



Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Vol. 32, No. 23 November 18, 1983

Are We Holy?

Sometimes we can read about deep concern with regard to Christians and the Christian faith. This deep concern is expressed, not in connection with Christians who are persecuted for their faith, but in connection with secularization, with worldliness in the church. Somewhere I read the complaint that “the evangelical wing of the church has, in recent years, become worldly to a remarkable degree.”

A few matters were mentioned. Worldliness is becoming part of the way of life; the religious mood is social instead of spiritual; the art of worship is being lost; the churches do not produce saints anymore, because what really counts in the church community is being a successful business man; homes have become theatres; and the hymnody which we sing in our homes “borders on sacrilege.” When I read this, it struck me. And I asked myself the question: Does this picture also fit our churches more and more?

Please, dear reader, consider a few questions with me. I hope that also young people are willing to confront themselves with these questions, together with their parents. Often, though not always, a wrong trend and an unfaithful direction is not initiated in the hearts and minds of young people, but in the circle of the family. This means: it often starts with the parents. The “next generation” (Psalm 78) has to learn the fear of the LORD from the older generation in truly faithful Christian homes.

Now here come a number of questions. When we have our social visits, do we still discuss ecclesiastical and spiritual matters? Are our hearts and minds filled with these matters? Or are the topics of our conversation just the material things: houses, cars, clothing, entertainment? Do our minds concentrate on these things? Can we still talk with each other about what goes on in the churches (our own and others)? Do we still know what is happening, because we take the trouble to read? How many have discussed, for instance, the articles of Rev. Pouwelse on “Labour Relations” and the question whether these relations must be ruled by the fifth or by the ninth commandment?

Are we, too, loosing the art of (family and personal) worship? Do we still take and make time for “being with God” in the “inner room,” listening to what our Father has to say to us in His Word and, in response to His Word, talking to Him about what He has just spoken to us? Do we have or make the time to worship as a family, for instance at our meals or in the evening before we go to bed? Do all those present have their own Bible to promote good attention? Or is it so that — as a formality — a few verses are quickly read, the Bible is quickly closed, and a short “prayer” is spoken, and quickly we go our different ways, immediately forgetting what was read? Do we take the time to discuss the things that God speaks to us in His Word in order to let that Word penetrate better? Are we aware that God’s Word is the seed of regeneration?

There was also the question what our families “produce”? Do they “produce” saints — children, young people, men, and women who love the Lord and who are eager to serve Him as their Redeemer and Master? Or do also our families produce people whose goal in life is to be successful in business, or, in any case, receive a good income? And is this so because

success in business and a better income are the things that are always talked about in our homes, because these things occupy the first place in our hearts and lives?

Are our houses homes which are holy for the Lord? Or are they little, private movie theatres. Are they centres of service in and for God’s kingdom and for His church, or are they centres of entertainment, evening after evening. Do our children still see their parents read (and hear them discuss) a good Christian book, to increase their knowledge of the Scriptures and of the Confession? Do they see their parents read *Clarion*, and, maybe, also *The Outlook*, to mention only these two? Do they hear the older ones stimulating them to read?

It was also said that the hymnody in our homes “borders on sacrilege.” “Sacrilege” is disrespect for anything sacred. These words can mean that the hymns which are sung, are sung in a totally worldly manner: with rock and roll tunes. Now I am not aware that this happens much in our families. But what I do notice is that also many of our young people, our teenagers, listen to modern rock music, and do so rather constantly. This modern music does not come from the Holy Spirit. It comes from people who reject the commandments of God and sing of what is sin in God’s eyes. It is music and song that is inspired by the devil and comes from hell. The music itself already is revolutionary, anarchistic. It aims at destruction, and it does destroy! It destroys the old values. We should not say too easily that listening to this kind of music is a passing stage. Many a youth in a rebellious stage in the process of growing to adulthood got stuck in his destructive rebellion, also through the constant bombardment of that screaming overly-loud rebellion music. And the saving, healing Word of God that brings peace could no longer penetrate the armour of rebellion.

May I ask: are our homes holy places, where psalms and hymns are sung to the glory of God and the upbuilding in faith, bringing with them the Christian peace? Or are our homes places where we at certain short times open the Bible and are silent for a moment, but where, only moments later, unholy, worldly, devilish music and songs desecrate and profane? Should not our homes and minds be holy for the LORD?

Is the difference between us and the world that we hold on to some old Christian forms, but without real contents? Is there just some Christian form of religion, but without real power?

Do we still have the power of faith that we dare to be different through our love for the Lord? He says: You are Mine. I am holy. Therefore you must be holy. “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him We know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every one who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure” (I John 3:1ff).

But there is also the warning: “Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is in vain that the Scripture says, ‘He yearns jealously over the Spirit whom He had made to dwell in us (James 4:4,5)?’ ”

J. GEERTSEMA

General Synod Cloverdale 1983

On Monday October 31, 1983, the delegates to the General Synod 1983, came together with the brothers and sisters not only from Cloverdale, but from all the churches in the Fraser Valley, to ask the Lord's blessing upon the work that was going to be done during the following weeks.

The service was conducted by the Rev. D. VanderBoom, chairman of Synod 1980. Although the service was held in the Langley Church building, it was the Cloverdale consistory which called the brothers and sisters together. The Rev. J. Visscher ushered the delegates in and, taking the position of serving elder, led the Rev. VanderBoom to the pulpit. We sang from Hymn 41, stanzas 1 and 2. Then the Creed was sung, to profess our common faith with one voice. Scripture reading was from I Corinthians 3:10-4:5, followed by the singing of Psalm 119:49, and Rev. VanderBoom led us in prayer. The offering was for the Canadian Home Bible League and the singing was stanzas 7, 8, and 9 of Psalm 94.

Text for the sermon were some verses taken from the chapters we read, namely I Cor. 3:10-12 and 4:2-5. Rev. VanderBoom began with saying that it is a good thing that we have the opportunity to present the need of the churches before the Lord. We are thankful for this. The other fact is, that at some time in the history there was a Reformation — the Reformation of the 16th century. One can ask, of course, whether there is any connection between the bringing of the need of the churches before the Lord now that another General Synod is about to be convened, and the Reformation which took place in the sixteenth century. Are we not somewhat conceited when we try to see and lay claim to such a connection? It seems to be such a far-fetched idea. It all depends on how one looks at it. The question we ask first of all is not "What happened?" but "What has become of it?"

This year is called "Luther" year. Statues have been erected of the Reformers, of Luther, Calvin, Knox, Beza, but the question is, "How have people been building upon the foundation since that sixteenth century? When looked at from that angle things become different. Then it happens that a fact which is considered to be of no importance at all — e.g. the convening of a general synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches — ap-

pears to be a matter of the most importance. This is also caused by the fact that whatever is being done is done for eternity. Thus the work done at a general synod is very serious, very responsible work.

It is good to listen to our text, which teaches us concerning stewardship in the building on the one foundation, in the light of Christ's return.

In the first part of his first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul appears deeply moved. He warns against the spirit of competition which was so evident in the Corinthian Church. He makes it clear to the Christians that what the one does and what the other does is not the most important thing. Most important is, what is the foundation. The Word incarnate gathers His Church. HE has the final say. Not only in Corinth was this the issue: it is the final issue in every reformation, as well as in all synodical decisions.

There are three different kinds of people: First a group which shows a staggering lack of sense of direction. Then, there are those who are just travelling along: they feel that something is wrong but they are unwilling to do something about it. And then there is the third group — the group of those who show involvement in all actions unto the fulfilment of their task.

The apostle Paul provides a great comfort to those who are thus involved. He issues a serious warning as well: the foundation is there, the Lord Jesus, who is the Cornerstone. However, now people have to build on that Cornerstone. Let there be concern regarding the materials used. The Gospel is the Gospel of salvation by grace alone. Wherefore every builder has to see to it that he uses the right materials. Every member must do this, but it applies especially to those who have an office in the church or who have been called to deal with matters at a general synod. The foundation is one and unchangeable, but the superstructure differs; in fact, there is an astonishing variety. The apostle gives us a warning concerning the quality of the building of this superstructure. There is, namely, not only a difference in the materials used, there is also a difference in the manner in which the materials are used. As for the quality of the materials, the question has to be raised, "Can they stand the test? Are they worthy of the foundation?" This is the issue in every reformation; this is the issue

for each and every member of the church. This will have to be the issue when the general synod deals with the matters that have been presented to it. With all matters that come up for discussion, and all decisions, we have the calling to build with such materials, as are worthy of the foundation. The builder also must see to it *how* he builds on this foundation, how he uses the materials which have been put at his disposal. The best materials can be spoiled by poor and shoddy workmanship. Talents which have been received are a gift of God's grace, and all of us are trustees of the treasures of the Lord. Thus



Published bi-weekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, MB

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editors: J. Geertsema and W. Pouwelse
Co-Editors: J. DeJong, Cl. Stam and
W.W.J. VanOene

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION
9210 - 132A Street
Surrey, BC, Canada V3V 7E1

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE

MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 1983

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

Second class mail registration number 1025.
ISSN 0383-0438

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial — J. Geertsema	480
General Synod Cloverdale 1983	481
Welcome Dr. K. Deddens	483
Sojourners or Citizens?	
— W. Pouwelse	485
Remember — What?	
— W.W.J. VanOene	488
Mews Medley — W.W.J. VanOene	490
"Anchor" — They Shall Always Be Among Us	492
Patrimony Profile ²⁵	
— W.W.J. VanOene	493
Press Review — Contributions and Collections — J. Geertsema	495
Press Release	496
Capital Called and Is Still Calling	497
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty	499

General Synod Cloverdale 1983

we have the calling in all our labours to stand up for the truth of the Word of God, of the Gospel. All our endeavours must be in the atmosphere of consecration, for we labour under the light of eternity.

For this reason we also should be indifferent to any praise, indifferent to any blame. Paul illustrates this by his own position. It is tremendously difficult to come to an accurate assessment of our own achievements. We should not jump to conclusions, and we should not condemn too hastily; but we should scrutinize everything by the light of God's Word. We are to bear in mind that Christ has made us partakers of God's work. This also means that all our assessments are preliminary. There will be a time when all our decisions and all our actions will be brought to light. Then every man will receive his commendation from the Lord. Thus we are to work, blind to the future but strong in faith, in full submission to the infallible Word of God. It is not important how the church will be judged: do your work as stewards of God. Build on the one and only foundation. When your labours are done by faith alone, they will not be in vain. As long as they are done to the glory of God the Father, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hereafter Psalm 80:1, 7, 8 were sung and Rev. VanderBoom brought in his prayer of supplication and thanksgiving especially the needs of the synod before the throne of grace.

The singing of Hymn 40:1, 2, 4 and the subsequent benediction concluded this prayer service.

After the service the brothers and sisters who attended, received the opportunity to meet the delegates in a social hour, and many made use of this opportunity.

On Tuesday morning at 9 o'clock the work started. The Rev. H. Visscher called the meeting to order. Upon his request Psalm 107:1 and 12 were sung by the delegates and the many brothers and sisters, who had come to be witnesses of the opening of this tenth general synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches. After the reading of Ephesians 2, Rev. Visscher led in prayer.

He spoke the following opening word.

Esteemed Brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ

On behalf of the convening church,

the Church at Cloverdale, British Columbia, I would like to extend to you all a hearty welcome. We are grateful that our prayers for your safe arrival have been answered and we count it a privilege to have you in our midst. We hope that you in turn will enjoy our hospitality, as well as that of the other churches in the Fraser Valley. We pray that your meetings may be harmonious, your decisions scriptural, and your work a blessing to the confederation of Canadian (American) Reformed Churches.

As some of you may know this is the Tenth General Synod in the history of our churches. Almost thirty years ago the first one was held in Homewood-Carman, Manitoba. Incidentally, there is a delegate here today who was also present at that very first assembly. For those of you who are unable to guess the answer, it is the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene.

In any case, since that first gathering a great deal has transpired in the history and development of the churches. Thanks to the faithfulness of the Lord, quite a number of new congregations have been planted, additional ministers and missionaries have joined the ranks of pastor and teacher, the Theological College has come into being, the churches have divided into four classical regions, and so we can mention many more ecclesiastical highlights, not to forget also other aspects that have to do with the rise of Christian schools, a Reformed training institute for teachers, and other organizations. Truly, there has been much development over the years under the blessings of the Lord.

This is a fact that can also be recognized when one has a close look at the agenda of this synod. A considerable amount of it is devoted to the *Book of Praise* and matters related to it. The new translations and revisions of the prayers, forms, confessions and Church Order all point to the fact that the efforts of the first generation are bearing fruit. As churches, we are coming into our own in this land of our adoption.

At the same time you might also say that other matters on the agenda point to the same conclusion. You will have to deal with various matters relating to our relations with other churches, with the International Conference of Reformed Churches, with the Theological College and the appointment of a fourth professor, with that much debated issue of

voting rights for women, and with various appeals, overtures and requests. Quite simply said, brethren, "you have your plates full."

It all points to the fact that the immigration period in the life of our churches is over. We are settled and we are dealing with the issues and problems that settlement carries with it.

Nevertheless, as we move more and more into the mainstream of North American life, we must not discard the heritage of the past, throwing it overboard as just so much unwanted baggage. The Lord has given us much in terms of our history and in terms of understanding His Word. We must treasure all that as a gracious gift. We must always be mindful of the benefits that the Lord has bestowed upon us.

In addition, we much also be willing to let others share in the bounty that we have received. Turning to the world of sports for our illustration, as the apostle Paul did so often, we can say that as Canadian Reformed Churches we must be both defensively and offensively minded. The gifts of the Lord we are not just to defend, but also to dispense, not just to protect, but also to promote.

Let us do this in the humble awareness that all that we have received are gifts from the hand of the Lord, gifts from a merciful God to an undeserving people. Hence let there be no boasting in what we have built, in how faithful we have been. Let there only be praise to our covenant God who has seen fit to lavish His promises upon us, to use us as His instruments, and to give us the greatest gift of all — His Son Jesus Christ, as the Prophet who reveals His will fully, as the Priest who sacrifices Himself totally, as the King who defends His church eternally.

Brothers, this great Prophet, Priest and King has called you to serve Him in the offices of minister and elder. He has called you to deal with matters that pertain to the life and well-being of all the churches. In all of these things He expects from you ready obedience, true humility, and thankful service. As for the gifts of wisdom and guidance and proper speech, we shall pray daily that He will send you those from above.

May your decisions be a great blessing in the churches.

May you be filled with the Spirit and led by His Word.

— Continued on page 484.

Welcome

Dr. K. Deddens



One of the most important items on the agenda of General Synod 1983 was the appointment of a fourth professor. A previous synod had expressed the necessity of replacing the lecturer in Diaconology, the Reverend C. VanDooren, by a fulltimer. This was not because the Rev. VanDooren did not do his task well (on the contrary he performed in a very admirable manner), but because of the importance of the position. A fulltime professor of Diaconology is no luxury, given the broad spectrum of disciplines — homiletics, catechetics, poimenics, liturgics, evangelistics, and missiology — and given the necessity of a Reformed approach over against the impact of unscriptural psychology and sociology on North American theology. Now the General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches (Cloverdale 1983) appointed the REVEREND DR. KAREL DEDDENS of Groningen, The Netherlands, for the period 1984-1990. This limited period is chosen in connection with the age of Dr. Deddens and his wish to remain a minister of the Church of Groningen South, and to return to The Netherlands when he has reached his retirement age. Dr. Deddens therefore will be "on loan" from our sister churches abroad.

May I introduce our new professor.

Karel Deddens was born on August 20, 1924, in the Reformed manse at Rijswijk (Z.H.) as second son of the late Prof. P. Deddens and younger brother of the present Prof. D. Deddens, both professors in ecclesiology at our sister institution in Kampen, The Netherlands.

Dr. Deddens attended Willem-Lodewijk Gymnasium at Groningen and was on August 9, 1945, one of the first students after the Liberation to be examined by Profs. S. Greijdanus and K. Schilder (propaedeutical exam). In 1951 he became candidatus theologiae and was minister of the Word in the Reformed Churches of Hoek (1951-1956), Leerdam (1956-1961), Amersfoort C. (1961-1965), Rijnsburg (1965-1970 missionary in Curacao, 1970-1974 minister in Rijnsburg itself) and Groningen-South (1974- the present moment).

Since 1970 he directed his attention to special theological study. His *doctoraal examen* (now called *doctoraal oude stijl*) in May 1972, was in the field of diaconology (major: liturgics). Under Dr. C. Trimp as his promoter he wrote his doctor's thesis, entitled *Annus Liturgicus? Een onderzoek naar de betekenis van Cyrillus van Jeruzalem voor de ontwikkeling van het 'kerkelijk jaar'*, Goes: Ooster-

baan, 1975, 272 pp. His book *Het begon in Jeruzalem* (1976) is a popularization of this thesis. Dr. Deddens showed himself a prolific author. He published in the field of liturgics, *Wat heeft de huidige liturgische beweging ons te zeggen?* (1957) and, *Waar alles van Hem spreekt* (1981).

In the area of catechetics he wrote not only a series of sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism, but also instructional booklets for pre-confession classes (on the Belgic Confession, e.g.).

He is especially interested in music. *Muziek mixturen: Grepen uit de muziekgeschiedenis* (1978) and his many reviews in *Nederlands Dagblad* and *De Reformatie* witness to this fact.

The fruit of his labour in preaching is seen in the popular books on the prophecies of Zephaniah (1973), Zachariah (1967) and Malachi (1970).

Dr. Deddens has shown a good organization in his studies and a practical approach. The Synod regarded Dr. Deddens an obvious candidate. Besides Dr. C. Trimp and Dr. A.N. Hendriks he is the only theologian in our sister churches who has obtained a doctor's degree in Diaconology.

The family Deddens is used to work abroad (Curacao) and Dr. Deddens is gifted with a feeling for languages. He masters, among other languages, Papiamentu.

In church life he plays an important role. Dr. Deddens was president of the last General Synod Arnhem, 1981, and he attends our General Synod Cloverdale as one of the two delegates of our sister churches in The Netherlands.

Of the six children two sons are married. At home are Detmer (1963), Margriet (1966), OttoJan (1968) and Geert (1969). Their's is a positive attitude towards a stay abroad.

Dr. Deddens, his wife Greet DeGraaf and their children hope to arrive in the early summer of 1984, and Dr. Deddens will give his inaugural address, the Lord willing, on Friday, September 7, 1984. With deep gratitude for the development of our Theological College, we express the wish that the God of life may bless Dr. Deddens and his family in their coming to our country and may make them a blessing for His churches in Canada. Welcome Dr. Deddens!

J. FABER

General Synod Cloverdale 1983

— Continued from page 482.

May the Lord be with you all and with all His people.

With these words, I now declare the Tenth General Synod of the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches, opened.

Before the proceedings were continued, Rev. Visscher read letters received from The Free Reformed Churches of Australia and Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke van Suid Afrika. He informed the brethren that the delegates from the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland are to arrive in Vancouver this coming week, and that the Rev. Jack Pieterse will attend on behalf of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

The Cloverdale Church organized all the materials in a proper container which

each of the delegates found on the table in front of their assigned chair. The last of the materials received was inserted this morning at 2 o'clock. Two-thirds of the materials were not received in time to send to the delegates. All the materials were colour-coded, and Rev. Visscher mentioned especially the brethren P. Vandergugten and H. Van Delden, as the brothers who worked till late the previous night. All the committee rooms have been provided with IBM typewriters, there is a photocopier, and a computer. The finance committee was presented to synod, the ladies who have the supervision in the kitchen were introduced, and finally we were told that a brother reserved tickets for a concert, which were a present to the members of synod.

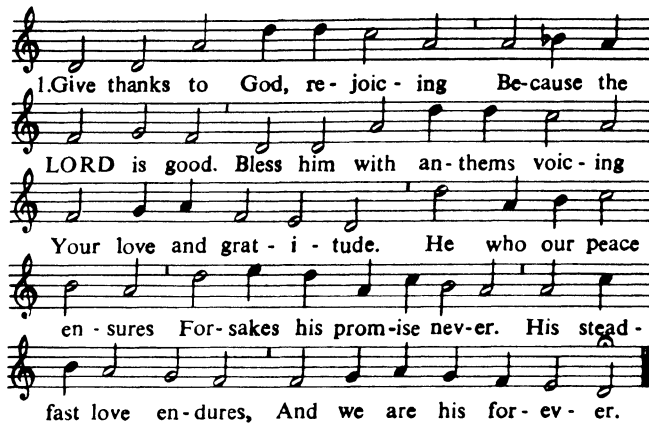
After these more practical bits of information, the brothers from the Cloverdale consistory present examined the credentials. A few delegates were replaced by their alternates, but both regional synodical areas were legitimately represented. This opened the way for the election of the moderamen. This election resulted in the following brothers being invited to take these positions: Rev. VanOene, chairman; Rev. Geertsema, vice-chairman; Rev. Stam, first clerk; and Rev. Pouwelse as second clerk.

Synod having thus been constituted, the chairman expressed the gratitude of the brethren for all the work which was done by the convening Church. It is quite a job to have everything ready and in order, but the neat file which each of the brothers has received attests to the care and accuracy given to this task. The chairman also expressed gratitude to the brethren for the confidence placed in the moderamen. As for the remark of the Rev. Visscher that only one of the members of this synod was a member of the first synod of 1954, the chairman mentioned that the words of Psalm 45 are fulfilled today: "Instead of your fathers shall be your sons." Two of the brothers present here are sons of the brothers L. Lodder and P.B. Oosterhoff who attended that first synod. One of them is still alive, the other one has been taken away by the Lord. The chairman also expressed our thanks to the Rev. VanderBoom for the words spoken last night in the prayer service. Indeed, we are to do our work without asking for praise and without fearing any blame. May here, too, the Spirit of the Lord be our guide.

As various pieces came in this morning, a definitive provisional agenda cannot yet be presented. Therefore the meeting was adjourned until such a definitive provisional agenda has been prepared and the moderamen has had the opportunity to come with a proposal regarding times of meeting, division into committees, and assignment of the various points of the agenda to these committees. Most of the rest of the morning was taken up by this, and after lunch the various committees went to work.

As this is about all your reporter can tell you, we will have to break off our report, and say: "Till next time, the Lord willing."

PSALM 107:1, 12



1. Give thanks to God, re-joic-ing Be-cause the
LORD is good. Bless him with an-thems voic-ing
Your love and grat-i-tude. He who our peace
en-sures For-sakes his prom-ise nev-er. His stead-
fast love en-dures, And we are his for-ev-er.

Laud in your congregation
The greatness of the LORD.
O elders of God's nation,
Praise him with one accord.
Extol and thank the LORD,
Him grateful offers bringing;
His steadfast love record,
With joy his wonders singing.

VO

Sojourners or Citizens⁴

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.

8. Eschatology

After what we have learned from Holy Scripture in the previous installment, we will now further discuss the problems we mentioned before. We will do so, not from the point of view of the futurologists, but rather in an eschatological perspective. Eschatology is the doctrine of the last things, the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and everything that goes with it. Our whole attitude in life has to be determined by this eschatology and not by what futurologists say.

When we consider what we have learned from the Word of God, many aspects of the present developments will fall into place and can be seen as a fulfilment of the prophecy. We have heard about the theory of Dr. A. Kuyper. He saw the fast development in science and technology as a fulfilment of John 14:12, where Christ says of those who believe in Him: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father." However, in our time and age the spreading of the Gospel does not go together with civilization and cultural development. On the contrary. The development in science and technology has become the idol of modern men. It is their god, in which they believe and trust.

Still, the dream of the modern philosophers does not come true. Reality is a far cry from it. Science and technology are supposed to take away hunger and poverty. They should bring peace and prosperity for everyone. But in reality there is hunger. Every day many people starve to death for lack of food. In Matthew 24:7 we read that in the last days there will be famines in various places. That is what happens, in spite of the efforts of economists and the result of technical progress.

Revelation 6:5, 6, tells us that in the last days there will be a shortage of the most essential things: food and drink. When the black horse appears — the symbol of hunger and famine — the rider will have a balance in his hand and he will say: "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm oil and wine!" The prices of food will sky-rocket. What a labourer earns in one day will not even be sufficient for his personal daily food, let alone for his family.

Modern futurologists can make prognoses, but one dry or one wet season can destroy the whole harvest. How often don't we hear, sometimes on the same day, about a disaster in the one area through drought and heat, and in another area through rain, flooding, or cold? Do we hear in these things the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Scriptures?

We hear about marvellous developments in the biochemists' laboratory, but don't forget that everything is in God's hand. Sometimes a virus or some bacteria can destroy a whole

scale of plans. People are trying to develop a "superman," but they forget and deny that God has created a real "super" man, able to fulfil his God-given mandate, but that mankind has deprived itself of all these gifts. In the Canons of Dort we read (III-IV, 1): "But revolting from God by the instigation of the devil and by his own free will, he forfeited these excellent gifts; and in place thereof became involved in blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment; became wicked, rebellious, and obdurate in heart and will, and impure in his affections."

Science will never be able to overcome this collapse. The place for improvement and restoration of the human race, restoration to its former glory, is not the laboratory of the biochemists but the cross on Calvary's hill. There, in principle, mankind has been restored to its previous state, and it will be worked out and made visible on the day of Christ's return on the clouds of heaven.

History teaches us that mankind sometimes can achieve unbelievable things. We should not say too hastily that something is impossible and never will happen. Many people, even famous theologians, have made mistakes in this respect. It has been considered impossible that a human being ever would travel to the moon. Some said: the Lord will never allow human beings to leave this earth and go to the moon or to other objects in space. Even the late Prof. Dr. K. Schilder once wrote: "We shall therefore hold to the idea that culture history is earth history, and that it *cannot* move outside these borders" (emphasis mine, W.P.). It was a very important moment, when, on July 21, 1969, the first American astronaut, Neil A. Armstrong, set foot on the moon. But nowadays no one gets excited about it any longer. We have gotten used to the idea.

Therefore, we do not know what modern technology will achieve. Revelation 13 teaches us that the human effort will come to a climax, Six hundred and sixty-six is the number of the beast. It is the symbol of human (im)perfection. It will never reach seven, the symbol of God's perfection.

Jesus Christ is in control; to Him has been given all authority in heaven and on the earth. This world and the present civilization will come to an end, not by a nuclear blast or by a world war, but everything will be made new when Christ comes back on the clouds of heaven. The end will not be determined by a super power that decides to push the button of destruction, but by Christ who will give His angels charge to gather the harvest.

9. Legitimate withdrawal

What has been said thus far makes clear that we cannot agree with a doctrine stating that before Christ comes back everything that is concealed in creation has to be developed

by man. If that were true, we would immediately have to start on a comprehensive cultural program to develop everything that is potentially present in nature. However, we can't and we don't have to either. There are certain areas we have to withdraw from. The Bible teaches us clearly that we are strangers and sojourners in this world. The service of the Lord comes first, and many areas will appear to be out of reach for Christians.

Take for instance paleontology. That is the science that deals with life on earth in early times and with the study of fossils. One who wants to study in this field has to work with the evolution theory. That is one of the basic tools in that profession. It is almost impossible for a Christian to work in that field without compromising or being compromised. How can someone work with theories and postulates which presume that God does not exist and that the world has not been created by Him?

Of course, the results of these studies are important. Fossil fuel — one of the main pillars of our modern economy — depends on the results of these paleontological and geological studies. But to work in this field in a real Christian way would take an almost complete overhaul of the present textbooks. That is an impossible undertaking with the available manpower.

We know that these statements do not solve all problems. Very important work has to be done. We need qualified teachers in our schools and therefore also people who have studied these matters. There may be some who see it as their duty to go to university to get a degree in this field. We should not condemn them for that. We need educated people to educate others. But at the same time we can understand that others shun this field of science, no matter how much they would like to go in that direction. We should not call such a withdrawal a denial of the mandate given in Genesis 1:28.

There are problems in other areas of culture as well. It is becoming more and more difficult to find a full-time professional job in music and art without getting involved in certain conflict situations. But let us not forget that this counts for almost each and everyone. In the past the most fitting and Christian job for a girl was to become a nurse. Nowadays it is not that easy to complete the course for registered nurse without getting involved in the organized murder which they call abortion and euthanasia. Other people cannot find a job because they refuse to pledge allegiance to the unions. Some unions require from their members unconditional obedience to all the regulations that are in force or will be adopted, and to set the benefit of the "brothers and sisters" in the union above all other values in life. A Christian cannot make such a pledge. You cannot commit yourself unconditionally to two "masters." Therefore many have lost their jobs or cannot find employment. This is also a fulfilment of the prophecy of Revelation 13: 16, 17.

We are speaking about a cultural mandate, but what does "culture" really mean? Is it what modern man tries to make us believe? Prof. Dr. K. Schilder wrote in respect to Genesis 1:28:

Therefore this first page of the Bible, replete as it is with covenant regulations, is directly of cultural interest. For the Creator Himself is culturally interested. "Culture," after all, is a word that has been derived from the Latin verb colere. Colere means "to cultivate," "to care for." The farmer who plows his field is engaged in this colere. There is a field, which is a promise. And there is seed, which is a promise. But there is also a farmer, which means: "a commandment with a promise."⁶

Culture is the work in the service of the Lord, to His glory, according to His commandments. A commandment and a promise!

We have to work and to fulfil our task. Prof. Dr. K. Schilder also wrote:

First of all, we must emphasize that, since there is a cultural mandate that existed even prior to sin, abstention from cultural labour is always sin: those who abstain from it are on strike. And now that Christ has comprised in Himself all the real treasures of "culture" — that is, of "grace" — abstention for the sake of abstention is nothing but renunciation of Christ, self-imposed poverty, and sin before God. In this sense a Christian's abstention in cultural affairs should never be preached. "Every creature of God is good . . . if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:4, 5). It says: every creature.⁷

The fulfilment of our cultural mandate as well as the withdrawal has to be determined by the Word of God and obedience to His commandments. We have to set our priorities. Prof. Dr. K. Schilder wrote in this respect:

The Christian labourer who toils to save a quarter and on Sunday puts it in the collection bag for mission work, is also engaged in "culture," be it indirectly. Half of this amount would have been enough for him to give if the idlers who spent their two quarters in the theatre had been able to find the dividing line between entertainment and labour, creative effort and recreation. The sums of money that are offered for one single bad film have been taken from, e.g., mission work, which is also cultural labour, although not exclusively. These few examples may illustrate the fact that Christians as a community are heavily burdened with respect to education, mission, Church life, charity, etc. At every step they are accompanied by abnormality, for the son who works in his Father's vineyard is overburdened because his brother who does not work is unfaithful to the Father.⁸

In a time of increasing secularization we will feel our position as strangers and sojourners even more. The contributions for Church, mission, school, and all other things, often make it impossible to spend the same amount of money as unbelievers do for other things. The study of God's Word and the fight against false doctrines take lots of time and effort. If we fulfil our task and mandate in this way, not in voluntary abstention, but forced to it in many cases, then we are really cultural workers in God's field. We will again quote Prof. Dr. K. Schilder:

A Christian people maintaining their colleges, supporting missionaries, and caring for the needy who were left them by Christ, thus saving them from the clutches of state-absolutism (that pioneer of the Antichrist!), doing a thousand other things of divine obligation, and primarily because of all this not able, for example, to set up an imposing Christian stage, supposing that such were possible, or to establish an extensive Christian organization of aesthetic and artistic character, such a people is indeed a heroic communion. When it voluntarily abstains for this reason, such abstention is, among other things, self-control and also self-denial, self-development of the man of God who wants to remain engaged in that whereto he has been called. Others may mock him, but he is herein dominated by a broad cultural insight. For this abstention because of the emergency situation places time under the arch of the history of the beginning as well as of the end. This sort of abstention should not be typified with the word "resentment," but finds its limits and legitimation in, e.g., Matthew 19:12, where Christ speaks about those "that make themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of heaven's sake" and not in order to avoid this Kingdom. It recognizes itself in the scene presented in Revelation 12. There the woman (the Church) goes into the desert.⁹

10. Summary and conclusions

We will wind up these articles with a summary of what has been said, using the format of conclusions.

1. Man has been created in the image of God, as His representative, His ambassador in this world. His mandate is to subdue the earth and to have dominion over all creatures and the whole creation.
2. Although after the fall into sin man is not able any longer to fulfil his office in the proper way, the mandate remains the same.
3. There is a rapid development in science, technology, and art. That means that the treasures and gifts, concealed by the Lord in His creation, are being explored and exploited.
4. No area of science, technology, or art is good or bad in itself. It all can be used and must be used in the service of the Lord, but it is used very often in disobedience and rebellion against the Lord. (The technological development in Noah's time gives us a clear example in two directions: the ark was an impressive specimen of technology in obedience to the Lord, and the three sons of Lamech as well as the city of Babel were examples of advanced technology and art in rebellion against the Lord.)
5. We are living in the midst of this world, with its rapid scientific and technological development. In many fields we have to work together with people who do not believe in the Lord. We have to use their tools, their theories, the results of their labour. Without the help of geologists, e.g., it would be impossible to find the fossil fuel on which our modern society depends.
6. Already in this field we are facing the problem whether, and to what extent, we can work with theories and postulates which deny the existence of a God who created all things. This makes it difficult for believers to enter this field of science.
7. Although, according to our cultural mandate, we should subdue the earth and have dominion over all things, we do not have the time, money, and manpower to set up our own systems, to do research in a Christian way.
8. That brings with it, in some (or many?) cases, a withdrawal from certain areas of science, technology, and art. This, however, is not a dereliction of duty but a consequence of our position as strangers and sojourners in this world.
9. When we hear all kinds of science-fiction-like stories, we should not get too excited or impressed. Oftentimes it is more fiction than science.
10. At the same time we should not be embarrassed if some unbelievable things happen. II Thess. 2:9 tells us that the coming of the lawless one by the authority of Satan will be with all power and pretended signs and wonders and with all wicked deception.
11. Therefore we should not say too hastily that something can or will never happen. We don't know how far the Lord will allow the evil one to go.
12. Through the introduction of the computer the technological development has come into a rapid.
13. The stories about a computer which has intelligence and can do intellectual work, and which finally as a super-intelligent robot will dominate mankind, are based upon a lack of knowledge about what a computer really is. For the time being the computer is only a machine that can execute programs written by man. The only amazing aspect of it is its speed.
14. The computer has made many new developments possible, especially those which require massive data storage, complicated calculations, and very fast processing of information.
15. The greatest threat of the computer in the present situation is not the development of a super-intelligent robot, but the possible intrusion on privacy via smart computer-

- bugs, or a potential enemy or a terrorist's tampering with our defence system.
16. Also this invention, like all other ones, can be used in the proper way, as a blessing for mankind. It is, however, also a device in the hand of the evil one.
17. Impressed by the progress made and the miracles wrought by unbelievers, we should remember that in II Thess. 2:9 it is called "*pretended* signs and wonders and wicked deception for those who perish, because they refuse to love the truth and so be saved." It is oftentimes more pretence than substance.
18. At the same time we should remember I Peter 4:12 and 14: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. . . . If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you."
19. Finally, all our work, no matter how unimportant it may seem to be in the eyes of the world, will not be in vain, as we can learn from Revelation 14:13: "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." "
20. In a world of increasing lawlessness the instruction of the Lord in Revelation 18:4 will become more and more urgent: "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues."
21. Our position as strangers and sojourners in this world may cause abstention in many areas of life. Nonetheless, we know that we are heirs of this world, the new world that is, and citizens of the Kingdom of heaven.
22. Finally we will be able to fulfil our cultural mandate in perfection, as it was in the beginning, because He who sits upon the throne has said: "Behold, I make all things new." These words are trustworthy and true (Revelations 21:5).

Langley, BC

W. POUWELSE

⁶Prof. Dr. K. Schilder, *Christ and Culture*, Winnipeg, 1977, p. 37.

⁷*Ibid.* p. 68.

⁸*Ibid.* p. 69.

⁹*Ibid.* p. 70.

Church News

CALLED and DECLINED to Lincoln, ON
REV. R. AASMAN of Guelph, ON

CALLED and ACCEPTED to Burlington-West, ON
REV. J. MULDER of Toronto, ON

The Classis Ontario-North of September 15, 1983, has examined and declared eligible for call:

Mr. G. Nederveen, B.D.
2096 Parkway Drive
Burlington, ON L7P 1S4
Phone: (416) 634-1772

New Address: Rev. W. Pouwelse
19660 - 50th Avenue
Langley, BC V3A 3S6
Phone: (604) 533-2549

Remember — What?

One of the saddest aspects of the countless controversies and struggles which are going on in the world is that almost all who speak about them, form an opinion about them, and take sides in them, do not have an eye for the spiritual background of the conflicts. True, oftentimes there is no spiritual background; frequently the clashes are caused by financial or economic interests or by personal antagonism. More often, however, there is a spiritual, ideological background, a background which is ignored or even denied.

Our Western world is divided against itself and does not have any basic defence against the ideology *and* growth of communism. If only the spiritual background were seen, this ideology and system would not stand a chance anywhere in the world. Communism is *not* a social or economic system, it is a *religious* system, based on anti-Christian philosophy. As long as this is not seen and recognized, resistance to the advance of communism will be in vain and will cease. It may benefit the citizens of a country temporarily when a communist dictatorship is removed through an invasion, if there comes no turning to the Lord and if the eyes are not opened for the basic and fundamental questions, it is only a postponement of the being taken over by it again.

Generally speaking, people have no interest in backgrounds: they judge things by their viability and results. And insofar as they appear to be aware of backgrounds, it seems as if indeed the threat has been fulfilled and is being fulfilled in our days, that the Lord will send an energy of error, that people shall believe the lie.

When, in 1940, the German armies overran a large part of Western Europe, this was far more than an occupation by hostile forces: right on the heels of the armies came the men charged with the indoctrination of the subjected population. It was not just the *Lebensraum* which was sought: the theory of national-socialism should be rammed down the throats of the people and all education should be promoting this very same theory.

The world woke up to the threat of national-socialism only when Hitler began making his advances. Nothing was seen of the background when Neville Chamberlain uttered his now famous sentence about "peace in our times."

In such circumstances it is a blessing when the Lord raises up men who have a clear insight into the spiritual, ideological background of movements, theories, and conflicts. One of those whose eyes were open and who opened the eyes of many others was Dr. K. Schilder and we shall remember him gratefully when we remember those who gave their lives in the armed conflict which ended with our liberation from the enemy boot and from all the bitter experiences during the occupation years.

Early Reaction

It was not only when the borders were violated, and the singing bands of enemy soldiers marched through the streets, that Schilder uttered his warning and pointed to the underlying philosophy and theory. His warnings came as early as the rise of the Third Reich, when Adolf Hitler was appointed as Reichskanzler by the aged von Hindenburg. As soon as the theory of national-socialism began to be propagated Schilder wrote against it.

In The Netherlands too, the movement stirred and idealists were attracted to it. The movement gained adherents in the years of the depression, and ecclesiastical assemblies that were faced with the question what to do with churchmembers who joined the movement, did take into account the economic situation.

The consistory of the Church at Rotterdam Delfshaven, e.g., decided that "Everyone who subscribes to the principles of the National Socialist Movement (NSB) and accepts their consequences, thereby lives in conflict with the Holy Scriptures and the Confession of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, and thereby impossibly can, at the same time, be a member of one of these Churches." The same consistory continued its statement with declaring that it should well be taken into account whether, perhaps, someone joined that movement because he saw therein a way to get out of economic difficulties. Each and every case should be treated separately and should be judged separately. This decision was taken in 1934.

And when the National Socialist Movement issued brochures to propagate its principles and when therein it tried to prove that Christian principles were underlying their theories, Schilder wrote a series of articles with the title "Is the

N.S.B. Christian?" One of the arguments used why people should join the movement was that this was the best and strongest defense against Russian communism. During the war years this was elaborated on and we were treated with the slogan "Mussert or Moscow." (Mussert was the leader of the Dutch Nazi party.) Thereby it was suggested that every one who did not choose the Mussert party basically placed himself on the side of communism.

It was already in 1934, that Schilder showed the fallacy of such reasoning and the falsehood of such a dilemma. As we said during the war, when bombarded with that slogan: "Neither Mussert nor Moscow!" Speaking of the fight of the Nazis against communism, Schilder wrote, among other things, the following passage in his imaginative language:

The Russian bear — I admit that the metaphor is somewhat bold — can calmly approach the NSB-judge; he can say — precisely as Agag, who cheerfully came to Samuel supposing that the latter was just as tame as Saul — "Surely, the bitterness of death is past." Saul is here the NSB, Agag Russia. Saul did not see the antithesis between Agag and himself, and therefore did not act according to it.

But therefore only Samuel, who did know the antithesis and acknowledged it because he let the WORD speak, could kill Agag. This Samuel — they are those who do not begin with an idea, but with the living, creating, law-giving God. They do not say: Russia-Agag is ultimately our relative, but they say: there is a form of government that serves God and there is one that does not serve Him, that opposes Him. Therefore with them not every form of government is degraded with the other, but the antithesis is proclaimed, also in the organization of the state.

This is the issue: the NSB wants to pose as the power, the movement which will free us *essentially* from Russia. And to *them* we say: It is POSSIBLE that we treat Agag too kindly. But it is CERTAIN that YOU do it. For you left the law of God out of the picture. You are unable to tell us the difference between him who does not serve God and him who does serve Him. You are NEVER able to wage the holy war against Russia-Agag because ultimately you put yourselves and us, and every concrete state essentially on a level. This you do because you have exchanged the God of the Christian faith for the idol of the idea-philosophy.

In this series of articles Schilder then proceeds to show the Hegelian background of the national-socialist principles, some-

thing which he continued to do.

It is not our intention to give a complete description of Schilder's struggle. We only wish to remind ourselves and others of him and of his extremely valuable contribution to the resistance insofar as it was the fruit of the conviction that anti-Godly and anti-Christian principles and their imposition were endangering the faithfulness to the God of life. When many of the leaders from whom the Reformed people expected so much either kept silent or even actually promoted the cause of the enemy, Schilder used his sharp mind and his able pen to expose

people will not hurt the members of the NSB as *persons*, nor neglect the difference between what they did personally and what the NSB as such did. But it will continue to condemn the dogmata of the NSB. It will let the weapons that can be seen rest. But it will not let the spiritual weapons rest and rather suffer persecution than be unfaithful to God, the Living One. It will keep on praying for the Jews and will not bar them from the baptismal font when they are converted. It will declare race, blood and soil subordinate to the Word and the Spirit.

These words appeared on August 16, 1940. Allegedly Schilder prayed therein for the victory of the Allied Forces: to come from across the English Channel and via Italy and the Brenner Pass into Southern Germany, to come from North Africa via Malta and thus to free The Netherlands from the German occupation.

It was a flimsy excuse.

Prof. Den Hartogh — who also had a law degree — brought a group of us students together and we scanned Schilder's works carefully in order to find similar expressions, containing the names of places and rivers, in order to prove to the Germans that this was Schilder's manner of writing and of making things concrete. Each of us took part of Schilder's oeuvre to scrutinize. I never heard whether these efforts yielded any fruit. I do know that his writings were not in vain. He opened the eyes of many and gave again some elasticity to knees that had become weak and to backs that had lost their sturdiness.

These events took place more than forty years ago. We recall them in order to urge all and every one: Beware of the principles. They are more dangerous and more lasting than even the most powerful nuclear bomb. When we wish to honour those who gave their life for our liberation, we can do so no better than by discerning the spirits and letting ourselves be guided by the Spirit. Then, perhaps, the Lord will still be merciful to our country and nation.

For the sake of the righteous.

Our Western world is divided against itself and does not have any basic defence against the ideology and growth of communism.

the philosophies behind statements and measures. To write, he stated, is a matter of grave responsibility, but *not to write is equally* a matter of serious responsibility. The Lord does not leave us one moment on our own and at ease. We are not neutral with respect to the Lord and His will. The Church will not deny the Lord her God.

She will not, in order to provoke people, or in order to create a hostile mood, elaborate amply on the connection between the mysticism of Jacob Böhme, and the philosophy of Fichte-Hegel, and the book of Alfred Rosenberg which found so many readers in Germany. But neither shall she keep silent about that essential connection whenever the question is raised or when otherwise necessity requires it (e.g. if our bookstores should be flooded or our youth-action be deprived of its freedom), and it shall continue to condemn a doctrine which we may not tolerate. In other words, this

In his last article — the one which was the occasion for the Germans to forbid publication of *De Reformatie* and to imprison Schilder — he spoke of the difference between authority and power. Once again he stressed that the differences are basically points of *faith*.

God knows whether they will obtain the "power" here with all the means at its disposal. We know that we shall retain the "authority." Power and authority, fortunately, remain distinct. In the end, the anti-Christ will retain the former, the Church the latter. And after that comes the day of the great harvest. Come, Lord Harvester, yea, come with haste, come via the Channel and via the Brenner Pass, come via Malta and Japan, yea, come from the ends of the earth, and bring along Thy pruning knife, and be merciful to Thy people; it does have the authority, but only through Thee, through Thee alone, for the sake of Thy eternal good pleasure.



VO

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

OUR COVER

Toronto Skyline as seen from Centre Island. Photo Courtesy J.F. Vanveen.

news medley

Even though the previous news medley has not been published as yet — apparently it arrived too late in Winnipeg — I am going to write another one. General synod is coming up and therefore there won't be much of an opportunity to provide you with this column for the next couple of issues. I do hope to be present in another form: by means of reports on the broadest assembly. At least, that's what I promised I was going to do: write reports on the general synod to keep our readers informed about the proceedings there. There will always be some time-slot available to give you impressions and perhaps even to tell you about decisions made.

Speaking of the forthcoming general synod, the consistories everywhere are busy with studying the copies of the reports received. In one bulletin the warning was sounded that the consistory meeting where these reports were going to be discussed was not a sort of pre-synod. If no one thought it necessary to raise a certain question or to bring some point to the attention of the synod, nothing was done at the consistory level. That is the proper procedure. On the other hand, it is extremely important that our consistories take note of what is going on, that they study the documents and thus will be better able to scan the Acts to see whether everything has been done in agreement with the adopted rules: in total submission to the Word of God, in faithful adherence to the Reformed Confessions, and in loyal observance of the adopted order.

As for the "adopted order," among the documents is also the final report of the committee for the revision of the Church Order. A few points were raised here and there. In a few bulletins, however, I found some sentences which made me hastily consult the report to see whether we really were all that wrong. But no: the report was correct and the mistake was to be sought with the bulletin writers. I was already planning to pay some special attention to these things at the College, but there is no Church Polity course this year. Anyway, you must be curious by now to know what made me so nervous.

In the first place I read that "Regional Synod last week at Smithers examined and admitted to the ministry Cand. E. Kam.øen." During my lifetime such examinations took place at a classis and it was a classis which admitted into the ministry; but then, we are living in an everchanging age. As for this classis, "the major item on the agenda concerned the pre-emptory examination of br. E. Kampen, minister-elect of the Church at Houston. However, you will recall what a pre-emptory examination is all about."

I must admit that I would love to be instructed on this point, for I have no idea what it is all about. It reminds me of a pre-inventory sale, and I would say, *Caveant pre-emptores*, which might be translated as, "Let those who buy at a pre-inventory sale beware!" I trust that things were a little more solid at that classis.

Meanwhile Houston has received its minister and from this place our heartfelt congratulations!

We have no news from Houston or from Smithers and therefore stop over in the Okanagan Valley.

The joyful information was given that "due to the increase of young people in the congregation, a Young People's Bible Study has now begun." Keep it going!

There was something in the Chilliwack consistory report that I did not understand completely. "Censura fraterna — none. Censura morum — none." Yes, I do understand that there was none of the brothers who made use of the opportunity to "kindly admonish" his fellow-office-bearers regarding the execution of their office. But what is not clear to me

is what the two expressions refer to.

The general news about the Fraser Valley Churches is that the fund which the Rest Home Society is collecting has reached almost \$300,000. Further that the first issue of the evangelistic magazine *Evangel* has come off the press and has been distributed. I find the price quite stiff: eighty cents per copy and four dollars per year for the five copies scheduled to be issued, but I am certain that all the money goes into the paper and that the writers do not get any remuneration for their work. It will not be too great a burden on our congregations, however, for even when fifty or one hundred subscriptions are taken out for distribution, this still comes to not more than \$400.00 per year, an amount which will not constitute an insurmountable obstacle, I think.

I would urge our Home Mission Committees to make use of this opportunity to distribute material which can be trusted and can be recommended wholeheartedly. Here is a serious effort to approach those who are without in a manner which is in accordance with our Reformed Confessions and also in this manner we are discharging our duties towards our fellow-citizens. There are many places where this magazine can be put so that others can read it: hospitals, old age homes, waiting rooms of physicians and dentists, and so on. Do it and do not delay.

Another major undertaking in the Fraser Valley is the organization of lectures. This item comes under the heading *Fraser Valley Study Center*. The considerations for establishing this Center come partially from the fact that once one has made profession of faith, there usually is no *organized study program*. We should stress the word "organized," for there are, of course, our societies and here and there post-confession classes are held. "Nevertheless, there is no ongoing, systematic, study program available."

The intention of the Study Center is "to offer courses on a regular basis that will instruct interested people especially within, but also outside, our community. Courses will be offered in the following areas: Biblical, historical, confessional, ethical, political, economic-social, and so on. These courses will be structured in such a way that textbooks will be read, lectures and discussions will be held, and papers and oral introductions will be assigned. The goal is in-depth study, but then at a level that all will understand. These courses will be held on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis, depending on the lecturer's program and schedule, as well as on the students."

I shall not copy the whole piece found in the *Church News*, but it is quite exciting, I think. Hopefully the enthusiastic start will be followed by an equally enthusiastic continuation. Perhaps it would be wise to charge a hefty fee for these courses: that will make people continue to come. We had a post-confession course here on the Canons of Dort. True, it lasted more than two seasons, but whereas we started off with some thirty-five participants, we ended with seven or eight who were faithful in coming. The same happened with a subsequent course on Church History. The hardest thing is to keep the interest going and the people coming.

From the Barrhead Church we mention that their bulletin has received a face-lift and now shows us the church building on the cover. It is a little too dark to my taste, but the picture is clear and that is the main thing.

Yes, I am sorry, we have to move on to Ontario.

Between brackets: There are no couples to be congratulated this time. I have not yet received the issue of *Clarion* that must be in the mail, and the bulletins do not provide me with any information in this field. Yes, in some issues of bulletins I found a few names mentioned, but these bulletins were six and five months old. I do not think that it would make much sense to mention the names I found in them as yet. I cannot

write about things I don't know. If a name has not been mentioned, this was no wilful omission but innocent ignorance.

The Brampton consistory decided that the *Credo* will be sung from now on when the Lord's Supper is celebrated. The new form leaves it in the freedom of the churches either to have the Apostles' Creed recited by the minister — as is the custom — or to have it sung by the whole congregation. Brampton decided that it shall be sung and considers that thereby it is expressed more clearly that this is the confession of all of us.

The Ottawa consistory decided "that the matter of how to stimulate the numerical growth of the congregation will become a regular point on the consistory agenda. Various avenues will be explored including the possibility of a regular broadcast on a local radio station!" Also a record will be kept of persons who showed interest as well as a record of their occupation and other relevant data.

We go down to Smithville. There are quite a few things to be mentioned from there.

In the first place: Smithville has had double services during the morning for quite some time now. It was not yet necessary to have them in the afternoon, for the afternoon services are always attended by fewer people than the morning services, as there are parents who have to attend to small children at home and as others go to the Dutch service, although in the long run it may be necessary to have double services in the afternoon as well. Before this will become necessary it is hoped that a much-discussed institution in the Wellandport-Canboro area will have become a fact. No definite decision has been made as yet. As soon as one has been made, we'll pass it on to you.

The Rev. Stam mentioned in a sermon the non-payment of school fees. Some reaction was received to what he said. He replies to these reactions via the *Family Post*, from which we quote also for the instruction of members elsewhere.

Let me itemize in point-form.

1. *inform* the schoolboard early of your predicament, and do not let the debt accumulate silently. This lack of contact with the board only fosters the idea of unwillingness.
2. *give* the most you can miss (why are we always short exactly monthly fee?), even if it is a matter of only a few dollars, and indicate when the balance might follow. This shows that there is no unwillingness whatsoever involved. But why stop all payment without a word, and then, perhaps, be somewhat disturbed when the board approaches you in the matter?
3. if the shortage of available funds persists over a longer period of time, *request* temporary help from those who are called to assist, first the immediate relatives (if they can help), or the communion of saints (if necessary via the instituted office of mercy), so that you are not after half a year, e.g., faced with an impossible amount.

These are suggestions which are well worth considering.

The Smithville bulletin also carries a brief report on the meeting of the schoolboard. Perhaps I said this before, but I do not think that such is correct. Information about society work, I would gladly insert in our bulletin, but reports on meetings of boards belong in a publication of the society, not of the whole Church. Our schoolboard publishes boardmeeting reports in *The Link*, our monthly schoolpaper. That is correct.

Reading the reports of the schoolboard of Smithville, I found there that the board received an invitation to attend a wedding of one of the teachers, I understand. The problem was that the wedding was going to take place in Grand Rapids. For the board this was no problem at all: it was published that the whole board plus their wives were going to attend this wedding on the expense account of the school. When reading this, I thought, "Why not?"

In a following bulletin, however, the board reported to have received some letters from members who protested against such use of school moneys. Then the board revealed that they had just been joking and that they had not been thinking at all of charging the school society for the cost of going there. If anyone was going to undertake the journey, he would do so at his own expense.

It was a good joke, and still it worried me. No, what worried me were not the actions of the board. I like that kind of things. What worried me was the attitude of some members who wrote about it to the board. Maybe they wrote in a very kind manner, and I certainly hope so. Yet: What would have been wrong IF the board had done what they wrote in their first report?

Are we aware of it that the boardmembers spend countless hours on the business of the society for which they never get any remuneration? And are we aware of it that boardmembers — as also the office-bearers of the church — drive I don't-know-how-many kilometers per year in the service of the society for which they are not reimbursed? Being a boardmember costs one a considerable amount of money each year. Meetings have to be attended, members have to be visited, people who are behind in their payments are to be reminded and perhaps have to be visited to discuss their problems. This costs not only time, it also costs money, and I am certain that only a very small percentage of these costs is ever charged to the society.

But WHAT would be wrong with it then when, at a very special occasion, the cost of a certain journey were borne by the society? Nothing at all! And why could the wives — who are alone many an evening because of schoolwork being done by their husbands — not reap some benefits from this?

To a certain extent the above lines are academic, since the simulated journey was not made. It gave me a nice opportunity to draw the attention to a seemingly often-forgotten fact.

What I was not happy about at all was a note in a boardmeeting release that "It is decided that members who are moving and in arrears, the respective consistories will be notified on moneys owing."

I have it by experience that something in that vein was done, but the consistory involved at that time sent the letter back with the information that the office-bearers of Christ are not a collection agency.

It is realized that the boards sometimes have a hard time making ends meet and that in some instances there is sheer unwillingness to meet one's obligations. It makes one think at times when you see that people can do all sorts of things, have all sorts of luxuries, but when it comes to contributing to the church or meeting their obligations to the school, claim that they are unable to do anything. This is frustrating and I can well understand it that a board looks for ways and means to remedy the situation and to make people fulfill their promises. But I'm sorry, involving the consistories in this is not the right way.

As we did more often, so we conclude our journey this time south of the border, in Grand Rapids.

"In response to the demand for properly recorded sermons from various sources, a tape recorder for the church was purchased for the total amount of \$600.00, including mike and cables. This unit has the ability to record two tapes during the service and additional tape(s) after the service." There must be quite some reverberation in that building to make this possible! However, I think that I see what is meant.

I do not know when we shall meet again in this place.

Hopefully, I have given you some food for thought and some hard-to-digest pieces, which will keep you occupied till next time.

So long.

VO

"ANCHOR"

They Shall Always Be Among Us

The physically and mentally handicapped people shall always be among us. The proper attitude toward a handicapped life can only be fostered when we accept and consider well the handicapped. Not only parents and other relatives, but we all are involved with the handicapped around us. We can never get away from that, because we are all guilty.

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God by wanting to be as God, night descended over the world and all of creation lost its splendour. The original sin of the first human couple is deeply imbedded in us. It was said to Adam, and in Adam to us all, "In the sweat of your face you shall eat your bread." This means in daily life: difficulties and sorrow in your work, the body will be exhausted, when getting older the mind will darken and at last follows death. And to Eve was said, "In pain you shall bring forth children" and also in that pain is the bearing of handicapped children.

We will never be able to understand how deeply this sin has corroded our life. The communication between God and man in the cool of the evening in the Garden of Eden was broken and man was driven out of the Garden of Eden in order that (notice here the mercy in the judgment) he would not eat of the Tree of Life. For in that case there would be no possibility for return and deliverance anymore. But the Lord has driven man out in order to keep the way open to the Tree of Life in the new Paradise. Thus God has put man on the way of suffering and in that suffering our handicapped also play an important role. But in this way God has already started with His work of redemption and also there the handicapped take an important place.

The prophet Isaiah already pictured the Great Redeemer as the servant of the Lord, who shall not break off the broken reed and who shall not extinguish the languishing wick. He cares especially for the small and despicable. That important place which is occupied by the handicapped on the way of suffering and towards redemption through Christ, makes us more and more believe and accept the fact that they will always be with us. The man who is created without a mental- or physical handicap but who does not distinguish himself from the handicapped in any way, has very often not wanted to accept that handicapped life. The Bible is full

of examples. Did Israel not often withdraw itself from its responsibilities and exclude the handicapped from its society. Also think of the Pharisees who lifted up their heads in haughty pride and thanked God for not being like those people who were handicapped by their own fault. And thus it has been through all of history.

In earlier civilizations the life of the handicapped was lost in the struggle for daily survival. There was a lot of misunderstanding and a handicapped person was abhorred. Sometimes they were even made the object of amusement. Parents often hid their children from society and in so doing they kept their problems to themselves. During World War II thousands of handicapped people lost their lives in the gas chambers. Also in our modern civilization we do not accept the fact that handicapped persons shall always be with us. Even in so-called "Christian" circles euthanasia of a mentally handicapped person is not an imaginary issue. This the so-called mercyfulness of the ungodly is without mercy towards the pain and suffering of a "life without function." In an amniocentesis done on 150 pregnant women, 20 of them were in all probability carrying a handicapped child. Of those twenty mothers there was only one who objected to an abortion. Man in his sinful pride does not want to accept the handicapped, because he does not want to admit that he himself is handicapped by sin.

Our Saviour has taught us that we have an important task. Handicapped or not, man remained an image of God in spite of his marred state. With God there is no respect of persons, the handicapped as well as the non-handicapped covenant child is called upon to put himself in God's service. There will always be handicapped among us. Why and what for? In John 9, we read the story of the man who was born blind. He sat there, the poor man, as a beggar just outside the temple — and then came Jesus. Jesus had just left the temple and people had thrown stones at Him. The conflict between Him and the Jews flared up. At that same moment Jesus is confronted with the blind man. His disciples, apparently not yet freed from Pharisaism ask the question, "Who sinned, this man or his parents?" Then Jesus gives the astounding answer, "The works of God must be made manifest in him!" What an amazing answer! Jesus

understands these hypocritical questions with no trace of common guilt. The works of God must be made manifest in him. This man was healed and made a living example. In him the preaching of the Gospel gains ground. Jesus says, looking at him, "I have come into this world as a Judge, so that those who do not see will be made to see and those who do see will be made blind."

The Pharisees in their haughty pride don't know what to do when they see the man who was born blind. In their hardening of heart they push this child of God out of their midst. But then there is Jesus Christ who accepts him in His communion.

Are we going to say: the handicapped will always HAVE to stay with us? Of course, it is the result of our common guilt. Now we leave this problem and look up at Jesus and we say with Him: God's works must become manifest in our handicapped brothers and sisters. Let us then extend a hand to our handicapped brothers and sisters and let us support their work and the work of our Association and assist them in word and deed as followers of Christ, who was so often moved with pity during His stay on earth. Let us hold on to that.

There are many handicapped among us and many parents have handicapped children. That life often is and remains difficult here on earth. One day all handicapped covenant children shall be invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb. Also those, who now are being cared for in institutions and have never seen a Lord's Supper table and have never participated in the celebration of the Supper. Christ shall say to those children, who at one time were so severely disfigured, "My child, eat and drink." He shall place them in the radiant light of His Father.

R. GUNNINK

Translated from *Dit Koningskind* December 1979.



EBENEZER VILLA

337 Stone Church Road East
Hamilton, ON L9B 1B1

For rental, information and appointment to view our new 30 unit senior citizens home, please call (416) 383-0097.

A few units are still available for immediate occupancy.

PATRIMONY PROFILE 25

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

Dated December 31, 1838, the request was accompanied by a letter signed by H.P. Scholte, H.G. Klijn, E. Takken, and P.W. Lothes. Herein they requested to be recognized as a *Christian Seceded Congregation*. "Two courts have acquitted us," they wrote; "in Parliament the persecutions are called incompatible with the constitutional laws; the unrest of which people speak is not caused by our gatherings but by those disturbing them; further there is the biting opposition of the *Arnhemsche Courant*. Your Majesty can put an end to all this."

With the above letter they enclosed their Regulations and an address. From this address we learn the following. "The undersigned, inhabitants of Utrecht, in the Province of Utrecht, take the liberty with due respect to approach Your Majesty for the following reasons. They all belong to those who have seceded from the now-by-Your Majesty-recognized denomination, because they were not free in their consciences to unite with them any longer, and they could not find therein any food for their immortal souls; no public profession and proclamation of their faith; no ecclesiastical institutions agreeing with their confession of faith.

"They are mutually united in the same faith of which they make public profession with the from-of-old-known and also by-Your-Majesty-recognized Forms of Unity, namely, the Belgic Confession, consisting of 37 articles, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons adopted at the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618 and 1619, presented to Your Majesty already before.

"As a result of this unity of faith they are bound by their consciences before God also together to practise their religion and to maintain those institutions which the Lord has commanded in His Word. They do not wish to come back to all that happened about this from various sides. Forgetting what is behind, they wish to reach forward to that which lies ahead, in order with all modesty and sincerity to press onward towards the goal of the prize of their calling which is from above, and to preserve an inviolate conscience before God and men. For this reason it is also their heartfelt desire no longer to live at variance with Your Majesty's government and to find themselves in the necessity of having to come into contact with police and courts as a result of their worship services. Therefore they had been hoping for a long time to receive a favourable reply to their latest address. "Since, however, they are constantly being rebuked for not having made themselves sufficiently clear regarding some of the points presented by Your Majesty, they deemed it necessary to approach Your Majesty once again with the following declaration and request.

"1. They consider the above mentioned Forms of Unity in all parts and articles as the outward ecclesiastical bonds of unity as expression of their common faith, whereby also their religious persuasion can be known by

others; whereas also this union ceases when these Forms are rejected.

"2. That subsequently they have elected as their overseers and deacons and present as such to Your Majesty for recognition: H.P. Scholte, formerly minister at Doveren, Genderen and Gansoijen, H.G. Klein, E. Takken, P.W. Lothes; the first one also for the preaching of the Gospel and for the administration of the Sacraments; the last three as ruling elders; further J. Veldhuizen and A.M. van Beugen, both as deacons.

"3. That as a result of an experience of more than three years a regulation has been prepared according to which the overseers and deacons, now presented to Your Majesty, will have to conduct themselves in the execution of their ecclesiastical office; wherewith the undersigned fully agree, and whereby also their outward ecclesiastical actions are regulated according to their Forms of Unity, as far as the congregation is concerned presented to Your Majesty.

"They also submit a copy of their regulation signed by their chosen overseers, in order that it may be examined in behalf of a good policy.

"4. That they do not nor will lay any claim to any possessions, income, rights or titles of the Netherlands Reformed or any other denomination. That they themselves do and will take care of the support of their ministers, church buildings and needy; without going to lay any claim to subsidy from the national treasury.

"5. That in proof of this they have already supported their needy for three years, and recently, by the favourable dispensation of Providence, purchased a building wholly fit for their common worship services, namely 'Soli Deo Gloria,' previously used for the services of the Old Catholics, and until now exempt from land taxes. Besides, a very suitable dwelling for minister and caretaker adjacent to and in front of aforementioned building. Both are situated in a quiet and respectable section of the City on the Nieuwe Gracht.

"Pursuant to this sincere and clear declaration it is their serious request made hereby: that Your Majesty may be pleased to *admit and recognize* them in the civil society according to their Forms of Unity, with their ecclesiastical organization, as a *Christian Seceded Congregation* under the ecclesiastical government of the overseers and deacons presented to Your Majesty above; and subsequently to relieve them of the still continuing hampering of their common public worship services. Sire! We have tried to express ourselves as briefly, simply, concretely and clearly as we could."

Some interdepartmental correspondence followed receipt of the above application, but on February 14, 1839, the requested recognition was given. Applicants did comply with the conditions set, and they did admit, in fact, that they were something *new*. Thus no reason was seen why recognition should be refused.

Groningen Follows

The Rev. Hendrik de Cock, by now minister of the Congregation at Groningen, was upset and disappointed

when learning of the negotiations which had been opened by Scholte and his congregation. He was far from enthusiastic about the name "Christian Seceded," and, once he learned the provisions of the Regulation, objected to some of them. However, now that freedom had been obtained, de Cock asked himself what his position ought to be from now on. Information received from Rev. Scholte convinced him that there were no overriding objections to asking recognition by the Government. "He was convinced that the name itself should not be a reason why the congregation was to be exposed to persecution; the same applied to the possession of material goods." The congregation was recognized as a *Congregation*, and thereby one of de Cock's most serious objections was removed. Thus the Rev. de Cock was prepared to submit an application for recognition on the same conditions as Utrecht had done. The step was further promoted by the purchase of a church building on January 28, 1839.

Little was changed in the Regulation taken over from Utrecht. A few articles regarding marriage were omitted and one article was changed. There were 77 articles in all, many of which remind us of the Dort Church Order. Some provisions sound somewhat strange in our ears. Article 36 provides that "The male communicant members shall always have the right to advise the consistory in its meetings." In article 38 it is stated that "In every consistory meeting there shall be a secretary who, if needs be, can be chosen from the male communicant members." Article 64 says that neglect of family devotions shall render one subject to discipline; in case of hardening excommunication will follow. If any consistory member becomes unable to fulfil the duties of his office because of old age or infirmities, article 74 provides, he may receive an honourable discharge from his office if he has executed his office faithfully. Such a retired member will, however, retain the right to attend and vote at consistory meetings, says article 75.

The request for recognition was dated March 1839.

Dated August 25, 1839, the requested recognition was given. It was the same date on which de Cock preached for the first time in the purchased church building. His text was Deut. 32:31: "For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

Finally Freedom

The abdication of King William I and the ascension to the throne of his son William II brought relief to the Seceders. When the Governor of the Province of Utrecht writes in a report that it will "not be unknown to Your Majesty that in two rural communities in this province, viz. Loosdrecht and Bunschoten, soldiers have been billeted since 1837," the result is a memo from the Secretary of State to the Governors of the provinces: "The King desires that the military no longer be used to prevent the gatherings of those who seceded from the Reformed Church, and that the troops which are still lodged in some places be withdrawn. I have been charged to inform Your Excellency of His Majesty's desire, in order that Your Excellency act accordingly." The memo is dated November 28, 1840.

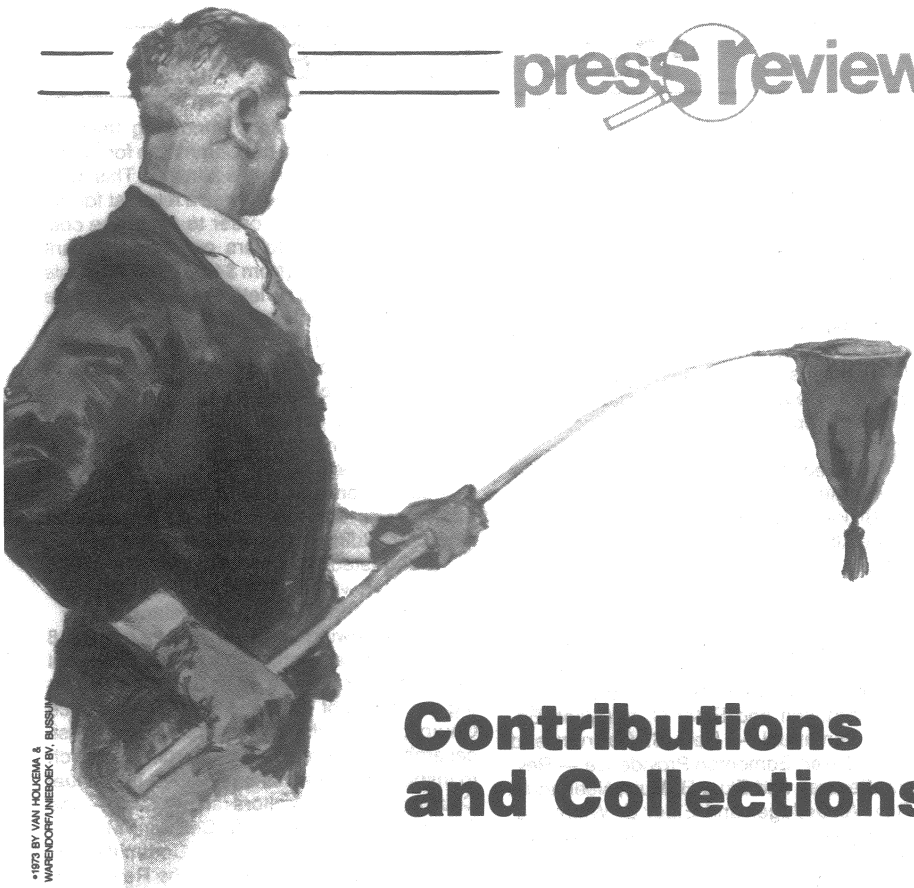
The Council of State received the request from the King to advise him "in how far in general the Seceders could be given an unrestricted freedom or, if this should be objectionable, how the existing freedom could be expanded."

This very same Council had not been too happy with the attitude of the Government under William I, and made this known to his son and successor. The Council deplored the secession from the Reformed denomination, the reply states, but had to withhold its approval from some measures of which it was said that they were very suited to counteract the schism, but of which the Council feared that they would worsen the situation. Unfortunately, the outcome proved the Council right. Council tried in vain to achieve a milder attitude with the authorities, and now hopes that Your Majesty will show such an attitude. Council replied that, abstractly speaking, indeed unrestricted freedom could be granted to the Seceders. In the beginning of the struggle the public order may have been disturbed somewhat, after that the Seceders have had to endure the wantonness and offense by the rabble; but since they have been recognized all traces of unrest have disappeared. The Council advises the King to be very lenient when requests for recognition are received and to make sure only that the Seceders comply with the existing laws. If they don't have the funds to maintain their buildings and ministers, it can be predicted that the congregations will come to nought of themselves and that many will seek refuge in the bosom of other denominations. "It is somewhat different with respect to the indigent; but humanity commands granting support which is denied neither to a Christian nor to a Jew or a heathen, and this principle can also be found in the Law of November 28, 1818."

The advice of the Council of State may have had some influence, witness a Royal Decree of January 9, 1841, lowering the requirements for recognition, the Minister of Justice makes clear that justice must run its course. Those who do not ask for recognition do not experience any consideration. The Court in Goes, f.i., imposed on one day no fewer than one hundred and ninety-five fines of one hundred guilders each on the Rev. Buddingh and his friend J. de Jonge. A little more than two weeks later twenty-one fines of one hundred guilders each were added. The Minister of Justice, confirming to the King that the information which His Majesty had received was correct, adds, "These manifold sentences show how little respect those persons have for the laws of the country and how little reverence they cherish towards judicial verdicts."

It was the revision of the Constitution in 1848 which opened the way to complete freedom for the Seceders. "The articles 164, 165 and 170 provided that every one was allowed to confess his religious opinions in complete freedom; that all denominations in the realm would receive equal protection; that involvement of the government was not required either with the correspondence with the heads of the various denominations or with the proclamation of ecclesiastical regulations, save responsibility according to the law. . . . Especially the existing denominations made a thankful use of these provisions to organize according to their specific requirements."

— *To be continued.*



Contributions and Collections

In the Coaldale congregation's *Church News* of July 17, 1983, we found an interesting article on contributions for the church and collections for the needy and how to go about them. First it is pointed out that also these financial matters are always greatly neglected when deformation conquers the church (Israel, the Middle Ages; see Calvin, *Institutes*, IV, ch. 4, 15-18). We also read that different times and situations demand different ways of contributing. In days of persecution when the believers come together secretly and when itinerant ministers preach now here and then there, contributing for the ministry of the Word differs from contributing in a situation in which the government allows freedom and a congregation can have its own minister and its own church building. However, the principle remains the same.

In the Old Testament, the Bible gives strict laws with regard to giving for the temple service. It is done by way of:

- a. the temple tax (Exodus 30:12-16 and 38:24-26). This tax was also paid by Jesus (Matthew 17:24). The amount levied by this tax was the same for every Israelite of 20 years and older, namely, a half shekel.
- b. Another contribution which was expected from every Israelite was the tithe which is described in Leviticus 27:30-33 and other places. In Malachi 3:8ff. the Lord says that the peo-

ple of Israel are *robbing Him* in not bringing the full amount of their tithes. . . .

In the New Testament this requirement to look financially after the service of the Lord is continued. In Gal. 6:6 it is said that those who are taught are to share all good things with those who are teaching. When Christ sent out the apostles, He instructed them that they did not have to take care for their daily needs, because the laborer deserves his food, Matthew 10:9, 10.

In his explanation of Gal. 6:6-8 Calvin states that failure by the congregation to look after the ministers is ridiculing God.

This command of God to look after the financial aspects of the service of the LORD is distinctly different from the laws which regulate the care for the needy. Of this care for the needy we read, for instance, in Exodus 23:11, where the Israelites were told that the land had to rest in the seventh year so that the poor of the people might have to eat. In Leviticus 19:9, 10, we read that what grew on the corners of the fields, as well as the leftovers of the harvest, were to be left for the poor. . . . In the New Testament we also read about the care for the needy.

In this connection Matthew 6:2 is quoted: "Do not give your alms before men to be seen by them." "The gift of mercy [is not] a prescribed amount but . . . an act of Christian love determined by a response of thankfulness in the Christian for what God in His mercy has done for him through Jesus Christ." Then we read:

The Heidelberg Catechism, dealing with the

fourth commandment (Lord's Day 38, Q.&A. 103), distinguishes between our giving for the maintenance of the Gospel, which it does not see as part of the worship service, and our giving of Christian alms which is *one of the reasons why we gather together as Church of God on the day of rest. And therefore Dr. Bouwman (in Gereformeerd Kerkrecht, I, 581/8) . . . says that the general rule should be that in every church service there should be a collection for the needy.*

But about contributing to the church he says (II, 423f.) "The members of the church have the responsibility to contribute for all the expenses of the church according to their ability. This responsibility they have taken upon themselves by joining the church. What they contribute in this regard is not a gift of mercy (as for the needy, but a contribution to the payment of a debt for which every member is responsible."

Every church member would do well to remember these words. The following conclusions are drawn:

What the Lord Jesus said about not giving our alms to be seen by men does not directly apply to fulfilling our duty towards the church expenses, where the LORD Himself calls a failing to fulfil this duty "robbing the LORD." Therefore, there seems to be no reason why a collection [for the church, J.G.] is needed besides our regular contributions. For the consequence is that part of our gifts for the church are hidden from the office-bearers, so that they cannot see whether a member of the church fulfills his duty toward the Lord and the communion of saints or not. [Here is a duty toward the communion of saints as well; and] failure to fulfil this duty is stealing also from the other church members.

One of the grounds for having collections for the church is: in this manner we can give something extra for the church to express our thankfulness for extra blessings received from the Lord. There is, however, no reason why such extra or larger gifts should not be given as part of a regular contribution. In this respect it is not *necessarily* so that when, at the beginning of the year, we have written our 12 post-dated cheques we have fulfilled our financial obligation to the church. Our personal economic conditions could change drastically during the year and so could the needs of a particular church. (I do not want to discourage the practice of post-dated cheques, because I can see this practice as a great help for the treasurer of the church.) For people who have been faithful in their regular contributions for the church, the church collections are obsolete and therefore could lead to meaningless giving.

We have not even mentioned here the fact that our government gives us the privilege to deduct our church contributions from our taxable income, which saves us tax money. And if we do not need this ourselves, it could certainly be used for a good cause. To use this privilege seems to be good stewardship. . . .

At the end comes the recommendation to discontinue collections for the church. As far as I know, most of our churches do not have collections for the church any longer, only the contributions. Nevertheless, there are elements in this article that

everyone should keep in mind. I took it over for a reminder for all of us.

COLLECTION COUPONS

In *De Reformatie's* Press Review of June 18, 1983, W.G.d.V. takes over the following remarks of the Rev. C.J. de Ruyter made in the *Gereformeerde Kerkbode voor Zuid-Holland*.

The Sunday collection is a first possibility to contribute [for the church, he means, J.G.]. The collection is taken up in the worship service. It, therefore, reminds us even more of its character of being a gift of thankfulness. What you give is an expression of thankfulness to the Lord for what He gives. It is important to dwell on this fact also before you go to church. However, it seems that this character of the collection as gift of thankfulness is not very alive for us any longer. In many churches the collections bring up approximately two guilders per church member per Sunday. That means: for everyone one guilder per service. Undoubtedly, this has to do with the fact that gifts are tax deductible, so that the members would rather pay by giro [cheques] than put large amounts in the collection. I think there is nothing wrong with that, as long as its character as a thank-offering is not lost.

Some churches try to make it possible for the members to make also their gifts in the collection tax-deductible by providing collection coupons or coins. Personally, I always have some problems with this. In the first place, it seems as if the church has a money system of its own. In this connection I think of "holy money," money that has nothing to do with the money we work with during the week. (But this is more an emotional argument.) Moreover, you buy a whole sheet of coupons at one certain time. That means that you have given your gift to the church already. Therefore it is as if you live on your advance money for a number of weeks or months with a kind of reverse payment system. Besides, to me it appears to be difficult to explain to the children what you put in the collection bag. They sure may know and learn that giving money in the church is also part of being a Christian. In short, if I make use of collection coupons I have the idea that I am working so cleverly that my left hand knows too well what my right hand is doing. This does not mean that I doubt the sincere willingness to offer of those who do contribute via this system.

W.G.d.V. comments: "I completely agree. One should not be too covetous." I agree. Let us not forget that a loving caring heart that gives to the Lord (and to the neighbour) out of thankfulness is the first thing that counts, and not our cleverness and keenness as such. On the other hand, perhaps, our Dutch sister churches could eliminate the use of collection coupons by discontinuing the collections for the church.

The main point is: let us continue to show our thankfulness to the LORD for His grace in our whole life and also in our sincere *thank-offerings* in and for the church.

J. GEERTSEMA

PRESS RELEASE

Classis of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Alberta and Manitoba, October 25, 1983, at Edmonton.

Elder P. VanSpronsen of the convening Church of Coaldale calls the meeting to order, requests the brothers to sing Ps. 146:1, reads I Thess. 1 and leads in prayer. A hearty welcome is extended to all. Mention is made of the fact that Rev. Wielenga would not be present due to unforeseen circumstances. A special welcome is given to Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer and Rev. A. DeJager who are at classis for the first time as representatives of their respective churches.

The delegates of the convening church report on their examination of the credentials. Elder Bikker of Calgary and Elder C.M. VanVliet are alternate delegates. There is one instruction.

The churches are represented by:

Barrhead — Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar and Elder A. Reinink; Calgary — Deacon B. Winkel and Elder G. Bikker; Carman — Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer and Elder P. DeRuiter; Coaldale — Elder P. VanSpronsen and Elder C. VanVliet; Edmonton Immanuel — Rev. S. DeBruin and Elder K. Duker; Edmonton Providence — Rev. M. VanBeveren and Elder B. Muis; Neerlandia — Rev. A. DeJager and Elder E. Wierenga; Winnipeg — Rev. B. Berends and Elder W. Gortemaker.

Classis is constituted. The moderamen is appointed as suggested by the last classis meeting. The officers are: chairman — Rev. M. VanBeveren; vice-chairman — Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar; clerk — Rev. B. Berends. The chairman mentions the fact that Rev. Berends had received and declined three calls and congratulates Winnipeg with this decision.

The form of subscription is read by Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer which he then willingly signs.

The agenda is established.

Reports: a. Report from the classical Committee for Aid to Needy Churches. A letter from the Church at Calgary was received stating that they were no longer in need of financial assistance. A letter from the Church at Barrhead is also received in which they request financial assistance. After this matter is discussed, classis decides to grant this request. b. Report of the church visitors according to Art. 44 C.O. Report is given on visits to the Churches at Carman and Winnipeg. This is gratefully received. c. Report by the Providence Church on the audit of the books of the treasurer. In the opinion of this committee the treasurer's books are deemed to be in good order. d. Report by the Immanuel Church on checking the archives of classis. The archives were found to be in good order except for a few items. These will be corrected. e. Report of Rev. B. Berends on contact with the Committee for Fraternal Relations with the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the O.P.C. He reports that he has answered their previous letter. A letter is received from this committee again, informing classis of their plans for their next meeting, and inviting classis to send delegates to observe. Rev. Berends suggests writing them again, informing them that we await a reply from our committee for contact

with the C.P.C., before honouring their request. f. Report from the Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry. This committee reports that there was a request for aid from two students. In order to cover the cost an additional two dollars per communicant member is needed (from \$4.00 to \$6.00). This request is granted. A letter of thanks is to be sent to this committee.

It is decided to go to "Appointments" as the next item on the agenda. The appointments are as follows:

Immanuel Church at Edmonton is appointed as the next convening church for classis. The date will be, D.V., March 13, 1984. The delegates from this church request that the next classis be held in the new Immanuel Church building. This request is granted.

Suggested officers: chairman — Rev. A. DeJager; vice-chairman — Rev. M. VanBeveren; clerk: Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar.

The following appointments as per Art. 8 of the classical regulations are: a. Classical treasurer — Br. A. Nauta; b. Church for auditing the books of the treasurer — Providence Church; c. Church for taking care of the classical archives — Providence Church; d. Church to inspect the classical archives — Immanuel Church; e. Church visitors (art. 44 C.O.) — the Reverends B. Berends; S. DeBruin; M. VanBeveren and D. Wielenga; f. Committee for Examinations — coordinators: the Reverends M. VanBeveren and D. Wielenga; g. Examiners for Preparatory or Peremptory exams are: Sermon — the Reverends M. VanBeveren and D. Wielenga; Exegesis O.T. — Rev. M. VanBeveren; Exegesis N.T. — Rev. S. DeBruin; Knowledge of contents of Holy Scripture — Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer; Doctrine and Creeds — Rev. B. Berends; Church History — Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar; Ethics — Rev. A. DeJager; Church Polity — Rev. D. Wielenga; Deaconological subjects — Rev. S. DeBruin; h. Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry — the brothers A. Hamoen, C. Veldkamp and W. Vogelzang. i. Committee for Aid to Needy Churches — the brothers W. Gortemaker, P. Groenwold and J. Harthoorn; j. Deputies for Contact with the Governments of Alberta and Manitoba: Rev. S. DeBruin and Rev. B. Berends respectively.

Question Period according to Art. 41 of the Church Order is held. In closed session advise is given to one of the churches on a matter of discipline. The Church at Calgary requests an extension of the list for preaching arrangements. Rev. S. DeBruin and Rev. D. Wielenga are appointed to look after this.

Personal Question Period is held. Censure according to Art. 43 of the Church Order is not needed. The Acts are adopted and the Press Release approved.

The chairman, Rev. M. VanBeveren thanks the Providence Church for the work they did in preparation for this meeting. He thanks the ladies for the work they did. He then requests the singing of Ps. 146:3, leads in prayer and declares the meeting closed.

For classis,
E.J. Tiggelaar
vice-chairman e.t.

Capital Called and Is Still Calling

About twenty years ago, the Canadian Reformed Church at Ottawa was as large as many of our other congregations in those days; it numbered around 150 members in total. For the last fifteen years, however, it has hovered around 30-40 members. With an awareness that this situation could not continue indefinitely, much discussion has taken place within the congregation in the past years around the question how this situation could be remedied. Debate centered around such questions as: should we buy land and work towards a building? Or shall we call a minister? *Can we call a minister?* Advice was asked from Classis Ontario-North which responded favourably to the latter and even pledged financial support in the event that Ottawa would call and receive a pastor and teacher. And so it came about that the smallest church in our federation began the calling process. Surprisingly enough, the second call that was extended brought us a minister already.

Thus, on July 24th, the congregation at Ottawa assembled together with great joy and thanksgiving to the Father of lights who had given also this good gift. That morning Reverend R. Aasman of Guelph led the service in which Reverend G.H. Visscher was to be installed. Rev. Aasman had chosen as his text the words of Hebrews 13:17: "Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you." Rev. Aasman summarized the message of his sermon for us as follows:

"It is obvious from Hebrews 13 that the readers of this epistle were in danger of being led away by diverse and strange teachings. However there is a safeguard against such dangers. Jesus Christ has appointed spiritual leaders over the flock in order to teach it the truth of the gospel and defend it from heresies.

In the first place the officebearers have to keep watch over the souls of their flock, as men who will have to give account. Every officebearer must be keenly aware of the fact that he has received the awesome responsibility of caring and standing on guard for the flock which has been obtained at the cost of Jesus Christ's

blood. He must always watch out for heresies and dangers so that he can warn the flock in time and keep it safe. Obviously a lazy, indifferent or unknowledgeable leader will leave his flock open to all kinds of terrible dangers. Therefore every officebearer must keep in mind that he will have to give account to the Great Shepherd for the way in which he cared for His flock.

In the second place the flock must obey its leaders and submit to them. That does not mean that a congregation obeys and submits to its leaders only when they are friendly and only when they say things which are totally agreeable to the congregation. The congregation must also be keenly aware that officebearers have their mandate straight from Jesus Christ to stand on guard for the souls of the flock. That means the congregation must show total obedience and submission to all the instructions and admonitions of its leaders, as long as it does not conflict with the Word of God. The officebearers should be able to do their work joyfully, which means they should see their work bearing fruit.

After about twenty years, the congregation at Ottawa has just been blessed with a new minister. May he be filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that he can stand on guard against all kinds of dangers which threaten the flock and so lead the flock in the pathways of righteousness to living waters. May this also be a congregation which by the Spirit of Christ, listens to the voice of her pastor and teacher, together with the rest of the officebearers."

In the afternoon, our new pastor and teacher was led to the pulpit in order to preach his inaugural sermon. He had chosen the words of Isaiah 55:10, 11 as his text: "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

What follows is Rev. Visscher's summary of that sermon:

"Undoubtedly, it is an awesome task that lies ahead of us: to bring about quan-



titative as well as qualitative changes in the life of the Church at Ottawa and so reverse the trends of decrease and decline. We might well ask: how can this goal be reached? Who is sufficient for these things?

But it is clear that there is only one way in which this goal will be reached, and that is: through the power of God's Word! For the Word of God is not like the words of men; the latter are often ineffective, frequently not meant seriously, and thus impotent. But God's Word is always a power. In Isaiah's day God and His Word were considered to be of little significance, for the exiled Israel of this God is nothing but a heap of ruins. But Isaiah speaks about the magnificent power of God and His Word. Just as the rain and the snow which proceed from heaven are not ineffective but do that which God sends them for, so it is all the more with the Word which proceeds from out of the very mouth of God. Not one such word is lacking in power. Think of Genesis: by the words which came out of God's mouth, the world was created. Think of Israel: that nation was *called* into existence by God (Rom. 4:17). Think of Jeremiah: "Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces?" (23:29). Think of the Christ: when He who was the Word of God Himself spoke, things happened — the dead rose, demons departed, and seas became still. Think of Paul: "the word of the cross . . . is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18). Or of Hebrews: "the Word of God is living and active. . . ." (4:12). That Word of God has a two-fold content — blessing and curse, promise and demand; Israel too experienced that. But *never* does that two-sided Word of God return to Him empty; it *will* do that for which God sends it.

And so when we doubt about the future, we may be assured of one thing,

congregation: that God will do *His* part. Like rain and snow, that Word will do something here in our midst. Something *is* going to happen; there *will* be activity here in the church community of Ottawa. For when the Almighty God speaks, will action not result?"

After the service, br. A. DeLeeuw, the chairman of the consistory, spoke some fitting words and gave others the opportunity to do likewise. Several brothers did make use of it in order to extend congratulations from sister churches: br. J. Poort represented the Church at Burlington West; br. C. Van Raalte, the Church at Fergus; br. L. Kampen, the Church at Toronto; and Rev. Aasman represented the Church at Guelph and Classis Ontario-North. Congratulatory messages were also received from Brampton and Orangeville. As you can see, many others rejoiced with us!

Thereafter, Rev. G.H. Visscher received the floor again. He related how he had even surprised himself when he accepted this call, and how he had become convinced again that "big is not always beautiful" and numbers do not necessarily determine needs. He urged us to work together harmoniously in the coming years and to explore jointly every possible means and avenue that might contribute to the enlarging of Christ's Church here in Ottawa.

* * * *

It was a small but enthusiastic group which gathered on Monday evening, July 25th, 1983, at the Ottawa Christian School to welcome their new minister and his family. After br. H. Holtvluwer opened the evening in the usual Christian manner, the master of ceremonies, br. H. Jager directed us to a splendid buffet dinner which was carefully prepared by the ladies of the church. Plenty of time was allowed after the meal for table talk over coffee and cake.

The more formal part of the evening began with Mrs. G. VanWeerden giving a poignant account of the past history of the Church at Ottawa. She led us from the pioneering days of the 1950's through the period of rapid growth and expansion which was followed by troubled times and subsequent substantial decrease in numbers. Thus the arrival of Rev. Visscher has certainly given the Church at Ottawa great cause for joy. Sr. VanWeerden spoke of that when she expressed her gratitude for the fact that the Church at Ottawa had, as she put it, "the courage to call Rev. Visscher" and that Rev. Visscher "had the courage to accept."

After Mrs. VanWeerden's presentation, a large house plant was presented to the minister and his wife on behalf of the women's society. A contribution from



Ottawa's youth followed. Accompanied by four recorder players, a very young choir sang a little welcome song to Rev. Visscher and his wife. This effort was rewarded with well-deserved applause.

The floor was then given to br. P. Buist who took the liberty to make some light-hearted remarks about the new minister. Among other things, he commented on Rev. Visscher's prowess as a fisherman and presented him with some live fishing bait. A welcome mat was also presented on behalf of the men's society.

On behalf of the Ottawa young people, Anita Scheper introduced each family to the minister and his wife. She started with the latest arrivals and worked her way back in time. Not in too many places can one do that within the space of ten minutes!

Rev. Visscher was again given the floor to make some closing remarks. Among other things, he expressed his gratitude for the fine evening and for the many splendid ways in which the congregation had made his family feel at home in their midst. Thereafter the Name of the LORD was praised with the singing of Hymn 65 after which Rev. Visscher closed in prayer of thanksgiving.

* * * *

Notwithstanding the significance of these events, there still remains the question: will our congregation grow to a healthy size in the years to come? Needless to say, we hope to do everything possible to work towards such a numerical increase; former members will be visited, efforts will be made to reach out in the community and draw others, and contacts will be made with other faithful Christians. But still a certain amount of the onus rests with other members of the federation of churches. In the past, persons have been hesitant to move to Ottawa because they considered our church here to be dying;

even persons with concrete job offers have turned them down for these reasons. We are hoping that this will no longer be the case. That from now on you too will give us a chance. If you are contemplating a move, why not consider Ottawa? Is it a healthy thing that in our federation large churches continue to grow with leaps and bounds, while our smaller churches have to fight for mere survival? Where is the adventurous spirit of our parents who brought us to this massive land? Ottawa has much to offer you. It is a beautiful city situated in a splendid valley; while offering plenty of employment, entertainment and action, the joys of outdoor recreation are not far away either. Bicycling along the city's many bike paths in the summer, skating down the rivers in the winter, the splendid beauty of Gattineau Park — all of that and so much more is available here! Ottawa is not only the capital of the nation; it is also the centre of Canada's ever expanding computer and high technology industry; construction is booming today as well. If you are seriously interested in moving to the capital, please feel free to contact us. The consistory has appointed br. H. Jager as our "contact person" for such purposes. He is willing to investigate and inform you about employment opportunities, housing possibilities, etc. If you wish to come and look around, we will be happy to assist you in every way possible and provide you with accommodation during your stay. Just contact Joe Jager at 36 Nestow Drive, Nepean, Ontario, K2G 3X8 (613-225-5219). If for some reason you are unable to reach him, feel free to contact our minister at 613-224-7732.

Think about it: would you like it if your church was no longer represented in the capital? How would you feel if that light faded out? Will you not do whatever you can to make sure that that does not happen?

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

What is YOUR hobby?
 What do YOU do in your spare time?
 We would love to hear about your hobby.
 Some Busy Beavers have a hobby called CALLIGRAPHY.
 And here are some samples of the beautiful writing they make.

Busy Beaver *Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg* wrote the alphabet in this lovely script

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

And Busy Beaver *Jeannie Barendregt* sent these samples of calligraphy.

*copy again and again
 calligraphy Aunt Betty*

If you have some samples of calligraphy you want to show us, or if you want to tell us about your hobby, here is my address:

Aunt Betty
 Box 54
 Fergus, ON N1M 2W7

Busy Beaver *Chandra Meerstra* has a poem for you called:

LITTLE ANIMALS

Little animals are so much fun, fun, fun, Little animal life has just begun, begun, begun.	Oh, those little friends have so much fun. Life for THEM has just begun.
---	---

But as for me?
 I can climb a tree just like a little cat.
 My little friends, do not laugh,
 For I know you are much better than I!

Thanks for sharing, Chandra!

NOVEMBER!

Now it's time to wish all the Busy Beavers celebrating their birthday in November a very happy day and many happy returns. Here's hoping you have a good time with your family and friends, and we wish you God's blessing and guidance in the year ahead. Happy Birthday to you all!

Jennifer Stam	2	John Linde	15
Geraldine Tamminga	3	Debbie Vandergugten	17
Margaret Oosterveld	4	Veronica Post	20
Jennifer Van Woudenberg	8	Hilda De Vos	21
Michelle Van Egmond	12	Cathy Van Delden	21
Aimee Jagt	13	Lorinda Barendregt	22
Brian Bosch	15		



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Michelle Oosdijk*. We are happy to have you join us. You're a real Busy Beaver already, I see, Michelle! Thank you for the puzzle. Keep up the good work! Write and tell us about yourself and your hobbies, sometime. Will you, Michelle?

Did you receive your membership card already, *Chandra Meerstra*? Thank you for your letter and all the "goodies" in it for the Busy Beavers. They will enjoy them, I'm sure!

Thank you for a beautiful letter, *Jeannie Barendregt*. The script was just lovely! But you didn't tell me what kind of pen I need. Keep practising, Jeannie. Just think of the beautiful cards and letters you can make!

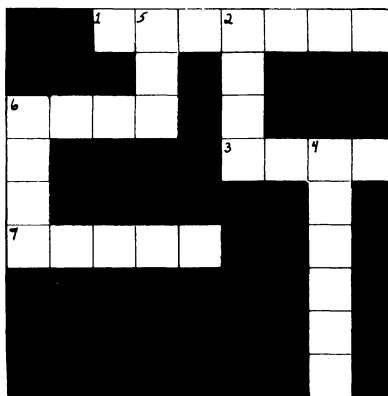
Hello, *Sylvia Van Bodegom*. I'm sorry you lost your pets. But thank you for your story. Bye for now, Sylvia. Write again soon.

Thank you for a pretty letter and the puzzle, *Gwen Werkman*. How are you doing? Bye for now.

Are you still practising your calligraphy, *Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg*? The script you sent was very pretty! You should keep it up! You have a cosy group of girls in your class, don't you, Mary-Ann? Thanks for the puzzle.

Crossword Puzzle

by Busy Beaver *Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg*



ACROSS

1. person who teaches
3. arithmetic
6. five plus four
7. not wrong

DOWN

2. pal
4. animal who carries his house on his back
5. Adam's wife
6. not far

Bible Quiz

Fill in the blanks. The first one is done for you.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Aaron's _____ rod | 9. the _____ of Solomon |
| 2. Balaam's _____ | 10. the _____ of Babel |
| 3. Naboth's _____ | 11. Jacob's _____ |
| 4. Noah's _____ | 12. "the _____ of the Lord |
| 5. the _____ of Tarshish | _____ and of Gideon |
| 6. David's _____ | 13. the _____ of Lebanon |
| 7. the _____ of Job | 14. the _____ of Adullam |
| 8. Mars' _____ | |

Answers: Crossword Puzzle: Across — 1. teacher 3. math 6. nine 7. right; Down — 2. chum 4. turtle 5. Eve 6. near
 Bible Quiz: 2. ass 3. vineyard 4. ark 5. ships 6. harp 7. patience 8. hill 9. wisdom 10. tower 11. ladder 12. sword 13. cedars 14. cave.

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.
 Hope to "see" you all next time!

Yours,
 Aunt Betty