

# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

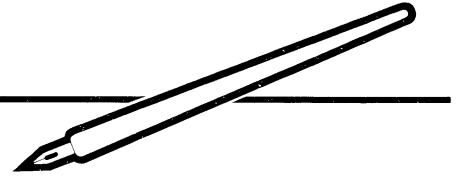


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**Maintaining  
the  
Ten Commandments**



## **Are we following myths when we maintain the Ten Commandments as expression of God's will also for the New Testament Church?**

In *Verdict Report* of October 1982 (Vol. 1, no. 6) the author, Robert D. Brinsmead, writes about "Myths about the Ten Commandments." He mentions six myths. I will discuss this very important matter here for two reasons. In the first place, the matter of the Ten Commandments is important in itself. In the second place, *Verdict* claims full enthusiasm in seeking to be an instrument for a renewal and revival of Christianity and of true faith in Christ. It says that the Christian church is in a situation of transition. We are entering a whole new era. The old period was characterized by specific confessions, by laws, by division. In this new period we must learn once again to live out of faith in Christ. We must not bind ourselves anymore to the old confessions of the 16th and 17th century. In Christ Jesus and in Him alone we have salvation: both justification and sanctification. We partake in that salvation through a living faith that connects us with the living Christ. We are bound to Christ and the law of Christ, and not to the old Ten Commandments as such. Much of present-day Christianity misses enthusiasm. In many a church true spiritual life is dull, or rather almost dead. We must go back to the pure gospel of Christ, to the living Christ. It is in the frame of this call for renewal that *Verdict* calls us, especially as Reformed Christians, to do away with a number of myths regarding the Ten Commandments.

The reader can understand that we are dealing with a significant matter. I shall summarize what the article says, part by part, and give my comment. The call to renewal, to conversion from sin, also from dullness, from lifelessness is an important call.

In his introduction Dr. Brinsmead says, that the "Ten Commandments deserve a place of honour among the most celebrated documents of sacred history." For the Jews they were the "words of the covenant." The church saw in them a summary of the moral obligations for all of mankind and used them in its catechetical instruction. Although there have been voices to eliminate them, the church has retained them with the whole Old Testament as "profitable for Christian instruction."

The article continues to say that "great teachers of the Christian church such as Irenaeus, Augustine and Luther have recognized a qualified use of the Ten Commandments," understanding that they had to be "interpreted Christianly," that means taking into account "the new situation which had emerged through the inbreaking of the new age of the Messiah." Then the author gives the reason for his article when he writes, "But just as the church's acceptance of the Jewish Scriptures has exposed it to the danger of misusing them, so its adoption of the Ten Commandments has incurred the risk of their misuse." This misuse caused the development of a

number of myths which must be "challenged because they constitute a serious misunderstanding of the Christian gospel and its bearing on Christian ethics."

Before we continue to listen to Dr. Brinsmead, a few remarks should be made. The author correctly warns for a possible misuse of the Ten Commandments. The Law of God, including the Decalogue, must not be used in a Judaistic, legalistic way, as a vehicle that can bring us to heaven and as means by which we can build up our own righteousness before God and earn our own salvation.

Further, it is of course true that the Ten Commandments as such were given by God to Israel on Mount Sinai. We shall come back to this point. We can also agree with others who said that we Christians, who live in the New Testament dispensation, must interpret the Ten Commandments in the light of the New Testament revelation of God in Christ. This is clearly done, e.g., in the Heidelberg Catechism (Lord's Day 34-44). Here the teaching of John Calvin is followed.

This leads to the next remark. Calvin is not mentioned together with Irenaeus, Augustine and Luther. In my opinion that is not accidental, but on purpose. Luther's view, regarding the law, and even more that of his followers, differed from that of Calvin. Dr. H. Bavinck writes in *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (Reformed Dogmatics), IV, p. 434, "The Lutherans see almost only the accusing, condemning working of the law and therefore know no higher salvation than the liberation from the law. The law is only necessary because of sin . . . Believers are not under the law anymore. The Reformed were of a different opinion." According to Bavinck, they saw the remaining normative function of the law as its chief function. They gave a much broader place to the law in the doctrine of thankfulness than in the doctrine of misery. We can all see that when comparing Lord's Day 2 of the Heidelberg Catechism with Lord's Day 34-44. The law of God does show us our sin, but that same law also teaches us what a life of faith is in the covenant with God. God's law is still our rule for a life in thankfulness for redemption, and teaches us how to sanctify our life.

A point that cannot but strike us as Reformed readers is the manner in which Dr. Brinsmead speaks about the Old Testament in general, calling them "the Jewish Scriptures," and about the Ten Commandments specifically, calling them one of the "most celebrated documents of sacred history." We also note that he refers to only one part of II Tim. 3:16 with respect to the Old Testament, namely the words "profitable for Christian instruction," while this text clearly says of the whole Old Testament, "all Scripture is inspired by God," and is therefore "profitable for teaching," etc. God's New Testament revelation speaks in many places about the Old Testament as God's infallible, authoritative, inspired Word, which the Holy Spirit still *speaks* (!, present tense!, Hebrews 3:7) to the Christian church. That is why we confess (Art. 3-7, Belgic Confession) that both the Old and the New Testament (and this includes the Ten Commandments) *is* God's holy, inerrant, authoritative and normative Word for the Church of Christ. In the expressions used by Dr. Brinsmead this confession, this truth of God's

own Word regarding the Old Testament, does not come out in a clear way. He strongly gives the impression that the church of Christ in the new dispensation is bound to the New Testament and not to the Old. The church can read it; it can take good instruction from it, but it is not bound to it anymore. In this way a contrast is made between the Old and the New Testament.

Of course, we do confess and "believe that the ceremonies and symbols of the law ceased at the coming of Christ, and that all the shadows are accomplished; so that the use of them must be abolished among Christians; yet the truth and substance of them remain with us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have their completion," (Art. 25, Belgic Confession). Hopefully this point will receive more attention in the future. Meanwhile we also say in this Article 25 that "In the meantime we still use the testimonies taken out of the law and the prophets to confirm us in the doctrine of the gospel, and to regulate our life in all honourableness to the glory of God, according to His will."

We now come to the first myth: The article says:

*"Myth 1: That the Ten Commandments are a Divine Legislation given to All Men for All Time"*

The argumentation for "demythologizing" this "myth" is as follows: "The Ten Commandments appear in the narrative regarding God's making a covenant with Israel." (Ex. 20). They are called "the words of the covenant," or even "the covenant" (Ex. 34:28, Deut. 4:13). The form in which they appear with in the preamble is similar to many covenants or treaties made in those days: first there is a preamble and an historical prologue. Then there are the binding stipulations. The words "I am the LORD your God, who redeemed you . . ." are the preamble and historical prologue, while the Ten Commandments are then the binding stipulations of the covenant or treaty that God made with Israel. Israel was to observe these stipulations. The conclusion is: "The covenant itself is the Ten Commandments." In Deut. 5:2-4 we read that Moses says that the LORD did not give this covenant (the Ten Commandments, to the fathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob). Also the apostle Paul makes a distinction between the covenant with Abraham and that with Israel, 430 years later (Gal. 3:16-19 and 4:24-26). Pointing at the Fourth Commandment, Dr. Brinsmead writes: "It should be clear that the Ten Commandments are historically conditioned and contain cultic elements adapted to the situation of the nation of Israel." He continues to argue that there is no statement anywhere in the Bible that says that the Ten Commandments are for all mankind and for all times; that the New Testament does not say anywhere that Christians have to take the whole of the Ten Commandments as rule for their life, even though several commandments from the second table are mentioned and maintained in the New Testament.

In his last point concerning "Myth 1" Dr. Brinsmead gives an answer to the question why "the Christian church has honoured the Ten Commandments at all if they contain cultic elements" which were specifically for Israel. This is, he says, because these commandments contain "moral principles which are self-evidently binding upon all mankind." They were called "moral laws," since "man's moral consciousness consents to the moral and ethical prohibitions" in the Ten Commandments. But, he concludes, "such recognition of the value of the Ten Commandments differs from the more rigid and systematic mind-set which wishes to maintain the entire document in unaltered form." What Dr. Brinsmead writes about the connection seen between the Ten Commandments and "natural law," is true also with respect to Calvin. The reader can find this e.g. in *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Editor John T. McNeill), Vol. 1, page 368, note 5: "Calvin's view of

the Commandments as a divinely authorized text expressing and clarifying the natural law engraved on all hearts is the traditional one."

Now the matter of the "natural law engraved on all hearts" is a chapter apart. I will not go into this subject. However, the fact that it can be stated that the Ten Words are "expressing . . . the natural law" shows that their validity is universal and for all times.

It is true that they are formulated in a manner that fits in the Sinaitic covenant. The Second Commandment speaks about the prohibition to make images; the Fourth speaks about a total rest on the seventh day; there is the promise of a long life in the promised land in the Fifth Commandment. Nevertheless, the basic meaning of all the Ten Commandments is rooted in God's divine nature, in what God is and in what He has revealed about Himself. They teach us the basics of a true faith in God who makes His covenant with man. They form the fundamental obligations for man, for his life with God in the covenant. This basic character is the reason why Christ maintains them in the Sermon on the Mount for the New Testament church.

I hope to elaborate on this in a future article.

J. GEERTSEMA

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# Capital punishment<sub>1</sub>

## 1. What are the motives?

While I was preparing for this article, I found a submission in *Reformed Perspective* dealing with the same issue. It was written by Mr. E. Bos, previously crown prosecutor and now judge in The Netherlands. In close connection with what he writes I should like to elaborate somewhat more on certain aspects of this matter.

Recently, dealing with the sixth commandment, I asked the students in my catechism classes to write an essay on this topic. I did so, *before* I had given my own opinion. In this way I could find out what their spontaneous responses were, and I elaborated on the subject after I had read their submissions.

It was interesting to notice how they all, unanimously, were in favour of reinstating capital punishment. Different points of view were brought to the fore. Some very strong and Scriptural points were mentioned; also less pure and un-Biblical motives were given. In this ar-

ticle I will use the information gathered in this way to emphasize some aspects which might be forgotten or neglected once in a while, and to warn against some unsound reasoning which may be used, even with good intentions, but nonetheless not in harmony with what the Bible teaches us.

Some points *against* capital punishment were raised, which are worth considering. Although they are not decisive, they might give an idea of the difficulty and the danger involved in this matter.

Some points were brought forward in *favour* of reinstating this sentence. These arguments are not always pure either; they show us another aspect we have to be aware of, namely, the danger that we are striving for this method of treating those who have committed a terrible crime on the ground of un-Scriptural reasoning.

As a third category we should like to mention some aspects which are not really decisive in this respect either, but which

have to be considered with regard to punishment and all corrective measures in general, to allow us to come to a balanced judgment in this matter.

## 2. Arguments against capital punishment

First we will mention a number of arguments raised against capital punishment. We will just list them for the time being. Later in this article we will evaluate them and give our judgment about them.

### 2a. It is not corrective, but rather revengeful

The most common motive against capital punishment is that every punishment should be corrective, remedial, and restorative, and not revengeful. A punishment should be used either to restore the damage in paying back in a reasonable way and in making up for the damage done by the offence, or to correct the offender in bringing him to terms and in convincing him of the terrible character of his deeds. It might even be used to prevent him from committing the offence again or to protect his potential victims against being exposed to the same violence.

However (these people say), what purpose does capital punishment serve? It does not pay back anything to the victim. It does not restore or remedy any relation. It does not correct the criminal. It can only give a certain feeling of satisfaction to the victim, but (they say) that

## PRESS REVIEW



### Can we be overexposed to Bible teaching?

In a "Guest Editorial" in *The Banner* of December 13, 1983, Dr. Harvey A. Smit wrote some very worthwhile remarks about the complaint of "overexposure" to the teachings of the Bible. He explains that he heard about a Christian couple who did not send "their children to church school." He asked the father why not? and received this answer: "We talked it over carefully and decided to wait until seventh grade. We don't want our boys overexposed." Then he writes:

At a meeting on church school matters . . . one woman said bluntly, "Don't ask me to help my children with any church school homework. We're all too busy already. The church demands too many of our evenings." An even more common complaint is that children are overexposed to the same Bible stories or doctrines. "I've heard that before" or "We studied that already" is a child's cry that seems to gain quick parental support.

Admitting that a remark about overexposure can be caused by an unwillingness to expose a child to a wrong kind or a wrong way of teaching, Dr. Smit writes:

School teachers hear the same complaint when they assign books to be read. In a quick entertainment age, few children are ready to reread and reflect on good literature. Most read for the story line, not for depth of meaning.

But Bible stories aren't meant to be read like comic books.

The same child who is "overexposed" to the story of David and Absalom if he hears it twice in the same quarter willingly watches *The Return of the Jedi* six times in one month and gleefully witnesses roadrunner pulverize the coyote for the 234th time.

This is a point that we all should watch. We live in the age of entertainment. That is what we seek. We avoid exertion and the urge to work hard at knowing something perfectly and doing a perfect job. Often as grown-ups and as par-

ents we are a bad example in this respect for our children, or we lead the children in this way by (over)exposing them to the television. T.V. is a great, ruinous danger in Christian families as it is in *non-Christian* families.

Dr. Smit continues:

The fundamental question is: can we ever be overexposed to the truth? Can we get too much gospel light, too much Christian teaching? . . . . When Paul tells us to think about what is true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, and gracious, he sets no time limit (Phil. 4:8). Korean Christians daily attend 5:30 a.m. prayer meetings at their churches. This practice hasn't hurt their spirituality or hampered the growth of their churches. The opposite is true . . . .

The opposite of this overexposure fear is another friend's remark one Sunday evening. "I've slowly begun to realize," he said, "what all those sermons, worship services, and church education classes have been doing to me. It's been a nudge here, a push there, a

should never be the motive of our judicial system and of the way criminals are treated.

#### 2b. It does not prevent murder

The next argument we often hear for the abolition of capital punishment is that it does not prevent murder. A criminal who kills someone is often not in a mood to use reasonable considerations. He does not realize or think about the consequences of his deeds. Only rarely, if ever, will the knowledge that he might be sentenced to death prevent him from committing his crime. Therefore (people say) capital punishment does not serve any purpose as far as crime prevention is concerned. It only forces people to plead "not guilty," making it harder for the judicial system to work properly. Who would plead "guilty," when he knows that that would mean the end for him, because he will be put to death? It seems that he has nothing to lose.

#### 2c. It is a final, irrevocable measure

A fourth reason adduced against capital punishment is that it eliminates the possibility of correcting judicial errors. It happens once in a while that someone is convicted while innocent. Since every murderer pleads "not guilty" because he has nothing to lose, it becomes very difficult to produce sufficient evidence and the chance increases that someone is convicted and sentenced although he is innocent. If the judges later find out that

it was a mistake, the penalty cannot be revoked and nothing can be restored. Because of the irrevocable nature of capital punishment, many people are of the conviction that we are never allowed to use it.

#### 2d. It is cruel and inhuman

That it is cruel and inhuman is another argument we hear against this punishment. We are living in an era in which corporal punishment has virtually been abolished. We don't have corporal punishment in our schools, many parents have done away with it, and we don't use it in our judicial system any longer, as was the case in the Middle Ages. How can we use the most cruel and far-reaching corporal punishment, the death penalty? Moreover, the way people are put to death, e.g. in the electric chair, is so cruel that even reading a story about it makes one sick. To use this method is considered to be in conflict with human dignity and respect for human life.

#### 2e. We are not allowed to kill

Some argue that we simply are not allowed to kill. No one has the right to take away someone else's life. This argument is not only brought forward by people who only think in terms of "human rights," but it can also be heard with people who base their reasoning on what the Word of God teaches us. They say that in the Old Testament the death penalty might have been an acceptable tool of

justice, but in the New Testament we should do away with it. We have to love our neighbour as ourselves; we have to forgive; we have to show mercy and kindness, even to our enemies. Capital punishment, according to them, contradicts the teaching of Holy Scripture in the New Testament.

#### 2f. There is no possibility of repentance

Another argument which we can hear quite often is that capital punishment takes away every possibility of repentance. As long as a sinner is alive, he can repent. Especially with criminals who have hardened themselves in sin and who have committed terrible deeds, we should deal in a Christian way in giving them the opportunity to amend their life, to show repentance, and to start all over again with a life of new obedience to the Lord. Capital punishment, humanly speaking, takes away the time and opportunity for repentance.

So far the arguments against capital punishment. They form quite a list. They sound impressive and for some they might even be convincing. In the next installment we will try to evaluate these arguments, and then we will see that they are not as solid and convincing as they may seem to be.

— To be continued

Langley, BC

W. POWELSE

warning on the other side. And slowly, bit by bit, my life's been reshaped."

I like to add what the LORD says (present tense, see Heb. 3:7) through Moses in Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them *diligently* to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

as a constant reminder and perpetual teaching.

It is not the amount of teaching; it is our attitude towards it that causes the problems.

#### *Adherence to the Reformed Confession mandatory for the Reformed Church*

I read the following in *The MONTHLY RECORD* of the Free Church of Scotland of October 1983 under the Title "Professor Torrance and the substance of the Faith." The author is the editor, Rev. Donald Macleod.

The Very Reverend Professor T.F. Torrance seems determined (and rightly so) to remind the Church of Scotland of the need to define what its Ordination Formula (kind of subscription form, J.G.) means by the phrase "the substance of the faith . . ." The distinction between "the substance of the faith" and other peripheral and variable elements is a valid one and, as Torrance points out, was clearly enunciated by men of such impeccable orthodoxy as Charles Hodge and Samuel Rutherford (and William Cunningham).

We would also agree that the Nicene Creed . . . is the greatest and the most fundamental of all the Christian Creeds. It should indeed be binding on every ordinand and the doctrines

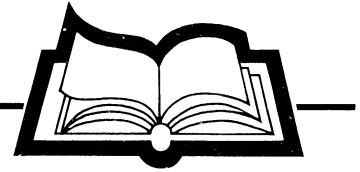
it affirms should stand in the forefront of every preacher's message.

But Professor Torrance's proposal goes further. He wants to make the Nicene Creed the definition of the substance of the faith. It would then become, in effect, the binding theological standard of the Church of Scotland.

It is difficult to see the wisdom of this. For one thing, the proposal fails to distinguish between what may be required of ordinary church members and what may be required of office bearers . . . . If we go on, however, to make such a creed our sole theological standard we are saying, in effect, that we expect no greater doctrinal commitment from ministers than we do from ordinary church members. The theological qualifications or ordinands become the same as those of catechumens.

In my opinion, there is no principle difference between office bearers and "ordinary" members of the church. When a

— Continued on page 38



“ . . . yet Thy footprints were unseen.” Psalm 77:19b

## Hidden footprints

In reflecting upon the mighty power and strength of the LORD as it was revealed in history, the poet of Psalm 77 makes a remarkable observation, an observation which also forms the solution to his distress, and the resolution of his fear and doubt. He is in a situation in which he no longer sees the saving and guiding hand of the LORD. In pain and distress, he is troubled in his heart. “Has the LORD forgotten to be gracious?” he asks; and so he shows how he misses the leading hand of the LORD among His people. But he overcomes his depression and fear by recalling the mighty deeds of the LORD, how He led the people of Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, into the promised land. And then he notes that the way of the LORD had something invisible about it, something mysterious and awesome. His footprints were not known, His path was indiscernable.

In a few short strokes, the psalmist paints a curious and arresting contrast in the LORD’s way of dealing with His people, His way of leading them to His glory. With powerful words he describes the force of God’s activity upon creation, how the whole creation trembled at His presence, and how earth and sea stood in awe of Him, and bowed to His majestic strength. The poet describes a working upon creation which shows that the LORD is the omnipotent God, the Sovereign Ruler who has all the elements at His disposal. Yet, despite the catastrophic upheaval of the powers and elements in creation, earth and water, the LORD’s way could not be traced. He did not leave His mark as He led the people into the promised land. The waters returned to their former place, and aside from the man-made monuments, no passerby could see that the LORD had led His people in such a dramatic way.

This contrast is a very unique and compelling one, and only adds to the greatness and majesty revealed in the LORD’s saving work. In majesty and might He works upon His creation, controlling and governing its every power; yet He honours it, upholds its laws, and as it were covers His tracks as He performs His mighty deeds of deliverance for His people. In powerfully working upon it, He nonetheless does not destroy His creation. His catastrophic power is truly re-creative: it is a power that saves His people, and brings back His creation to rest.

The psalmist also focuses on God’s way of working: it is the way of unexpected intervention, the way of surprise,

the way of coming to the aid of His people precisely when they do not expect it anymore. Such was His way in history; and for the psalmist, such will be His way again. That is his faith and triumph. He knows that the LORD will appear and help him in the same way as He appeared so gloriously in the past.

And did not the LORD appear in the same way — yet with even greater wonder — in the work of His Son Jesus Christ? And does He not work in the same way today? The proclamation of the kingdom, the call to repentance, the miracles of healing and resurrection, all came upon the world as a mighty storm. In His suffering and death, in His preaching and healing, the Lord Jesus came through the land like a mighty whirlwind. His hour was the hour of *crisis*, the time of decision. But after He had been removed out of the way, all seemed to return to normal. Israel and the empire continued on as before. His footprints were unseen.

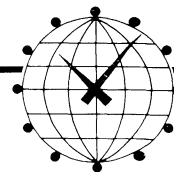
And so it continues today. With power and strength, with the mighty force of the Spirit, the LORD works His salvation in history. He sends forth His Word, He confirms His promises with the sign of baptism, the washing of regeneration. He still radically reshapes and reforms the lives of His saints. Still, we cannot see His way. It is majestic, awe-inspiring, unfathomable, mysterious, and glorious. His way is in holiness. “The wind blows where it wills, you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Jer. 3:8.

So we have comfort for our own day, for our own hearts. Has the LORD forgotten His people? Is His truth and right still living in His Church? Where is He in His power and might?

“Be still! What God in His good pleasure  
To you in wisdom may impart  
Is given you in perfect measure;  
Thus be content within your heart.

Yes, be still, and know that God still works! His ways are unsearchable, His paths are past finding out! His footprints are unseen. But He continues in truth and righteousness. And He will bring us home.

J. DEJONG



## LEFEBVRE ACCUSES VATICAN OF SUPPORTING COMMUNISM

FRANKFURT (KNA) — In a manifest published last December, 1983, the traditionalist and dissident Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre accused the Vatican of not having served world peace since the Second Vatican Council, but of having "supported communism." According to the former Archbishop of Tulle, the Second Vatican Council has had a negative influence not only on the clergy and the believers, but also on the rest of the world. Lefebvre did not expect the situation to change "as long as the modernists have power in Rome." The manifest was presented as an "urgent request" to Pope John Paul II to return "to the truth of the church."

## DOES THE WCC GIVE ROOM FOR REFORMED INFLUENCE?

APELDOORN, THE NETHERLANDS (ND) — In a speech to the student organization of the Theological College of De Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken (Free Reformed), Dr. W. Balke, Dutch Reformed minister, expressed his optimism about the possibility that Reformed Protestants have a positive influence in the World Council of Churches. In a speech titled "International Ecumenical Movements, especially the RES, ICCC and the WCC," Dr. Balke mentioned that the growing influence of evangelicals in the World Council, with their orthodox views, is an important development within the WCC which Reformed people should not overlook. He warned against traditional "Reformed individualism" which places the piety of the individual first and sees the church as a very small group. Since Christ gathers His church everywhere, one should not refrain from being part of an organization like the WCC, according to Dr. Balke.

Dr. Balke's remarks are similar to those made earlier by representatives of the Christian Reformed Church who went as observers to the last held General Assembly of the World Council in Vancouver, 1983. It appears that within Reformed circles there is a growing sympathy for the evangelical mission-oriented segment within the WCC.

## OPC MEMBER DISAGREES WITH SECESSION IN MARYLAND

KAMPEN, THE NETHERLANDS (ND) — In a letter to the Dutch Reformed Daily, *Nederlands Dagblad*, J.P. Elliot of New

York City, studying at the Theological Seminary at Kampen, expressed concern about and disagreement with the recent secession in Laurel, Maryland, involving the Rev. B.R. Hofford, one elder and various members who seceded from the Burtonsville Covenant OPC because of objections against the "open Lord's Supper table." Elliot considered this secession to be untimely and much too quick for "as long as there is the will to live according to the Scriptures and the Confession (and that is definitely the case in the OPC) there is no reason yet to secede." Since Hofford c.s. consider the OPC now to be a false church, Elliot sees the matter becoming very complicated. Many OPC members, perhaps sympathetic to Hofford's views, will find it impossible to follow him. If the Canadian Reformed Churches accept Hofford, they will become "isolated" on the North American continent, according to Elliot. (see: COMMENT)

## A LOOK AT THE AGENDA OF THE REFORMED ECUMENICAL SYNOD (RES)

GRAND RAPIDS, USA (ND) — In July 1984 the next plenary session of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod will be held in Chicago. The agenda for this meeting has been printed and sent to the member churches. Some of the most interesting points are: a request to characterize the South African Apartheid policy as "heresy" and an elaborate study on "human rights." The RES will deal with matters as homosexuality, the authority of Scripture and evangelism. An important item on the agenda is the relationship between the RES and the World Council of Churches, especially the issue of dual membership in the RES and WCC. Three churches have requested to be admitted to the RES: the Associate Presbyterian Church in Mexico, the Greek Evangelical Church and the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

## THIRD CONFERENCE INDONESIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

SINTAGI, INDONESIA (ND) — The Reformed Churches in Indonesia recently (December) held their third conference, this time in Sintagi, Kalimantan Barat. Purpose of the conference was to continue building an independent church life for churches which for a large part are still in a mission(ary) situation. These church-

es are the result of Mission work done by the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland and the Canadian Reformed Churches. The first of these conferences took place in 1976 (Kouh, Irian Jaya), the second in 1978 (Sumba) while the next conference is planned for 1987. An important point of discussion was the relationship with the Indonesian government, e.g. with respect to the role of church and government in solemnization of marriages. The churches decided to accept one name: The Reformed Churches of Indonesia (Geraja Reformasi di Indonesia), although each region shall retain a certain independence. It was decided to give more effort towards coordinating education, especially with respect to material and curriculum.

## COMMENT: AN UNTIMELY AND RASH SECESSION?

Last year, after the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church rejected an appeal of the Rev. B.R. Hofford c.s. against the "open Lord's Supper table" practice within the OPC, a secession took place within the OP Church of Burtonsville MD., and the Rev. Hofford presenting an Act of Secession and Succession, formed the Tri-County Reformed Church of Laurel, MD. It is obvious that this act would meet with criticism from within and outside the OPC. Criticism from within has come from J.P. Elliot (see above).

Elliot agrees with Hofford's objections to the current practices in the OPC with respect to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. He points in this respect to a minority report at the General Assembly which went in the same direction, and concludes that more people in the OPC share Hofford's concerns. What Elliot does not agree with is Hofford's decision to break with the OPC. He feels that it is wrong, after one appeal has been denied, to secede from a church and to consider that church false. It would have been better, according to Elliot, if Hofford instead had decided to try to convince the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of his case by publications and sermons etc. He concludes that Hofford apparently doesn't want to take the trouble to do so.

Elliot intimates in his letter to *Nederlands Dagblad* that the Hofford case had been presented too much from a *Canadian Reformed* perspective by someone who obviously feels that things are not right in the OPC. His letter is designed

to present a (more balanced?) view of a concerned OPC member. Besides, we are told, the information given by the Canadian correspondent does not reflect the *majority* view within the Canadian Reformed Churches, but that of a minority out of touch with age-old contacts between Reformed and Presbyterian Churches. Elliot possibly knows our churches better than I do.

Did Hofford and those with him act rashly in seceding from the OPC when they did? Were other means still open to these concerned OPC members than the one drastic step of secession? Certainly, the opinions will vary on this point; there will be those also within the Canadian Reformed Churches who agree with Elliot.

One can always argue whether *the moment* for secession has come. To stay or not to stay, that is indeed the question! Many who agreed with Rev. H. de Cock c.s. still felt that secession from a church, which *maintained* an un-Scriptural practice and forced this upon its members, was wrong. The same happened in the time of the Liberation. Many of those concerned, felt that it would go too far to liberate themselves. That Hofford would be criticised for his decision was to be expected. But the criticism, then, should take into account the *facts*, also in their chronological order.

Hofford's objections to an *un-Scriptural* practice do not date only back to last year. He has gone a lengthy and careful route, travelling what we would call the "church orderly" way, so it is not just a matter of "one appeal," but a going on and coming to the *conclusion* of a way of appeal open to him by Presbyterian order of government. On that way he has not met with much support, at least not from any official judiciary of the OP Church. In the meantime he was *forced* to administer the Lord's Supper in a manner not in accordance with the requirements of the Word of God. May a servant of the Lord subject himself to such coercion?

This matter of the manner of celebration of the Lord's Supper happens to date back to 1971, when a special committee of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic outlined the methods to determine who is eligible to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Two ways were considered possible: letting the individual participants themselves decide or leaving this decision in each case up to the session (= consistory). The Presbytery felt that it would be wrong to exclude members of other (evangelical) churches, in effect, that while the table should be restricted, it should not be closed.

In the course of time, the Rev. Hofford and others became increasingly dissatisfied with the accepted procedure of letting every one decide for himself whether

or not to attend the Lord's Supper. When the Rev. Hofford indicated that he could no longer "in good conscience" continue thus to administer the Lord's Supper, the Burtonsville session agreed to an interim period in which only certified members of the OPC could attend the Lord's Supper and during which the session would study the matter further. This period expired, and the session, disagreeing with its minister, went back to the old practice. Hofford c.s. *officially* complained to the session, but the session *denied* the complaint. The complaint was then in 1982 brought before the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. This Presbytery also denied the complaint, however without giving grounds. In June 1983, the General Assembly dealt with the complaint, and also turned it down. The General Assembly saw the closed table as a form of "denominational exclusivism." The current practice in the OPC was officially sanctioned at the "highest judiciary" of that church.

The appellants had asked the General Assembly, in the event that their complaint would be denied, that the Lord's Supper matter be studied further, e.g. by a special committee. But the Assembly *refused* to do so, thereby indicating that the matter was *final*.

The appellants were concerned mainly with two aspects of this decision: it did not deal with their Biblical argumentation and it cut off further consideration of the matter. And, finally, it forced a minister to administer the Lord's Supper in a manner contrary to the Word of God.

The matter of "open" or "restricted" or "closed" communion is not an *unknown* matter in the OPC. Twice the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic had to deal with it. *All* the OP Churches were informed of the complaints. Various of the OPC's own scholars have pointed out that the *session* must exercise full discipline over those who attend the Lord's Supper and that this is not possible with those of other denominations (see e.g. John Murray, *Collected Writings II*, pp. 381 ff.). But the General Assembly chose to decide otherwise and to close the door for further study and consideration on an *official* basis. It seems to me that Elliot is unfair when he asks Hofford to do individually and unofficially what judiciaries have officially refused to do. Don't place the onus on a local pastor, when the task has been lawfully put on the shoulders of those called to deal with the matter. It is also quite improper to suggest that a man who has struggled with a matter in the Presbytery for many years (and suffered the accompanying abuse) cannot be bothered to take the trouble to press his case.

The OPC clearly wishes to maintain its practice. In the local session of Burtonsville

there was also no room left on this point. It was a matter of submitting or secession.

To secede or not to secede, that seems to be the question for Elliot. Those who do not secede, remain responsible for the decisions and course of the OPC in this matter. Let us hope that Elliot, and other concerned members of the OPC, do what Hofford c.s. are accused of not having done: publish, preach and sound the alarm!

Elliot also suggested that if the Canadian Reformed Churches accept Hofford and the Tri-County Reformed Church, this will have dire consequences for the contacts between the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches. Classis Ontario South of December 1983 received a letter from Pastor Steve Larson of the Beverly OPC of Los Angeles, with a similar warning, urging classis to consult with the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic before proceeding further. The Canadian Reformed Churches must indeed to all things properly and in good order. Synod 1983 requested its Deputies for Contact with the OPC also to inquire in the so-called "Hofford-case" and the matter of restricted vs. closed communion. Our churches wish to deal with the matter communally and officially. The OPC might perhaps be more receptive to input from Canadian Reformed side than from its own members.

But the Tri-County Reformed Church of Laurel should meanwhile not be left out in the cold. If this church would be accepted into the Federation of American/Canadian Reformed Churches, this would be done on its own merits, in accordance with Reformed Confession and polity. We must be prudent, but should not feel threatened.

Cl. S.



Clerk of the Canadian Reformed  
Church of Toronto:

Mr. L. Kampen  
425 Easy Street

Richmond Hill, ON L4C 3Z5  
Phone: (416) 884-3130

**Did you pay your  
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# Yak'isda Bik'ah

## Smithers Indian Ministry Newsletter No. 5 December 1983

We are grateful to be able to report to you that the work could be continued unhindered and that new programs could be initiated with a good response. The Lord is giving us opportunities to sow the seed: may He also give the growth and fruits to this work in His Kingdom. At the same time satan does not sit by idle either. He will do what he can to discredit our work and distract the people who have shown interest. It is a spiritual battle indeed but we know that we are on the side of Him who is Lord of lords and King of kings!

### NEW PROGRAMS

As we mentioned in our previous Newsletter, we planned to start several new programs in the fall to reach more people. We are thankful that our plans could materialize and that we could add the following to our regular schedule:

#### Teeners' Bible Study Club

This intends to be a follow-up of the Teener's Bible Camp. We meet weekly on Thursday evening and follow a systematic Bible Study, discuss timely topics, do some singing and guitar playing and have some games available. Mr. Joe Plug, a local teacher, has been found willing to help out for these evenings. The response? We have had anywhere from ten to nil attending of which four to five are "regulars," depending on what other events are going on in town that evening. Yet we have had very good discussions, wherein they come with many frank and open questions. Betty Paul, a girl who works at the Youth Centre, also attends and draws other teenagers to the Bible Study, especially older girls, which we certainly appreciate.

#### "Manna" Lunch Hour

In October we started with a "soup-kitchen" every Friday lunch hour. Thirteen ladies of the congregation have offered to bring in soup for this purpose while an Indian woman offered her help in serving. So far this program is working out well and we do have a regular number of people coming in, ranging from 3 to 8 visitors, the majority of whom are alcoholics who spend their days wandering back and forth on Main Street.

Closer contacts have been established resulting in good discussions. Frequently they will turn to me for help and counseling. This program at the same time creates much goodwill in the native community by showing concern for these outcasts of white-as well as native society. Most of them have come after a personal invitation.

#### Youth Group

Also in October we started a sort of a Sunday School called the Sunday Morning Youth Group for the ages of 6 to 12 years. This is held at 11:30 and an older girl of the congregation helps out with this program. About 14 children enrolled of which 10 attend quite regular. For the Bible story we divide into two groups. The children living further away are being

picked up. Except for one or two ram-bunctious ones attention and cooperation is good. It also gives me opportunities to visit new families when the children bring new students.

#### Moricetown

The regular work also expanded geographically since we now have regular meetings in Moricetown with the young people and others whom we got to know through the Summer Youth Camps. After visiting several of the parents and various talks with the people of the Band Council and Community Hall Committee they decided to donate the Community Hall free for our purposes one evening per month, (the 3rd Friday). We are very happy with this decision not only because we now have a meeting facility there but also

ACTIVITY	WHEN?	FOR WHOM?	WHAT DO WE DO?
COFFEE HOUR	Wed.-Sat. 11-12 noon	Anyone who feels like dropping in!	Free Coffee (and a chat!)
BIBLE STUDY AND FELLOWSHIP	Wed. Evening 8 p.m.	adults	Bible Study, discussion, singing, prayer, fellowship.
TEENERS' BIBLE STUDY CLUB	Thurs. Evening 8 p.m.	Young People: 13 yrs. and over	Bible Study, singing, topics social activities etc.
GET-TOGETHERS	4th Friday of the month 7:30 p.m.	Kids of summercamps and others who are interested.	Social evenings, games, outings, refreshments, singing etc.
DROP-IN	2nd Friday of the month 7:30 p.m.	Anyone	Games, chat, reading, refreshments etc.
"MANNA" LUNCH HOUR	Friday noon	Adults	Free hot lunch — (soupkitchen)
SUNDAY MORNING YOUTH GROUP	Sun. morning 11:30 a.m.	Children: 6-12 years	Bible Story, singing, crafts.
SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE	When enough are interested	Anyone, all ages!	Worship: Bible message, singing, prayer, fellowship.

because it shows a positive attitude from their side towards our work. They have said as much: "What you do is good for our children and therefore for our community!"

Our first meeting or "Get-Together" was held on Nov. 18th and was attended by 21 young people, mostly teenagers. As you will know, Moricetown is a reserve, 32 km. from Smithers. The attitude and behaviour of these young people are quite different from those who spend most of their time on Main Street and in the arcade. They took good part in the singing, listened very well to the Bible story and enjoyed the games we had organized for them. Our next meeting with them will be a Christmas celebration on Dec. 16, D.V. With the older ones we have arranged a separate evening in Smithers as well, to take into account the different needs for the difference in age-groups. A schedule of all the activities which take place at the Centre is posted on the Bulletin Board of the Centre and was also published in the local newspaper (see insert).

**BARRIERS**

We may, of course, expect all kinds

of barriers and difficulties. It is against sinful, human nature to seek God and submit oneself to His Word. Further, we are not the only ones who have approached them with the gospel in one form or another. Satan has done and is doing his work as well by making people apathetic and sowing confusion about the gospel wherever he can. Allow me to list some of the tactics he uses to keep people away from us.

*Traditional Religion*

No, I am not in the first place thinking of the actual native religion of this area. Very little knowledge seems to have remained of what their forefathers really believed. For many the Roman Catholic Church as become part of their tradition even though for most it is only a nominal affiliation. Certain rituals are performed but it has not given them the only comfort of belonging to Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. Yet there appears to be a certain loyalty to this institution even when they will hardly ever attend church.

*Charismatic Movement*

Very confusing to many is the char-

ismatic movement which is strong among the native population. The "joyful noise" appeals to many while at the same time it boosts their ego: there you can finally be someone! Your spirit is as good as someone else's! Further, they attract "exciting" speakers and musical groups. You can go there and still remain Roman Catholic as well. Often these matters have to be discussed in our Bible Study evenings. Some do not come back and prefer the excitement. Others do prefer the security of the written Word over against the wishy-washy testimonies of individuals who claim to have the Spirit.

*Irregularity*

One of the major difficulties in this work is the irregular attendance of those who show interest. Of course we have to realize that many consider themselves "religious" even if they go to church a few times a year and now we expect a weekly attendance! Many are irregular in all their activities, whether it is going to school, going to work and even their own native events. Much patience will be needed but in the meantime it is sometimes frustrating and difficult to follow a systematic program.

*Peer Group Pressure*

I believe that this is especially strong among native people, adults as well as young people. We have to realize what it really means for a young person who is popular is his own street society to attend Bible study in the Christian Indian Centre.

It seems that the odds are in favour of satan but we know better. God will gather all those whom He has chosen unto eternal life through the preaching of His Word. No one can resist His work. In that confidence we may work.

C. VAN SPRONSEN

As you can see from our Balance, we are, at present, in a sound financial position, for which we are very thankful.

We have a loan from the Church at Smithers on which we are only paying interest but hope to be able to pay some on the principal in the near future.

Those of you who have donated to Home Mission in the past year and would like a receipt for income tax purposes please drop me a note with your return address and I will send you one.

We are very thankful that we may be involved in this work and grateful for your financial support, but especially for your prayers. That it may be to the glory of our heavenly Father!

D. BANDSTRA, Treasurer  
Home Mission Board  
Box 3868  
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

**FROM THE TREASURER**

*Financial Report for the months of Sept., Oct., and Nov. 1983.*

<i>Balance — August 31/83</i>		\$9,826.00	
<i>Received on requisitions from:</i>			
Abbotsford .....	\$ 1,591.84		
Chilliwack .....	1,213.16		
Cloverdale .....	—		
Coaldale .....	3,211.73		
Edmonton (Imm.) .....	582.04		
Edmonton (Prov.) .....	—		
Houston .....	420.75		
Surrey .....	6,535.65		
Smithers .....	2,215.95		
	<u>\$15,771.12</u>	\$15,771.12	
<i>Collections:</i>			
Carman .....	\$ 842.38		
Chatham .....	381.99		
Fergus .....	368.00		
Toronto .....	1,867.37		
Langley .....	1,854.28		
Smithers .....	575.50		
London .....	698.89		
Burlington (W) .....	677.17		
Burlington (Ebenezer) .....	1,392.83		
Watford .....	599.96		
	<u>\$ 9,258.37</u>	\$ 9,258.37	
<i>Donations:</i>			
"Bloeiende Amandelboom" \$50.—,			
Others: \$50.—, \$1,000.—, \$29.17, \$50.—, \$50.—,			
\$50.—, \$50.—		\$ 1,329.17	
<i>Miscellaneous</i>		326.70	
	Total	<u>\$ 36,511.36</u>	
<i>Total Expenditures (Sept.-Nov.)</i>		<u>21,419.36</u>	
<i>Balance Nov. 30, 1983</i>		\$ 15,092.00	



If things depended on the quantity of faith, I would say that it takes a lot of faith to believe the claim of the head of Canada Post that ninety percent of the first-class mail was delivered on time. Today is the thirteenth of January, and I still have not received my first-class mail *Clarion*. I could read the Year End issue over and over again, but who wants to look back every time? I don't.

As a result, I do not know whether there are brothers and sisters whose names should be found in our column because of a wedding anniversary. I did learn about another anniversary, although not a wedding anniversary. This knowledge I gathered from the Orangeville bulletin, *The Sheepfold*. The Rev. M. Werkman celebrated his 12½ years in the ministry on December 27, and the Orangeville congregation apparently was aware of this. Ministers don't have many secrets when the Yearbook spells out all sorts of particulars. In any case: we congratulate our colleague with this gift, and wish him much wisdom and skill for his further ministry.

Let not any colleague who was not mentioned in this column on the same occasion feel bad about it: if I had not read it in the Orangeville bulletin I would not have known about it either. I don't keep a file on these events.

"Considering the dilapidated state of *Books of Praise* and *Hymn Books* for our guests, they will be replaced when the newly approved version rolls off the printing press." This is a quotation from the Ebenezer Burlington bulletin. There will be more churches where the same sigh goes up. I don't think that it is necessary to decide that the old books will be replaced, for they have been replaced by synodical decision. All we have to do is wait till the adopted version comes off the press.

When will that be? I don't know. Neither does the committee on the *Book of Praise*, as I heard from one of them. What they are waiting for is the text of the Forms (Confessional and Liturgical), the Prayers, and the Church Order. And this text cannot be given to them until the proofs of the *Acts* have been read and — if necessary — corrected. These cannot be read and corrected if they have not been received. In other words: we wait for the proofs to come from Premier Printing. They are working hard on them, I am sure, but we should recall that it is just one-and-a-half months ago that Synod was closed. Of these one-and-a-half months several days were lost due to the holiday season. Even with the modern means of technology we cannot expect miracles to happen. Add to this that our first clerk e.t. had to catch up with work in his own congregation, and we can see that it may take a few months yet. However, we have been waiting for more than thirty years; what do a few months mean when compared to such a long time?

Burlington South does not have a church building of their own as yet. It was realized that no funds might be available for an organ once the possibility is there to acquire a building of their own. When, therefore, the consistory received "a donation from a brother without any specific direction," they decided "to establish an 'Organ Fund' with this donation." Smart thinking.

This brings me to an item which appeared in some bulletins regarding Fergus. Yes, dear readers, sometimes we are deemed worthy of mention in other bulletins. We remain humble in spite of this honour, don't worry. Yet I should like to make

a few remarks in connection with the item I am referring to.

In one of the bulletins the message read as follows, "On Thursday evening there will be an organ concert in the church building of Fergus. They have just installed a new 'Johannus' organ."

Let me tell you that the concert did take place, and that it was on a "Johannus Organ." It was given by the well-known organist Andre Knevel.

What is a wrong impression is that this instrument is said to have been "installed" in our church building. It was there just temporarily, on trial.

The case is that our organ needs extensive repairs, in fact, a complete overhaul. As there were not many funds or large funds available to install one when the church building was completed in 1962, the organ was put together from all sorts of parts and remnants. It served us well but now we are faced with reality: the money which was not available twenty years ago has multiplied, so to speak, although not in our pockets.

Our organists requested permission from the Committee of Administration to have a "Johannus Organ" on trial for some weeks, and this is what was done.

I must say that, in its kind, it is one of the better ones I have heard. If a congregation does not have the funds for a pipe organ and wants to have something until such a time when they can afford one, it would certainly be wise to investigate the above mentioned instrument.

I have, however, not heard anyone in the congregation who was enthusiastic about it. And all to whom I talked about it were convinced that we should have our pipe organ upgraded. It will cost more than the instrument we had on trial for some weeks, but is well worth the money. Pipes have a voice of their own, an electronic instrument has not. We discovered that it was very difficult to sing with the latter, and were afraid that an "unknown tune" would have resulted in confusion. You need a good, clear leading voice to guide the singing of unknown tunes; this instrument did not produce such a clear voice.

In connection with the above I would like to state what my main objection is to electronic instruments. I was asked this question during our trial period.

My main objection is that it is fake. Each instrument has a voice of its own, whether it is a trumpet or a guitar, an oboe or a pan-pipe. Not every instrument is suitable for accompanying the congregational singing, but at least they have their own, characteristic sound and voice.

An electronic instrument *pretends* to have a voice of its own, but it has none. It only imitates. It makes you *believe* that there is a bourdon, a prestant, a rohrlöte, a trumpet, and so on, but none of these stops is there in reality. It is all make believe. The imitation may be so good that it is extremely difficult to determine what you are hearing: a true pipe organ or an electronic imitation. And there are definitely many instances when I would not be able to tell the difference. And yet: imitation and make believe should not have a place in the service of the Lord. There everything should be genuine. Do not the provisions which the Lord gave for the tabernacle and its service, its parts and ingredients tell us this clearly and distinctly? THAT is my main objection.

Let us continue.

Burlington South was mentioned above. Rev. J. DeJong writes in his bulletin about the synodical decision to insert the word "Christian" in the Apostles' Creed. On purpose I use the verb "insert" and not "reinsert" as it is falsely called in several publications. This word was never in the Apostles' Creed as the Canadian Reformed Churches had it and has now been inserted for the first time, whereby we have abandoned the path of ecumenicity in this respect.

Rev. DeJong writes the following about this decision.

Since the term does not appear in the older Latin and Greek texts, and the reasons for including it have never been officially accepted, I consider its inclusion to be both superfluous and disharmonious; we no longer have an unbroken line between the first confessors of the truth and the present confessors.

I fully agree with this and am waiting anxiously for the *Acts* to say more about it.

The Grand Rapids Church has been in the news lately more often than was the case in the past. This is the result of their position in the United States and the contacts which they have made.

Being the only church south of the border to which our brothers and sisters could turn for help, the Grand Rapids Church has been asked for its cooperation in taking care of the holidayers in Florida. At one of the classes in Ontario South the following motion was adopted.

Classis thanks the Church at Grand Rapids for the report.

Classis acknowledges that institution according to Art. 38 Church Order is not possible.

Classis considers that the avenue of Art. 39 Church Order has not been exhausted by the Church at Grand Rapids.

Classis advises the Church at Grand Rapids according to Art. 39 Church Order to take up contact with the home churches of those brothers and sisters residing in Palmetto, Florida, for the purpose of obtaining the consent of these churches to supervise church services for these brothers and sisters in Palmetto, Florida.

We are aware, the Grand Rapids Church is also in contact with the Rev. Hofford at Laurel, Maryland. Classis Ontario South of December 14, 1983, made some decisions regarding the requests from this minister as well.

Rev. Kingma writes further,

Rev. Peterson who was representing the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at our Synod, wrote that he, and some other ministers want to meet with your pastor in the beginning of 1984, to seek closer contact with our church . . . .

Contact with the Reformed Church in the USA (RCUS), Eureka Classis, is to be kept up too. These churches are in the process of adopting the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort, besides the Heidelberg Catechism. The next classis will deal with this issue.

We are thankful for all the contacts that we have via our Grand Rapids sister church. It is a good thing that our latest general synod appointed the Grand Rapids Church as the address church in the United States, besides Burlington East as the address church in Canada.

I should like you to note the correct way in which in the above mention is made of a classis. "The next classis," "The Classis of Ontario-South of December 14, 1983."

I also quote from another bulletin: "On Thursday a 'Classis North' will be held."

This is the correct way of putting it.

The wrong way is what I found in another bulletin: "Last Thursday there was a meeting of Classis North in Toronto . . . . A preliminary report of the classis meeting held on December 8 was given."

There is in the Reformed Church Polity no "classis meeting" or "meeting of classis." A classis is held, for this classis is the meeting. A classis may have several sessions, a morning session, an afternoon session, a session on the 14th and one on the 15th because it could not finish its agenda, but it is wrong to state that a classis holds a meeting or that a classis meeting will take place. We should, also in our terminology, avoid everything that might lead into the direction of permanent broader assemblies which meet once in a while.

No objection can be raised to the adjective: a classical meeting, for then the character of the meeting, the "level" is being described. The noun is definitely wrong.

Herewith we leave Ontario, skip the deep-freeze prairies, and go to the not-so-mild-either Houston.

The question of solemnization of marriages is being discussed here and there. Carman — just to mention this — has appointed a committee to draw up a report to guide the consistory in its deliberations regarding the question whether this solemnization is to take place in a worship service or in a private ceremony (which may be held in the church building).

Houston came to the following conclusion regarding solemnization of marriages.

It was decided that marriage ceremonies will only be performed when both parties are confessing — I prefer "communicant" members VO — members of the church. This decision was reached in light of the fact that marriage is a holy institution before the Lord. Before a young couple is ready to commit themselves to each other they should have committed their lives to the Lord. You can only build a life together if you are one in faith. The view is taken that the minister does not perform marriages on the authority of the government but in the Name of the Lord. The government only recognizes and registers that fact.

I can follow this and express my agreement with it. What I do not understand is part of the following decision.

It is also decided to keep a record book in which all baptisms and weddings will be recorded, as well as a log to record decisions made by the consistory.

I have no problem with the recording of baptisms and consistory decisions. I only hope that the latter will be kept up. Many consistories at one time or another made a similar decision and I am wondering how many of them have such a complete file of decisions.

What I have trouble with is the book in which weddings will be recorded. Does the Church at Houston not have such a book? Then they had better ask for one as soon as possible from the Director of Vital Statistics in Victoria. In my days such a book was provided by that office and ministers were required to keep an accurate record of all marriages they solemnized. The records in the book should match those sent to the Division of Vital Statistics. Perhaps, however, I don't understand the decision, but I am wondering, because the book remains the property of the church. I don't think that it disappeared into Rev. Visscher's moving van when he left for Ottawa!

The general news from the Fraser Valley first.

"We may inform you that for this issue we had to send out almost 2,000 more copies than the first issue." No, sorry to disappoint you, these words do not refer to our dear *Clarion*, alas. Would it were true!

The above words refer to the second issue of *Evangel* and I am very happy with this little note. The periodical is received well as far as I could conclude from the various bulletins, and this is encouraging for those who give their time and skill to prepare it. The extra two thousand copies were requested in

— Continued on page 45

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# Houston receives a new Minister

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In the morning service of October 9th, 1983, Rev. C. Van Spronsen ordained Candidate E. Kampen of Burlington, as Minister of the Word in the Church at Houston, which had been vacant only for a very short time.

The text chosen for this ordination was taken from II Cor. 5:20: "So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

The theme of the sermon was: *A Minister of the Word is an Ambassador for Christ*. This was expounded under two headings:

1. What this means for the minister, and
2. What this means for the congregation.

Paul knew that he spoke with the authority inherent in his office. He was sent by God with the Word of God even as an ambassador is appointed by his sovereign and authorized to speak on his behalf. Whoever he may be, whatever his personality may be, what counts is what he says on behalf of his sovereign. That part a minister of the Word has in common with the apostle. It defines and marks off carefully what the task of a minister is. He may and must proclaim the full counsel of the Lord as revealed to us in His Word, and may do so with boldness and authority. You should at all times be able to say: "The Lord says" and the congregation should be able to verify this with the written Word.

Once we see this clearly it is also defined how a congregation must receive a faithful minister. His personality, presentation and approach are no longer of primary importance, but the first question is whether he faithfully represents his sovereign and if so, his word is to be received as the Word of God and not the word of man. "God is making His appeal through us," Paul states, "we beseech on behalf of Christ." A faithful message cannot be ignored neither can it be disputed. A congregation must receive its minister with joy and thankfulness, because the minister may speak on behalf of Christ.

In the afternoon Rev. E. Kampen conducted his first sermon as Minister of the Word. He chose his text from II Cor. 2:14-17.

The apostle Paul worried about the

Corinthians who had rejected him and turned after other teachers. Paul wrote a very strong letter to point out their sin. He was anxious to know the result of this letter. There was repentance. This causes Paul to give thanks to God. Paul is overwhelmed with God's grace in which He uses human ministers to spread the gospel, which our text calls a fragrance. And this ministry is a pleasing aroma of Christ to God. The theme was: The ministry of men is an aroma of Christ to God.

1. Why this ministry is an aroma.
2. The twofold power of this aroma.
3. Conduct fitting such an aroma.

1. God is moving through this world in a giant victory parade. In this victory parade in which God shows off His saints and their salvation, the apostles and all the preachers of the apostolic word have a special place. Through them God is pleased to reveal the gospel of Jesus Christ. This gospel is described as a fragrance. Because the preachers work so closely with the Word they pick up the scent of its content, the fragrance of Christ. Therefore the preachers can be called a fragrance. If God is pleased to use human ministers, we should not dare to ignore it, or think little of it, for it is a powerful aroma.

2. The ministry of the Word is one of the keys of the Kingdom. It speaks of promises and demands. The Word is a rock for rising and falling. To the faithful, the ministry that is so pleasing to God, gives off a fragrance of life. The gospel and those who bring it are a fragrance of life, for Christ as preached by them is the Bread of life. For the unbelievers the smell of the gospel is fatal rather than vital. The gospel and those who bring it smell like an open grave to them, for the smell of the beautiful gospel reminds them of their sins. They try to remove that deadly fragrance by attacking those who carry the fragrance. This fragrance of the gospel and its twofold power has shown itself wherever Paul preached.

3. Paul was overwhelmed by this grace of God. He shows that we should not take the office lightly and become peddlers of the Word of God, who are in the ministry for the money. Such peddlers are still found on radio and T.V.; they wa-

ter the gospel down and get rich as they sell religion like aspirin. Paul by his life shows a conduct fitting the ministry. He is ruled, first of all, by sincerity. He is also a commissioned man who only speaks what he is told.

It is a great responsibility and difficult task to be an aroma to God. It can only be done in covenant communion with Christ. If Christ were not there with His sin forgiving sacrifice, one could never speak before God. We may marvel, who is able to do these things? Yet God is pleased to use our human ministry to make known the fragrance of the gospel. *Accept* no other ministry than that which is an aroma of Christ to God. *Pray* that a ministry with this aroma that pleases God and moves men may also be found here in Houston.

After the service, Br. J. Ten Brinke spoke a few words of congratulations, on behalf of the consistory, to Rev. Kampen and family, parents, and grandparent. He also read a letter of congratulations from our former minister, Rev. G. Visscher and family.

Rev. C. Van Spronsen spoke on behalf of the Church at Smithers, congratulating the Church of Houston as well as Rev. Kampen and family. Br. R. Klaver of Smithers spoke on behalf of classis pacific, also conveying congratulations, and the blessing of the Lord, to the Church of Houston, and Kampen family.

On Wednesday, October 12th, 1983, the congregation gathered for a social evening to welcome the newly ordained minister and family. The chairman Br. J. Ten Brinke spoke on behalf of the consistory and congregation. Br. Onno Vanden-Hoek spoke on behalf of the Men and Women Society and presented a book containing the history of Houston, and Br. Ralph Fennema Jr. presented two beautiful big plants to the Kampen family on behalf of the Young Peoples Society. On behalf of the Ladies Aid, Sr. Fienna Dykstra made a presentation of a book on crafts to Mrs. Kampen. At the end of the evening Rev. Kampen expressed his appreciation for this evening, and is looking forward to start his work here in Houston in good harmony and cooperation.

R. FENNEMA

# League of Canadian Reformed Women Societies in Ontario

## LEAGUE DAY 1983

Mid-October and the days for our 22nd Annual Convention had arrived. Outside the rain poured down steadily and the buses were late. But all that was soon forgotten as we gathered as sisters inside the bright warm building of the Bethel Canadian Reformed Church in Toronto. A pleasant mixture of warm greetings and chatter, hot coffee, and the goodies served by the sisters of the Toronto Society warmed us all for the beginning of the morning programme.

This was opened with singing several stanzas of Psalm 81, Scripture reading from Proverbs 31, and prayer. Mrs. Lyn Van Delden, League president, welcomed all the sisters, a number of brethren, and guests from Australia and out West.

As theme for the day Mrs. Van Delden had chosen part of Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." Referring back to the very energetic and capable woman of Proverbs 31, of whom we read in the opening moments of our programme, Mrs. Van Delden pointed out that the source of this woman's wisdom is nothing else than the fear of the Lord. And this source of wisdom is daily available to us too in the Word of God. How the fear of the Lord proves to be an unending blessing in the lives of God's children will be shown, Mrs. Van Delden said, both, in the essay of this morning and in the speech to be held as part of the afternoon programme. With this she wished everyone a joyful and profitable day.

The primary announcement was, of course, the election, the previous evening, of a new corresponding secretary to the Board of the League in the person of Mrs. Willa Dale Smid, who was duly introduced to the gathering.

At the delegates' meeting the Societies had elected to have the League Day collection for the Mission Aviation Fellowship.

Congratulations had been received from the Bond van Gereformeerde Vrouwen in Holland.

Annual reports from the secretary and treasurer were read. And then it was time for the roll call which showed that 322 sisters were in attendance. We joined then, in singing of our oneness in faith and reliance on God's faithful Word with the words of our League Song.

"Jacob blesses his sons," was the title of Mrs. Hetty Boot's essay on Gen. 49:1-28 and Rev. 7:1-12. She showed

how these blessings go far beyond those 12 men gathered around the aged patriarch's deathbed. In giving each of his sons the blessing suitable to him, Jacob prophecies concerning the future of the tribes. We also see at work God's sovereign grace in giving special blessings to Judah, first of all, but also to Joseph.

After singing of Psalm 68 we briefly discuss the relationship between prophecy and blessing, and how in time some tribes prove themselves more faithful to God's covenant than others, and how blessing comes in the way of obedience. The morning programme was then closed with the singing of several stanzas of Psalm 147.

A short drive through Thornhill brought us to the Thornhill Community Centre where the hostess Society served us a delicious lunch. The afternoon programme was then opened with the singing of our national anthem. By way of entertainment the hostess Society treated us to an interesting pictorial lesson in Canadian geography. Competition was pretty stiff, but the lesson went down very well with everyone.

After Scripture reading from Gen. 2 and Eph. 5, and the singing of Psalm 19: 4, 5 and 6, Rev. Mulder was given the floor for his speech entitled, "Flesh of my Flesh" in which he showed how our human history began with a wedding in Paradise, and will end with a wedding feast in the new Paradise, and the many practical implications of this. We sang several stanzas of Psalm 138 and then held a brief discussion on the topic.

Mrs. Van Delden offered sincere thanks to Rev. Mulder for his inspiring and informative speech, to Mrs. Janssen for providing musical accompaniment the whole day, and to the hostess Society who took such excellent care of us. She also gave special thanks to Mrs. Boot, the morning essayist, for all her work also as board member.

Mrs. Ludwig, League vice-president then spoke some words of appreciation to the president. The singing of Hymn 59 and Rev. Mulder's closing thanksgiving and prayer ended the meeting.

Afterwards, over coffee and refreshments, we all agreed that the weather hadn't dampened our spirits in any way, or our enjoyment of this day of fellowship and study. And on this note ended our 22nd Annual Convention.

E. HOF SINK,  
Secretary

## PRESS REVIEW

— Continued from page 29

person publicly professes his faith in a Reformed church and declares that he acknowledges the doctrine of that church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation, then he declares that he agrees with that doctrine. And that doctrine is what we confess in the Three Forms of Unity. Yet, I realize that not every communicant member is expected to know the confession as thoroughly as an office bearer. But let us continue to listen to the argumentation of the Rev. Macleod.

Another problem is that Professor Torrance's proposal would not even remotely safeguard the Protestant character of the Kirk. Any Roman Catholic priest could quite happily sign the Nicene Creed. All credit to them for that. But if the Church of Scotland is to have any continuity with its own past, surely it must affirm that the substance of its faith is the substance of the *Protestant* faith. Indeed, the present legal position anchors the Kirk immovably in the Reformation: "The Church of Scotland adheres to the Scottish Reformation."

The Nicene Creed would be even less effective as a protection of the *Reformed* character of the Kirk. . . . To this day, through its commitment to the Westminster Confession, the Church of Scotland professes to adhere to "the sum and substance of the faith of the Reformed church." There is absolutely nothing in the Nicene Creed which is Reformed. On all those issues which distinguish Calvinism from Lutheranism and Arminianism, it is silent. . . . Professor Torrance's own position is not clear. Does he want to jettison the Kirk's attachment to "the sum and substance of the Reformed faith"?

The greatest problem of all, however, is that the Nicene Creed does not safeguard the gospel. The gospel includes those doctrines affirmed by Nicea, notably the enfleshment of God in Christ. But it also includes others on which Nicea says nothing. The most obvious of these is justification by faith — the article by which, as Luther pointed out, the church stands or falls. There is every reason to think that Paul would have agreed with Luther. This was the precise issue he faced in Galatia. . . . Without justification by faith alone there was no gospel.

If we want to remain Reformed, we must adhere to our Reformed Standards, because by these standards others should know us. That is what we stand for. Our Dutch sister churches have a Contact relationship with the Free Church of Scotland. The Free Church of Scotland separated from the Church of Scotland (the Kirk) like the Reformed Churches separated from the Dutch Reformed (Hervormde) Church in 1834.

J. GEERTSEMA

## PATRIMONY PROFILE 29

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

At the fiftieth anniversary of the Theological College, Prof. L. Lindeboom stated, "If the Secession had been a work of man, most certainly nothing but fragments and slivers of the redeemed Church would have been left." Gradually, however, the brothers sought each other again and re-unification was the result, although some remained on their own. The majority, however, did begin to see more and more clearly how foolish and sinful their stubbornness and partisanship was.

A few went their own way. The followers of Buddingh and Ledebøer formed their own groups in isolation, the former resulting in a Free Evangelical Congregation, the latter in what later on were called the Reformed Congregations in The Netherlands.

The Rev. H.P. Scholte left with many of his followers. Their way led to America. Whatever was left of his group either, joined the main body of the Seceded Churches, returned to the bondage in the Netherlands Reformed Church, or became lost altogether.

The reunion with Brummelkamp and his people came about in principle in 1852; at the Synod of Zwolle in 1854 it became definite.

In 1869 the Seceded Churches and the Reformed Congregations under the Cross found each other again, although some of the latter continued on their own.

Let us now pay some attention to some of the differences and their resulting alienation.

### *Two Pioneers Become Estranged*

Two of the men who had been of great support to one another in the beginning of the struggle for the reformation of the church soon stood over against each other. They were the Rev. Hendrick de Cock and the Rev. Hendrik Pieter Scholte. The first point of conflict was the question whether all infants in the church should receive baptism. Scholte said, "No," whereas de Cock said, "Yes." Scholte's stand is described in these words: No children are to be baptized of whom not at least one of the parents is a communicant member. Baptism obligates one to also go to the Lord's Supper as soon as he is able to discern the body of the Lord. Whoever does not fulfill this obligation is disobedient. When he perseveres in this disobedience, he is to be considered as no longer belonging to the congregation. De Cock, on the other hand, was convinced that all children of the congregation should be baptized, whether the parents had made profession of faith or not. He respected the hesitancy of those who did not dare to make profession of faith, hoped for their repentance, but certainly did not wish to discipline them. These people were sometimes called "sojourners." De Cock considered more the person than the rules.

However much the two men may have differed on this point, it was not this difference which drove a wedge between them. The matter which was decisive was the question of the Church Order. Already on April 8, 1835, a meeting was held in Groningen where delegates were

found from no fewer than sixteen congregations. It was the "First General Meeting of the Various Christian Reformed Congregations." Thereafter Provincial assemblies were held throughout the country, where the old Church Order was recalled from retirement into active service. Then, on March 2, 1836, the first General Synod was held, consisting of five ministers and eleven elders, where the Dort Church Order was adopted.

The second General Synod, held on September 28, 1837, and following days, however, saw Scholte succeed in having a new Church Order adopted.

### *A New Church Order*

There was a difference of opinion among the Seceders about the character and binding force of the Church Order. De Cock and van Velzen were both convinced that for the well-being of the churches a good Church Order was necessary and that its rules were being kept as well. De Cock wanted right away the restoration of the old Dort Church Order. It was completely in his line when the first General Synod decided that in dealing with all matters the Dort Church Order was to be followed "insofar as this will be possible with a view to the lack of pastors and teachers in the congregation and to the overall condition of the church in her persecutions." Van Velzen initially favoured introduction of a revised Church Order. In the Preface to the Acts he wrote that the Church Order has to be changed, augmented, or diminished when the condition of the church demands it. Therefore "our Synod held at Utrecht would have been unfaithful to God and the church if, seeing the profit of the church, it had failed to change it." However, not too long after that, seeing the experimenting and chaos here and there, he leaves his grave words for what they were and pleads for acceptance of the Dort Church Order. Under his leadership a provincial assembly of North Holland decides to adopt the Church Order of Dordrecht again.

What kind of a Church Order did the Synod of 1837 adopt? Of the articles contained in the Church Order of Dort, 42 were changed, 8 were deleted, and 36 were adopted without change. First however, six articles were adopted which actually belong in the field of dogmatics. They read as follows:

1. All who make profession of faith and live accordingly, together with their children, are to be recognized as members of the church of Christ.
2. The profession of faith consists in the consent of the heart, made known by the acknowledgement by the mouth, to all the parts of the Christian religion. The conduct consists in forsaking the world, leading a life according to God's commandments, and the submission to the eternal King Jesus Christ.
3. Although there are hypocrites who mingle among the good, and it is therefore necessary and useful that everyone examine himself and take heed of the others, yet no one who makes this profession of faith and conducts himself in that manner, may be suspected of hypocrisy.
4. The above mentioned confessors and their children must be recognized as members until they are ex-

communicated from the church because of their doctrine or conduct. This excommunication ought to take place only when it is absolutely clear that the doctrine or conduct is incompatible with the covenant of grace which God has established with His church, and that such actions are involved regarding which God has threatened with excommunication.

5. As long as someone has not been cut off from the church of Christ he also has a right to receive the signs and seals of the covenant of grace for himself and his seed, unless he is placed under discipline for some time by the consistory; on the understanding that the censure does apply to the person himself but not to his seed.

Immediately after these articles had been read De Cock protested against the first one. He proposed a change and read: "All who have made profession of faith in the church of Jesus Christ, together with their children, are to be recognized as members of the visible church of Christ, which extends farther than the invisible church of Christ, which invisible church is described in our Catechism, Lord's Day 21, which may fail to appreciate." A discussion ensued.

After the articles were adopted, Rev. de Cock came with a declaration in which he stated that he could see it not otherwise than that they went the way of Donatists, Anabaptists, Labadists, and others. He lodged his objection against the above articles and his protest was co-signed by A. Schouwenburg, D. Hoksbergen, F.A. Kok, D. van Enk, and D.D. Drukker, the last one in partial agreement. He also came with a protest "since in the first article of the basis for the Church Order it is demanded that we have to recognize all confessors with their children as members of the church of Christ since as such (i.e. as a basis, VO) only the description of this church is recognized, Lord's Day 21, and Art. 27 of our Confession, since in that description neither the children nor the hypocrites are included, are found, or can be found, and consequently it must be acknowledged that one can drop out of the covenant of grace; and since the other articles are built on this basis, we must protest against them."

However interesting it might be to go further into this difference between the brothers, we must return to the Church Order. As said before, Scholte had his own ideas about church polity. Actually, he did not see a church, but only a gathering of individual believers who find their unity in Christ. He was basically an independentist and did not feel very much like instituting a church, or having a confession; even less enthusiastic was he about a Church Order, church organization and church federation. Many years later he wrote that he would have done better if, after his suspension as a Netherlands Reformed minister, he had "simply continued with preaching and baptism and with having communion with the believers in the breaking of bread and in prayers, without bothering about an ecclesiastical organization." His ideal was a free gathering of believers who can develop freely without being bound by a certain confession or organizational form. Shortly after the Secession he wrote that a Church Order was not absolutely necessary for the life and well-being of the church. Don't we say in our Belgic Confession that the whole manner of worship which God demands of us

is fully described in Holy Writ? Thus we should not have anything besides the Holy Scriptures.

Scholte prepared a Church Order for the churches which he led: South Holland, Lower Gelderland, and North Brabant. Then he worked for adoption of the Church Order at the 1837 Synod. One wonders, of course, why the man who cared about a Church Order least of all should so busy himself with one and endeavour so much to have it adopted. Scholte claimed that in his concept only such provisions were found which are prescribed directly in God's Word, but one gets the impression that he tried to push the churches into *his* direction by putting them before a *fait accompli*.

Groningen and Drenthe rejected the new Church Order, as did Friesland. Overijssel did not even want to talk about it. We mentioned already the first introductory articles which were adopted by Synod. A second group of introductory articles referred to "the government of the church in general." They read as follows:

1. Since all power in heaven and on earth has been given to the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has in particular been anointed by God to be King over Zion, the mountain of His holiness, no one, either civil magistrates or any other person shall have any power of executing authority *in* or *over* the church.

2. The congregation of the Lord ought to be governed only according to the ordinances of her King, while only such government or rulers should be in the church of whom mention is made in God's Word.

3. Therefore there are in the congregation of the Lord overseers who, together forming the government of the church, ought to come together in smaller or larger assemblies.

4. It is the duty of these assemblies to see to all things that belong to the government of the congregation over which they have been set; yet so that they do not lord it over it, but only exercise a governing power.

5. No gathering of overseers may give any binding command to any particular congregation or to the whole congregation over which they have been set, when in God's Word the obligation to give such a command has not been clearly demonstrated.

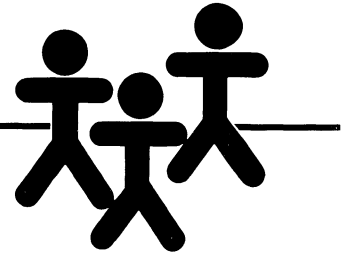
6. In such instances which are not expressly found in God's Word but yet require a provision according to the condition of the church and the well-being of the congregation, the overseers of the congregation ought to give guidance, and no one has the right to deviate from that arbitrarily, but no one may ever make such cases a burden or compulsion.

7. The same serving power which is exercised by a consistory over a congregation is also due to more consistories that are assembled together. No part of the overseers shall be permitted to withdraw from the united assemblies of the other overseers.

In the Church Order itself many changes were made; we mention a few. The word "doctors" was deleted, but, strangely enough, shows up again when the Church Order speaks of the "professors." Elders and deacons are to serve for life; only for serious reasons are they allowed to interrupt their service for some time with the approval of the consistory.

— *To be continued.*





## Ethical Dimensions (continued)

This is the last part of a speech of Mr. W. den Hollander which dealt with Covenantal Education.

Finally, let me adhere to your request to say something about a Christian lifestyle. After all that has been said so far about nurturing in godliness as a particular walk of life, our spiritual worship in everything we do, our covenantal awareness of a life "in the Lord," to the glory of God carrying out our cultural mandate with pencil, pen and piece of chalk, the ethical implications for our cooperations with the parents, *after all that* to speak about "lifestyle," seems almost superfluous. "Lifestyle," says Dr. J. Waterink, is one of these strange things, which a man has because of what he *is*, not because of what he does. . . .<sup>16</sup> Indeed, we say, but what does that mean for being a Covenant child? D.B. Cumming's experience is different when he says "to mention a Christian lifestyle immediately conjures up a picture of monasticism, austerity, wartime deprivations, and judgmental attitudes on the part of those seeking to live up to such a lifestyle." "At the least," he adds, "it is a kick-off for a vigorous controversy all the way down the field."<sup>17</sup> Is it that bad? Is a lifestyle in conformity to the Scriptures *idealistic*? No, not after what we have learned from Lord's Day 44, 52! Even though we have only a beginning of the new obedience, even though our godliness must be trained thoroughly, this does not make a covenantal lifestyle *idealistic*. No, we make it our *ideal* to please God in every aspect of our life and conduct to His glory. The fact that God gave His Spirit expresses God's desire to see us succeed in it. The apostle Paul writes "that nobody lives to himself" (Rom. 14:7), and he calls us "to pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding" (vs. 19). Paul wishes also that the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such *harmony with one another*, in accord with Christ Jesus, that *together* you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ." Doesn't that express harmony, uniformity in service, a desire to and encouragement of a Christian lifestyle?

The term lifestyle implies that the whole of life should be in the same style. By "style" we mean the entire complex of expressions and forms which are characteristic for a certain artist, school, or "movement." Likewise the life in the covenant should be of a style characterized by the recognizable features of the covenant. This style makes the children of the covenant normal people, and not abnormal as the world wants us to believe. From the O.T. prophets such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos and Hosea, as well as from Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians and Timothy we know that covenantal faithfulness has a lifestyle pleasing to the LORD inherent in it. There are also examples galore in which God expresses disgust at Israel's style of conformity to the nations. Yes, here, too, we may say that everyone who adorns him/herself with good deeds rather than with a worldly style, shows a lifestyle which befits people who profess godliness (I Tim. 2:10). In the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul displays some of the features of it, such as, honest work with the hands, edifying talk, kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiving, thanksgiving, being filled with the Spirit, submission, obedience, etc. Also in contrast to this we find in the epistles many a list of a lifestyle *à la* our own corrupt nature. Remember also the beautiful list we read at the opening of this meeting (Rom. 12:9-21).

If such is our approach to lifestyle as well, then we can also be more specific without being moralistic. Everyone will agree that in such a style theater attendance, movie going, and drinking bouts are like entering a realm which is foreign to the glory of God. In this approach we should also dare to pick up the touchy topic of dress and dress code; however, not only for girls also for boys. For dress too, is a matter of the heart of our godliness, of our "liturgia" before God. The way we dress betrays what kind of heart we have: careless, indifferent, daring, defiant, insolent; or a heart which also in apparel reflects carefulness, pleasantness, harmony, cultural taste. The world's sense of beauty, of value of norm, has faded, which is reflected in fadedness of dress, unisex, and monotony. God's creation is colourful, attractive, beautiful, and so God's creatures may in the renewed relationship of the covenant reflect this at-

tractively, joy, beauty, and pluriformity. Yes, in this context I dare to renew a plea for dress and skirt in order to distinguish our girls as girls adorned before their Maker. Yes, here too, the covenantal sensitivity and discernment of Phil. 1:9 applies. Hairstyle, T-shirt and beachwear may seem matters of momentary fashion not worthy of concern in themselves, but in the framework of covenantal awareness and responsiveness there are no trivialities. Dress is a uniform, saying that we take the learning-teaching experience as seriously as our Sunday worship. Church and school, Catechism class and lecture room, are workshops of the Holy Spirit where our appearance reflects our attitude.

I must come to a close. I've been busy with covenantal education and yet what have I done? All I've attempted is to capture a waterfall in a perfume bottle; most of it has spilled out around the edges. Also with respect to the ethical dimensions of this covenantal education I've tried to show that the entire status of Covenant child amidst the covenant community of the church determines the covenant walk of life. This status educates to a *personal* responsiveness resulting from covenantal awareness; it also contains ethical responsiveness in communion with God in Christ, and among His people. Teachers and parents, therefore have to align their educational effort, strengthen each other, help each other. Don't sit with your discipline, drug, or drinking problem in your staff rooms but seek the privacy of the homes, the support of the local elders, the leadership of the ministry. Offer your help in the education at home; also don't limit the parents' role and involvement in the education at school to bake sales!

W. DEN HOLLANDER

<sup>16</sup> J. Waterink, *Brieven aan jonge mensen* (Wageningen: N.V. Gebr. Zomer & Keunings Uitgevers mij.), p. 70.

<sup>17</sup> D.B. Cummings, *The Basis for a Christian School* (Phillipsburg, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1982), p. 32.

## A. Government and Private Schools

In British Columbia, the Ministry of Education has told private high schools that all Grade XII students must write government examinations in June, 1984.

These examinations, which will count for half the students' final high school grades, are based on public school courses, reflecting a secular and nonsectarian philosophy and approach.

The Act which gave British Columbia's private schools funding, states that pupil testing is to be established by *each school*, subject to the approval of the inspector. Only general learning assessment, to check basic standards, was to be done by the provincial authorities. However, the government now seems to be saying that it has the right to tell private schools exactly what is to be taught and how students are to be graded.

What is at stake in British Columbia, is whether it is the government or the parents who control a child's education. The answer is obviously clear. Although the government has the right to *monitor* standards, it does not have the right to *stipulate* detailed course content.

At the moment, the government intentions are being widely discussed and debated. Possible legal action is pending, based on the British Columbia Independent School Support Act. In Alberta as well, there is the threat of compulsory, province wide diploma examinations, which may force our schools to compromise their Biblical convictions.

Do not think for one moment, that these concerns come about necessarily as a result of government grants or funding. We often tend to forget that our schools exist at the moment, not on certain rights of historical precedence, but because of a government's tolerance. Humanly speaking, our right to exist as Canadian Reformed Schools is at the mercy of provincial politicians. May these concerns have our prayerful attention!

### B. High School Plans

A delegation from the school board in Orangeville reports that Orangeville feels it impossible to start a high school. They wonder whether cooperation with Fergus-Guelph is possible in an organized manner rather than with individual members. A 5-man committee was set up in Orangeville to investigate. Orangeville has two questions:

- a. Would Fergus-Guelph be prepared to go regional — Orangeville, Brampton, Toronto, Fergus-Guelph?
- b. If Fergus-Guelph would not go regional would they allow Orangeville to join Fergus-Guelph as a chapter member? (from LINK — Fergus-Guelph)

Apparently, a committee has been appointed to investigate the possibility of working together with Orangeville and to come up with a recommendation. Discussions and proposals such as these, should be viewed with great interest. Decentralized secondary education, if prop-

### C. School Statistics 1983-84

A new school directory was recently published. This gives us all a chance once again, to become somewhat more acquainted with Reformed education in the various communities. At the moment, 2302 students are enrolled in 21 Canadian and American Reformed Schools. These students are taught by 119 full-time and 31 part-time teachers. Travelling from West to East, one would find the following:

School	Teachers		No. of Students	Level	Year the School Opened
	Full-time	Part-time			
<b>1. British Columbia</b>					
a. Credo (Langley)	11	3	165	9-12	1978
b. Ebenezer (Smithers)	6	3	126	1-12	1969
c. John Calvin (Yarrow)	5	0	96	1-7	1970
d. William of Orange (Surrey)	8	1	218	1-7	1955
<b>2. Alberta</b>					
a. Coaldale	4	1	69	1-9	1974
b. Covenant (Neerlandia)	4	1	73	1-12	1977
c. Parkland Immanuel (Edmonton)	7	2	129	K-10	1977
<b>3. Manitoba</b>					
a. Dufferin (Carman)	6	1	99	K-9	1972
b. Immanuel (Winnipeg)	4	1	51	1-10	1976
<b>4. Ontario</b>					
a. Ambassador (Watford)	2	0	17	1-8	1980
b. Covenant (London)	1	3	23	1-8	1976
c. Credo (Brampton/Toronto)	4	1	68	1-8	1979
d. Dufferin (Orangeville)	4	1	78	1-8	1968
e. Ebenezer (Chatham)	5	0	72	1-10	1973
f. Emmanuel (Guelph)	3	3	52	7-10	1977
g. Guido de Brès (Hamilton)	15	3	246	9-12	1975
h. John Calvin (Burlington)	11	1	258	1-8	1962
i. John Calvin (Smithville)	8	2	224	1-8	1964
j. Maranatha (Fergus)	4	1	100	1-6	1968
k. Timonhy (Hamilton)	5	1	114	1-8	1973
<b>5. United States</b>					
a. Prof. Dr. K. Schilder School (Grand Rapids)	2	2	24	1-11	1977

Statistics usually bring about a few observations — often somewhat subjective, since local situations are not usually known to the reader. Here are a few:

- a. Only two schools operate a kindergarten. What makes this possible in two communities and not in others?
- b. Although a number of schools maintain the normal elementary set-up of Grade 1 to 8, and secondary structure of Grade 9 to 12, there are a number of exceptions. While a number of schools are probably forced to make decisions according to distance and isolation, there must be other considerations as well. I wonder what some of these considerations are?
- c. How can some schools provide a sound academic program with such a large number of grades and so few teachers?
- d. The student/teacher ratio in our schools (19:1) seems to compare very favourably with that of other school systems. However, when one considers the fact that most schools have two or three grades in one room, then quite a few teachers in our schools seem to have a very heavy workload.

If anyone would like to make some comments about "School Statistics 1983-84," you are cordially invited to do so. Several written submissions could be the basis of another article in a future School Crossing column.

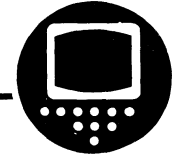
erly set up, would allow for a more effective link between home and school. It would also eliminate very long school days and extensive, tedious bus routes.

Allow me to sign off with the following quote from one of the school bulletins:

"Notice on school bulletin board: Free — every Monday through Friday. Knowledge. Bring your own containers."

NICK VANDOOREN  
John Calvin School

607 Dynes Road, Burlington



## **Classis Pacific, Smithers, BC, October 4, 5, 1983.**

*Opening* — On behalf of the convening church, the Church at Smithers, the chairman of the consistory, br. W. Kanis, asked the brothers to sing Psalm 111:1, 3. He read Psalm 111 and called on the Lord for His blessing.

He welcomed the delegates, visitors, Candidate E. Kampen, the Deputies ad Art. 49, C.O., namely, the Rev. J.D. Wielenga and the Rev. M. vanBeveren, and the Rev. W. Pouwelse, who had been delegated to Classis Pacific for the first time.

*Credentials* — The delegates from the Church at Houston reported that the credentials were in good order.

The churches sent the following delegates: Church at Abbotsford — Elder F.M. Flokstra, Rev. M. VanderWel; Church at Chilliwack — Rev. C. Bouwman, Elder P. Van Woudenberg; Church at Cloverdale — Elder C. Leyenhorst, Rev. J. Visscher; Church at Houston — Deacon C. Dykstra, Elder J. Ten-Brinke; Church at Langley — Elder T. Hansma, Rev. W. Pouwelse; Church at Smithers — Elder A.G.J. Barendregt, Elder R. Klaver; Church at Surrey — Rev. J. Geertsema, Elder B. Huttema.

Deputies ad Art. 49 C.O.: Rev. M. vanBeveren and Rev. J.D. Wielenga.

Classis was declared constituted.

*Officers* — The following officers were appointed: chairman — Rev. M. VanderWel; vice-chairman — Rev. J. Visscher; clerk — Rev. C. Bouwman.

The chairman expressed the gratitude of the Classis for the presence of the Rev. W. Pouwelse and for the fact that the Church at Houston had received a positive response to the call that it extended to Cand. E. Kampen. He also expressed the hope that the vacancy that exists in the Church at Smithers would soon be filled. Mention is made of the imminent arrival of the Rev. P.K. Meijer, missionary in Marigogi, Brazil. The many guests, especially the young, were welcomed.

*Agenda* — The Agenda was adopted. The high-light being the examination of Candidate E. Kampen.

*Subscription Form* — This Form was read and the Rev. W. Pouwelse was requested to undersign it. This he then proceeded to do.

*Examination of Candidate E. Kampen* — The Church at Abbotsford proposed that the deliberations on the examination of the candidate be held in a closed restricted session, which would mean that only the members of classis and the deputies could be in attendance. This proposal was defeated. The documents of the candidate were examined and found to be in good order. The examination commenced with a sermon proposal on Phil. 1:9-11. After this was heard, classis went into closed session and discussed the proposal. It was decided to continue the examination.

Rev. J. Geertsema examined the candidate in Exegesis O.T.; Rev. C. Bouwman in Ex-

egesis N.T.; Rev. C. Bouwman in Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; Rev. M. VanderWel in Doctrine and Creeds; Rev. J. Visscher in Church History; Rev. J. Geertsema in Church Polity; Rev. M. VanderWel in Ethics; Rev. J. Visscher in Diaconology.

The results of the examination were discussed and the advice of the Deputies ad Art. 49 C.O. was received. It was decided with thankfulness to admit Candidate Eric Kampen to the ministry of the Word in the Canadian Reformed Churches. The candidate and his wife were congratulated by the members of classis. His call to the Church at Houston was approved and he was asked to sign the Subscription Form. Thereafter, Psalm 134:3 was sung and the hope was expressed that the blessings of the Lord might extend to the candidate and over his future work in the Church at Houston.

*Correspondence* — The Church at Smithers officially informed the Classis that the Rev. C. VanSpronsen has been released from his regular ministerial duties in the congregation, due to the fact that he accepted the call to become a missionary to the Native Peoples in the Bulkley Valley.

The Church at Cloverdale proposed that classis meet henceforth in one location, namely Langley, BC. The proposal was defeated.

*Reports* — The Study Committee appointed to look into the position of the missionary (home) within classis, had not completed its report.

The books of the treasurer had been audited by the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church, Surrey, and were found to be in good order.

The assessment to cover classical expenses for the years 1983 and 1984 was set at \$4.00 per communicant member.

*Preaching Arrangements* — Classis decided to continue the monthly preaching arrangement with the house congregation at Winfield, BC (Okanagan Valley). The Church at Smithers will receive assistance in this area too if, after consultations with various parties, this is deemed necessary.

*Question Period Ad Art. 41 C.O.* — Three churches asked for and received advice.

*Appointments* — The following appointments were made: Examiner Ethics — Rev. W. Pouwelse; Church Visitor — Rev. W. Pouwelse; Counselor (Smithers) — Rev. C. VanSpronsen; Representative at the Ordination of Cand. E. Kampen — Elder R. Klaver; Convening Church — Church at Surrey, date: April 4, 1984; Executive — Rev. J. Visscher, chairman; Rev. C. Bouwman, vice-chairman; Rev. W. Pouwelse, clerk.

The Acts and the Press Release were adopted. The chairman thanked the convening church and the ladies for their very good care. The vice-chairman led in thanksgiving and prayer. The classis was closed.

For the Classis Pacific,  
JAMES VISSCHER

## **“Anchor” Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, Hamilton, November 18, 1983.**

The chairman, br. J. Witten requested us to sing Psalm 85:1, led us in prayer, and read from the Scriptures, Romans 15:1-13. He welcomed the board members and informed us that br. Henry Kok will take the place of Mrs. G. Jannsens of Watford as board member. The secretary, Sr. H. Nobel read the minutes of the two last meetings. After a small correction these were approved and signed.

The agenda is then established. Matters arising from the minutes are dealt with.

*Building Committee:* The building committee is working hard to find a suitable property to build a home on, and several properties are being considered. We have received some sketches made by br. C.Y. Nobel of Brampton and these will be studied. After a lengthy discussion it is decided that the board will receive recommendations from the building committee but final decisions on property, building etc. will be made by the board itself.

*Logo:* A definite decision will be made at the next board meeting.

After a brief intermission we resumed with business.

*Immigration:* Matters pertaining to the immigration of the Zomer family, from The Netherlands into Canada, are discussed.

*Contract:* Br. W. Godschalk presents a partial contract to be considered by the board. This is discussed. More information will be obtained from established homes.

*Question Period:* Mrs. Riesebosch will be an official member of the Public Relations Committee from this time on.

*Next meeting:* Our next board meeting will be, D.V., December 19, 1983. We sang Psalm 85:4 and Mrs. Riesebosch ended the meeting with prayer.

## **Classis Ontario North, Toronto, Ontario, December 9, 1983.**

Rev. J. Mulder calls the meeting to order and requests to sing Psalm 98:1 and 4; he reads Psalm 98, and then leads us in prayer.

The delegates from the Church at Burlington East examine the credentials. They report that all churches are legitimately represented.

Classis is constituted with as moderamen the brothers M. Werkman as chairman, G.H. Visscher as clerk, and W.W.J. VanOene as assessor.

The agenda is established, after the chairman has mentioned the birth of a son in the R. Aasman family, the 40th wedding anniversary of the Rev. and Mrs. VanOene, the acceptance of the call by Cand. Nederveen to the Church at Brampton, by the Rev. J. Mulder to the Church at Burlington West, and the upcoming vacancy in the Church at Toronto.

Brother C. Bosch requests permission to speak an edifying word. He delivers a sermon proposal on Hebrews 2:14-18, and is examined regarding the knowledge of the Reformed Confessions; this is done by the Rev. J. Mulder. The requested permission is granted for a period of twelve months. Brother Bosch signs the subscription form for students who have received permission to speak an edifying word.

The Church at Brampton requests classis to convene the next classis earlier with a view to the peremptory examination of Cand. G. Nederveen. Thursday, January 26, 1984 is set as the date.

The Church at Orangeville reports on the financial support of the Rev. C. Olij. Classis takes note of this report.

The Church at Orangeville reports to have audited the books of the treasurer of the Fund for Needy Churches and to have found them in good order.

Regional Synod October 1983 sent a copy of its Acts to classis. Classis receives this document for information.

The Church at Toronto submits proposals regarding financial support of Rev. C. Olij and his relation towards the Church at Orangeville. Regarding these proposals classis decides the following:

a. Classis agrees that Classis of June 16, 1983, did not offer a solution to the matter at hand.

b. Classis decides to allot the Church at Orangeville a support of \$5,000 for the year 1983, to enable this church to support Rev. Olij over 1983 as yet with this amount over and above the 40% which Orangeville gives to Rev. Olij according to the stipulations approved by Classis June 1980.

c. Classis decides to advise the Church at Orangeville for the year 1984 (when Rev. Olij will receive 20% from Orangeville as per arrangement 1980) to examine Rev. Olij's financial needs for that year and if extra support is needed and the Church at Orangeville is unable to supplement the income of the Olij family, to approach the next classis and ask for its support.

d. Classis rejects the proposal to withdraw the statement that Rev. Olij is no longer subject to the call of the Church at Orangeville on the grounds mentioned by Regional Synod, October 1983.

In order to execute the above decision concerning extra support, the churches are requested to sent \$3.50 per communicant member for this purpose to the treasurer for the Fund for Needy Churches.

The call extended by the Church at Burlington West to the Rev. J. Mulder is approved.

The report of the treasurer of the Fund for Needy Churches is read. The churches which have not yet contributed the full amount requested for 1983 are urged to do so as soon as possible.

Upon the request of the Church at Toronto, the Rev. M. Werkman is appointed as its counsellor.

No appointments have to be made.

Question period ad Art. 41 C.O. is held. No matters are brought to the fore.

For the next classis Burlington West is the convening church. The moderamen will consist of Rev. Aasman as chairman, Rev. Werkman as clerk, and Rev. Visscher as assessor. The date is January 26, 1984.

No censure ad Art. 43 C.O. is necessary. Classical Regulations are not dealt with due to lack of time.

The Acts are read and adopted.

The Press Release is read and approved.

The chairman thanks the brothers for their cooperation, wishes them a good journey home and leads in prayer of thanksgiving after Psalm 81:1 and 9 have been sung.

By order of classis,  
W.W.J. VANOENE, assessor e.t.

### **Classis of the Canadian Reformed Churches, Southern Ontario/American Reformed Church, USA, December 14, 1983.**

The Rev. J. VanRietschoten, Pastor of the convening Church at Chatham, opens the meeting of delegates. He requests the singing of Hymn 11:1, 4 (old Hymnsection), reads Luke 1:18-25 and 57-67 and leads in prayer. He also welcomes the delegates and briefly addresses them, enlarging on the passage of Scripture which had been read.

The *Credentials* are examined by the delegates of the Church at Watford. All churches are properly represented per credential. Four churches have submitted written instructions.

*Classis is constituted.* Classis is served by the Rev. W. Huizinga, chairman; the Rev. P. Kingma, clerk; the Rev. J. VanRietschoten, vice-chairman. In his opening statement the chairman remembers the vacant churches in the Region.

*The Agenda is adopted.* First point on the Agenda is *Question Period ad Art. 41 of the Church Order.* It so happens that none of the churches needs the help of Classis.

*Instructions:* The vacant Churches at London and at Watford request the churches which have a minister to send their minister two Sundays per month to lead their worship services. These requests are granted.

The Church at Smithville requests that their minister be exempted from the schedule for preaching in vacant churches, since they already have two reading services each Sunday because of double services. Is granted.

The following *schedule for preaching in vacant churches* is arranged:

#### *London:*

Jan. 8	J. VanRietschoten
Jan. 22	W. Huizinga
Feb. 5	W. Huizinga
Feb. 19	P. Kingma
March 11	P. Kingma
March 25	P. Kingma

#### *Watford:*

Jan. 15	P. Kingma
Jan. 29	J. VanRietschoten
Feb. 12	J. VanRietschoten
Feb. 26	W. Huizinga
March 4	P. Kingma
March 18	W. Huizinga

The Church at Hamilton via an *instruction* requests classis to maintain Art. 6 of the Classical Regulations and not to deal with important matters which have not been sent to the consistories in time to deal with them beforehand. Is *taken note of* by classis.

*Reports.* The American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids reports re "classical decision

of June, 1983, to investigate the possibilities of instituting a church in Palmetto, Fla., in accordance with Articles 38 and 39 of the Church Order." Classis thanks the Church at Grand Rapids for the report. Classis agrees that institution according to Art. 38 is not possible. However, classis considers that the avenue of Art. 39 has not been exhausted by the Church at Grand Rapids. Classis requests the Church at Grand Rapids, according to Art. 39 Church Order, to take up contact with the home churches of those brothers and sisters temporarily residing in Palmetto Fla., for the purpose of obtaining the consent of these churches to supervise church services for these brothers and sisters in Palmetto Fla. Classis decides to have this report added to the Acts of classis in an appendix.

*Report of the Church at Chatham re Art. 19 Church Order, Fund for Needy Students.* The balance of the Fund as per Jan. 1, 1984, is appr. \$3553.62. Because of overpayment for the year 1983 the Church at Smithville is credited with \$1154.00 and the Church at Watford with \$252.00. If expenses of the Fund do not increase, a *levy of \$5.00* per communicant member will suffice for the year 1984. This levy is approved and the report is thankfully received.

A *report* from the classical treasurer is read and received. Classis decides to set the *assessment of monies* to be paid by the churches to the classical treasurer at \$4.00 per communicant member.

The treasurer, brother C. Ouwersloot, notifies classis that as per December 31, 1983 he requests to be *relieved* from his trusteeship. Classis grants this request and expresses gratitude to brother C. Ouwersloot for the excellent services he has rendered to classis.

Classis decides to *appoint* brother P.L. Schuller, 35 Oriole Crescent, Grimsby, ON L3M 3X3 to become treasurer of the classical Fund.

*Correspondence received.* A letter from the Rev. Mr. S. Larson, Pastor of Beverly Orthodox Presbyterian Church, CA, USA, is read. The Rev. Larson is concerned about dealings of our churches in Ontario South with the Rev. B.S. Hofford and Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel, MD.

Since the previous classis charged the American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids to report on further contact with the Tri-County Reformed Church, classis decides to refer this letter to the Church at Grand Rapids. Classis also decides to send a notice of this decision to the Rev. Mr. S. Larson.

A letter from the Rev. Mr. B.S. Hofford on behalf of Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel, MD, is read. The letter contains a request to classis that classis assist this church by making ministers available to instruct them in the Three Forms of Unity.

*Classis decides.* 1. Although the churches have not been able to consider this request, to accede to it in principle, Be it understood, that the rendering of assistance in instruction may not be taken as a judgment of classis in the matter of the Tri-County Reformed Church versus the OPC; pending the report of the Church at Grand Rapids, as charged by classis September 14, 1983, Acts Art. 6b.

2. To pass on the request of the Rev. B.S. Hofford to the Church at Grand Rapids, with

the recommendation that the Church at Grand Rapids, approach the churches in the classical region of Ontario South, to see whether, how and when, local ministers will be made available by the churches for this purpose.

3. To request the churches to assist in the funding of this project.

4. To include this letter as an appendix to the Acts.

*Arrangement for the next classis.* The Church at Grand Rapids is appointed to convene the next classis on March 7, 1984, at 10 a.m. in London, Ontario.

Proposed officers for that classis are: chairman, Rev. Cl. Stam; clerk, Rev. W. Hui-zinga; vice-chairman, Rev. P. Kingma.

None of the members of classis made use of the *Personal Question Period*. The Acts are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved. With thankfulness it is noted that censure according to Art. 43 Church Order was not needed. The chairman then thanks the ladies of the Church at London for their excellent hospitality. He leads us in prayer and thanksgiving upon which the classis is closed.

J. VANRIETSCHOTEN,  
vice-chairman, e.t.

## Executive Committee of the Board of Governors, Canadian Reformed Teachers' College, January 6, 1984.

The chairman, Br. G. Nordeman opened the meeting by reading from Psalm 119, followed by prayer.

After a word of welcome the minutes, including the agenda for this evening, were adopted.

Br. J. Gelderman, our treasurer, gave his report which was well received. Receiving less than the monthly expected revenues the first few months of operation, we were thankful to see the encouraging figures in membership fees and donations which were collected during December. The chairman expressed that, here too, we could see the work of the Lord through answering our prayers to the support of the College.

There was no mail or drive report.

The principal reported that he has tried to find an instructor to teach Art. After some discussion plans will be made.

He also asked that a letter be adopted that could be sent to the various schools concerning Practicum teaching remunerations.

A proposal concerning the admission re-

quirements of students and academic policies was discussed and will be presented at our national meeting.

A report was heard and information was given concerning continued studies of the staff. This will also be discussed at the national meeting to be held, the Lord willing, February 11th, 1984.

A few arrangements were made to prepare for this February meeting. Br. J. Jonker led in prayer and the chairman closed the meeting.

For the Executive,  
JOHN JONKER

### Correction:

In the Press Release of the *Clarion* of November 4, 1983 under #1. Press Release Committee: The function of the Press Release Committee . . . This should be both times: Public Relations Committee.

### OUR COVER

Taken from, *Story Bible for Older Children*, Anne De Vries, 1978, Paideia Press, St. Catharines, ON.

## NEWS MEDLEY — Continued

connection with the Christmas season, of course, and I do not expect such a rush for the third issue; yet I do hope that the momentum be maintained.

The Rest Home Society reports that the total amount pledged in donations and/or loans has reached \$300,600.00.

The Board wishes to introduce to the meeting a proposal to build a Rest Home for 15 units, with 12 finished and 3 to be finished at a later date, with 9 . . . committed to move in.

The Abbotsford consistory dealt with church institution in the USA. "A general discussion was held on this topic and a proposal was made to have an informative meeting with the membership in the USA in early spring."

Another very encouraging occurrence. I can well understand the hesitation of the brothers and sisters south of the border, but as both Abbotsford and Langley are growing to almost "unmanageable" proportions, something has to be done. This is not the main reason why I am thankful for the development. The main reason is that there should be a church south of the border, as a witness and pillar of the truth. One can hardly expect to attract many people south of the border if they have to travel to Canada every Sunday, even though the distance may be only a few kilometers and even though members living in Canada may have to travel much farther than the brothers and sisters in the States. Plant the church in as many places as possible, that is the mandate.

By the way, let me not forget to mention that also in Hamilton and Smithville discussions are still going on which — we hope and expect — will result in the institution of new churches in those neighbourhoods.

The Okanagan also appears to make some progress. I mean, of course, the brothers and sisters or, more correctly, the house congregation in the Okanagan Valley.

Rev. Bouwman writes about this under the heading of Chilliwack.

As to the house congregation in the Okanagan, my records show that they began the year with a total membership of 15 persons, 7 communicant and 8 noncommunicant. In the course of the year, that total has nearly doubled; it stands now at 26: 12 communicant and 14 noncommunicant members. If this rate of increase continues, it should not be long before a church can be instituted there.

For many years the Okanagan Valley has been the stepchild of our people as far as settling is concerned.

It is quite something to leave one's more or less comfortable surroundings and to go out to pioneer once more. Besides, the thought of the children and their schooling will play a large part in the considerations. Let us, however, bear in mind that the Canadian Reformed Churches would not even have been here if people had not decided to leave their old country and to build up a new life here in Canada. They left behind relatives and homes, positions and congregations, schools and churches! Yet they went. See now the result: a membership of more than ten thousand, church buildings and schools, even a theological college and a teachers college.

Let us spread out! It will mean smaller congregations, at least in the beginning. But smaller congregations mean more and better involvement of everyone. Financially it will be a little harder and larger contributions will be required, but the Lord still takes care of His people.

Spreading out also increases the possibilities for our young people. Now they are oftentimes limited in the possibilities for promotion, since they don't want to go to places where they cannot come together with the brothers and sisters because the distance is too great. Or they go nevertheless, only to become lost to the community in which they grew up, made profession of faith even, and lived for so many years; there is no congregation to receive them, to watch over them, to protect them, or to help them.

Go and fill the earth.

# OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



Hello Busy Beavers,

Happy New Year to you all!

May the Lord, our heavenly Father guide and keep us all in this brand new year that has started.

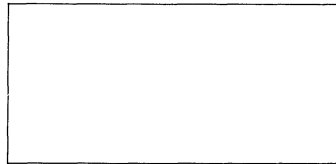
Let's be real Busy Beavers, all of us, this year!

Let's start with something that's:

## FUN-TO-DO

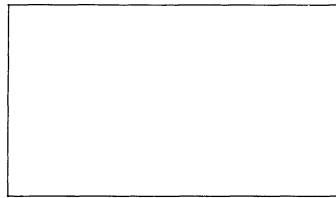
Make the cartoon picture beside each of these Busy Beaver poems. Your markers will work best. Or make a bigger picture on another sheet of paper.

When I grow up  
I'll drink tea from a cup  
I will get out the hose  
Then everyone knows  
That I'm a fireman!



By Busy Beaver  
*Sylvia Van Bodegom*

I went to town  
To see a clown.  
But when I got there  
He took my gown!  
I phoned the police  
Who wore the crown  
That the king  
Had thrown down!



By Busy Beaver  
*Dennis Flokstra*

Will you share your picture with the other Busy Beavers?

☺ Quiz Time! ☺

Here is an interesting quiz for you from Busy Beaver *Lloyd Lubbers*. The first two are done as examples.

### Parts of the Body

1. Two tropical trees
2. Weapons of war
3. Parts of a clock
4. A large wooden box
5. Covering of an apple
6. Part of a table
7. Part of a river
8. Two students
9. Part of a wagon
10. Product of a spruce tree
11. Two young domestic animals
12. Best part of a goose or turkey
13. Used a lot by carpenters
14. Branches of trees

palms
arms

## RIDDLES FOR YOU

A.  
In the green meadows  
I take my herd.  
Its loud moo-moos  
Haven't you yet heard?

WHO AM I?

from Busy Beaver  
*Marjorie Barendregt*

B.  
I pick cotton bols  
White, white cotton bols  
For you, for me, for all.

WHO AM I?

C.  
I put out fires  
with my hose.  
I spray all the water  
from my pump.

WHO AM I?

D.  
I must be extra careful,  
Whenever I'm up there  
To fix the lines, so that each phone  
May ring again in every home.

WHO AM I?

E.  
I fix a whole bunch of cars  
for my customers.  
I use all good parts  
that aren't smashed yet.



WHO AM I?

F.  
When moving it's a van you need  
To lift your TV and stereo sets,  
Sofas, tables, chairs and beds.  
Just give me a call and I will heed.



WHO AM I?



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Jason Wierenga*. We hope you'll keep really Busy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Did you have a good Christmas celebration with your family, Jason?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Carla Schoon*. We are happy to have you join us. What a big birthday party you must have had last December 11, Carla! Will you write and tell us about it?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Cheryl Vandeburgt*. Do you help look after all your pets? And how is your skating coming along? Write again soon, Cheryl.

Welcome to the Club, *Sheri Oussoren*. Did you have a good holiday, Sheri? What are your hobbies? Will you write and tell us?

And a big welcome to you too, *Michael Schouten*. We hope you will really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities! Thank you for your colourful picture, Michael. Keep up the good work!

Yes, you may join the Busy Beaver Club, *Kenny Hoff*. How did you do at bowling this time? And did you have a good holiday, Kenny?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Jennifer Siebenga*. Thank you for the pretty picture. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already. Keep up the good work! Write again soon.

How was your Christmas programme, *Cheryl Bysterveld*? Will you write and tell us about it? And how did you spend your holidays? Thanks for the card, Cheryl.

Hello *Heather VandenBerg*. It was nice to hear from you again. Did you have a good holiday? And how was your Christmas programme?

Is your arm all better, *Angela Brouwer*? Did you have a Christmas programme, too, Angela? And did you have a good holiday? Thanks for the puzzle!

I'm glad to hear your teacher finally came, *Jeannie Barendregt*. Did he get his suitcase, too? Did you have a nice Christmas celebration and programme, Jeannie? Thank you very