

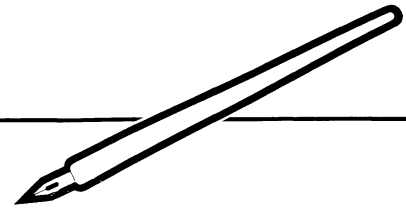


Clarion

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Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church_s

Ecumenical Matters

NAPARC

In the book *Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church*, the third and last part of six “Studies” is devoted to the ecumenical relations of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). The first study gives us an informative history of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC). This ecumenical organization was initiated in 1974 at the second General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), which started its existence the year before, as a group of churches that seceded from the liberal Southern Presbyterian Church in the United States.

RCA

The second study deals with “The Future of a Distinctive Dutch/American Theology in the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church.” It is written by I. John Hesselink, Jr. who is professor of Theology at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, the seminary of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) in Michigan. He sees a bright future for that distinct Dutch/American theology when CRC and RCA theologians continue to work together. According to the author, “Reformed elitism,” “a danger for any group that takes its confessional stance . . . very seriously,” is disappearing also in the CRC.

Reading this study, one gets the impression from the names that are mentioned that Reformed and Barthian (following Dr. Karl Barth) go quite well together. The name of Dr. K. Schilder is not mentioned among the contributors to the Reformed heritage. Schilder fought against Barthian theology. Is that why? Also this study can be an eye-opener.

GKN

“The Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland and the Christian Reformed Church” is the topic of the third study in this last part of the book. It gives us an overview of the history of the two churches from 1892 to 1980. It is written by Dr. D. Nauta, emeritus professor in Church History at the Free University. Also here we have a very informative and interesting study. The Liberation of 1944 is also mentioned in connection with the contact between CRC and GKN. We read: “During the war years a serious schism had taken place in the church in The Netherlands, due to the conflict that centered especially around Professors Klaas Schilder and Seakle Greijdanus.” It is easy, *but wrong*, to make the struggle that led to the Liberation a matter of persons. Then it is no longer a matter of doctrine and church polity, and then the question of right and wrong does not have to be answered anymore either.

What was the reaction of the CRC in North America? The study says: “When the CRC finally took note of the schism as an actual fact, it could only be with deep regret. There was no hesitation, however, in displaying an attitude of the greatest loyalty toward its sister church in The Netherlands. An invitation, which had been received early in 1946, to be present

at the Synod of the ‘Vrijgemaakten,’ as that group was then called (in accordance with Article 31 of the Church Order) was rejected without any reservation.”

Alas, the consequences of this rejection and of a closely maintained relationship with the synodical GKN is surely visible in this book, namely in the influence of the thinking at the Free University of the last decades.

WCC

The next study speaks about “The Christian Reformed Church and the World Council of Churches.” It is remarkable that this study is written by professor Klaas Runia of Kampen, The Netherlands. When the synodical Gereformeerde Kerken (Reformed Churches) in The Netherlands (GKN) started to think about joining the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1949, it found strong opposition in its sister churches on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. That was in line with earlier decisions. In 1918 the CRC, for practical reasons, joined the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (FCC), the predecessor of the present National Council of Churches in the United States (NCC). But six years later in 1924, membership in this organization was terminated on the basis of the following three grounds:

1. There is a burdening conviction in our churches that ecclesiastical alliances of any kind between orthodox and liberals are contrary to the Word of God;
2. Liberalism is strongly in evidence in the Council as is clearly seen from its emphasis on the social gospel and its humanitarian tendencies;
3. The Council stands committed to elaborate programs pertaining to industrial, national, and international affairs which our churches have never endorsed and should not endorse, even if we could fully agree with them, since they do not belong to the province of the church as an organization.

This decision and these grounds were maintained throughout the years. In 1958 the first ground mentioned above, was made even stronger by adding “Scripture forbids such association with unbelievers and with those who preach another gospel, compare II Cor. 6:14-18 and Gal. 1:8, 9.”

Runia, then, mentions a “second development,” namely “the ecumenical policy statement the CRC adopted in 1944.” He finds here a “statement of principle” and “a line of action.” The “statement of principle” is: “On the assumption that other churches than our own are Christian churches indeed, those churches and our own are closely related as being all and severally manifestations of the one and indivisible body of Christ.” (Acts of Synod 1967, p. 454). The “line of action” is described as an effort to win other Christians for the Reformed faith. Runia can agree with the “statement of principle” but has difficulties with the “line of action.” We can leave that for what it is, however, I like to ask this question: Is there not a shift in the line of thinking after 1924? Can we not conclude

that the background of the 1924 decision was very strongly our confession concerning the church as we have it in Art. 29 of the Belgic Confession, placing the true church over against the false church? A connection between the two is forbidden, as was stated later, on the basis of II Cor. 6:14ff. Was that principle not undermined with the statement of 1944? Today the "principle" is that all the existing churches are branches of the one body of Christ!

The Synod of 1967 again had to deal with the matter of membership in the WCC in connection with the plan of the GKN to join. There were two reports, the one against such membership, the other favouring it. The Synod of 1967 decided "that it is not permissible for the Christian Reformed Church to join" the WCC. In line with this decision advice was given to the GKN.

Runia is in favour of membership in the WCC, even though he states: "If one simply compares it with, or measures it by, one's own ecclesiology, for instance, the Reformed ecclesiology as outlined in the Belgic Confession Articles 27-29, one is forced to conclude that the WCC does not live up to his standard." We can be thankful for this honest statement. It is true that a church which wants to be Reformed cannot join the WCC. A pronouncement like the above should simply decide the matter. It is, therefore, good to read in *The Outlook* of April 1984, "why should we as a confessionally-bound church join" the WCC? (Prof. Martin H. Woudstra).

Such a statement of Runia makes it the more sad, when we see him continue with the question: "But is this the correct approach?" (namely to abide by the confession of the Reformed Churches). Apparently it is not. But that means that the GKN have abandoned the Reformed confession and sacrificed it on the altar of the ecumenical relations. It is also sad to see that there is a strong trend in the CRC to follow the GKN in this respect. Already since 1968 the CRC has had official observers at the WCC meetings. Professor John H. Kromminga, in whose honour the book we are discussing is written, has been one of them. He is also one of those who work towards joining this ecumenical organization.

The question is and remains: do we maintain in word and in deed as Reformed Churches what we confess, or don't we? We remember that *The Banner* (editorial October 26, 1981; see *Clarion*, Press Review Jan. 8, 1982) has stated that we cannot

work with the Articles 28 and 29 Belgic Confession anymore in today's situation.

RES/CGK

The second last study deals with the place of the CRC in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES) and the history of this ecumenical organization, whereby again the question of membership in the WCC is discussed. The reader may remember that the RES will meet this summer and come to a decision regarding the question of the acceptability of a dual membership in the RES and the WCC. I shall not elaborate on this point. I only mention that this study tells us, among other things, that the RES has sought closer contact with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), in which more "churches in the Reformed tradition" are members, than are found in the RES. The WARC is more liberal (see *Clarion*, November 5, 1982, Press Review).

The last study provides a history of the relationship of the CRC with the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands (related with the Free Reformed Churches here in North America).

Conclusion

And herewith we have come to the end of our discussion on the *Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church*. In conclusion it can be said that this is a very interesting book, giving us much information about the history of the CRC, showing that the CRC and the Canadian Reformed Churches have the same root and background. It shows also how much we are growing apart, since the "perspectives" as given here do not show a return to confessional faithfulness but a further departure in, what we see as, the liberal direction. The book is revealing in this respect. It is also honest, and that we appreciate. In short, if you, reader, can read with discretion and have learned what it means to be confessionally Reformed, and what leads away from it, take the book and read it. And, where possible, discuss it with your CRC neighbours or acquaintances. It might help in opening eyes. It is my hope and prayer that the trend, as is so strongly shown in this book, will be stopped and reversed. But I fear that those connected with Mid American Reformed Seminary will not be able to halt this trend, because it is too strong.

J. GEERTSEMA

Hal Lindsey₃

Seven years in heaven?

7. The Rapture

We previously quoted the words of the apostle Paul in I Thess. 5:2 where we read! "That the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When people say, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them." This is one of the texts on which Hal Lindsey based his theory about the "Rapture." He makes a distinction between the "day of the Lord" which will come like a thief in the night and Christ's bodily return to the earth, which will take place at the dramatic climax of the war in the valley of Meggido. The latter will be an event which can be

predicted exactly. He pretends to be able to figure out even the year in which it will happen. It will be known to all believers seven years in advance. The former will be a surprising event which will not even be noticed by the majority of the people on earth. That is what he calls the "Rapture." The word "Rapture" means: to seize or carry away, or, as he puts it, to snatch away. It also means: a state of great delight or ecstasy. Christ will come, at a moment when no one expects it, and carry away from this earth all the true believers. The believers who have died will be raised, and those who are still alive will be changed

and taken up into the air, to be with Christ, and to go with Him to heaven. Christ will not return on the earth. He will only come close to the earth, to take to Him, in the air, all the true believers. They will go with Him to heaven with glorified bodies (pp. 126-134).

He bases his theory on a number of texts. For instance I Cor. 15:51, 52 where we read: "Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed." He also mentions Phil. 3:20, 21. There it says: "But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power which enables Him even to subject all things to Himself." His most favourite text is I Thess. 4:13-18: "But we would

not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."

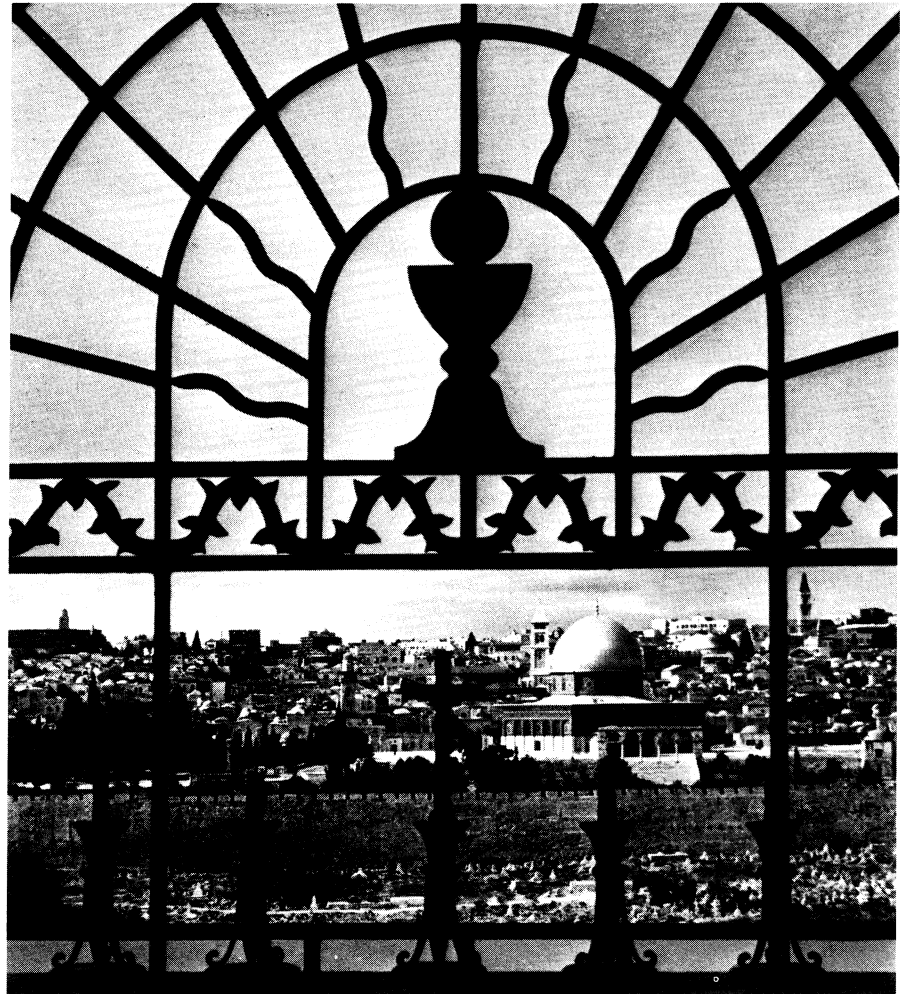
Hal Lindsey has set up a theory, that first the State of Israel will be restored, the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, the service of the sacrifices will be restored in the temple, and then the last episode of history will begin. An episode, ultimately concentrating on the people of Israel, the State of Israel and the conversion of the Jewish people. The history of salvation began with God's election of the Jewish people as His people. The period of the Christian Church was, and is, a sort of an interim, a period in between. The final aim and purpose of history will be the Jewish people again. The Jewish people, with a restored temple in Jerusalem, a service of sacrifices in the temple, and finally a restored kingdom of David with the Jewish Messiah, Christ Jesus, on the throne in Jerusalem. Christ Jesus will reign from His royal seat in Jerusalem a thousand years before the end of history will arrive.

We will deal later in more detail with this "thousand year" concept. Now we

"Seven years before Christ's return to the earth, He will come, not on, but very close to the earth to take away, to carry away, all true believers. They will go to heaven. Those who are dead will be raised and those who are still alive will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Hal Lindsey gives a very appealing description of this event, and it shows how captivating his style of writing is."

will first give our attention to the so-called "Rapture."

Seven years before Christ's return to the earth, He will come, not on, but very close to the earth to take away, to carry away, all true believers. They will go to heaven. Those who are dead will



The Jewish people, with a restored temple in Jerusalem?

be raised and those who are still alive will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Hal Lindsey gives a very appealing description of this event, and it shows how captivating his style of writing is. We will

crazy . . . cars going in all directions . . . and not one of them had a driver. I mean it was wild! I think we've got an invasion from outer space!"

"It was the last quarter of the championship game and the other side was ahead. Our boys had the ball. We made a touchdown and tied it up. The crowd went crazy. Only one minute to go and they fumbled — our quarterback recovered — he was about a yard from the goal when — zap — no more quarterback — completely gone, just like that!"

More of these stories are presented. Finally he regales his readers with a story about someone whose wife has been taken up to Christ, but who himself had never been willing to listen to her testimony during her life on earth. He quotes this man as saying: "You really want to know what I think? I think all that talk about the Rapture and going to meet Jesus Christ in the air wasn't crazy after all. I don't know about you, brother, but I'm going to find myself a Bible and read all those verses my wife underlined. I wouldn't listen to her while she was here, and now she's — I don't know where she is."

quote a few examples from his book, in which "unbelievers," those who will be left on the earth after the "Rapture," are supposed to react when the believers are taken away (pp. 24/5).

"There I was, driving down the freeway and all of a sudden the place went

It is understandable that such a publication catches the attention of many and that this book is sold by the millions, but it does not contain what the Word of God tells us.

His whole theory is based mainly on two presumptions. The first is that the resurrection of all believers and their being taken up to Christ will come unexpectedly, unnoticed and unacknowledged by the unbelievers who will remain on the earth. It will come like a thief in the night. His second presumption is that the final stage of world history will be God's dealing with the Jewish people. The persecution, tribulation, and war all over the world, with a dramatic climax in the valley of Meggido, will trigger a massive conversion of the Jewish people and an acceptance of Christ as the Jewish Messiah.

His biggest mistake is that he tries to "understand" and to "explain" everything. He does not realize that prophecy always has, and will have, an element of surprise. There might be an actual fulfillment of a prophecy but there always can be, and probably will be, an even greater and more wonderful fulfillment than we could ever have imagined. The apostle Paul speaks more humbly when he writes in I Cor. 13:12: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood."

According to Hal Lindsey's theory, the whole political and military development mentioned above, the war in the Middle East, the invasion by the Russian army, the war between the Western Allies and the Chinese army, will all take place in the seven years between the "Rapture" and Christ's return. That means that none of the true believers will see it, or be a part of it. All the true believers will be taken up into heaven *before* this period of tribulation begins.

The way he deals with certain texts in the Bible also becomes clear in the way he has figured out this so-called period of "seven years."

8. Seven years?

We have already mentioned the fact that according to Hal Lindsey all true believers will be taken up into heaven seven years before Christ's return to earth. You may wonder where he got this "seven-year" period from. He calls that the "seven-year countdown" and writes (p. 32):

"Some time in the future there will be a seven-year period climaxed by the visible return of Jesus Christ.

Most prophecies which have not yet been fulfilled concern events which will develop shortly before the beginning of and during this seven-year countdown. The general time of this seven-year period couldn't begin until the Jewish people re-

established their nation in their ancient homeland of Palestine."

Lindsey writes further about this period of time (pp. 33/4), "The apostle John counted out seven years for this period when he spoke of the second half being forty-two months (i.e., 3½ years), and the first half being 1260 days (i.e., 3½ x 360 days, which is the Biblical year) (Revelation 11:2, 3)."

That is the only "proof" for his "seven-year" concept. However, what does the Bible say in Revelation 11:2, 3? After the sixth angel has blown his trumpet, the wrath of God is poured out upon the earth. The great war begins. The true believers will be persecuted until the dead bodies of the two witnesses will lie in the street of the great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt. In this context we read

"He has developed his own concept about a 'seven-year countdown,' a seven-year period between the so-called 'Rapture' and Christ's return."

in Revelation 11:1-3: "Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told: 'Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant my two witnesses power to prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.'"

What does that mean? Without going into detail as far as the exegesis is concerned we can say that, in this text, a picture is given of the ongoing war between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The fight against the power of the darkness and the Church of Jesus Christ goes on. Christ gathers and protects His Church throughout the ages in spite of every attack from the enemy. He takes care of His Church. All things are measured and recorded. Nothing escapes His attention.

The court outside the temple is left out. It is given to the nations and they will trample over the holy city. The devil will increase his attack and he will have the opportunity to do his work. He will go just as far as the Lord allows him to go, for as long as the Lord will allow him to do

so. After his time is over he will be removed from this earth forever. His time has been spelled out. Forty-two months has been allotted to him. That might seem to be a long period of time, but we have to notice the symbolic language of the book of Revelation. A thousand years is the symbol of a very long and complete period of time. Seven is the symbol of God's perfection. Three-and-a-half year is half the number of seven. It indicates a very restricted time, exactly determined



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by the Lord and cut off at His time; not a full period of time. The work of the devil is cut short. It is as if the work of the devil and his period of time is cut in half by the Lord.

In verse 2 we read that the court outside the temple is given over to the nations for forty-two months and in verse 3 we read, that the Lord will grant His witnesses power to prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. That means that no matter how serious the attack of the devil might be, the testimony of God's witnesses shall go on during exactly the same period of time. The devil cannot stop them for a moment, not even for a single day. Although they may finally seem to be dead, they shall rise and stand on their feet again. The time given to the devil is counted in months; the time given to the two witnesses is counted in days. That means: the devil will have a limited time (forty-two months) but the Lord takes care of His people from day to day. He does not let them be silent for a single day. The message in this symbolic language gives us great comfort. The Lord will never forget His people, not even for a moment. He takes care of them all the time. From month to month the devil tries to attack the Church, but from day to day the Lord is in control. The period of time in both cases is the same, three and a half years, but the way in which the time is used and counted is completely different.

The same period of time is mentioned in Revelation 12:6. The Church, persecuted by the devil after Christ has been taken up to heaven, is led into the wilderness. The Lord has prepared a place for His people, to nourish them. "And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to His throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days." Here again the time is measured in days. The Lord takes care of His people from day to day. He protects His Church.

Also in Revelation 13:5 we can find this period of time. There we read that "the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months." Again the same symbolic language. The devil has received a time to fight against Christ and His Church, but his time is limited and counted in months.

However, what does Hal Lindsey do with Rev. 11:2, 3? He completely ignores its meaning and the symbolic message. He has developed his own concept about a "seven-year countdown," a seven-year period between the so-called "Rapture" and Christ's return. In one sentence he

concludes the whole matter when he writes: "The apostle John counted out seven years for this period when he spoke of the second half being forty-two months (i.e., 3½ years), and the first half being 1260 days (i.e., 3½ x 360 days, which is the Biblical year) (Revelation 11:2, 3)" (p. 33/4).

He simply puts the forty-two months and the one thousand two hundred and sixty days together and in this way he comes to his "seven-year" theory. In one single stroke he states that the apostle John has "counted out seven years." And in passing, for convenience sake, he changes the order in which the two periods of time are mentioned, saying that the first mentioned forty-two months are the second half of the seven years and the second mentioned one thousand two hundred and sixty days are the first half of the "seven years."

This is no exegesis but simply imposing one's own opinion on the Bible. Everything concentrates on, and is based upon, a preoccupation, a concept about the supremacy of the people of Israel over all other people. He says that the history of the world and the history of salvation are not the history of the Christian Church, Christ's Church, but the history of the Jewish people.

— *To be continued.*

W. POUWELSE

Ascension — the church has a mighty King and faithful High Priest

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, did not receive the promise that it would have an easy life in this world. On the contrary, the opposite is true. The Son of God came down on earth, taking upon Himself our human nature, to share our sufferings and pain, the consequences of our fall into sin. At the same time, God's Word also teaches us that the church shares the sufferings of Christ Jesus her Lord. "They have hated Me," the Lord said, "they will also hate you."

That hatred started immediately after the fall into sin. Cain slew his brother Abel, Ishmael derided Isaac, Israel often killed its true prophets, the Jewish people crucified Christ, and the Jewish leaders, as well as the Roman Empire, persecuted the church of Christ. This hatred is also present today in the oppression and

persecution of Christians in communist and other countries.

Why do people hate Christians who want to live holy for the Lord as His servants and who faithfully confess Him as the (ir) Lord and Saviour? This hatred comes from unrepentant hearts which give in to the instigation of the evil spirits. The devil hates God and all which is good and true. Therefore, he hates the believers. He seeks to destroy the work of God. Devil and world are strong enemies. Can the church stand the hostility?

The hatred of Satan reveals itself also in another form. Besides persecution, he tries to destroy the church from within through a falsified gospel. Time and again he attempts to make the church unfaithful to its Lord and its holy calling. He tries to make the church adapt its life and its thinking, to the thinking and life-

style of the world. Believers who live like the world, have no message for the world anymore. Believers who think like the world, (e.g. believing and teaching a humanistic social gospel) have given themselves into the hands of the devil and act as his instruments in destroying the church as church of Christ. The seduction from the world, invading the church and working from within, is very strong. Church after church falls prey to this seduction. Can the church stand this hostility? Christ Jesus warned the church that in the last days both the oppression and the false prophecies will be so intense that for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. Can the church endure? It can, not in its own power, but through the faithfulness and power of Christ, the Lamb of God.

With this promise the LORD God en-

couraged His people. This is beautifully expressed in Rev. 5. Here, like in Chapter 12, we have a vision about the ascension of the Lord Jesus into heaven. John saw that God, seated on His heavenly throne, had a book, a scroll in His hand that was written on both sides and sealed with seven seals. A strong angel called, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break the seals?" John wept when no one was able to do this. But one of the elders said, "Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that He can open the scroll and its seven seals." John then saw the Lamb standing as though it had been slain, taking the scroll.

When the Lamb had taken the scroll the four living beings and the twenty-four elders sang a new song: the Lamb is worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for He was slain and has ransomed the saints for God and made them a kingdom and priests to God. And innumerable angels replied: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!" The Lord was received with songs of praise when He ascended to the heavenly throne and took the sealed scroll.

What does the scroll contain? The interpretation that many have given is that the scroll contains the unfolding of history between the ascension of Christ and His return. Grounds for this interpretation are that the Lamb is said to be worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might (v. 12); further that every time the Lamb opens one of the seals John sees something that will happen in future history, so that we can say that the seals reveal the unfolding history during the "last days"; and also the fact that Chapter 5 points to Christ's ascension after His death and resurrection to the heavenly throne, indicating His royal dominion as the great King over heaven and earth.

In spite of these arguments, others have come with a different explanation. They are of the opinion that the scroll is the "book of life" which is mentioned later in Chapters 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27. We can adduce as grounds for this interpretation, in the first place, that the book of life is twice called the "book of life of the Lamb," 13:8 and 21:27. When the book of life is emphatically said to be the book of the Lamb, we can expect that there was a previous reference associating that book with the Lamb; or rather that we are told about the Lamb receiving that book. This we find in Chapter 5.

There is further the striking fact that the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David appears here as the Lamb that was slain. This points more to His work of redeeming and saving His people than

His ruling as King, although the aspect of ruling certainly has to be included. But I will come back to that.

Also the fact that the four living beings and the twenty-four elders sing that Christ ransomed the saints and made them kings and priests to God is indicative of His work of salvation rather than His royal dominion. Further the fact that John wept is much easier to understand when the sealed scroll contains the names of all God's chosen children than when it contains the history with its judgments which the world will go through. Why did John weep so much? It was because that book, with the names of God's elect, appeared to remain a closed book preventing the salvation of the elect because their names could not be read. Why was the Lion of the tribe of Judah worthy to take the scroll as the Lamb? That was because He was slain for those elect and had bought them with His blood. Therefore He could take the scroll, break the seals, and open the scroll, to read those names and save those people. And that is why His glory is sung as the Saviour-Lamb of the saints.

Now the question may come up, why is He said to be the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David? That certainly points at His royal everlasting dominion as the great King out of the house of David. And this aspect of His kingship is presented in the second song of praise where He is said to be worthy to receive "power and wealth and wisdom and might and royal honour and glory and blessing" (see also Psalm 21 and 61).

Now this ruling as the great King with a rod of iron, as becomes evident in the judgments that come over an unrepentant world, is specifically connected not with the scroll, but, with the seals. Chapter 5:4 explains that John wept because no one was found in the whole universe who could "open the scroll or look into it." Chapter 6 shows that the Lamb's royal rule is connected especially with the opening of the seals.

This brings us to a remarkable aspect. In Chapter 5:2-4 the text speaks of an opening of the scroll and a breaking of the seals. That fits together, because the seals are broken to open the scroll and to look into it. All the emphasis is on the opening of the book. Then v. 5 speaks about the opening of both the scroll and its seven seals. Chapter 6 further deals with the opening of the seals. Now the question is: what do we normally do with a seal? We break it, in order to open that which is sealed. And certainly, that is how we read it in Chapter 5:2. But then it is strange that Chapter 5:5 and especially Chapter 6 constantly speak of an opening of the seals instead of a breaking of the seals and an opening of the book. The

fact that the text clearly makes this difference between a breaking of the seals in connection with the opening of the scroll, and the *opening* of the seals when it comes to the seals as such, shows that these seals must have their own contents. They are special seals. Those seals contain the unfolding history during which the elect must be born, become believers, suffer and endure even unto death.

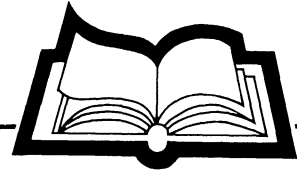
There is one further argument in favour of the interpretation that the scroll contains the names of God's elect. That is the fact that Chapter 7 speaks about the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are sealed and saved, and about the great multitude of the ransomed people of God. This chapter follows naturally from Chapter 5 via Chapter 6 with this explanation. It is also in this way that we can see that the seven churches in Asia Minor, to which John had to address this book of comfort, received great consolation and encouragement from Chapter 5. These churches went through very difficult times. There was the attack of Satan in the form of false prophecy which proclaimed adaptation to the world; there was also the assault on the churches by means of severe persecution. It was comforting to know that in all circumstances of life the Lamb was in heaven at the right hand of God, as the King out of David's house ruling all those events while, at the same time, holding the elect in His mighty hand, so to speak: those whose names were written in the book of life of the Lamb.

That is, then, also the comfort for the church of all ages, including today's. Persecution goes on and is severe in many areas of the world. False humanistic prophecies bring a different social gospel and "humanize" the church in many a denomination. It can seem as if Satan has more power than Christ. Also in these days judgments are manifest in imperialistic world powers, in civil revolutionary wars, in hunger over against great riches, in diseases and death. But the church knows: Christ has ascended to the heavenly throne. From there He rules over all things. And He does so as Head of His church, holding God's elect, the true believers, in His mighty hand, because He has the scroll with their names in His hand. He will make them endure to the end. That is great comfort for the church in its suffering; that is profound encouragement in the struggle of faith.

J. GEERTSEMA

OUR COVER

An ancient church in The Netherlands.



“... and let him put his mouth in the dust — there may yet be hope.”

Lam. 3:29

Hope in Balance

This verse finds us in the middle of the third lament in the book of Lamentations, and thus the midpoint of the whole book, the point at which all appears in a balance. It is the deepest point in the book, the heart and marrow of its theme. For here suffering comes to its peak — the righteous man, bearing the yoke of God’s anger must put his mouth to the dust. And as the pain of suffering reaches its *maximum*, so hope reaches its *minimum* point. Here hope almost seems to waver — as if the promises of God and the working of His grace are all in a balance. The way of escape appears to be so darkened that hope is reduced from certainty to possibility, and all trust is reduced to a gamble. How must we understand such expressions?

There are a few more expressions like this which seem to put salvation in a balance, and they all are born out of the same situation — the judgment of Israel and Judah, cf. Joel 2:14, Amos 5:15, Zeph. 2:3. After the full measure of sin, the LORD strikes His people with the rod of His anger, and they reel under His blow, Psalm 60:1-3. This punishment of the LORD constitutes the definitive end of Israel and Judah as nations, and the definitive end of the temple service in Jerusalem. In these Lamentations, the poet Jeremiah weeps bitterly over the destruction of Jerusalem, the desecration of the temple and holy things.

Still, we must not see these words of lament as an expression of the end of hope. Rather, they are an encouragement to continued hope in God. They are an appeal to the faithful to accept the chastising hand of the LORD and cling to Him in trust and perseverance. God has struck hard, but the way of repentance and salvation is not closed. For the LORD holds true to His promises, and never fails.

So we must see these words not as an expression of doubt, but as an expression of the *force* of the judgment and great anger of the LORD. That is why we may also see them as *prophecy*, reaching beyond the judgment of Israel to the judgment of her great Son, Jesus Christ. And there is all the more reason to draw the line to the future here in this lament, since it is an *individual* lament, pointing strongly to one who as a representative, bears the guilt of the people, e.g. the prophet himself, or the king. This representative suffering finds its fulfillment in Christ Jesus, who willingly “ate the dust” in order to bring hope to God’s people. Indeed, the lament applies more to Him than to Israel. For Israel was struck with *temporal* punishment, but the way of salvation was not closed. Christ, however, had to face

hell and grave. Life and death stood before Him as two eternal realities, and He had to freely let go of one, and freely accept the other. He also had no help in suffering: He had to draw His hope *out of Himself*. For Him more than for anyone else, hope was in the balance. And this midpoint in the lament points to that great midpoint in His earthly life — His descent into hell. Truly, He put His mouth to the dust!

Yet He endured, and His endurance is the birth of new hope for the Church. For after His full expression of obedience to the God who hid Himself, His Father returns as Father again, and raises Him up on high. So He becomes for us the author of a new and living hope, “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” I Pet. 1:3, the one who changes our lament because of sin to a song of joy because of His surprising and life-giving liberation. Indeed, we still hope for what we do not see, Romans 8:24, 25; but our hope is now rooted in confidence and trust of the risen and living Lord! No more do we read in the New Testament of hope *in the balance*; rather, we read of Jesus who has become for us “a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain . . .” Heb. 6:19. We share the firstfruits of the resurrection of the dead, the firstfruits that fills all darkness with the light of living hope, and fills all the groaning of bondage with the glorious liberty of the new age. For *He* took the risk; He walked in the balance — and was victorious *for us*.

For He bore the *full* wrath of God — more than anyone else ever could. All ways of escape were closed to Him. But He opens the way of escape for us! He brings us the unexpected “honey from the rock,” Psalm 81:15, the surprising turn of events which turns our mourning into joy, and our despair into hope. And with His Spirit as our inheritance, we may learn to walk in the same trust and the same faith, sacrificing all for the sure hope of God’s redemption, giving all for the abiding call to service, and so standing open to the call of God and to His promises, holding fast a sure hope in Him. Then the world may crumble around us, and we may feel driven and threatened on every side; but He sets us in a broad and open space, Psalm 18:9; He fills our hearts with a song of joy, making us partakers of His unexpected salvation. For He rose from the dead, and gives new life to all who trust in Him!

J. DEJONG



Will the OPC join the PCA? The invitation is through!

You may remember, that last year's General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) decided again to extend an invitation to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) to join the PCA, provided the presbyteries would vote in favour with a three-fourth majority. Earlier, the PCA presbyteries had voted against such an invitation to the OPC. Some said that the teachings of Dr. Norman Shepherd on justification were one of the obstacles. (The PCA invitation to the Reformed Presbyterian Church-Evangelical Synod was approved, and the RPCES joined the PCA.)

Professor Shepherd has been removed from Westminster Seminary and became a minister in the Christian Reformed Church. Was he an obstacle?

For many months the big question was whether the required number of presbyteries would now vote in favour of the invitation. The *Presbyterian Journal* of March 28, 1984, reported:

The proposal that the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) invite the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) to become part of the PCA has taken all sorts of unusual turns. Only a church historian with a sense for the bizarre could have predicted the measure's unusual final stages within PCA church courts, however.

For one thing, it could well happen that the PCA's invitation will be confirmed right here in Wheaton, Illinois — often called the capital of evangelicalism. For another, the decisive vote could take place in an OPC church rather than a PCA church.

All that is possible because of a decision of the PCA's Northern Illinois Presbytery to meet concurrently with the OPC's Midwestern Presbytery at Bethel OPC here for joint talks about the measure before the PCA presbytery votes.

With 29 PCA presbyteries needed to vote "yes" on the measure to ratify last summer's action by the PCA General Assembly, with 28 already having voted that way, and with this vote being the only one remaining among 38 presbyteries, the decision here is obviously critical. Originally scheduled to meet and vote late in April, the presbytery has now advanced the date to late March.

Even if Northern Illinois should vote "no," however, the proposal may not be finally dead. Central Florida Presbytery, whose vote on the issue ended in a 27-27 tie when

the moderator exercised his prerogative to participate, is expecting a motion at its April 14 meeting to rescind that vote in an effort to break the tie one way or the other. Some presbyters reportedly felt that so important an issue should not be left in a deadlocked state.

Would the invitation be ratified?

The April 4, 1984 issue of the *Presbyterian Journal* tells us the final result:

By a convincing vote of 20-5, with one abstention, the Northern Illinois Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) provided the final and decisive ratification needed to confirm the PCA's invitation to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) to become part of the PCA.

In voting "yes" on the measure, the presbytery became the 29th in the PCA to give its approval, narrowly providing the necessary three-fourth majority among the PCA's 38 presbyteries. . . .

"No," one presbyter told the *Journal*, "we didn't particularly feel any pressure. We knew ours was the decisive vote, but I don't think that entered into how we made up our minds."

In the final unofficial church-wide tally, 997 presbyters voted "yes," 522 voted "no," and 33 abstained.

In the 38 presbyteries, 10 reached their decision by relatively close votes — with a margin of eight votes or less. But of those 10 presbyteries, five voted affirmatively and five negatively.

The measure goes now, without further action needed by the PCA General Assembly, to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for its consideration. But spokesmen for the OPC say it is not likely to be put to a vote there this year. Instead, time will be given for extensive discussion and debate.

Besides, the OPC is still eager to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 1986. Even if it accepts the PCA invitation, it may wait a year or two to make that celebration possible.

If it is true — and time will tell — that the OPC General Assembly of this year will not bring the invitation to a vote yet, but first give ample time for discussion to the presbyteries and the churches, it will mean that they will keep us (Canadian Reformed Churches) and others in suspense a little longer. Some predict that the invitation will be accepted. I must say: I have no idea what the outcome will be. Should acceptance of the invitation come about, will that mean that a number of OPC churches will not go along? In my

opinion, a decision to give the matter to the presbyteries and the churches for discussion before coming to a vote on the acceptance at a General Assembly would not make so much difference. The presbyteries have to ratify it anyway. Besides, the matter has likely been in discussion unofficially already since the decision of the PCA General Assembly of last year. The presbyters of the OPC may have made up their mind in the meantime.

On the other hand, some more study and discussion might not harm at all, but have good results. Unity in faith should be expressed not only in the common name "Presbyterian," but also in unity in the same church (federation). That is the calling. But it must be certain that it is a unity in the faith. Both churches have the same confession, the Westminster Standards. They also have basically the same form of church government. If both maintain what they confess, unity is commanded. The OPC must make sure that that unity exists.

We follow the development with great interest.

J. GEERTSEMA

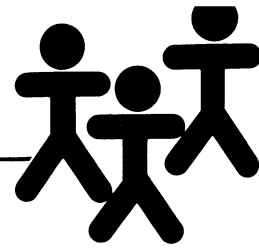
THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Christ who knows all His sheep
Will all in safety keep;
He will not lose His blood.
Nor intercession:
Nor we the purchased good
Of His dear Passion.

I know my God is just.
To Him I wholly trust
All that I have and am.
All that I hope for.
All's sure and seen to Him.
Which I here grope for.

Lord Jesus, take my spirit:
I trust Thy love and merit:
Take home this wandering sheep.
For Thou hast sought it:
This soul in safety keep.
For Thou hast brought it.

Richard Baxter, 1615-91



A. Proposal — Educational Consultant

At its meeting on January 27, the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies, briefly discussed the possibilities of an Educational Consultant for our schools. To quote from the minutes:

Some years ago, the Board at Burlington, presented the League with a paper showing certain problems within our school system and possible ways to meet them. A part-time or full-time consultant could help us and bring also more unity in the system.

During the last five years, the Principals Club, the Canadian Reformed Teachers Association, and the Committee for Assistance in Reformed Education have all looked into this at one time or another — without much result. The fact that we are still in “neutral” as far as this situation is concerned, is deplorable! In Ontario for example, our schools do their curriculum work largely on an individual basis. Although there is some informal communication and although CARE has done some work for the schools in regards to Church History and Literature, a lack of cohesion and common purpose remains. It is frustrating (to put it mildly) to notice that most schools are working on the same curriculum areas and are tackling the same problems with virtually no input from other teachers. Surely, this was never meant to be the definition of a *parental* school!

Expectations are changing in our schools. Boards, Education Committees, and parents who have been educated in this country, are insisting on seeing more professionalism and more work in regards to a written school program. The pressure is on, especially when one realizes that the work of a full-time teacher and curriculum development, do not always go well together during the course of a school year. Work during the summer is a viable alternative and it *is* done by a number of dedicated teachers. However, the overall *strategy* is usually missing. There has been a great deal of reluctance on the part of the CRTA to set up summer courses and workshops. The reasons for this are beyond me! If a teachers’ organization does not see the need for this, one can hardly expect the school boards to push for it. A *Reformed* curriculum is the most distinctive feature of our schools. Anyone who makes a commitment to teach in a Canadian Reformed School, *must* make a commitment to work on cur-

riculum — each teacher according to his/her ability.

So far, no comments have been made about an Educational Consultant. Hopefully, the need for one has been made clear, however. Someone is needed to set the framework, delegate areas of responsibility and to organize workshops and summer courses. To quote from a proposal sent to the League:

There are some areas in our education system which are not being met as effectively as they might. Some of these are:

Curriculum — need for expertise, organization, and sound leadership.

Staff Development — need to make teachers more effective in their daily work through regular seminars and/or lectures to update skills and enrich their practice.

Reformed Textbooks — need for a critical approach to teaching materials and the possibility of designing our own material.

Special Services — need to centralize special education activities which can be shared among all schools, as well as certain testing instruments.

Staff Assessment — need for an independent, objective, qualified, observer to assess, in a consultative capacity, senior staff and administration.

In order to meet these needs, it is proposed that the League endorse the concept of an Education Consultant for our schools, whose activities would be directed towards all of the areas mentioned above and that the League take steps toward hiring such a professional.

“Anyone who makes a commitment to teach in a Canadian Reformed School, must make a commitment to work on curriculum . . .”

What is so distinctly *Reformed* about our curriculum? This is obviously a difficult question to answer. The first reply would be that we involve the children in Bible and Church History study. We would also say that in our schools, there exists a prevailing Christian atmosphere and attitude in all the work we do. Definitely important, but what about the rest of the time? In general terms, we are still making use of the same humanistic curriculum we tried to get our children away from. However, no amount of cutting or pruning, dissecting or altering, can change this basic framework which is humanistic and thus an untruth. An Educational Consultant

proposal is not an answer by itself. It is simply another ingredient to make the “machine” run more smoothly. Along with our college, teachers, school boards and parents, the mandate of a consultant, will help us to develop the basic elements on which a distinct Reformed curriculum can be founded. Let’s not adopt an attitude of complacency — there is a need. In a period of declining enrollment, our schools are expanding and growing. May the awareness of the *needs* of Reformed education also grow among us!

B. “The Police Rock On”

The following article was written by Mr. R. Bergsma, Grade 5, 6 teacher at the Dufferin Area Christian School (Orangeville, ON). Due to its length, certain sections have been deleted — hopefully not at the expense of making Mr. Bergsma’s excellent article less meaningful for all of us. He concluded by saying that comments or criticisms would be appreciated. If you have any reactions, please forward them to me and I will make sure that Mr. Bergsma receives them.

“The Police” is not your average, run-of-the-mill rock group. This group is made up of “. . . three diligent, intelligent and sexy musicians. . .” Their strength lies in the fact that they are “. . . willing to serve as superstars without losing control to drugs, treachery, greed or sentiment.” Since when have *you* heard of a rock group that hasn’t given way to one of the above vices? Folks, what we have here is a very clean-cut group. . . .

From a survey done with his students, Mr. Bergsma drew the following conclusions, which I’m sure is relevant for all our schools:

1. There is a body of students in our school who listened to rock music on a daily basis.
2. Beat, melody (or lack of it) and excitement come rather high on the list of reasons for enjoying music.
3. A large proportion of children listen to rock music on a daily basis thus reinforcing their knowledge and enjoyment of the songs and musicians.
4. That as children reach the age of puberty and adolescence, their enjoy-

ment or tolerance of rock music becomes greater.

5. That there is a body of parents who consciously (willingly), subconsciously (without being truly aware) or unconsciously (without being aware at all) are allowing their children to listen to rock music.

"Well?" you might ask, "Surely there are more clean-cut groups like The Police who haven't given way to some of the vices of this world? Wouldn't it be okay if we allowed our children to listen just to the good groups? . . . perhaps on an occasional basis? . . . only when we are around, so that we can judge the music our children are listening to? . . . only the "soft rock" groups? . . . what's *wrong* with listening to rock anyway? . . . there's so much we *can't* do these days . . . sometimes it's all so confusing!"

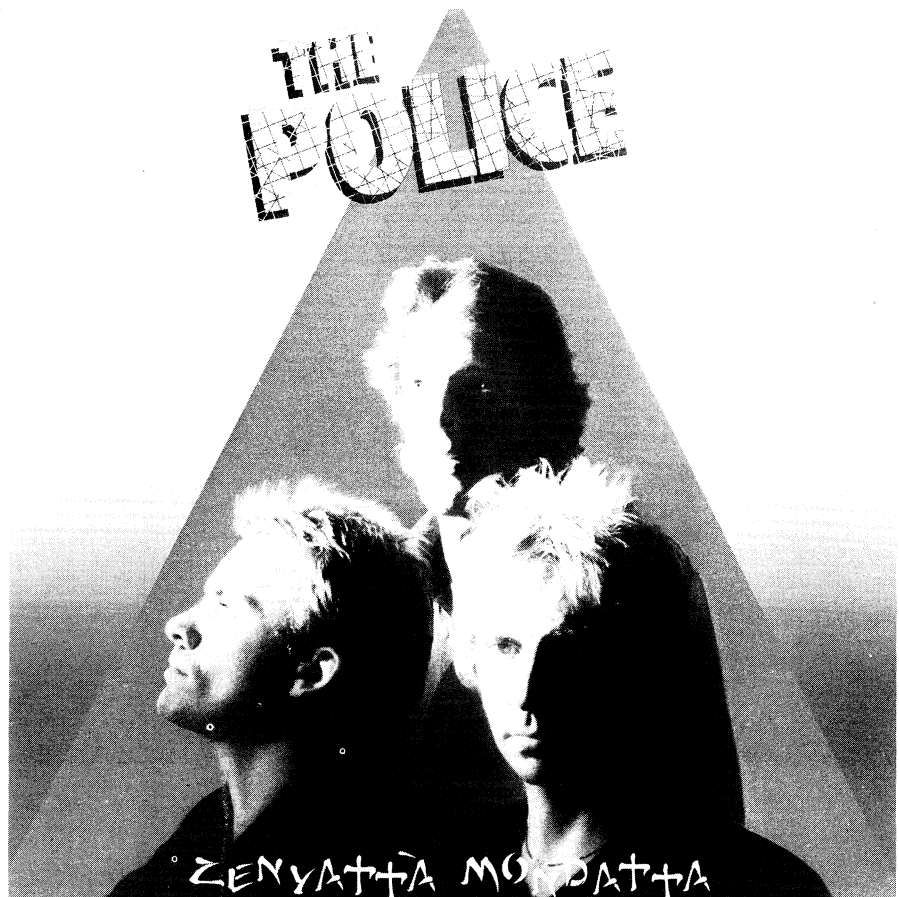
The objective of this article is to help you and I to discuss parts of the article "The Police At the Top of Rock" by Brian D. Johnson (*Macleans*, Aug. 15, 1983). I'd like to pose some questions and would like to do so in the light of our responsibility as Christian parents. I cannot and will not give all the answers; firstly since I am not qualified to do so and also since we are ultimately, personally responsible to God and must answer for our decisions. What we both *can* do is pray for guidance from above, and allow this guidance to be the light of our discussion.

Satan's power in undermining our Christian life should not be underestimated. Satan comes to us in various forms — not always ways in which we can recognize him. Sometimes he changes his package or wrapping so that he doesn't seem as ugly or harmful as he really is. I'd like to quote a few more parts from Brian Johnson's report on The Police. I challenge you to see if you can recognize the Beast in his various forms as we go along. I'll let you be the judge.

The Aug. 3 concert at the "Big O" before a crowd of 40,000 dancing, singing and screaming fans succeeded against all odds" (p. 32).

Why were they screaming? Was it pain? Unlikely! Was this concert an outlet for frustrations perhaps; frustrations based on a life which has no meaning, no sense of purpose and no fulfillment? Would a satisfied Christian who has a deep relationship with his Maker, scream till his voice hurt? Would a person who directs his energies to God's Kingdom in work or leisure time feel the need to scream and act in a way which would be plainly embarrassing in normal social situations?

The fans were dancing. What type of dancing was this? Did it have sensual overtones — a sensuality reflecting the



. . . the Police rock on . . .

"sexiness" of The Police? Does God permit us to use our bodies in order to "turn on" others or to be "turned on" by others? Or should sexual advances, in dancing or otherwise be confined to that holy married state which God presented as an unparalleled gift to Adam and Eve? Johnson goes on to report that,

Stripped to the waist, Sting interwove the frenzy and the music to produce a smooth escalation of structured hysteria (p. 32).

Who is in control here — the audience or the musicians? The words "frenzy" and "hysteria" seem to indicate a state of confusion. Is the God of our orderly universe (which moves in perfect synchronization every minute of the day) responsible for bringing people to a state where they are "out of their minds" i.e. hysterical? Are we not called upon to be sober and to put on the breastplate of faith? (Thess. 5:8). Or is it the Beast who encourages this "mind-blowing" music and grins with satisfaction that he is indeed in control of this "smooth escalation" and "structured hysteria"?

Sting, who writes most of the songs, admits that he is attached to the idea of musical piracy; "When an art form crosses a cultural barrier . . . that is where it becomes more interesting than it was ethnical-

ly. I'm here to steal. If I see something, I'll steal it" (p. 34).

Is this statement further proof that rock is revolutionary and that one of its purposes is to break down old values — the sound values based on Scriptural truths? In the light of what Sting said, can we not agree with Rev. J. Geertsema who stated, "The music (rock) itself already is revolutionary, anarchistic (encouraging lawless disorder). It aims at destruction, and it does destroy! It destroys the old values" (*Clarion*, Vol. 32, No. 23, November 18, 1983). Also; to whom does the concept of "stealing" belong — our righteous God or the cunning "snake" who already wanted to "steal" Adam and Eve in Paradise?

The report continues:

There's a weird, almost psychotic element to The Police's music. There is an obsessive quality to their stuff, as if they won't let go. There is a level of it that is deeply emotionally disturbed (p. 34).

Sting insists that the darker element is essential to the music. "Without emotional disturbance there would be nothing to say. Who wants to hear what a nice day it is?" It seems that Sting feels that there is no purpose to music if it doesn't have elements of emotional disturbance. He is

not content with normal life. Is that because there is an emptiness, a void in his life that cannot be fulfilled? Does he need to indulge in a dangerous play with emotions in order to get a "high" out of life, and; can mature and fulfilled Christians have an empty spot in their hearts which they allow to be filled with these emotional disturbances?

Sting is indeed intelligent. At times he also seems to be aware of what he is doing. He states at one point:

I can sing a song like "So Lonely" to 60,000 people and have them sing it back to me, the irony being that they're all singing how lonely they are but they're all together (p. 34).

I think he misses one point though; his audience *is* lonely, even when they're together, but that loneliness stems back to a lack of faith and true communion with our Lord Jesus Christ. Sting doesn't realize that perhaps his audience means it when they sing "So Lonely" back to him.

The material produced by The Police ranges from songs on prostitution such as the hit "Roxanne" to suicide as depicted in "Can't Stand Losing You." We don't need to make a comment here. You be the judge in the light of Scriptures.

There is one last section that I would like to quote from the report and this one probably "caps the lot" on the sinfulness of rock music.

"Let our children not become empty vessels that lend themselves to be filled by worldly wretchedness as portrayed in rock music. Instead, let the love of God and its accompanying peace be a part of their every fibre."

One of Sting's favourite words is *subversion* (the act of utterly ruining or overthrowing — Webster). Since then he has shifted his concerns from political to spiritual terrain. "I am still a closet anarchist, but I have realized that . . . ranting . . . against whatever does not work. I think that what we do now is much more subversive, and it is pleasant and seductive at the same time. But there is a background of very radical thought behind it."

Sting considers his reckless music to be pleasant and seductive. He doesn't mind if it ruins those who are willing to listen to it. He even feels that by seduction, this ruining is pleasant. He is aware of the fatal consequences of his music philosophy and yet he thoroughly enjoys it. The

Book of Lamentations teaches us "to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord does not approve" (3:36). Whose instrument is he? God's or Satan's?

Let the "rock set" not become part of our scene. Let our children not become empty vessels that lend themselves to be filled by worldly wretchedness as portrayed in rock music. Instead, let the love of God and its accompanying peace be a part of their every fibre. While the Lord shows us the way and parents are called to be a part of His great plan, the Beast roars — and The Police rocks on. He won't stop with his destruction until the Lord, too, shall call him to account on that final day. He and his followers shall gnash their teeth into eternity, but Christ's children shall enjoy eternal blessedness. Which do you choose for your children?

C. Reformed education and our responsibility

The following article was originally written in the church bulletin of Burlington West, by Rev. Stam. During February and March, schools try to finalize September enrollments, so that the proper number of teachers may be hired and that the necessary programs may be finalized. There are still parents who do not see the need for Reformed education and who return the enrollment forms blank, with (perhaps) a brief explanation as to why their children will be enrolled at a public

school. Rev. Stam's comments in this respect are very appropriate, not only for the nonsupporters, but also for those who take our schools for granted or who perhaps have misgivings and doubts from time to time. (In other words, his comments are relevant for all of us.)

For many years we have been blessed with our own Reformed schools and in the past years this education could even be expanded from the elementary to the senior levels. Although nothing is perfect, I think that it can be argued that these schools offer solid programs and promote good Christian development. It is grossly inconsistent with Scripture, confession and our own baptismal vows that some families still do not see fit to support and use these God-given

facilities. I have seen some of the results in my pastoral work; the results are outright DISASTROUS.

What valid reason can we come up with to refrain from using these facilities? If these were financial, we must make our NEEDS in this respect known to the brotherhood which is obliged to give adequate aid and also has done so in the past. We must be a communion of saints, in giving, but also in RECEIVING, and if this aspect of our mutual association is being neglected, something is wrong.

We may or may not agree with FEE STRUCTURES and perhaps even promote another system of contribution. So be it; yet such is no reason to withdraw support and, as it were, GO ON STRIKE. What we condemn in others, we should not do ourselves. If we are members, it should be our full striving to meet the financial burdens and again, if we foresee difficulty, to inform the brotherhood in time. Our schools must never become institutions for the RICH only, but are for ALL to make use of. This means that all, young and old, must support to the best of their ability. Single people and young families are not exempted from this responsibility. I was brought up under this golden rule; as soon as you have ANY income, a part of this is to be reserved for the ministry and the schools. Were my parents wrong, or are we today much wiser?

We read lately of great deficits with our schools. Churches are also feeling the pinch. If this is due to the general financial and commercial climate, we can live with it. But if this is because we are gradually shifting our priorities, we stand condemned. Israel was warned already before it entered the promised land that wealth makes fat and unwilling, and it is often then that the first love grows cold. Certainly such is not the case with us!

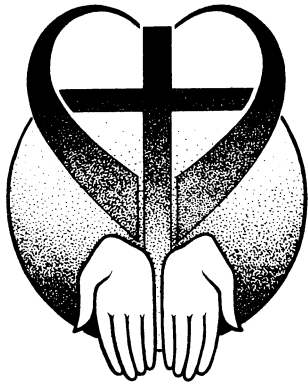
It happens also that when children fail at school, parents take them off our school and send them to the public school. Was there not enough "value" for the hard-spent money? May the school not "fail" children if these are below the required mark? Is the problem really solved when such children go to the public schools, or are we causing ADDITIONAL problems? I applaud the father who said to his child, if you do not deserve REFORMED education, you don't deserve public education either; find a job and make yourself useful.

I simply cannot understand that when we have our own schools, parents dare to send them off into the world and entrust them to men and women who do not fear God. While people from other churches are clamoring to have their children admitted to our schools, we send ours away. That would seem like striking the Lord in the face.

Until next month (DV)!

NICK VANDOOREN
John Calvin School
607 Dynes Road
Burlington, ON

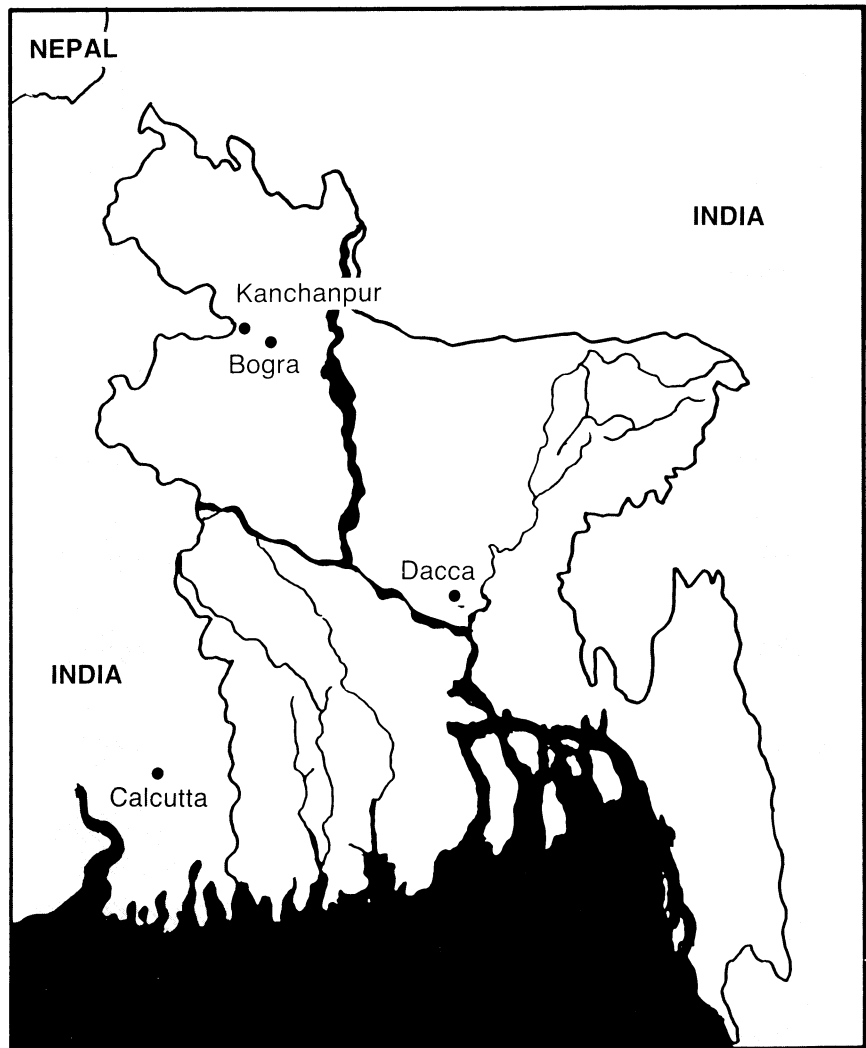
Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund



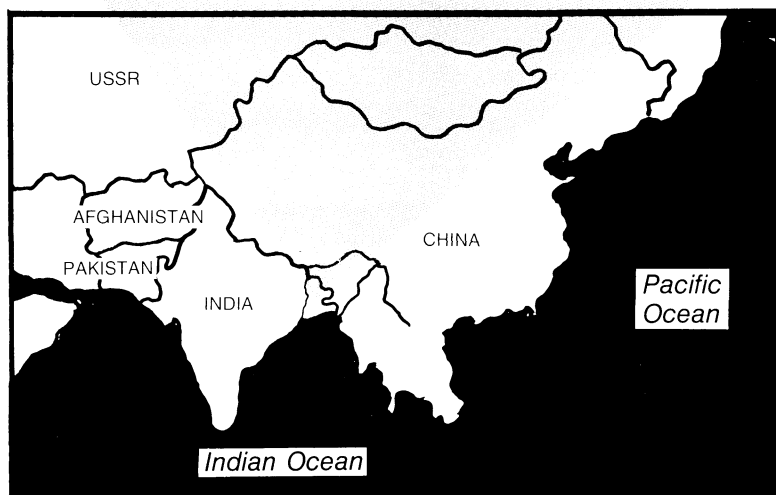
The income and work of the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund have slowly increased over the past few years as you faithfully contributed and as God gave growth. We have been encouraged by reports of the clinic work in South Korea, and news and pictures of the expansion of our Achego's Children's Home in Kenya. But, we have often wondered what more we could do, using your gifts responsibly, to help alleviate a little of the suffering in our world. Our efforts still seem so limited One answer came last fall in a proposal to consider assisting impoverished farmers in one of the world's poorest countries. Detailed information was sought and received, and in March, at our annual Spring membership meeting, representatives from area congregations gave an enthusiastic go-ahead to begin assisting the poor in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated and poorest countries with a per capita yearly income of only about \$80.00. Located in the north-east part of the Indian subcontinent, this land has known much hardship and turmoil. Formerly the province of East Pakistan, it declared its independence from Pakistan in 1971 after fierce fighting. The people, 89% of whom are Muslims, subsist mainly on rice, the country's most important crop.

How did we at CRWRF become involved in a country whose government is not kindly disposed to Christian outreach? Well, the project was first brought to our attention by Peter and Geraldine Ysselstein, members of the congregation at Guelph, who are currently living in Bangladesh, working as Agriculturalist through Christian Reformed World Relief. Their job there involves increasing the economic welfare of the marginal farmer in an area where the crops raised by many farmers will not enable them to support their families for the entire year. Many farmers have been forced to borrow at exorbitant rates and have ended up losing what little



BANGLADESH





September 1, 1983
Bogra Town, Bogra District
Bangladesh

Dear Friends,

Greetings! If you were to travel two days by plane and another five hours by car and ferry, you would finally arrive at our home in Bogra, Bangladesh. We've lived here for almost two months now and would like to share some of our first impressions with you.

A typical day in our home begins and ends with two hours of language learning with our tutor. The sounds were totally unfamiliar to us at first but now some of the words are invaluable: "Acha!" for okay; "donnabad" for thank you; and "assalamu oalaikum" for our greeting — peace be with you.

As a newcomer, Bangladesh greets you warmly with a blanket of heat and humidity. Overhead fans and daily downpours are a real blessing.

When you venture into the street, you're amazed by the thousands of rickshaws that transport people and goods all over the city and countryside. Buses, cars, motorbikes, ox carts and cows all share the road. Honking is a polite warning in this country.

Just a short walk from our house and you're in the countryside. Small dirt paths demarking ownership of the tiny plots of rice, will eventually lead you to what appears to be a forest. Under Urese bamboo and mango trees live the villagers in mud walled homes with thatched roofing. Often an extended family have their homes in a square around a common courtyard. Grandma lies dozing in the shade. Little children are carrying baby brothers or sisters around. Bengalis love their children and have them constantly on their arms. Women spend most of their day in this courtyard. Crouched on their haunches over a mud stove fueled by leaves and twigs, they prepare rice, curry and some vegetables.

The men according to their occupation are out plowing the rice paddies with a team of oxen, bringing produce on a yoke to market, weaving chair backs, chopping wood, sewing clothing or driving a rickshaw. They will generally do all the shopping or marketing for the family.

Some children attend schools but parents have to be able to pay for their books, uniforms and tutors in the higher grades. Children must grow up fast and help bring in "taka" (money) to feed the family.

Wherever you go in Bangladesh there are people and the figure of 95,000,000 inhabitants becomes a living reality. Of these people's needs and problems we are beginning to become aware of and hope to write you more in the future.

Pray for the people of Bangladesh and its leaders that they may learn to do justice. Pray also that the work that is done to improve their living situation may be a witness of the love and truth of Jesus Christ.

In His service,

*Peter, Geraldine and Geraldine Ysselstein
Box 76, CRWRC, Bangladesh*

land they had to creditors. The program Peter and Geraldine work in has helped many of these farmers become self-sufficient by pointing them to better farming methods (shown on local demonstration plots), and by facilitating the procurement of small loans for the purchase of hand pumps. The use of these hand pumps promotes better irrigation of land plots, allowing for the harvesting of an additional crop each year. Thousands of farmers have been helped through this program during the past several years. Many of

their wives have benefitted from courses in nutrition and child care.

Peter and Geraldine are continuing supervision of this successful program and are also pushing into a new area in northwest Bangladesh where evangelism will be more feasible due to the background of the people living there. Most Bengalis are Moslems to whom gospel outreach is very difficult. Moreover, in this new area of Khanjanpur, the people are mainly from a tribal animist background and are more open to the Good News. In

fact, several churches have been established in the past so that many of the farmers who will be helped are believers.

The specific stated goal of this new project which we will completely fund, is to assist poor non-self-sufficient families (target families), in the Khanjanpur area, to become more self-sufficient by developing their own personal and community resources. Three major thrusts are proposed:

1. Adult basic literacy training — to increase the number of individuals per

community that are able to read/write their name, numbers, and the alphabet.

2. Cooperative development — to train groups of men/women in the following skills:

i. Management — the ability to make, implement and review plans.

ii. Financial — the ability to control resources, to budget, to save and use local banks for their savings and capital loans.

iii. Cooperative Control — the ability to maintain order, establish rules/by-laws, to develop trust and to have an effective turnover of leadership.

iv. Technical — the ability to recognize the skills required for chosen income generating activities, the ability to seek and acquire these skills, and to develop expertise and quality control.

3. Homestead gardening — to increase the number and quality of homestead gardens among the target families.

Peter will be the Project Manager and will supervise a staff of national men with expertise in rural community development who will be directly responsible to him.

Costs of the project, (excluding the Ysselstein's salary which will still be paid by CRWRC) will run to approx. \$6,000 a year. These funds are happily available already since with the construction on the Acheho extension taking longer than expected, much of the money budgeted for initial costs and maintenance of new children entering the home will not be required this year. The funds for the Khanjanpur project will be kept in a special account under our name, by Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, and will go directly to the support of this program. If we choose, we may terminate support at the end of the Ysselsteins' stay — another two to two and a half years. It is possible that the aims of the project may be largely completed by then.

The real advantage of such a project, as we see it, is that we will have much more direct "control" than we have enjoyed with our other projects. In Korea, as you know, the work is under the supervision of the Busan Gospel Hospital which is maintained by the Korean Presbyterian Church; in Kenya, Mrs. Rookmaaker

sends us reports and the work is supervised more regularly by the Africa Inland Church. Though these have proved satisfactory for the most part, we have often wished for the growth and funds that would enable us to send out our own personnel. In Bangladesh, we are now fortunate enough to be able to have our own church members directly supervising the project and reporting back to us.

We look forward to hearing more news from Peter and Geraldine in the coming months, and to viewing the slides and pictures they hope to send, as they share with us their work in ministering to the needs of some of the world's poorest people.

By way of introduction a first impression given by the Ysselsteins two months after arrival follows. For your orientation a map is added.

CRWRF
PO Box 793
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y7

Consulaat-Generaal Der Nederlanden CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

One Dundas Street West
Suite 2106, Box 2
Toronto, ON M5G 1Z3
Phone: (416) 598-2520

OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

MOERKERK, Leonardus, geboren 4 september 1889 te Holsteren, gehuwd met Elisabeth Raaijmakers, naar Canada vertrokken op 18 juli 1927 met bestemming Ottawa, laatstbekende woonplaats in Nederland: Bergen op Zoom. Uit dit huwelijk zijn geboren: J.A.J. Moerbeek, geboren 12.12.1913 te Bergen op Zoom; A.M. Moerbeek, geboren 4 oktober 1915 te Holsteren; P.A. Moerbeek, geboren 26 juli 1921 te Bergen op Zoom, C.C. Moerbeek, geboren op 23 mei 1925 te Bergen op Zoom.

RIJKHOF, Joseph Gerardus Bernardus, geboren op 21 februari 1955 te Meerssen, naar Canada vertrokken in 1979, laatstbekende adres: 3509 Peel Suite 302, Montreal.

GEERLIGS, Johannes A., geboren op 1 juni 1919, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Look 53, Holten, naar Canada vertrokken op 15 maart 1952.

HENDRIK, Charles Robert, geboren op 23 april 1919 te Warongdjajeng, Indonesia, laatstbekende adres in Nederland:

Dordtsestraatweg 46 te Rotterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 1 april 1968.

KIERS, Jans, geboren op 5 juni 1919, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Nieuw Lovensestraat 234, Tilburg, naar Canada vertrokken op 24 maart 1952.

KRANENBURG, Simon, geboren op 6 april 1928 te Rotterdam, laatstbekende adres: 80 Hawkes, London, Ontario, naar Canada vertrokken in 1951.

NEFS, Thomas, geboren op 13 juli 1917, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Julianastraat 62A, Halsteren, naar Canada vertrokken op 15 april 1952.

ROSENDAAAL, Johannes, geboren op 29 april 1945 te Rotterdam, laatstbekende adres: 27 Reeve Road, Brampton, Ontario, naar Canada vertrokken in 1978.

WILLEMS, Hendrik, geboren op 7 april 1919 te Odoorn, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Dorpstraat 60a, Vledder, naar Canada vertrokken op 8 mei 1957 met bestemming Niagara Falls, Ontario.

SMIT, Cornelis Johannes, geboren op 7 februari 1919 te Den Helder, naar Canada vertrokken op 26 augustus 1968 met als adres: 28 Mill Street, Acton, Ontario.

REITSMA, Wijkje, geboren op 10 maart 1919 te Schetten, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: van Osingaweg 44, Schetten, naar Canada vertrokken op 2 april 1953.

ROOS, Willem, geboren op 16 augustus 1917, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Zuilhofstraat 15, Sassenheim, naar Canada vertrokken op 26 juli 1955.

VAN SCHAİK, Carolus Philipus, geboren op 7 januari 1919 te Zutphen, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Vermeerstraat 48, Deventer, naar Canada vertrokken op 24 maart 1953, laatstbekende adres: Shuffman Rd., Frankford, ON.

EXLER, Theodora Johanna Wilhelmina, gescheiden van Collings, geboren op 6 februari 1926 te 's Gravenhage, laatste woonplaats 's Gravenhage, naar Canada vertrokken op 27 juli 1955.

V.D. LINDEN, Adrianus, geboren op 31 augustus 1917, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: A. van Royenstraat 8A, Noordwijk, naar Canada vertrokken op 13 mei 1955.

MICHIELSE, Johannes Woutherus, geboren op 3 maart 1919, gehuwd met Petronella Johanna van Hees, laatstbekende woonplaats in Nederland: Alphen en Riel, naar Canada vertrokken op 20 april 1960.

BANNING, Charlotte Marijke, geboren op 26 maart 1924 te Semarang, Indonesie, Laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Julianaalaan 64, Bloemendaal, naar Canada vertrokken op 27 april 1954.

BOOTSMA, Hero, geboren op 31 januari 1919 te Enkhuizen, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Leeuwarderweg 3A, Sneek, naar Canada vertrokken op 18 juli 1951.

DURAND, A.C., geboren 1 augustus 1917, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Koekoeksweg 13, Soest, naar Canada vertrokken op 7 mei 1952.

voor deze:-
Mevr. G. SCHNITZLER
Fgd. KANSELIER

Association for Reformed Political Action

Introduction

A Christian political action group was formed by members of the Langley and Surrey Canadian Reformed Churches in the beginning of 1983 in order to influence the political processes of our society on federal, provincial and municipal levels.

The name ARPA was selected because we had been informed that members of other churches in our federation had already formed similar groups with this name. We hoped that by taking this name we might facilitate the building of a national association with various chapters across Canada. Our efforts to make contact with these reported groups failed and we ask that anyone having knowledge of other Christian political action groups to let us know so that we can make contact with them and so learn from one another's experiences.

What can one individual do?

This question has often been asked. It is amazing however how much one individual can do. One only has to read the papers to realize how many things can be improved, and how many things can be done by any individual in order to be a witness in an evil society, if only by writing letters to the editor or to political representatives. Furthermore — *you are never alone*. The Lord will always be with you when you witness in His name. In His grace He has also given us brothers and sisters to encourage one another.

In this report we want to tell you how the Lord has blessed our activities in Surrey, BC.

The early days

ARPA in Surrey started as a small but enthusiastic group drafting a constitution and a letter of introduction to political leaders. At the same time a major confrontation developed when proponents of wide open shopping on Sundays pressured Surrey Municipal Council to place another Referendum before Surrey voters, although a similar one had been defeated the previous year.

The Sunday shopping issue

When Surrey Municipal Council announced that the Referendum would take place during the Municipal elections in November 1983 ARPA swung into action. ARPA decided that this was an immediate opportunity for Christians to become active. The Press and Radio were informed, T.V. appearances scheduled and 10,000

brochures printed for distribution. A letter was sent to all pastors in Surrey followed by a telephone call. Our brochures were distributed through the churches, in shopping centres, by Christian merchants and in some areas from house to house. Contacting some 100 churches in Surrey seemed to have the best results and even provided a stimulant to some of the pastors.

On election day the weather was terrible. Voter turnout was only 22.5% and the bylaw passed with a small majority of only 51.5%.

Never give up!

The first ARPA Board meeting after the voting was somewhat subdued. It was decided to write a letter to all aldermen. This was done but we received no feedback. All of a sudden there was an announcement that a new bylaw permitting wide open shopping on Sundays had received first, second and third reading and that a public hearing would be held on February 29, 1984. It was also announced that the new bylaw would be adopted only if it received a 2/3 majority vote by council members. Here was a new opportunity!

Renewed hope

A new letter was sent to all churches in Surrey followed by a telephone call. One minister of an Evangelical church said: There is nothing more I can do for you. I have made 250 copies of your brochure myself, I have dealt with the issue in my sermons, I have prayed for it, I have discussed it at society meetings and in my Young Peoples classes. I can do no more. How encouraged we were!

Public hearing

The public hearing was attended by 175-200 people, some 70% being members of the Canadian Reformed Churches. One minister attended with his entire catechism class. At 7:30 p.m. the hearing started. The chairman of ARPA spoke first to voice his objections to the evil bylaw. The Mayor of Surrey was very polite and offered the people attending the meeting to state only their name and whether they were for or against the bylaw. One alderman asked whether those opposing the bylaw would stand. When 95% of the audience arose he got the picture.

During the next 2½ hours we watched housewives, businessmen, young people and ministers of the gospel testify of their faith in God who requires that the Sab-

bath day be kept for His service. They reminded Council of their duty to use the authority given to them by God for the consecration of the day of rest. It was also made clear to them that doing so would be of benefit to society at large. The entire Council and also the few people in favour of the bylaw were truly amazed at the witness of this unexpected last-minute testimony by so many true Christians. One alderman said after the meeting that he had never before seen anything like it and that he was deeply impressed with the peaceful yet powerful witness of what he called the silent majority.

Bylaw defeated

At the next Council meeting the bylaw did not receive the required majority. There were 4 votes in favour and four votes against while the Mayor abstained.

Conclusion

Several ministers of the gospel attended the public hearing. It was encouraging for them to see their congregations and their young people in action. It was probably an eye-opener for them too, when they were confronted just as their congregations with the evil powers of the everyday world. We hear our ministers preach to us on Sundays. Only now could we hear them speak out to the world in a society as we meet it during the week.

Some young people will never forget that their first public witness for the Lord found His approval and received His blessing.

This strange but wonderful evening was an encouragement to all of us.

Our task continues

The road ahead of ARPA is a difficult one. Briefs and letters to politicians have to be written on such subjects as:

- Bill C-169 — Freedom of Speech.
- Bill C-10 — Divorce Act.
- Abortion
- No fault Insurance, etc. etc.

With Nehemiah we pray: Remember us O God, for good.

We hope that you will join us in Nehemiah's prayer but also in his commitment to build the walls of Jerusalem. Is this not our reasonable service?

B. VAN DER WOERD
Secretary — ARPA
11957 River Road
Surrey, BC V3V 2V9

PATRIMONY PROFILE³⁶

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

Both the union and the picture taking did not meet with general approval. One opponent wrote: "They all went to sit in a garden and had a picture taken of all of them together. O was that ever sweet to see, how close those heads were together. Even the little head of that 'keulemannetje' you could see from it; it was sweet and brotherly; posterity can look at it for a long time . . . are they supposed to be pastors to win my soul for Jesus? They idolize each other and themselves. Shame upon you! Shame! Away with such a bunch!"

In various places some ministers and their congregations were already on their own. They were, of course, not included in the reunion. Further there were small groups here and there which did not go along with it.

The large majority of the "Cross Churches" — the Reformed Church in The Netherlands — reunited with the brothers from the Seceded Church.

They were to enter into still another union: the one in 1892, when the Christian Reformed Church — as was its name since 1869 — united with a group which had broken with the yoke of the Netherlands Reformed Church in 1886.

One point which was controversial with the negotiations for this union of 1892 was the Regulation of 1869.

The Regulation of 1869

When King William II took over the reins of government from his father, the persecutions ceased. This was also the case under King William III. On September 10, 1853, a new law was issued, which gave full freedom of exercise of religion to all denominations.

Already in 1863, the "Cross Churches" decided to call themselves simply The Reformed Church. The Seceded Churches felt the need to have the spiritual unity that had grown lawfully recognized by the government. To this end a Regulation was drafted at the Synod of Zwolle in 1854. Signed by the consistories of 65 congregations, the Regulation was sent to the government by the Consistory of Kampen. However, in Article 1 they called themselves the Christian Seceded Reformed Church, and the government objected to the use of the name Reformed.

In 1869 the union of the Seceded Congregations and the Reformed Church (under the Cross) came about. It was decided to give notice of their existence to the government and to do so under the name of Christian Reformed Church. A committee was appointed to execute the decision, and a Regulation, largely similar to the one of 1854, was presented to the government.

This Regulation reads as follows:

"Art. 1. The Christian Reformed Church in The Netherlands recognizes completely and without any reservation as expression of its faith: The Belgic Confession, contained in the 37 Articles, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons adopted in the Synod of Dordrecht 1618 and 1619.

"In the public worship services it uses the forms for

baptism, the Lord's Supper, exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, installation of office-bearers and solemnization of marriage which were approved by the Synod of 1618 and 1619.

"In the government of the church, the Church Order of the Synod of 1618 and 1619 shall be followed insofar as the circumstances do not prevent it.

"Art. 2. All who voluntarily join themselves to the church, and the children who are ingrafted into its communion by holy baptism, insofar as they have come over to us with their parents, are regarded as members of the church and considered to belong to its communion. All these continue as members of the Christian Reformed Church as long as they do not show clearly that they separate from it or have been declared deprived of their membership by a competent Church Board.

"All male members of the congregation who have made profession of faith, and are not under discipline, are entitled to vote and, in matters regarding the material interests, also all adult noncommunicant members, who, at the moment of the changing of this Regulation, do have the right to vote.

"Art. 3. According to the Church Order, mentioned in Art. 1, the government over the individual congregations is exercised by the consistories; with respect to some congregations together in a part of a province, by the classical meetings; as far as all the congregations in a province are concerned by the provincial assemblies; and regarding the whole Christian Reformed Church by the General Synod.

"Art. 4. In normal circumstances, the General Synod is held every three years.

"Art. 5. The General Synod appoints a Synodical Committee consisting of three members, who shall retire after three years without being immediately eligible for reelection. This Committee has the mandate to execute all the Synod has charged it with. Further it has been entrusted with looking after all things which arise from the relation of the Christian Reformed Church with the government, and from whatever it is charged with by any provincial assembly.

"Having been approached by any provincial assembly about any matter belonging to the church in general, it shall deal with this as it deems beneficial and good without, however, impeding any ecclesiastical assembly in its actions. It also receives the communications which are addressed to the Christian Reformed Church in The Netherlands from abroad, and brings them to the attention of those whom they regard.

"In a weekly it shall publish all that should be brought to the attention of the congregations, it shall also report on all its activities during the time from one Synod to the other.

"Under normal circumstances it shall meet annually in the place where it was established, namely Amsterdam.

"Art. 6. Any deviation conflicting with the provisions of the foregoing article renders the action of the Synodical Committee void for the church."

Without wanting to, the Christian Reformed Church hereby basically presented itself as a *new* denomination.

Besides, the local congregations practically became locals of a country wide body. The singular "Church," is used for the totality of the federation, the plural congregations, when reference is made to the local gatherings of believers. A Synodical Committee functioned as a sort of permanent board. Collegialism became fixed in this Regulation.

Even the assurance in Art. 1. that the Dort Church Order will be followed insofar as the circumstances do not prevent it cannot undo the un-Reformed character of this Regulation.

We are not surprised that the Regulation of 1869 constituted an obstacle which had to be removed if the union between the Secession Churches and the Doleantie Churches ever was to become a fact.

The Rev. L.G.C. Ledeboer

We met the Rev. Lambertus Gerardus Cornelis Ledeboer already a few times. Yet now we will pay a little more attention to him. Born in Rotterdam in 1808, he studied at the University of Leyden, became a candidate in 1832, passed the provincial examination in 1834, and was ordained in Benthuizen in the Province of South Holland on July 29, 1839.

It did not take very long for the people to hear about him, and soon they came from all directions to listen to him. He was not a great orator, but spoke with conviction and was a true preacher of penitence. He dared to say almost anything from the pulpit and oftentimes became very personal.

Among others the well-known Rev. D. Molenaar wrote to him: "After all the things that I heard about you I believe that the work of the Lord has been powerfully worked in you, but I wished for your own sake and above all for the sake of the Name of our God that we heard less of queer expressions and actions of yours in the worship services."

Ledeboer did not study much, and his sermons were accordingly. One of his most faithful followers once testified, "In my whole life I heard only four or five times an *orderly sermon.*"

He was very generous and gave so much away of his considerable possessions that his family had him placed under trusteeship for some time. At times he was not in the right spirit for praying, and had then one of the catechism students pray in class. The Evangelical Hymns found in him a staunch opponent because he considered them to be Arminian for the larger part; the Synodical Regulations were an abomination to him because they violated Jesus' kingship over the church.

The conflict came soon enough. On Sunday, November 8, 1840, Ledeboer threw the Hymnbook and the Regulation down from the pulpit and after the service went to the garden of the parsonage where he buried both in the presence of many members of the congregation. A few liberal members lodged a complaint with the classical board and on November 13, 1840, the Rev. Ledeboer was suspended. Together with two elders he was deposed by the provincial board on January 26, 1841.

Four days after his suspension he appeared at the Seceded Synod of Amsterdam, welcomed with open arms, he joins the Seceded Churches, but not for long. One of

the reasons for leaving the Seceded Churches again was the request for recognition. Later he said of his joining in Amsterdam, "Through my haughtiness I fell into a snare."

Ledeboer had his share of persecutions and fines. He travelled through the country and preached everywhere without asking for permission. Every time he was fined Fl. 100 and, upon refusal to pay, imprisoned. On October 1, 1843, he was imprisoned for eighteen months and it is estimated that he paid some Fl. 2,000 in fines.

At many places Ledeboer established congregations. Sometimes he travelled for half a year, leaving his congregation in the care of Gerrit de Roos, one of the elders, who then conducted the services.

The congregations established by him were found in Zeeland, South Holland, Utrecht, Overijssel, and Gelderland. They are characterized by a strict observance of the sabbath — the Sunday is spent in such a manner that only "spiritual things" have the attention, such as going to church, reading the Bible and "old writers" — and a strong subjectivism, resulting in the "grading" of the spiritual levels of the members. A certain dualism in the line of Anabaptism is to be mentioned as well. The Psalms of Datheen were sung instead of the rhyming of 1773.

In 1881 many of Ledeboer's followers joined the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Christian Reformed Church.

In 1907, the Rev. G.H. Kersten succeeded in uniting them with the congregations under the Cross which had remained on their own after 1869. They took on the name of Reformed Congregations in The Netherlands. Splits occurred in this group as well. According to a survey of which the results were published in August 1980, the Reformed Congregations in The Netherlands, with 4 congregations in the United States — numbered 19,124 spread over 57 congregations, served by 6 ministers, the youngest of whom was 54 years of age.

The Reformed Congregations in The Netherlands and America totalled 89,529 members, divided over 158 congregations served by 56 ministers.

Dr. Abraham Kuyper

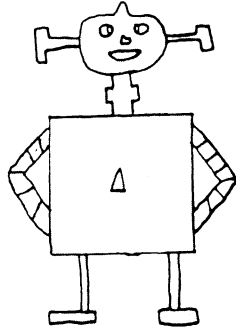
We now come to the life of a man who greatly influenced church life in the 19th century, and whose influence reached well into the 20th century. Abraham Kuyper was born in Maassluis on October 29, 1837. His father was a minister, but of the modernistic kind. In 1841 he accepted the call to Middelburg, but when the Rev. J.P. Hasebroek was called to Middelburg and accepted the call, the people soon noticed the difference. Hasebroek was a man of the Reveil and preached peace through the blood of the cross. This made the pious people very happy and they flocked to where he preached, with the result that the Rev. Kuyper preached to mostly empty pews. When the latter, therefore, received a call from the Church at Leyden, he accepted it, and thus young Abraham received the opportunity to attend the excellent facilities for education which existed in that city.

— *To be continued.*



Hello Busy Beavers,

Can you guess who this is?



It's Busy Beaver *Dennis Flokstra's* drawing.
But what is it?
Send your guess (and your story, if you like!) to:

Aunt Betty
Box 54
Fergus, ON N1M 2W7

* * *

SPRING

Spring, Spring, Spring!
What a lovely name!
The birds start to sing
The sun shines all day
With a bright yellow ray.
Let's give Spring
a great big hooray!

by Busy Beaver *Kimberley Van Dooren*

* * *

FOR YOU TO DO

Are you looking forward to the holiday on Victoria Day?
How did this holiday get its name?
What do we celebrate?
Where can you find out? Do you know?
Will you share your answers with the other Busy Beavers?



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Agnes Timmerman*. We are happy to have you join us. I see you're a real Busy Beaver already. Keep up the good

work!

And a big welcome to you, too, *Vanessa De Jong*. Are you having fun riding your new bike? Write again soon, *Vanessa*.

Yes, you may join the Busy Beaver Club, *Joanne Visscher*. We hope you'll really enjoy being a member of our Club. Thanks for the good riddles, *Joanne*. Bye for now.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Marc Jagt*. We are happy to have you join us. Thanks for the poem, *Marc*. Write and tell us about yourself and your hobbies, will you?

Hello *Pearl Vandeburgt*. It was nice to hear from you again. I see you are keeping very busy. Do you have a "better" rabbit yet, *Pearl*. Bye for now.

You must have had good weather to get a sunburn so early, *Margo Hofsink!* Sounds to me as if you have lots of fun at recess time. Keep up the good work, *Margo!*

Thanks for the puzzle, *Robert Van Middelkoop*. Do you like playing baseball at school, too, *Robert?* Write again soon.

Sounds to me as if you had a good spring vacation, *Chandra Meerstra*. What does your horse club do? Or is it a secret club? Thanks for the riddles, *Chandra*. And I hope you get a pen pal!

Are you excited about your trip to Ontario, *Dennis Flokstra?* Be sure to write and tell us about your trip and all the sights!

Hello *Sylvia Van Bodegom*. I hope you had a really nice birthday. Was your party fun? Will you write and tell us about it? How did your pictures turn out?

Did you have your concert yet, *Katrina De Jong?* Be sure to write and tell us all about it. I would love to hear you and your choir!

I see you have been very busy again, *Brenda De Boer*. Good for you! Did you count the purple martins at your house this spring? You are lucky to have such a good neighbour, *Brenda!*

Hello *Alida Knol*. How was your birthday. Did you have a fun party? Write again soon, *Alida*.

It was nice to hear from you, *Carla Schoon*. I like your code quiz and your word search, too. Thanks for sending them in.

Hello *Cheryl Vandeburgt*. I'm happy to hear you are all doing fine. I see you are going to be a really good writer. Thanks for the puzzle, *Cheryl*. Keep up the good work!

Busy Beavers we need a PEN PAL for:

Chandra Meerstra (age 10)
18253 - 74th Avenue
Surrey, BC V3S 4P1

RIDDLES FOR YOU

The long one is from Busy Beaver *Chandra Meerstra*, the others from Busy Beaver *Joanne Visscher*.

1. I know a little animal
Who also knows me.
That cute little animal
Can run and jump so free.
She's scared of little children,
And older people, too.
I've often asked her questions
She cannot answer me,
About the high clouds,
The soaring firmament,
And all about the South.
Who is she?
2. What did the pig say when the farmer got his tail?
3. What dog has no tail?
4. What room can't you get in?
5. What did the balloon say to the pin?

Answers: 1. a little bird 2. That's the end of me 3. a hot dog 4. a mushroom 5. Hi Buster!