convening Church at Burlington-West, the Rev. G. VanDooren called the meeting to order. He reads Psalm 46, which is followed by the singing of stanza 1 and 2 of the same psalm.

2. The credentials are examined and found to be in good order.

3. Regional Synod is constituted. The officers are: Rev. Cl. Stam, chairman; Rev. J. Mulder, clerk; Rev. J. DeJong, assessor.

4. The agenda is set and adopted. There are three appeals.

5. The submitted appeals are read and dealt with in closed session.

6. Appointments: a. A proposal to replace the appointment of the Rev. W. Pouwelse as delegate to the next general synod because of his departure from the regional resort is discussed and defeated.

b. New alternates are appointed re Art. 49 C.O.: for Classis Ontario South: Rev. M. Werkman; for Classis Ontario North: Rev. J. VanRietschoten.

c. The treasurer of regional synod is reappointed. The Church at Lincoln is to audit the books. The Church at Toronto is to keep the archives, the Church at Brampton is to inspect them.

d. The Church at Hamilton is appointed as convening church for the next regional synod, ad Art. 47, C.O.

7. The question period is made use of. Censure ad Art. 43 C.O. is not necessary.

8. The Acts are adopted and the press release approved. After the singing of Psalm 72:2, the Rev. J. Mulder leads in prayer, and the synod closed.

For Regional Synod,
 J. DEJONG, assessor, e.t.