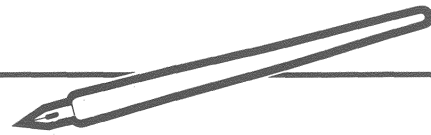




Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 33, No. 11

June 1, 1984



The General Synod of Heemse, 1984

On April 25, the General Synod of Heemse, 1984 was opened. Will our Dutch sister churches have a long synod? If it depends on the amount of "incoming mail," one could expect it. There were more than four hundred letters, some of which deal with doctrinal matters, others with matters of the Church Order, but most of them deal with the Dutch "Book of Praise" revisions of the Confessions and newly rhymed Psalms and new hymns. From the many articles and letters to editors during the past year(s) it has become clear that not everybody is happy with what has been done so far. Rev. Van-Oene recently wrote some critical remarks with respect to the new rhyming of the Dutch Psalms in *Clarion*.

To give the readers of *Clarion* an impression of what this synod has to do, I refer to *Nederlands Dagblad* of Saturday, April 28.

Advisory Committee I, for example, received for study the matter of the rhyming of the Psalms and the matter of the Theological Seminary. Advisory Committee II has to look into the matter of relations with churches abroad, among other things. Advisory Committee III must deal with the linguistic modernization of the Confessions, the Forms, and the Prayers; and further will be busy with the matter of deaconal cooperation. Advisory Committee IV will advise on the hymns and the order of the worship services. It also will come with proposals regarding as to when to baptize adopted children and regarding the so-called reading services (is an elder who conducts the worship service and reads a sermon allowed to lay the blessing upon the congregation?). Mission, evangelism, The Mission Institute, and catechetical instruction are some of the subjects for study and advice of Committee V. This incomplete list gives us an impression of what this synod will have to do.

There is one thing on the agenda of the Synod of Heemse that concerns us directly. That is the matter of relations with churches abroad — to which we also belong. The Dutch Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad has come to the Synod of Heemse with an extensive report on its activities. Information is given about contact that the deputies had with different churches.

This committee also advises synod about difficulties which Presbyterian churches have with the Dutch (and Canadian) rules for correspondence between sister churches. It might be good to print them here once again. They read:

- a. To take mutual heed that corresponding churches do not deviate from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government and discipline.
- b. To forward to each other the agenda and decisions of the broader assemblies and to admit each other's delegates to these assemblies as advisors.
- c. To inform each other concerning changes of, or additions to, the Confessions, Church Order and Liturgical Forms, while the corresponding churches pledge to express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable.
- d. To accept each other's attestations and to permit each other's ministers to preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments.
- e. To give account to each other regarding correspondence with third parties.

The report of the deputies mentions that especially the Free Church of Scotland (FCS), with which the Dutch churches have the provisional relationship of ecclesiastical contact, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland (EPCI), with which they have a sister church relationship, have difficulties with these rules. There are also the practical difficulties with the difference in language, particularly with the Korean churches. But the report says, "Not only the rules, but also the forms of our ecclesiastical relations raise questions: the striving of our churches for the eventual *one* relation of ecclesiastical fellowship seems to conflict with the forms which the Presbyterian churches know." The Irish and Scottish churches have different norms for their relations with others. They have "a first, second and third degree relationship (sister church relation, fraternal relation, and other contacts), which are determined by the degree of affinity. . . ." Our churches and the Dutch sister churches (like those in Australia and in South Africa) have the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (or correspondence) as a permanent relationship and ecclesiastical contact as a provisional relation. The Presbyterian churches are more in favour of the latter form of relation as a permanent one.

The report continues to say that the difficulties are not only of a practical nature, but also result from a difference in insight. "For example as the consequence of a different view on what being a church means, the Presbyterian churches do not know our rules for ecclesiastical relations, and do not so hardly understand them, and do not attach much value to them because they cannot be executed in practice."

The deputies come to the synod with a number of questions. They ask: "Can our Reformed churches ever become sister churches in the eyes of the FCS; and must we continue to strive for it? Or must we, respect, on practical grounds, the view of the FCS and even accept it?" Further they ask: "Did we perhaps not take into sufficient consideration matters that have to do with the specific history of (other) churches, and their different experiences, when we formulated our rules? Did we perhaps not see or even suppose this different history and perception? Has not that which receives undisputed validity in our churches and is seen as normal, due to the developments in the history of our churches, been used too much as the norm? As a logical consequence of being bound to the Dutch Reformed way of thinking is there not the inclination to see our own rules as the only correct ones and thereby fail to realize that the requirement to be bound to these rules can be seen by others as a hindrance for establishing a close relationship?"

These questions certainly have validity. However, it is also a good thing that the deputies made this remark: ". . . the Presbyterian churches may not demand from us that we take over the Anglo-Saxon approach; and that we crawl into their skirts. Your deputies do not want to diminish the abiding value of rules for ecclesiastical relations, since these relations have to function 'according to good order.'"

Thus the Synod of Heemse has to deal with the question

must we maintain the rules as we have them or must we change them and adapt them to the new situation of increasing contact with Presbyterian churches? Must we maintain one permanent relationship or make the provisional relation of ecclesiastical contact a second *permanent* relationship beside the other one?

To me the main point in the discussion must be: are the rules as we have them Scriptural? Are they in accordance with our Confession? When we, then, look at the first rule, in which sister churches agree "to take mutual heed" that they "do not deviate from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government and discipline," we see a Scriptural rule which applies to the individual members of the congregation, to congregations or churches which form a federation, and also to sister federations. In my opinion, a sister relation that is truly worth its name should have this rule as a principle, even when its practical execution meets with difficulties. As I see it, this rule is based on what we confess to be the marks (especially the first one) of the true church.

As far as I know, the second rule does not meet with too many difficulties, because it is practiced, while the third rule flows forth, more or less, from the first one. Accepting each other's attestations should not be too difficult, even though Presbyterian churches do not know our Reformed system. Rec-

ognizing one another as true churches, and as a consequence establishing a sister church relation, should include recognizing each other's ministers in good standing as faithful ministers, and allowing them to preach God's Word on each other's pulpits. When the execution of this rule is difficult or even impossible because of the language barrier, this should not make the rule as such invalid.

Synod Cloverdale 1983, made the decision that the sister church relation with its existing rules should remain the one permanent relationship. I like to express the wish that in further discussion with the Presbyterian churches they will come to recognize the validity of these rules. I certainly hope that the Synod of Heemse, if it makes a decision, will abide by the one sister church relationship as permanent and maintain the relation of ecclesiastical contact as a provisional one. I like to conclude with the following remark from the report: "It is certainly not ideal to have to deal with these rules and forms at synod after synod, but it is an immediate and unavoidable consequence of the rapid developments in which we have come with our relations these last years."

We wish our sister churches in The Netherlands a good synod, and the brethren the wisdom from above, so that their meeting will be a blessing for them and their relations.

J. GEERTSEMA

Pentecost and preaching

As we again remember the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, we may explore the question, "What is the effect of this outpouring?" The immediate effect, as Luke points out in Acts 2, is that the disciples are enabled to "speak in other tongues." Although there are varying explanations as to how this speaking in tongues is to be understood, whether they be foreign tongues or the glossolalia of which Paul speaks in I Corinthians 14, even whether it is a miracle of hearing rather than speaking (cf. Acts 2:8), it is evident that the tongues are made loose!

The immediate effect of Pentecost is that the gospel is *preached*. The Church which prior to Pentecost was very much in the doldrums, attending more to internal affairs than to public ministry, is enabled to speak out strongly and boldly concerning salvation in Jesus Christ. It is on the day of Pentecost that the apostle Peter delivers his first great sermon to the gathered multitude in Jerusalem. From then on the gospel will be proclaimed in an ever-widening circle, "from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (cf. Acts 1:8).

There is, then, an unmistakable relationship between "Pentecost and preaching." Pentecost marks the beginning of

the public proclamation of the gospel by the Christian Church. All sermons preached since then find their source and power in that outpouring. A Church which is truly "pentecostal" will actively maintain the faithful ministry of the Word.

By looking closely at that first pentecostal sermon, we may gain some insight into the kind of preaching which will be heard in and by the Christian Church. I do not mean to say that every sermon must in style and contents follow the exact pattern of Peter's sermon on Pentecost. Today we may choose our text from the entire Bible, and every preacher will use the gifts and talents which the Lord has given him. Nevertheless, the content and setup of this pentecostal sermon is not to be neglected, for it does indicate how the *Holy Spirit* causes the gospel to be proclaimed.

Pentecostal style

It always strikes me that this first sermon (and this holds true also for the following "sermons" in Acts) is very definitely not a dry or theoretical "discourse" but a very *direct address* with a lively style. The apostle does not take a "topic" which he then proceeds to treat or discuss from all possible angles, thereby inevitably lulling his audience into a peace-

ful slumber. On the contrary, his sermon is characterized by a forceful vitality which makes a deep and personal impact on the hearers.

There is a strong appeal to the hearers already in the manner in which they are addressed. Peter calls them "Men of Judea," "Men of Israel," and "Brethren" (Acts 2:14, 22, 29). Obviously, for the apostle Peter, the hearers are not a grey, undefined mass of people, but they are despite all shortcomings and sins still to be addressed as "the covenant people of God." Although every hearer has his own personality and identity, he is addressed as a responsible part of the covenant community. Sharing in the *promise* of the covenant (cf. Acts 2:39, "For the promise is to you and to your children. . .") the hearer is confronted with the *obligation* in the covenant to repent and believe (cf. verse 38).

If, in some evangelical circles, there is confusion or even controversy as to how the congregation should be addressed, this pentecostal style should certainly shed some light on the matter. The Church is a gathering of believers and their children, and the congregation should be addressed as such. When this is not done, the preaching only fosters sub-

jectivism and individualism, and loses its covenantal style.

It is this form of direct address which adds to the authoritative quality of the preaching. The hearers are urged to do their utmost in *listening*. The apostle interjects exhortative phrases which are not without significance: "Give ear to my words" (verse 14), "hear these words . . ." (verse 22), and "I may say to you confidently . . ." (verse 29). The matter is *urgent* as well as decisive, and the hearers are warned not to take the Word lightly or to shrug it off. Where God's covenant grace is spurned, the wrath of the covenant is incurred. The style of pentecostal preaching therefore carries within itself this sense of urgency, "O that *today* you would hearken to His voice!" (Psalm 95:7).

Preachers make a very grave error when they let a lackadaisical tone enter into their delivery or presentation, as if the matter is not really important and the hearer may "take it or leave it." The congregation should not be soothed by

neutral nonchalance but awakened by forceful conviction. In Acts 4:31 we read that the Word of God is spoken "with boldness." This should not be taken to mean that the disciples spoke impudently, rashly or without tact. It is a matter of being outspoken and frank, not skirting the issues but setting forth the Truth with conviction and clarity.

Preaching needs to be spiritually discerning, addressing the facts as given in the Scriptures and dealing concretely with the needs of the hearers, even if such "boldness" is not appreciated by all or forbidden by some. Again, the above does not mean that the preacher may be tactless or rude. Many a good sermon has been rendered fruitless by rash remarks and unripe interjections. Preachers must train themselves both in eloquence and discretion. Our speaking must be "seasoned," not sour (cf. Colossians 4:6).

Christological preaching

When we turn now to the contents of the pentecostal sermon — an aspect

even more important than its style — we notice clearly that the preaching is fully *Christological*. Which means that the entire sermon centers on the *saving work of Jesus Christ*. The sermon expounds the facts of salvation, the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. The "highlight" of Peter's sermon in Acts 2, I believe, can be found in verse 36, "Let all the house of Israel assuredly know that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

By sharp contrast, the preaching of many so-called "pentecostal" sects seems to have one single objective: to realize a repetition of the outpouring and to elevate the congregation to such a spiritual tension that "the Power" can descend. And, of course, when the Spirit does finally "enter" the auditorium, many miracles of glossolalia and healing occur! Compared to this ecstatic experience, the rest seems child's play.

But Christ Himself said that when the Holy Spirit is poured out, "He will glorify Me" (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit will testify to Christ and will apply to the congregation the riches which Christ has earned for His people. It is by the power of the Spirit and the preaching of the gospel that the congregation is made to see what great wealth it has *in Jesus Christ*. Sectarians tend to isolate the Holy Spirit from Christ, and in this respect destroy the *unity* of God's counsel of redemption.

True pentecostal preaching is, however, fully Christological. God's work of salvation in Jesus Christ is proclaimed and applied in all its riches and fulness to the congregation.

This Christological message is also *exclusive*. The pentecostal preaching does not allow even the slightest thought that there is any Saviour needed besides Christ or that Christ's atoning work is not of complete and global significance. God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ. He alone is Messiah. And in a later sermon, Peter emphasizes, ". . . there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Later the apostle Paul, preparing Timothy for faithful ministry, stresses that "there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5). In all his ministry, Timothy is to "remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead" (II Timothy 2:8).

So it remains throughout the entire apostolic era. So it shall be also today. Preaching that does not center on the perfect atoning work of Jesus Christ and the power of His glorious resurrection, does not merit the name "pentecostal." Every time the congregation leaves the church building to return to the calling of



Adam's Hymn in Paradise

*O Father, we approach Thy throne,
Who bidst the Glorious sun arise
All-Good, almighty and all-wise,
Great source of all things, God alone!*

*We see Thee! Brighter than the rays
Of the bright sun, we see thee shine!
As in a fountain divine,
We see thee, endless fount of days!*

*We see thee who our frame hast wrought
With one swift word, from senseless clay;
Waked with one glance of heavenly ray,
Our never dying souls from naught.*

*Those souls Thou lightedst with the spark
At Thy pure fire; and gracious still,
Gavst immortality, free will,
And language not involved in dark!*

*Van Vondel (From the Dutch), c. 1640
Translated by Sir John Bowring*

the new week, Jesus Christ shall have been proclaimed to them as a complete Redeemer and a perfect Mediator.

The unity of the Scriptures

It is a remarkable characteristic of pentecostal preaching that it is based on God's revelation not from a certain era alone, but on the *complete Scriptures*. In Peter's first sermon there are various references to the Old Testament, to the Prophets and the Psalms. This is not incidental, but essential. The events of the day are not seen in isolation from the preceding history of salvation but are proclaimed as a fulfillment of God's promises of old. References are made to Moses and Abraham (Acts 3:22, 25). The revelation of God in the Old Testament is clearly not "out of fashion," but also remains the normative Word of God for the New Testament Church!

It becomes evident that the will of God for His people is to be understood from the unity and totality of the Scriptures. Pentecostal preaching therefore approaches each text not only in its immediate context, but in the context of the *entire* Word of God. This means that pentecostal preaching is "historical-redemptive" preaching, explaining and proclaiming the saving work of God as it becomes clearer with the passing of time and is fulfilled in the ministry of Christ. Expounding on Old Testament material is certainly fully relevant in the New Testament Church. By neglecting the Old Testament in its preaching, the Church will only impede a true insight in the work of salvation.

There is today, even among some evangelicals, a tendency towards Bibliocism. Which means that texts are taken out of the context of the Scriptures and are seen as motto's for preaching. Such preaching tends to become topical and moralistic, and withholds from the congregation the true riches in Christ. Some so-called pentecostal sects restrict themselves almost entirely to the New Testament or portions thereof, while vast areas of God's wondrous revelation are left untouched and unexplored. Spiritual poverty and outright heresy are the result of this approach.

Pentecostal preaching, however, takes its message from the Old and the New, from the complete revelation of God, and so truly builds up the congregation in the full riches of the Scriptures. It is as Paul later wrote to Timothy, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching . . ." (II Timothy 3:16).

Call to repentance and renewal

There is yet one aspect of pentecostal preaching which I would like to

present in this article. The proclamation that Jesus is Lord and Christ, leads to a response from the side of the hearers, "Brethren, what shall we do?" (verse 37). The listeners are "cut to the heart" and seek further instruction. The apostle Peter's answer is clear and unmistakable, "Repent and be baptized. . . ." He urges them, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (verse 40). The *call to repentance* is certainly dominant in pentecostal preaching.

One might say that understandably since the preaching on Pentecost is directed to *unconverted* Jews, the call to repentance necessarily must prevail. One might argue that today when a preacher is faced with a congregation of committed *believers*, this call to repentance need not receive so much emphasis. There is today in Reformed preaching perhaps more a stressing of faith and knowledge than of repentance.

Still the element of "repentance" retains its place in pentecostal preaching, also in a congregation of committed believers. The congregation must constantly be reminded that it is "ecclesia," called out of this world and set apart in the service of Christ. This means that all the members of the congregation must lead holy lives before the Lord and godly lives in the midst of a corrupt and crooked world. There should be a constant appeal that not only initial repentance but *daily* regeneration is required. Holy baptism, expressly mentioned by Peter in his pentecostal sermon, is not just a sign of the

washing away of sins by the blood of Christ but also of the *renewal* of life by the Holy Spirit. Here we see something of the *depth* of Pentecost. Pentecostal preaching will seek not only to increase the knowledge of believers but also bring about an ongoing renewal of life of the believers.

Pentecostal preaching will stress sanctification and regeneration without becoming mystical or moralistic. It will set forth the holy will of God revealed in His Law, without becoming legalistic.

Pentecostal preaching, therefore, should never become "Methodistic," stressing the moment of rebirth and the salvation of individual souls. We do not need pietistic ramblings; we do require true piety. In pentecostal preaching we are to promote *the glory of God*, and therefore the congregation is urged time and again to walk in holiness. "By this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit. . ." said the Lord Jesus, as He began to speak about the work of the Spirit (John 15). Pentecost is also the feast of the *harvest*. The Spirit of Christ seeks fruits of thankfulness in the Church, and these fruits are evident in good works. Pentecostal preaching will stress the need for daily repentance and renewal.

May in all our Churches the Word of God be preached in accordance with the requirements of the Holy Spirit as evident on the day of Pentecost. May that Word be received with humility of spirit and gladness of heart.

CL. STAM



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

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

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

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

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

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES	Regular		Air Mail
	FOR 1984	Mail	
Canada		\$22.00	\$40.00
U.S.A. U.S. Funds		\$24.75	\$39.75
International		\$33.25	\$55.75

Advertisements: \$5.00 per column inch

Second class mail registration number 1025
ISSN 0383-0438

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial — The General Synod of Heemse, 1984	
— J. Geertsema	238
Pentecost and preaching	
— Cl. Stam	239
Hal Lindsey ⁴ — Speculation about 1988 — W. Pouwelse	242
Press Review — J. Geertsema	244
Patrimony Profiles ⁷	
— W.W.J. VanOene	245
From the Scriptures — Plain Language — J. DeJong	247
News Medley	
— W.W.J. VanOene	248
How does the revision of our Church Order affect us today?	
— W.W.J. VanOene	250
Ray of sunshine	
— J.K. Riemersma	252
School Crossing	
— N. Vandooren	253
Our Little Magazine	
— Aunt Betty	256

Hal Lindsey⁴

Speculation about 1988

9. Massive conversion

Another aspect that strikes us while reading Hal Lindsey's book is the constantly repeated notion that in the end there will be a massive conversion of the Jewish people. First their national identity will be restored. That is what he calls the "physical restoration." But after this reestablishment of the Jewish people as a State and an independent Nation, living in their "own" country, there will also be a "spiritual rebirth" (p. 51).

The tribulation, first the attack by the Russian army and later by the Western Allies and the army of Red China "are primarily designed to shock the people into believing in their true Messiah" (p. 38).

All this will happen in the seven-year

and to conquer them." Hal Lindsey writes: (pp. 99, 100) "It is logical to ask at this point, how is he going to make war with the saints when they are gone from the earth? 'The saints' are the people who are going to believe in Christ during this great conflict. After the Christians are gone, God is going to reveal Himself in a special way to the 144,000 physical, literal Jews who are going to believe with a vengeance that Jesus is the Messiah. They are going to be the 144,000 Jewish Billy Grahams turned loose on this earth — the earth will never know a period of evangelism like this period. These Jewish people are going to make up for lost time. They are going to have the greatest num-

Lindsey tells us that, *after* all the true believers have been taken up from the earth to Christ, God will reveal Himself in a special way to the Jewish people. Those who have rejected the Christ will still receive a special treatment, a special sign, a special revelation. Not just the sign of the prophet Jonah, as Jesus has said, but more than that.

All true believers will be taken away from the earth but the Lord will call and reveal Himself in a special way to 144,000 Jewish preachers. They are called "Jewish Billy Grahams." That is his theory, but he does not give any ground whatsoever for this statement.

Time and again we see in his book that at crucial points statements are made without any proof. Sometimes impressive lists of texts are given, with an exegesis which seems to fit together like the pieces in a jigsaw puzzle, but when it comes to the most fundamental point of his theory his presumptions are finished with one single stroke of the pen, without any effort to prove his point.

He gives the impression that he does feel the contradiction in his theory that when all true believers are gone there no longer is anyone to give testimony to the truth, while at the same time a massive conversion starts. However, he solves the problem by a statement based upon pure fantasy. On page 165, dealing with the so-called "millennialism," he makes a strong appeal to take the whole Bible literally but in cases like these he simply makes the Bible fit his Israel concept.

The number 144,000 clearly refers to what is said a few verses further, namely in Rev. 14:1-3. There we read: "Then I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpers playing on their harps, and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been re-

"All true believers will be taken away from the earth but the Lord will call and reveal Himself in a special way to 144,000 Jewish preachers. They are called "Jewish Billy Grahams." That is his theory, but he does not give any ground whatsoever for this statement."

time lapse between the "Rapture" and Christ's return to the earth. That means: after all the true believers have been taken away from this earth and are with Christ in heaven. One might wonder how there can be such a massive conversion among the Jewish people while there no longer is anyone to tell them the real message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. All true believers are taken up with Christ, and what is left are the unbelievers, those who have rejected Jesus Christ and the salvation through Him.

How does Hal Lindsey tally his theory of the "Rapture" with a massive conversion of the people of Israel after all the true believers have been taken away? How does he solve this internal contradiction in his theory? Again an example is given of a very preoccupied and whimsical exegesis.

In Rev. 13:7 we read that the beast "was allowed to make war on the saints

ber of converts in all history. Revelation 7:9-14 says they bring so many to Christ that they can't be numbered."

This is a very strange and whimsical exegesis. Without any trace of Biblical proof the writer states that the Lord will reveal Himself in a special way. Where does he get this idea from? Just fantasy! The apostle Paul says in Rom. 10:14, 15: "How are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?" And in verse 17 he adds: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ." In Luke 16 Jesus tells the people that if they do not believe the Scripture, they would not believe if they would receive a special revelation either. And in Matthew 12:39 and 16:4 He says to the scribes and Pharisees: "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." However, Hal

deemed from the earth.” We have to notice that Rev. 14:1 speaks about the Lamb, that is Jesus Christ, who stood in the midst of the hundred and forty-four thousand on what is called “Mount Zion,” but at the same time verse 2 says that the sound of the song came from heaven. In verse 3 we read that they sang the song “before the throne” while verse 4 clearly speaks about the hundred and forty-four thousand” who had been redeemed from the earth.” There is no doubt that the Bible speaks in these verses about those who have died and who are with Christ in heaven. The number hundred and forty-four thousand is symbolic for the whole Church, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb (Rev. 7:9).

According to Hal Lindsey this massive conversion will take place “three and a half years prior to Christ’s personal, visible return to this earth” (p. 99). That is three and a half years after all the believers have been taken away. He says that the one hundred forty-four thousand are “Jewish preachers” on earth, but the one hundred forty-four thousand mentioned in Rev. 14:1-3 are the saints in heaven.

It is clear that his whole concept contradicts what the Bible says. The one hundred forty-four thousand before the throne and before the Lamb in heaven cannot be identified with a group of one hundred forty-four thousand Jewish evangelists on earth. This is simply a matter of imposing a preconceived opinion on the Bible.

10. Around 1988?

We have dealt with most aspects of Hal Lindsey’s theory. Now we will try to give an overview of his whole concept and his outline of history.

According to him the history of mankind can be divided into a number of essential parts. The first important episode was the history of the Jewish people in the time of the Old Testament. After Christ’s first coming into this world and his death and resurrection a new era began, namely, what he calls, the time of the Christian Church.

This period of the Church on earth will come to an end with what he calls the “Rapture.” Christ will come down close to, but not on the earth, and He will take with Himself into heaven all true believers. The dead will be raised and those who are still alive will be changed.

After this “Rapture” follows a period of seven years, in which a war will be waged in the Middle East. This war will start with a Russian attack against the Arab-African confederacy. The Russian army will be defeated by the Western

Allies and the final battle will take place between the Western Allies and the Eastern army headed by Red China. In these seven years the greatest period of Jewish conversion to their true Messiah will take place (p. 156).” They are going to have the greatest number of converts in all history” (p. 100).

At the end of these seven years Christ will return to the earth to reestablish the Kingdom of David, and He will reign from His Royal throne in Jerusalem for a thousand years.

After these thousand years the present world will be destroyed or renewed and the last judgment will take place.

That is the basic outline of history, given by Mr. Lindsey. He pretends to know with great certainty and accuracy when all these things are going to happen. Christ’s return and the beginning of His thousand-year reign will take place around the year 1988. However, something must have been amiss in his calculations, published for the first time in 1970. According to his schedule the “Rapture” should take place seven years prior to 1988 or so, that is, around 1981. Obviously in this respect he did not “pass the test.”

How did he come to his prediction

“The conclusion is obvious. About forty years after the State of Israel ‘became a nation again on May 14, 1948,’ that is around 1988, Christ’s return to the earth will take place and the period of Christ’s thousand-year reign on earth will begin.”

that these things would take place around 1988?

In Matthew 24 Jesus tells His disciples about the tribulation which is to come. His disciples will be hated for His name’s sake, false prophets will arise and lead many astray, but he who endures to the end will be saved. Jesus warns His disciples not to follow the false prophets, but to stand firm and to look forward to the glorious day of Christ’s return on the clouds of heaven. In this context Jesus says in Matthew 24:32-34: “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that He is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place.”

You might wonder how someone can deduct from this Scripture passage that Christ will return around the year 1988.

Lindsey’s reasoning goes like this:

Jesus says in verse 16 “let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” That means that before Christ’s return the Jewish people have to live in the land of Palestine, otherwise they cannot flee from Judea to the mountains.

In verse 20 Jesus says “Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.” He writes: “This indicates that the ancient traditions regarding travel on the Sabbath would be in force again, thus hindering a rapid escape from the predicted invasion” (p. 42).

In verse 32 Jesus speaks about the fig tree. In this respect he writes: “The most important sign in Matthew has to be the restoration of the Jews to the land in the rebirth of Israel. Even the figure of speech ‘fig tree’ has been a historic symbol of national Israel. When the Jewish people, after nearly 2000 years of exile, under relentless persecution, became a nation again on May 14, 1948, the ‘fig tree’ put forth its first leaves” (p. 42).

So the conditions for Christ’s return are fulfilled. The Jewish State has been reestablished and no public transportation on the Sabbath is allowed in the State of Israel.

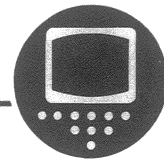
In verse 34 we read: “Truly, I say to

you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.” That seems to refer to those who were listening to Jesus, but Lindsey writes: “What generation? Obviously, in context, the generation that would see the signs — chief among them the rebirth of Israel. A generation in the Bible is something like forty years. If this is a correct deduction, then within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place. Many scholars who have studied the Bible prophecy all their life believe that this is so” (p. 42).

The conclusion is obvious. About forty years after the State of Israel “became a nation again on May 14, 1948,” that is around 1988, Christ’s return to the earth will take place and the period of Christ’s thousand-year reign on earth will begin.

— To be continued.

W. POUWELSE



Anonymous fathers

Under this title J.P. de Vries, editor of *Nederlands Dagblad* wrote an editorial in his paper of April 19. It is also worth reading by our readers. Modern technology, in combination with modern humanistic philosophy, makes it possible for man to “make babies” where before there would be no child. We read:

Childlessness is the cause of intense grief for couples to whom this happens. In such circumstances there is the willingness to do “everything” in order to receive an own child. Medical science can do much. When the cause of sterility is on the side of the husband, it is possible to make the wife pregnant by artificial insemination with sperm of someone else, a donor, without intimate contact. In such a case, she gets an own child, that, admittedly, does not have her husband as the biological father, but is accepted and will be brought up by him, as if it were his own child.

The objectionable aspect of this route is that the role of the man in the process of procreation is degraded here to an instrument that can be replaced. According to the order which God put in creation, a child ought to be the fruit of the covenant of love between his parents. Marriage is the basis for the building of the human race. No third party is allowed to intrude here, also not as the anonymous biological father of a child that is to be conceived.

De Vries speaks of the creation order here. This order is the basis for the norms by which we must live, because God added His word to His work. He created man male and female; He gave Eve as wife to Adam. God added to this created order the norm that, therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and that those two shall become one flesh. We have to maintain the norm that no one should be permitted to intrude in this intimate bond. It also must be clear that God meant this unity between a man and his legal wife to be the way for conceiving children. Artificial insemination with sperm from a donor must be seen as morally wrong and in conflict with God’s will.

The same applies when the cause of infertility is with the wife. We speak about test-tube babies who were conceived in a test-tube. It is possible to fertilize an egg cell of another woman with the sperm of the husband and implant this fertilized egg in the womb of the wife. Here another woman becomes the donor. This is just as wrong. The question as to whether a

husband and wife are allowed to conceive a baby via the test-tube can be dealt with another time.

De Vries points out in his article that the reality of life confirms God’s created order in a natural reaction of the child who is born as the result of artificial insemination. He writes:

That donor-insemination is in conflict with the created order is evident from the human need and desire to know one’s biological parents. Modern pedagogues can say as often as they want that everything depends on the environment in which a child receives his education and that blood ties are only a fiction, the practice of life teaches us differently. However good it was for a child with a married couple that brought him up as their own child, as soon as he knows that they are not his “real” parents, the desire often arises to learn to know those real parents.

The Swedish legislature has recognized this need and desire and has obliged the parents to tell the name of the biological father to a child that is conceived by donor-insemination. This is a grave setback for

“Artificial insemination with sperm from a donor must be seen as morally wrong and in conflict with God’s will.”

those who favour donor-insemination as a means to take away childlessness. The anonymity of the donor was a condition, both for the donor to act as such, and for the male spouse to agree with this route. Now, after all, a third party will enter into the relationships of such a family.

Nevertheless, we think that the Swedish rule is right, (even though a total prohibition would be better yet). He who denies a person the knowledge regarding his biological origin, causes an emptiness in his life.

One could argue here that this emptiness will not be there when the anonymity of the biological father is maintained in such a way that the child is never told the truth about his conception. But then the question comes up whether it is morally right to let a child live with a lie all his life, and this question should be answered with a “no.” The child should know. De Vries mentions two television programs, the one following the other. The first one

showed the urge in man to know the “real” father. The latter showed the intention to deny it. This urge to know the biological father:

... became evident in a striking way recently — in a television program — in which people spoke who, after the liberation, were conceived by Canadian soldiers and born of Dutch girls. When the soldiers had gone home, there had been no further contact between their father and mother. Sometimes even the name of the father was not known, and often he did not know that he had procreated a child. There was the awareness that tracing the father in Canada could cause a great disturbance in a happy family. In spite of this there was the uncontrollable urge to learn to know this father, in order to discover “one’s own roots,” as someone said.

In poignant contrast herewith the next program showed two lesbian women who wanted to bring up a child together and who had gotten a child by artificial insemination in one of them. There was again a child that, having become an adult, will live with the question: who is my father? but has a much smaller chance of finding him than those children of Canadian fathers. A certain feeling of being uprooted will always remain with this child.

Quite correctly, professor Schoemakers, a gynaecologist at the Free University (in Amsterdam, J.G.) recently refused to cure a woman from infertility, when she appeared to be living with another woman and sought to have a child through donor-insemination. The Free University was quick to point out that this was an individual decision on the basis of the conscience of one person and not the policy of the faculty. The Free University itself is, thus, willing to put its knowledge into the service of this corruption of life.

It is terrible, indeed, that a university that began a hundred years ago on the basis of Reformed principles, has fallen so deep that it not only endorses a homosexual relationship, but even is willing to assist in the birth of a child that will be raised in such an ungodly environment.

We can see here what happens when not God and the service of God according to His Word rules life, but the selfish lust and desire of man who has become his own god or idol. With sadness we can notice here the truth of Romans 1:18-32. When man refuses to serve God, the Creator, God surrenders him, in anger, to his own foolish and even unnatural thinking.

J. GEERTSEMA

PATRIMONY PROFILE³⁷

By Rev. W. W. J. VanOene

Abraham Kuyper never attended elementary school — his father and mother taught him — but he followed secondary instruction with the result that he passed the final examination in 1855 *summa cum laude* — with the highest honours — at the age of 17. On June 17, 1855, he registered in the faculty of arts from which he obtained the bachelor's degree in classical languages, and on Nov. 24 of the same year — 1858 — he enrolled in the faculty of theology. Kuyper obtained his bachelor of divinity degree on December 6, 1861, and the degree of doctor of theology on Sept. 20, 1862. All his exams resulted in the predicate *summa cum laude*.

Were his scholarly achievements exceptional, this cannot be said of his faith. Under the influence of the teachings of the modernist professor J. H. Scholten and his adherents Kuyper gradually lost the faith of his youth. He even stopped praying. A change began to come when he took part in a contest which caused him to become acquainted with the works of John Calvin and Johannes a Lasco. The Groningen University namely had offered a prize for the best essay comparing the views on the church of John Calvin and Johannes a Lasco. Kuyper's friend and former teacher Prof. M. de Vries urged him to take part in the contest.

There was, however, one drawback: The Jesuits had traced and destroyed the works of a Lasco so thoroughly that not even one large European library had an extensive collection of them. Thus Kuyper decided not to do it. His friend disagreed with the decision and urged him to continue his search. Perhaps, he said, my father has them.

The Rev. de Vries was a Baptist minister in Haarlem and possessed a library rich in works on church history. When Kuyper came and asked him, he did not recall having any work of a Lasco's, but promised that he would go through his library to have a close look. When Kuyper came back after a week he was shown such an extensive collection of a Lasco's works as no library in the whole world could boast of.

Abraham Kuyper went to work. Recognizing the hand of the Lord in the discovery, he started again to pray. It was the first step on the way back. His essay won a gold medal. Later he received permission from the Groningen University to use his essay as the basis of his doctoral thesis. On September 22, 1862, Abraham Kuyper received the degree of *Theologiae Doctor*. His thesis was written in Latin and has never been translated to make it accessible to a wider circle of readers and interested persons.

Having been declared eligible for call, Kuyper had to wait a while before he received one. There was an abundance of candidates, which made some churches very fussy. One church, for example, had no fewer than 42 candidates preach for it before extending a call. Apparently they were in no hurry to get a minister.

Kuyper conducted services here and there and waited for ten months before he finally received a call. It was from the village of Beesd in the Province of Gelderland, some

25 kilometers south of Utrecht. On August 9, 1863, Abraham Kuyper was ordained as the minister of Beesd and delivered his inaugural sermon in the evening service.

It cannot be said that he was greeted with undivided openness by all. He was reputed to be half-modernistic, half-conservative, and the non-modernistic members certainly did not lay out the welcome mat for him. Yet Kuyper did not skip them when visiting, and in particular one of these members gained a profound influence on him. She was Pietronella (Pietje, for short) Baltus. Born in 1830, she lived till 1914. At first she did not wish to have anything to do with the half-modernistic minister, but when others pointed out to her "that our minister, too, has an immortal soul, and that he, too, is travelling towards eternity," her attitude changed. The first visit, shortly after, was followed by many more, and the minister gradually came to the recognition of the *truth*.

To a certain extent, this was in spite of dangerous trends in the theories of the non-modernistic members such as Pietje Baltus. They were leaning into the direction of mysticism, and inclined to slight the church. Pietje Baltus led conventicles in her home and more and more turned away from the church. Later on she disapproved of the Doleantie and did not go along with it. Yet Kuyper is said to have had her picture on his desk until his death, recognizing thereby that she was the main instrument in the hand of the Lord to lead him to the source of faith and the firm foundation of the church.

There were other influences as well. The principal of the public school, Mr. Kievits, was an avid reader of Groen van Prinsterer's publications. He introduced the minister to these writings as well with the result that Kuyper was won for Groen's ideas. This led to discussions and lectures before a small group of interested persons.

During his research for and work on his essay for the contest and later his doctoral thesis, Kuyper became convinced that the works of a Lasco should be (re)published. From left and right he gathered a Lasco's works — one with the help of Groen van Prinsterer's international connections — and succeeded in producing such an edition. It appeared in 1866.

As a result of his research for the contest as well as for his thesis, Kuyper discovered much material about the struggle of the Netherlands Churches in the years after the Reformation hidden in foreign libraries. Seeing the importance of these documents and their publication, he pushed for the establishment of a society which was to have as its goal the publication of all these documents. The "Marnix Society" was established in 1868 and it did collect and publish many important writings and documents.

Already during his stay in Beesd Kuyper gave evidence of the change which had come about in his thinking. Even though he was not yet thoroughly Reformed in his thinking, he wrote a brochure entitled *What Shall We Do? Retain the Right to Vote for Ourselves or Authorize the Consistory?* The reason for writing this brochure was the new Article 23 of the Revised Regulation of 1852.

The General Regulation of 1816 provided in Article 23 that the consistories had the right of self-continuation.

Vacancies in the consistory could be filled by the consistory itself. The congregation had no say whatever in the appointment of elders and deacons or in the calling of ministers.

The Revised Regulation of 1852 provided in Article 23 that from now on the congregations were to choose ministers, elders, and deacons. It was, however, a big question *how* this was to be done. One could foresee that the ecclesiastical powers that be were not going to take this sitting down. It would amount to a serious undermining of their hold on everything. When, in 1866, a new regulation for the appointment of elders and deacons and for the calling of ministers appeared, a loyal execution of Article 23 could not be discovered therein. It provided, among others, "In every congregation of more than 100 persons who are eligible to vote, ecclesiastical electoral colleges could be established." These were then to elect office-bearers together with the consistories. In other words: each congregation was to decide whether they were going to exercise this right themselves or would leave it to the consistory.

Kuyper took a stand in this question and from now on ecclesiastical conflicts so occupied him, his strength, and his time, that he had to give up his special church history studies. He was convinced that the question what to do would be answered according to one's choice between modernism and anti-modernism. In his brochure, Kuyper exhorts and urges the congregations to exercise their right to choose. Most congregations decided that the congregation was to choose and not just the consistory. Even Amsterdam — with its many modernistic ministers — did so.

After four years in the ministry Kuyper's reputation was established. The Church at Utrecht called him, and the call was accepted. On Nov. 3, 1867, Dr. Abraham Kuyper concluded his ministry in Beesd with a sermon on Matt. 6:12, and delivered his inaugural sermon on John 1:14 in the Cathedral Church in Utrecht on Nov. 10. This inaugural sermon was more an essay than a sermon and — also according to sympathetic critics — not (yet) thoroughly Reformed. Thus Kuyper began his ministry in Utrecht.

Soon he became more and more involved in the struggle for reformation.

The Church Visitation of 1868

One of the yearly-returning events was the Church Visitation. However, it was not done every year in the same manner. Two years in succession it was done in writing, the third year in person. With the "written visitation" the classis sent to each consistory a series of questions which were to be answered. With the "personal visitation" two delegates from the classis visited the consistory. The reports on the visitation were sent to the general commission via the classical and provincial boards. The general commission drew up a central report and handed this to the general synod.

Things were quite solemn at the personal visitation. One of the two visitors took the chair and, although the meeting had already been opened, he reopened it with a solemn prayer. After this he gave an address in which he urged upon the consistory "Answer with the greatest conscientiousness . . . as in the presence of God." The

first questions concerned the *confession* of ministers, elders, and deacons. Then came the administrative questions about membership etc.

The first "written visitation" took place in Utrecht in 1867. Utrecht's Consistory decided to leave the questions regarding doctrine unanswered and to provide only the statistical particulars. Nothing was heard about this.

Then came 1868. Again the written questions had to be answered. What to do now? Kuyper proposed again to answer only the questions about membership etc., and then the next year, with the personal visitation, to discuss the other questions thoroughly. This proposal was defeated. He then proposed to send the whole document back without answering a single question. This was adopted. However: the classis was to have an answer! The answer was formulated by Kuyper and read: "The consistory declares itself unable to answer the questions asked with the Church Visitation because these questions are asked on behalf of a synod with whose dignitaries the consistory has no communion of faith or confession."

Understandably, the classical board did not take this. It sent a new set of questions with the demand that these be answered and returned within ten days. Another refusal by the consistory followed. Classis then informed the consistory that a committee of two persons was to visit the consistory on September 30, 1868, at 11:00 a.m., but the consistory told the board that these gentlemen would not be received. "This action is wholly illegal and conflicting with the spirit as well as the letter of the ecclesiastical provisions."

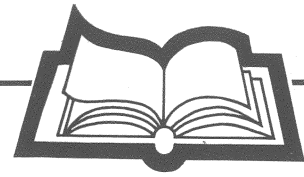
What was going to happen now? Would there be an open conflict with the high and mighty synod? Nothing happened, and the gentlemen who were to bring the visit reported that the written visitation did take place . . . the statistical information was received. In connection with this matter Kuyper wrote another brochure: *Church Visitation in Utrecht Historically Explained with a View to the Critical Condition of Our Church*. The worst opposition came from those who basically agreed with the stand taken but were too "careful" to come to any action.

In 1870 Dr. Kuyper accepted the call to the Church at Amsterdam. He was the first minister chosen there according to the new Article 23. On August 10, 1870, Dr. A. Kuyper delivered his inaugural sermon on Eph. 3:17: "Rooted and Grounded in Love." Again it must be said that this address was more an essay in which Kuyper developed his ideas about the Church-as-Organism and the Church-as-Institute than a sermon on the chosen text.

The Offense of the Seventeen Elders

On the first Sunday of March 1868, new elders and deacons were ordained in Amsterdam. Such an ordination was a yearly occurrence and hardly worth mentioning were it not that this time something was different: the ones that were ordained this year were the first ones chosen by the recently established electoral colleges. Apparently the men chosen this time were more Reformed than was pleasing to the modernistic spirits. At least, the officiating minister stated in his sermon that "not without sadness, not without concern, not without deep compassion he had seen a spirit of intolerance, of exclusivism rear its head."

— *To be continued.*



“I have said this to you in figures; the hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in figures but tell you plainly of the Father.”

John 16:25

Plain Language

In His farewell discourse to His disciples, the Lord Jesus summarizes His teaching and ministry among them as one bound by constraint. Obviously referring to His whole ministry among them, He says that He consistently spoke to them in *figures*, enigmatic and dark sayings which the disciples could not initially understand. And while characterizing His past with the disciples in this way, He announces a new way of speaking in the future. All His further communication to them will be characterized by plain language, and direct speech. What is the significance of this change? And why did the Lord Jesus speak the way He did?

In effect, these figures constitute the bulk of the sayings of the Lord Jesus, and include all the parables and figures of speech which He employed in His instruction of God’s people. As Mark says, “With many such parables He spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to His own disciples He explained everything,” Mark 4:33, 34. the Lord Jesus often used the *mashal* or proverb in His teaching. And in the book of John, these type of sayings are used regularly with the disciples. It characterizes His way of speaking to them, compare John 2:19, 3:8, 4:10, 6:51, 7:33, 8:21, etc. These were sayings which as it were drew in the listener, sayings which both disclosed and veiled a matter, revealed and concealed the truth about Jesus.

Mark also explains why the Lord Jesus taught in parables like this. This was all the people were able to hear; and while the disciples received a deeper knowledge of the truth, they, too, were not able to bear the full explanation, John 16:12. Direct speech would simply have been too much for them, beyond their spiritual capacity to absorb. Thus, Christ’s way of speaking to them is one of accommodation, not only to them as creatures, but also as to their time and situation. This is all a part of the humiliation of the Lord Jesus. While He was permitted to speak freely and openly, He always had to veil His words, and limit them according to the level of spiritual understanding present with His disciples.

This was all part of the self-denial of the Lord Jesus. For He longed to speak plainly with His disciples. Finally the hour dawns in which the figure, the *mashal* becomes obsolete. How He longed for this day, and strove for it with all His might, Luke 22:15. He longed for the birth of a new day, the day when dark and hidden sayings could be clearly set forth and publicly proclaimed, Matt. 10:27. Only He

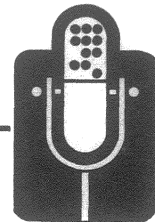
could usher in that day. For only He possessed the Spirit in full measure, and so also could impart the Spirit in full measure, John 2:34. And He receives the *right* to impart the Spirit with His death; the *power* to do so is manifested after His resurrection.

What then is the hour He is speaking of, the hour of plain language? That can only be the day of Pentecost, the day when the Holy Spirit is fully poured out upon the Church, and the disciples of the Lord Jesus come to mature understanding of the gospel of Christ. When they see how He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures, and as ascending Saviour sends them out to proclaim the good news, then the veil is removed! And the apostles may be instruments in the hand of the Lord Jesus to lay the foundation for the Church, Eph. 2:20. Through the apostolic ministry, Christ addresses His Church in plain language. The Church knows His voice, hears and understands. Through the power of His anointing, Christ maintains a direct link, — a link of clear speech — with His people.

This is the day we live in, the day we may share. Pentecost has happened! Today the *kerugma* (message) is clear, the proclamation is plain, and should be brought with the simplicity and modesty of the age of the Spirit. Doesn’t the confession of the Church through the age prove the clarity of the apostolic message? We know the Father, and we may know the Son, who came from the Father, and died for our sins, and returned to the Father on our behalf. That is why John is able to say that the “true light is already shining,” 1 John 2:8. Nothing is hidden anymore. Indeed, we will always see through a mirror darkly, with knowledge that is imperfect and incomplete. But what we may see is truth undefiled, and fully sufficient for our salvation. And through His anointing we may see more and more, for the treasure of His storehouse never empties, Matt. 13:51.

But a mature age requires mature children. Through disregard and neglect the light of the Spirit can become dimmer and dimmer. For the Word of God lives only when it is read, heard, used, digested, and practiced. Mature faith reaches for it; true faith cannot ignore it. Therefore we must arise, stand in His light, and so speak the plain language of His truth. Then justice and peace will shine forth around us, and the Word of healing will reshape and remold human lives with cords of peace and love. For in Thy light do we see light, Psalm 36:9.

J. DEJONG



Quite a few couples who celebrated a wedding anniversary have to be mentioned in order to receive an honourable place in our medley. That we do this is not "out of custom" — to use an expression which is well-known among us. We do it because we are sincerely interested in the blessings which we receive within the communion of saints and want the brothers and sisters to know that they are not isolated in their joy and gratitude.

For some of them our congratulations will come too late, since the day is past already. No, at the time of this writing all the dates are still in the future, be it the near future, but when these lines are read, it will be past the date.

We start at the "bottom" of the line, that is: with the ones who celebrate their fortieth wedding anniversary. They are brother and sister H. Linde of Smithville; at least, that's the Church to which they belong, I presume, seeing that the address is Vinemount. I am not too well acquainted with the geography in the Smithville area. Anyway, their anniversary is on May 25th. The advertisement tells us that they received children and grandchildren from the Lord, and thus they are a rich couple, having received a great inheritance. May they continue to rejoice because of these blessings.

The forty-fifth wedding anniversary will be celebrated by brother and sister A. Vander Sluis of Grand Rapids on the day after that, that is on the 26th. Their advertisement appeared in the previous *Clarion* issue, but I did not receive that in time for the medley which appeared in the May 4 issue. However, we do not think that we shall be much too late with our congratulations on this occasion. It is too bad that I cannot tell you anything about this brother and sister, and that these lines will have to suffice.

Coming to the ones who will celebrate their fiftieth anniversary, we mention brother and sister A. Endeman of Orangeville and brother and sister F. Ludwig of Burlington. Their dates are on May 16 and 25 respectively. A fiftieth anniversary: this means that they have been left together for half a century! This is a great gift, seeing that man's life-span is not all that much longer than half a century. It is with gratitude that we include the names of these brothers and sisters in our list. Sometimes names in a list are little more than numbers. Such is not the case here. Do we not find names mentioned in Scripture whenever special things have to be recorded? This means that in each and every case the blessings of the LORD are to be noted and remembered. That's what we do.

There is one fifty-fifth wedding anniversary this time. It is the one of brother and sister H. Idema of Langley. Their date is May 16th, too. As our readers could see, their picture graced the May 4 issue of our magazine. The information which was provided with the picture tells us that they are enjoying fairly good health. Yes, when we get older there are also the drawbacks of an advanced age. However, what never diminishes and gets older is the grace and mercy of our God. His mercies are every day new and it is a blessing when we may enjoy them and have attention for them, do not forget them, that is, let our actions and life, our thinking and attitude be determined by them. This, I am certain, is the case also with our brother and sister Idema.

All the above couples we wish the blessing of the LORD upon their further pathway, whether it be still a long one or a short one. Let us all be certain and assured of this one thing, that the pathway which we walk here under the guidance of

our Father, is not a dead-end road, but a road which leads straight to the new earth.

Meanwhile, we are here with all our labours and joys, our difficulties and progress, our struggles and victories. Always searching for the best way, oftentimes stumbling and coming to the conclusion that we could have done better, we nevertheless press on towards perfection.

From the Ebenezer Burlington bulletin we gather that "It was felt by the three Burlington ministers that the present situation of having catechism classes for grade 7 and 8 pupils at John Calvin School is not satisfactory and recommended that regular classes for these age groups should be added during the normal catechism evenings. After some discussion it was decided that the ministers should review this matter once more with a view to additional transportation."

I can well see the point of these ministers. When you have your own boys and girls at the regular catechism classes, you become acquainted with them and are able to accompany them in their further development. If there are boys and girls from three Churches together in classes at school, you never get that specific bond which, as ministers, we all hope we shall be able to establish with our students. When you have a certain schedule you would like to follow, this can actually be achieved only when you have the students from the very beginning. I therefore sympathize with my colleagues.

These catechism classes at school are most likely still the remnant from days when it was difficult and, perhaps, too expensive for parents to drive out in the evening to bring their children to catechism classes. In order to cut down on extra expenses those children still attending elementary school were taught at school.

I do not think that this argument holds true any longer. The economic level of our people has risen considerably. In many families there are two, three, or even more cars available, and when children can come to Church with their own car so that from one family there are sometimes three cars that occupy space on the Church parking lot, then it is not unreasonable to ask that they use their wealth to bring the younger children to catechism classes so that these classes can form a unity with the other age-groups. Besides, quite a few families arrange combined transportation so that the burdens are shared.

Let us go specifically now to Burlington West.

"The manner of checking the attendance at the Lord's Supper will be changed somewhat. Rather than a review at the subsequent consistory meeting, the section elders will review the attendance of the members in their section and report at a short consistory meeting after the afternoon service. The congregation is reminded that prior notice to the section elder of expected absence is appreciated."

To start with the last sentence, this is something which the membership should bear in mind. It is a good custom to inform the section elders of *any* planned absence, also for the "regular" Sundays. It should not be necessary that the brothers guess why so-and-so was not in Church this past Sunday: the brothers and sisters should tell their section elder. This is the more necessary when the congregation is larger. In smaller congregations it is more likely to be known when someone plans on going away a Sunday or weekend than in larger congregations. This is one reason why smaller congregations are to be preferred: there is a better possibility of keeping watch

over each other. Yes, keeping watch over *each other*, for it certainly is not the task of the office-bearers only to do so.

The method which Burlington West now is going to follow will already be customary in many of the Churches. I think that it is the best method, for then you remember best who was at the Lord's table and who was not, when you discuss it right after the afternoon service. This is better than having to rack your brains a week or two weeks after.

As for the drive for the new manse, one-half of the objective has been reached with the help of thirty percent of the congregation. Experience teaches that it may be three times as hard to collect the other one-half from seventy percent of the congregation! It is encouraging that "offers of goods and services have also been pledged."

I have no more news from Ontario to pass on except that at our Consistory meeting it was reported by delegates who attended a mission meeting in Toronto that we can be looking forward to a combined *Mission News* which is to appear six times per year, with the first issue to reach us in July, a *Mission News* in which we are informed about the work of Hamilton, Smithers, Surrey, and Toronto. One of my heart's wishes fulfilled. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Carman has a "problem" which will be shared by many Churches. "The nursery is getting rather crowded on the Sundays on which we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Are there other possibilities? The ladies will be informed that other alternatives are possible such as the use of the meeting hall."

What a blessing when the nursery is getting too crowded. For this we shall always be able to find a solution.

From nurseries to marriages is not all that a big step.

"The marriage services were dealt with.

"Three members of the Consistory had previously submitted reports on this topic. After an all-night discussion the Consistory . . . decided to adopt the following motion.

"Weddings shall be solemnized in a wedding ceremony conducted by the minister.

"Grounds:

- A. The present situation cannot be maintained because even though worship services are held for weddings, the full liturgy of a regular worship service is not maintained. Other things not belonging to the regular worship services being added.
- B. Scripture does not implicitly state that this must be done in a worship service.
- C. History indicates that the worship services for the purpose of marriage came into being because the civil government neglected its duty and because of the ambitions of a power-hungry Roman Catholic Church.
- D. Marriages may be solemnized in a private ceremony. See Art. 63 of the new Church Order."

This is a courageous decision. I wonder whether there is still any Church left within the federation which maintains the character of a worship service when a marriage is solemnized. If there is none left, we have finally all come to the point where, I am convinced, we are to be: as much as funerals are family matters, so much are marriages family matters, however much the Church may be interested in and affected by these events. When such ceremonies are no longer conducted in a worship service this does not mean at all that the Church is not interested in them or should act as if it has nothing to do with them. But this will be sufficiently clear, I think.

In the Immanuel Church in Edmonton a three-member committee was appointed to advise "Council how to eliminate the mortgage debt on the church building." If the advice works, I think there will be quite a few Churches that are interested in hearing what it is.

The new church building of the Immanuel Church has "at

present a seating capacity of 350 which can be increased to 450." Ouch, ouch!

Via the Okanagan Valley — which proudly reports that another family has settled there — we reach the Fraser Valley.

The Senior Citizens Home Society reports that at a meeting on March 30, they received the "mandate to build fifteen units on our property in Langley, and preliminary work is already underway." They are looking for pledges which will carry a 7% interest. If there is anyone who has some money lying around . . .

It does not happen too often that we report something about our foreign sister Churches. This time I like to pass on something from our Australian sister Churches. Their periodical *Una Sancta* tells us that they are planning a new series of publications under the title "The Reformed Guardian."

"This series will consist of papers delivered and undelivered and also of sermons.

"As for the latter, every now and then it appears that some of our Church members would like to be able to read a sermon which they have heard in Church.

"As for the former, the same can be said regarding certain papers and addresses that were delivered at annual meetings or suchlike of our various societies. It could also be that someone who had not the opportunity to hear such a sermon or paper would yet like to read it."

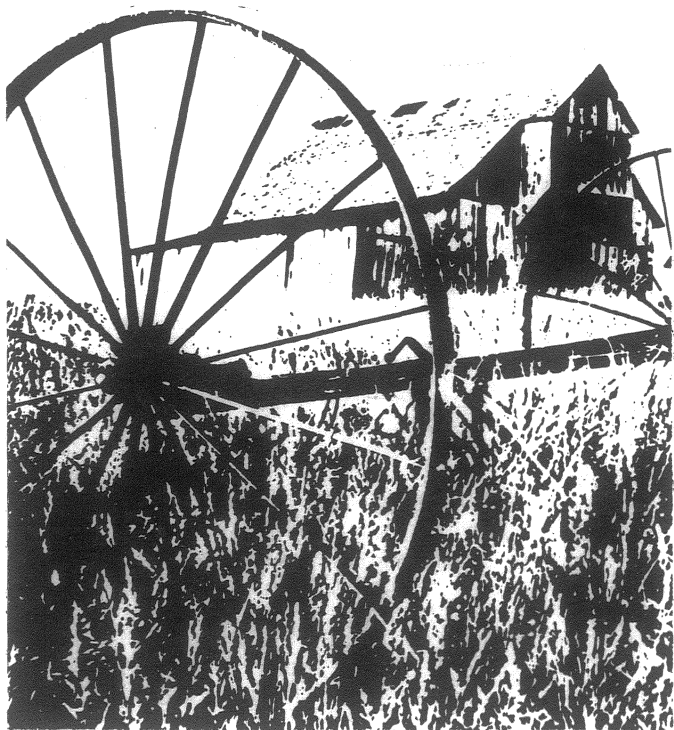
In order to fill this vacuum or need, it is planned to publish speeches and addresses that are considered valuable enough to be preserved. The price of the booklets will vary according to the number of pages. "However, it is not the intention to publish heavy books. Sometimes a single dollar may suffice. This depends also on the number of buyers! Editors will be the Revs. K. Bruning and G. van Rongen."

The first issue will be a booklet containing two papers delivered in the year 1983 by the Rev. van Rongen: "Look well after this child!" and "The Christian and His Talents," delivered respectively at the Parents' Associations of Kelmscott and at the Christmas Youth Conference.

Much success!

Till next time, the Lord willing.

VO



How does the revision of our Church Order affect us today? 1

This introduction was given by the Rev. W.W.J. VanOerpe at the Ontario Office-bearers' Conference held April 14, 1984.

A few months ago the Rev. Aasman phoned me and told me that neither the first choice for this office-bearers' conference was able to deliver an introduction to you today, nor the second choice. In his despair he asked me whether I would not be willing to address the meeting today. He suggested that I should deliver the same speech that I gave at a meeting of the Men's Societies in the Rehoboth Church a few years ago. This speech dealt with the then proposed revision of our Church Order, and the question which I had to answer at that time was whether the revision of our Church Order was good or bad, whether it was an improvement or an impediment.

Since I was so smart as to publish that speech in *Clarion*, I was not prepared to dig it up and just read it before you today. You would have felt cheated, no doubt. However, when pondering the question what then to say about the revision of our Church Order, I followed Rev. Aasman's suggestion and prepared something which, hopefully, answers the question how the revision of our Church Order affects us today, in other words, are there any special points to which we have to pay attention, is there anything that has been added, something that we have to do differently from now on, and so on.

In order to answer these questions, it seemed best to me to go over the changes which have been made in our Church Order and to see whether there is anything of a nature such as described above.

At our latest General Synod a revised version of our Church Order was adopted. In general, the suggestions of the revision committee were followed, although one of what I consider to be the most important suggestion, was not adopted.

This was the suggestion which followed Rev. Pouwelse's outline in a speech that he gave to an office-bearers' conference a few years ago. In this speech he developed the thought that the consistory is composed of the minister of the Word, the elders and the deacons. I shall not repeat the arguments which he brought to the fore in support of this thesis. May

I just mention that the revision committee as such agreed on this point and, upon the urging of a few Churches, in their final draft, formulated the revised articles in this vein.

However, the Synod of Cloverdale 1983, did not go for this. The synod decided to abide by the line which is found in the Church Order as it applied until now: the consistory consists of the minister of the Word and the elders. In some instances the deacons should be taken to the consistory, but this *must* be done only when the number of elders is less than three. In any case, according to our Church Order, they do not belong to the consistory by virtue of their office. In those cases in which they do belong to the consistory, this is done by an express decision, a decision which is mandatory in certain situations.

We all will have experienced that it is always difficult to determine precisely what should be dealt with at a consistory meeting and which things belong to the task of the consistory with the deacons. Our Church Order was not always clear in this point either. Mind you, our Church Order is not — and should not be degraded to — a book with all sorts of regulations which tell us exactly what to do in specific cases. Yet, the language should be clear on every point, as much as possible.

The revised Church Order tries to prevent misunderstanding.

Let me mention one thing to start with. In Article 4 of the old Church Order, we read that the lawful calling of those who have not been previously in office consists: "First in the *election* by the consistory and the deacons, after preceding prayers, with due observance of the regulations locally in use or established by the consistory for this purpose."

Everyone who reads this attentively will see that confusion is possible. The *election* shall take place by the consistory with the deacons, but the regulations in use are established by the *consistory*. One might get the impression as if the consistory — that is the minister with the elders — draws up the regulations, and that the deacons have no input into this at all. They are involved in the election and in the appointment; but have no say whatever in the drawing up of the rules for election.

Practically, this did not give any difficulties, for I do think that in every Church these rules and regulations have been adopted by the consistory with the deacons. Yet, it is not clear as it reads in the previous Article 4.

Our Revised Church Order has corrected this and prevents misunderstanding. In Article 3, we read, "The election to any office shall take place with the cooperation of the congregation, after preceding prayers, and according to the regulations adopted for that purpose by the consistory with the deacons." Now it is clear, that the deacons are involved in the drawing up of the regulations.

Throughout our Church Order the idea has been sustained that the same people and bodies who are responsible for the election and ordination, are also to be involved in all further actions regarding office-bearers.

The old Church Order provides in Article 11 that the *consistory* shall be bound to provide for the proper support of its ministers. The Revised Church Order states in Article 10 that the *consistory with the deacons* shall do so. I do not think that any change of practice is required by this change of formulation, for in each and every Church — as far as I know — the matters of support for the minister and of budget and financial statements are dealt with at meetings of the consistory with the deacons.

The old Article 12 does not even mention the consistory when it speaks of a minister of the Word entering upon another vocation. Our Revised Church Order has now, "Inasmuch as a minister of the Word, once lawfully called, is bound to the service of the Church for life, he is not allowed to enter upon another vocation unless it be for exceptional and substantial reasons, of which the consistory with the deacons shall judge, and which shall receive the approval of classis with the concurring advice of deputies or regional synod." It was the consistory with the deacons that appointed the minister, called him to serve; they are the ones who, in first instance, have to judge whether the reasons adduced are sufficient to permit this minister to enter upon another vocation.

Until now we never had a provision in our Church Order which allowed ministers to retire for any other reason than

illness or incapability due to age. In the Revised Church Order it has been inserted that they may retire upon reaching retirement age. On purpose no specific age is mentioned, for right now the retirement age is 65; it is possible, however, that after some years it is increased to 66 or even 70; or that it goes the other way and that it is lowered to 60. Not mentioning of a specific age prevents that our Church Order would have to be changed if the specific age were changed. Besides, in the old Church Order nothing was said about the question who is to decide whether the minister is no longer able to do his work as a result of illness or age. Various synodical decisions were made regarding this in The Netherlands, but we have never made a decision about the procedure to be followed. Technically speaking, it is possible that minister and consistory, by mutual agreement, come to the conclusion that it might be better that their ways part and, that they use illness as a pretext. Even very strictly speaking, the text of the old Church Order, Article 13, made it possible that the decision was the minister's and his alone.

In our Revised Church Order we have inserted the very same provisions which apply in other cases: we speak here of "according to the judgment of the consistory with the deacons, with the concurring advice of classis and of deputies of regional synod." Now we know who have to judge whether, indeed, a minister can no longer fulfill the duties of his office due to illness or age.

The old Article 14 provided that a minister can be temporarily released from his task with the advice of the consistory. Again, in the revised Church Order this has become, "with the approval of the consistory with the deacons."

The old Church Order provided in Article 27 that the retiring office-bearers "shall be succeeded by others unless the circumstances and the well-being of any Church . . . render a reelection advisable." In this old version it does not say who the ones are that have to judge this. The Revised Church Order states that "the place of the retiring office-bearers shall be taken by others, unless the consistory with the deacons judges that the circumstances and the benefit of the Church render it advisable to have them serve another term, or to extend their term, or to declare them immediately eligible for reelection." Not only has it been stipulated now who the ones are that decide about it, there are also three possibilities included: serve another term, or extend the term or present them to the congregation as just a candidate together

with the others.

We find the same addition "with the deacons" also in Article 71 — previous Article 79 — which deals with suspension and deposition of office-bearers.

In the years of the Liberation, there was sometimes controversy about the question whether the deacons are involved in the suspension and deposition of office-bearers. Even before the courts this question was of importance. I do not recall precisely where it happened, but I think I remember that once the argument before a court was that the deacons had taken part in the decision to suspend and that for that reason the suspension was declared invalid, something which had consequences also for the possessions of the Church. Anyway, the Revised Church Order provides that the judgment according to which office-bearers are to be suspended and/or deposed stands with the consistory with the deacons. Here we have the very same thought which was expressed before: the very same body which appoints, calls, ordains, should also be the body which decides about continuation of office, interruption of the work, or suspension and deposition. This body is the consistory with the deacons. No more confusion possible.

Yes, I anticipate a question here. It is the question which was asked before, whether, then, the deacons are involved in discipline. Some are vehemently opposed to this and think that discipline is none of the business of the deacons: in their opinion it is the proper privilege and task of the elders.

I can put these disturbed souls at ease. In the first place, we should read well. What we are dealing with in this article is not *discipline* upon office-bearers. We deal here with suspension and deposition. Such suspension and deposition can be the result of public or gross sin and it is evident that no lengthy period of admonition precedes such action. There is no question about it that such a brother can continue as an office-bearer: he has to be suspended right away. It is possible that later investigation reveals that the suspension can be lifted; it is possible that it has to be followed by deposition.

In this very same article we also speak of discipline, but the discipline part is confined to the consistory. Listen. "When ministers, elders, or deacons have committed a public or otherwise gross sin, OR REFUSE TO HEED THE ADMONITIONS BY THE CONSISTORY." Here we do not speak of "with the deacons," for we realize that discipline is a matter which is in the province of the elders. As the admonitions are given by

the elders, it will become clear whether there is such hardening in sin that suspension has to follow. As soon as the consistory has come to the conclusion that suspension is necessary, the deacons are called in also there where the consistory meets separately. This is not a matter of discipline, it is a matter of the same body which appointed deciding about the termination of office.

When we, now, look at the Revised Church Order from the beginning, we notice that the office of "doctors" has disappeared. Practically this will not make any difference, since for a long time already we have not had this office as a separate office. The origin of the word "doctors" in our old Church Order is to be sought with John Calvin and others, who understood Ephesians 4:11 to mean that there are pastors and that there are teachers, two separate offices, instead of having these two terms referring to the same office-bearer, only describing their office from different aspects.

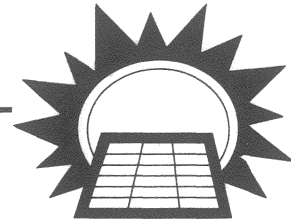
Another change which we made is in Article 3. There we speak in general about the call to office and how one will become an office-bearer. The general description fits ministers as well as elders as well as deacons. This prevents a repetition as we had in the old Church Order, Article 22, where the election of elders is described, and Article 24, where it says that the same manner shall be followed as was stated concerning the elders. All in all, our Revised Church Order has 76 articles over against the Old Church Order with its 87. Yet, no essential element has been omitted.

What is new is that we mention "male members who have made profession of faith." This was not done because there was fear in the present situation that in any of the Churches sisters would be called and ordained, but to state our position clearly. It does not necessitate any change, but it is good that everyone is aware of it where the Canadian Reformed Churches stand in this respect.

Another provision which does not necessitate any change is the provision that the election shall take place with the cooperation of the congregation. This, too, is not a new element — at least not for all practical purposes — for I would not know of any congregation where the consistory elects and appoints without the congregation being involved in one way or another. Yet it is good that now we provide this in our Church Order.

What has also been inserted is the provision that the consistory with the deacons shall be free to give the congrega-

— Continued on page 255



UNDERSTAND HIS PURPOSE

There's a purpose for each petal
That graces every flower,
There's a purpose to each second
In each minute in each hour,
There's a purpose to each sunrise
That lights the sky each day —
And a purpose to each trial
We find along life's way,
And although a purpose might not be
Revealed at once to man,
Nothing in God's kingdom
Is without a perfect plan!

By: Alice Joyce Davidson,
in; *Because I love you*

VREES NIET

Wees niet bevreesd, wanneer de nacht gaat vallen.
Wees niet bevreesd, wanneer het donker wordt;
Hier is Mijn hand - wees maar niet bang te vallen:
Ik houd u vast, Mijn macht schiet nooit tekort.
Wees niet bevreesd, wanneer de golven stijgen
zodat het water tot de lippen komt;
Want met één wenk doe Ik de winden zwijgen
en zee en aarde liggen als verstomd.
Wees niet bevreesd, wanneer uw krachten mind'ren
Want in uw zwakheid wordt Mijn kracht volbracht.
Ik heb veel werk te doen, ook voor Mijn zwakke kind'ren
En alles kunt ge, als ge Mij verwacht.
Wees niet bevreesd, want Ik zal voor U zorgen.
Denk aan de leliën, de mussen die Ik voed.
Ik ben de God van heden en van morgen,
de God, Die leeft en Die u leven doet!

By: Nel Benschop
uit: *Een Vlinder van God*

A thought to ponder:

Verwachting

Zijn we - kerk Gods
in deze tijd -
nog vuurbaak in de nacht?
Is in ons hart
wel vrolijkheid
omdat de Bruiloft wacht?

Albert Dorgeloos would like to thank you, brothers and sisters for remembering him on his birthday. He had, "the best birthday ever."

We are requested to send some cheery messages to:

HERMAN WEMEKAMP
131 Brenda Blvd.
Orangeville, ON L9W 3L5

Brother Wemekamp suffers from multiple sclerosis and is confined to either his wheelchair or his bed. Although we are late with our request for his birthday on May 21, we still hope that you will send him some messages of encouragement and cheer.

On our birthday calendar we have for June:

JOAN KOERSELMAN
c/o "Rehoboth"
Box 1089
Stony Plains, AB T0E 2G0

The Lord willing, Joan will celebrate her 27th birthday on June 17. Please remember her on her special day.

BEVERLY BREUKELMAN
Box 666
Coaldale, AB T0K 0L0

Beverly hopes to celebrate her 22nd birthday on June 30. In order to give you a little extra information I will quote from a letter I received from her mother last January. "Beverly did confession of faith on July 1983. She was very happy that day and is also happy on Lord Supper Sundays. She has been and still is suffering from depression which has lasted about six months — it looks like she is improving slightly." She has not worked since last August and does not know when she will go back to work again.

When seeming most alone,
Friends are around us,
Though no word be spoken.

Longfellow

Requests may be sent to:

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

SCHOOL CROSSING



A. The tedious process of obtaining “next year’s staff” seems to be finished in most of our school committees. A lengthy period of advertising, long-distance telephone calls, interviews and personal appeals, have taken up much of the local school board’s time in recent months. Thanks to our Teachers’ College, and due to the decision of most teachers to stay, only a few schools still experience vacancies. In other words, the “annual headache” did not turn into a migraine this year. Nevertheless, one still wonders if the present system of staffing our schools, is correct or in some cases, proper. Please consider the following points.

1. Due dates and deadlines are no longer adhered to in most Canadian Reformed Schools. After a number of attempts to define advertising and contract signing dates, the whole matter has been dropped, because local boards seemed to pay only lip service to it. As a result, some teachers are already asked about the following year’s intentions by Christmas. After one-third of a school year, this is one question teachers certainly could do without.
2. The energetic hiring practices of some boards are questionable. It seems to me that it is only ethical to approach a principal or another board first, when a teacher is enticed to go somewhere else. “Deals” and quiet bargaining, should have no place in our circles.
3. Some boards come on very strongly with the “need factor.” According to some colleagues, to refuse certain offers of employment, borders on being sacrilegious. It is true of course that some of the more isolated schools

- have a disadvantage in attracting applicants. However, no one is so indispensable that a school would collapse.
4. There must be a better system than the annual contract signing ritual. A teacher, who has made a long term commitment to a certain school, shouldn’t have to reaffirm that every spring by signing a new one-year contract. This is usually only restricted to sports and deals with six-digit salaries.

These four examples (there are more) hopefully suggest that a new and more professional system is in order. As our schools “come of age,” it is to be hoped that all of us — teachers, board members and school supporters — put a better system into place; something to replace what is rather haphazard at the moment.

B. Cultivating tendencies by modeling

Not only by observing the actions of others do we acquire expectations as to how we should react or behave, but we have a tendency to imitate those who are loved and esteemed by others. This is especially true of children. As far as the school is concerned, most children know the mannerisms and idiosyncrasies of their teachers to the finest detail. A recent article in the *Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools Communicator* provides some interesting details:

An American researcher, J.T. Malloy, conducted studies on somewhat comparable city high schools in order to determine the effects of teacher dress in relation to student performance. At one school, teachers wore casual clothes, such as jeans and T-shirts. At the other school, teachers

dressed traditionally — dresses for the women, and sports coats and ties for the men. At the school of traditional dress, students had high reading levels, whereas in the casual school, the reading levels were very low. Not only did the more traditional school far outrank the other school in reading, but also in discipline, parental involvement, absenteeism and general academic achievement. Malloy concluded that students feel that traditionally dressed teachers expect a higher level of performance than casually dressed teachers. A study of this kind does not conclusively prove a direct relationship in any event or in all kinds of schools. But it certainly supports two other old and outstanding proverbs, namely: “The outside reflects the inside” and “He who expecteth little will not be disappointed.”

On a similar theme, is an experiment that was done in California in order to determine the effect of beards on students. In selected areas of the same city, 132 boys and 121 girls aged 3 to 7, were shown four different pictures of a man wearing varying degrees of facial foliage. Most of the kids tagged the clean shaven guy as the “nice man,” whereas the gent with the full beard and mustache was seen as the “scary man.”

Of course, we have all grown up with the notions that appearances can be deceiving. On the other hand, it has been a standard assumption in human affairs that the state of the body is a clear indication of the condition of the soul. Perhaps it is the time to shave off all those revolutionary beards. But then again, it could be a good energy conservation policy.

C. News from the schools

1. Should teenagers be spanked?

In the higher grades there are times when we deal with issues where students are asked to express their thoughts about, perhaps, controversial items. A few months ago the question came up: “Should Teenagers Be Spanked? Give reasons for your position.” From the essays on this topic I have gleaned some different views. They are given here for you to read, to discuss, to . . . fill in your own. I hope you enjoy it.

- A teenager who runs away and hangs around with turkeys may need a spanking to get him or her straightened out.
- Parents should punish in other ways. Have no friends over, go to bed early; that will work just as well.
- It won’t do as much to teenagers. They have “tougher hides.”
- What’s the difference? They won’t listen anyways since they’re the big ones.

- Teenagers might think it is babyish to be spanked. I think so too but it might do some of them some good.
- As long as they're in the nest they should be taught right from wrong.
- If I swear I get it but my parents can swear; their parents aren't there to give it to them.
- Teenagers might pretend it hurts when they get spanked but actually think it was funny; then repeat their wrong behaviour.
- Teenagers might hate their parents if they are spanked. They should be punished differently.
- When my dad found out spanking didn't hurt me anymore but saw I tried not to laugh when he spanked me he changed his methods. I may get a punch on the arm or I get a big lecture.
- Spankings don't make a big impression anymore. When a friend is over you behave differently. A spanking would look silly for your friend.
- My dad got a sore hand while I didn't feel much the last time. So now I get sent to my room or so.
- My mom thinks spankings help. But she doesn't "hand" them out. Instead she twists an ear (that hurts!).
- No, because we have a right to say what we want to say. Some parents go against everything we say and do.
- Ridiculous!
- Taking away certain privileges is a better idea.
- How? Hands? Don't hurt. Straps? Hurt for a little while. Whips with meat hooks on them? Just might hurt.
- Spanking makes him rebellious.
- Most teenagers are rebellious enough as it is so why make them more so by spanking them.?
- I know my dad wouldn't give me one. Besides, he has to catch me first!

(from the Dufferin Area
Christian School, Orangeville, ON)

2. The public debate over private education

Recently there has been an increase in interest shown in the affairs of private education. Perhaps this can be attributed to "tight" money policies, a growing need for accountability or the simple increase in the number of private schools that are emerging. Whatever the reason, I believe we would do well to let these events induce us to look more closely at our schools and our educational policies and perhaps do some housekeeping.

The recent "Keegstra case" in Alberta has spurred this public debate. In response to this issue the Alberta government created a Committee on Tolerance and Understanding. This committee was

to conduct hearings and unearth other possible cases of bigotry in the classroom. Although the prime target of this examination was to be the public system it soon became evident that private schools would not escape the scrutiny of chairman Ronald David Ghitler who appears to endorse an anti private school view.

In their "study" the following charges were brought out against independent schools. (*Alberta Report*, March 12, 1984).

- Private schools prevent the proper mingling of cultures. In a brief submitted to the hearing, private schools were called "agents of intolerance and discrimination;"
- private schools attack the public system as ungodly, thus encouraging contempt for public school students;
- many private schools use a rote learning format which fills students with facts but doesn't train them to think;
- private sectarian schools, simply by teaching their faith as absolutely true, encourage intolerance for others.

Sometimes the need for Christian Education is expressed in terms of negative reasons. We don't want our students exposed to the secular environment, we don't want the students to read particular books, we don't want the students to miss out on Bible and Church History. While there may be much validity in these arguments it sometimes does not provide a positive picture. There continues to be a need for us to understand how pervasive Christian Education ought to be for all the subjects in our curriculum. This takes time, a concerted effort and above all prayerful support, particularly in times of mounting public pressure.

from the *Newsletter* of Credo
Christian School, Langley, BC

3. Teacher education

In his book *Educational Administration: The Role of the Teacher* A.W. Reeves writes that "to the institution of education is assigned the task of teaching selected skills, developing particular types of behaviour, and transmitting to youth the aspects of the culture deemed by society to be useful, significant, or in some way worthy of perpetuation." What this involves for Coaldale Christian School is laid down in Art. 368 of the School Act (with reference to the regulations of the Department of Education) and in the Constitution of the Coaldale Canadian Reformed School Society. The School Act and the Constitution are for our school not two separate entities, so that we comply with the one and also with the other, but they form one unified education system. To see the task of the school as first and

foremost teaching of Bible as subject would be infringement upon the task of the parents; emphasis on the teaching of doctrine as subject is the task of the church; the teaching of the government curriculum with prayer and Bible reading before and after is not the same as the Constitution of the Canadian Reformed School Society requires. Education of our children involves a prescribed curriculum "in accordance with the infallible Word of God as confessed in the Reformed Creeds." It is for this task that teachers should be trained.

In the same above mentioned book we read further that "educators pass on to students what they have received." Understandably, what they receive is of the utmost importance, because that is passed on. Because you as parents are concerned with what your children learn, you should therefore also be interested in what way the educators of your children are trained. The training of teachers should be according to law, the School Act, but also according to the Constitution of our Society. This includes that they should learn their subject material in a Christian framework. They have to learn the required material as prescribed by the minister and his department and at the same time in accordance with the infallible Word of God as confessed in the Reformed Creeds. Since this is what they have to pass on to the students, this is the way in which they ought to be trained.

This is not always possible and God has blessed work of educators who were not able to be trained in this method and have done their utmost to transform their training into the way they had to pass it on. However, it should be kept in mind that the ideal is a teacher training which complies with the requirements of the School Act as well as of the Constitution of the Coaldale Canadian School Society. Christians should always aim for the best

from the Coaldale Christian School
Coaldale, AE

4. A while ago the executive of the board held a meeting with the staff of our school to discuss the financial situation and speak about salaries. It is always somewhat embarrassing to determine the salary of a person who works exclusively in and for our community. We tend to compare their incomes to our own. If you are in the higher income groups you probably feel that salaries should increase. If you are on the lower end of the income scale, you may think that our teachers are making a good salary. And because you pay for it, almost automatically the sentiment is voiced "enough is enough."

We hope you will agree that this is not the correct way to determine a teach

er's income. In this manner the level of income would depend on who is on the board. If you have high income people on the board, it would tend to produce higher incomes for the staff, and vice versa.

The correct way, of course, is to see what comparable professions around us are paid. That is how the income of plumbers, carpenters, painters, and real estate salesmen and doctors is determined. We had a good rule: we paid a certain percentage of what the profession was paid in the world around us. Although that percentage itself may remain a matter of discussion, the rule was a good one. If we don't continue to follow it, we revert to subjective standards, set by ourselves, without regard to the normal professional standards. Then we will get back to the method of trying to determine what is "sufficient" for a teacher — according to our own opinions. Any personal director

will tell you that this question of sufficiency is impossible to answer fairly, but that he is willing to pay more or less according to the standards in the industry. The sooner we get back to this rule at Guido, the better it will be. The teachers will then know where they are at, and we will be able to hang on to our dedicated teachers who have been doing a very fine job.

from a chairman's report
— Guido de Brès High School,
Hamilton, ON

D. And finally . . . "mud time — Tide time"

With this heading, one of our school bulletins noted that spring was that time of the year when mothers get a chance to see how well Tide gets out that ground in mud. I am sure that most parents have

seen their youngsters return home from school, with mud splattered from head to toe. Due to a lack in funds (and in some cases because of low priorities) many of our schools' playgrounds are poorly drained and not very well landscaped. Combine this with the "innate" ability of children to find a puddle and the result can be disastrous. An excellent study in human behaviour takes place when one observes a primary pupil gingerly stepping into a mud hole until he finds that *one* place where the water will finally pour into his boots. Have patience mothers — we do our best at school. However in the spring, playground supervision becomes almost impossible!

Until next month (D.V.)!

NICK VANDOOREN
John Calvin School
607 Dynes Road Burlington, ON

Church Order —

continued from page 251

tion the opportunity beforehand to draw the attention to brothers deemed fit for the respective offices. This, too, is something which is rather customary among us; now it has been laid down in our Church Order, although still no consistory is obligated to do so.

A provision which may have some more practical impact is the part which provides, "The consistory with the deacons shall present to the congregation either as many candidates as there are vacancies to be filled, or at the most twice as many, from which number the congregation shall choose as many as are needed."

We provide here that it is not necessary at all that the consistory with the deacons always come with twice the number of office-bearers needed. This applies to the vacancies in the ministry as well as to the vacancies in the eldership and deaconship.

No one thinks it to be strange when a consistory with the deacons come with one name to fill the vacant pulpit; but if the brothers should come with just as many names as there are vacancies for the office of elder or deacon there certainly would be some protesting voices. And quite a few eyebrows would shoot up — to say the least — if the congregation were presented with five names to fill three vacancies. There should be six names! someone might exclaim; whereas all office-bearers know how difficult it oftentimes is to get a full slate of twice as many candidates as there are vacancies,

and how great the temptation is to put that many names on, adding the names of brothers whom the consistory actually does not consider fit for the office, and of whom everyone says, "He won't get enough votes anyway!"

Now we have the provision in our Church Order that there need not be twice as many names as there are vacancies. Perhaps it won't change existing practices — and it does not have to — but at least the possibility is there.

In the Articles 4 and 5 we have now inserted various decisions of our previous general synods regarding eligibility for the ministry. We have also listed the documents which are required, at least most of them. A change has been brought about regarding the eligibility of brothers who were declared eligible within a federation of foreign sister Churches. They are now eligible for call within the Canadian Reformed Churches as well. In how far this will have any practical effect with a view to the number of our own students and future candidates will have to be seen.

Until now we did not have a provision in our Church Order regarding dismissal or release of ministers of the Word. The only thing that was provided was that the consistory "shall not dismiss them without the knowledge and approbation of the classis and of the deputies of the regional synod." Nothing was said about the reasons why this dismissal could take place, nor was anything said about the procedure.

In our new Article 11, we provide a few things which take the uncertainty out of a few aspects of the dismissal.

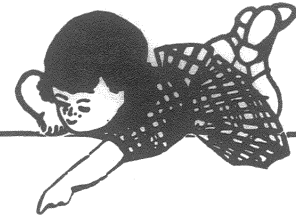
In the first place we state that dismissal or release can take place if a minister of the Word is judged unfit and incapable of serving the congregation fruitfully and to its edification. We add, however, that the situation should be such that there is no reason for discipline. This is provided to prevent that a consistory should try to work its way out of a difficult situation via the way of dismissal of the minister. This dismissal, we state here, is in no way allowed to take the place of Church discipline. All things are to be done orderly and sincerely.

We further provide that such a dismissal shall first be decided upon by the consistory with the deacons. The approbation of classis is required as well, as is the concurring advice of deputies of regional synod. This is not something new.

What is new is the provision that proper support for the minister and his family shall be arranged; this support shall be given "for a reasonable period of time." We can and should try to lay down in our Church Order how long this reasonable period is to be.

The provision which may have the most impact — if any such case will occur in the future — is the one that, if no call is forthcoming in three years, the dismissed minister shall be declared released from his ministerial status by the classis in which he served last. We hope not, of course, that any such dismissal will be necessary in the future, but if it will have to be done, we shall not have the figure that there is a minister who has the full rights and privileges of a ministerial status but is not connected to any Church. — *To be continued.*

W.W.J. VANOENE



Hello Busy Beavers,

Busy Beaver Jeannie Barendregt who lives in Smithers, BC has a very interesting story to tell us!

Here it is:

I have to tell you about what happened on Sunday, April 15. It was in the afternoon, after the first church service. We finished lunch already and we were playing a game, when suddenly it started pouring rain really hard. A few seconds later a loud rumble of thunder could be heard, and lightning could be seen. The thunder roared and lightning flashed. Then up came the wind, (the wind was measured to be 110 km/h).

Trees crashed and fell scattering all over, hitting the power lines and houses. They fell on patios and houses, fences and hydro poles. It was a great mess.

Our trees which fell did not damage anything but the fence. We had a cluster of about 8 trees on the bottom of our lawn, but only a few are still standing. A lot of trees fell on our fence. It damaged the fence also.

Some other houses had a lot of damage, for example my aunt and uncle's house has been damaged by a tree falling on their patio.

My uncle and aunt, who live in Houston, had their barn blown down.

My cousin and her husband had their house damaged by a tree falling on the corner of their house. A great many more trees fell in their property.

Our road, on which we live, was showered with trees hitting our hydro line. In one place the line broke.

The whole town did not have power for a little while. But some places which were close by the hospital had power right away or (as I should say) a few hours after. But some places did not have electricity until a night later. We did not have ours until April 17 at 4 o'clock in the morning. (Tuesday)

A schoolteacher's (from our school) house was also damaged by falling trees. Tricon Truss's shed blew down. My Aunt Marianne's car was crushed flat by a tree falling on top of it. Another Blazer was chopped neatly in half by a falling tree.

A student was driving home from church when a tree fell in front of him. It hit the power line and made sparks fly. They (his grandpa was along with him) drove up the driveway when another tree fell in front of them. And that was all I heard.

On Colemine Road a whole bunch of trees fell over the power line. It was one of the worst roads.

There were many more things like that that happened, but I can't tell you it all. But what we were so glad about was that nobody was hurt or killed by the storm.

Well, I can't keep going like this, I have to stop some time, But there was one thing I did not tell you, it was that there was supposed to be a spring concert that same Sunday. But we did not have it. Instead we had it in the same week on Wednesday.

When we did not have power, we had to use a Coleman for two nights for light. We also used a flashlight to find our way around the house. We used a campstove to cook our meals on.

Well, I have to say "Bye for now."

from Jeannie Barendregt

P.S. I forgot to tell you that we had to take a power saw in order to get to church, because we had to dig ourselves through all the trees. There were also hydro lines all over the road and in the ditch.

We went to Houston on Good Friday and saw my uncle's

barn. The roof was blown off and was on the ground. We also saw a house with three trees on it's roof, and it was damaged. We also saw a field that was covered with trees.

When we were just driving into Houston we saw a hydro pole that was hanging on the wires. I always thought the hydro poles had to hold the wires up. But not here! The wires were holding the hydro pole up.

June is here!

Time to wish all the Busy Beavers celebrating their birthday in the beautiful month of June, a very happy day and many happy returns! Here's hoping you have a great day with your family and friends. And may the Lord bless and keep you in the year ahead.

June

Sheri Oussoren	1	Dennis Flokstra	12
Doane de Witt	2	Jason Klaver	13
Nadine Woudenberg	2	Pauline Leffers	14
Gerrilynn Huizinga	3	Pearl Vandeburgt	18
Harold Dykstra	4	Sheryl Boes	20
Valerie Gelderman	4	Jamie Harsevoort	21
Carina Ploeger	10	Miriam Vanderwerf	26
Frederick Dewit	12	Debbie De Boer	28



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club Shelleen Bos. We are happy to have you join us. I see you're a real Busy Beaver already, Shelleen. I like your picture and poem. Keep up the good work!

And a great big welcome to you, too, Jane de Vos. How is your Opa now, and your special brother? What do you and your friends play at recess, Jane? Thank you for your poem and puzzle, and especially your picture!

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, Kristi Van Popta. Will you make a picture, sometime, to share with the Busy Beavers, since you like art? Bye for now.

Welcome to the Club, Timothy Van Popta. Which do you like better, Timothy, the piano or the recorder? And how long do you play every day?

Hello, Rita Wubs. Thank you for your story and your riddles. I see you are keeping busy! It was nice to hear from you again. Bye for now.

You must have had a good time visiting your relatives, Cindy Huttema! Sounds as if you enjoyed traveling, too! Write again soon.

Congratulations on your new little brother, Janina Barendregt. I guess he just loves it when you play with him and talk to him! Your fort-playhouse sounds really great. Do you play there a lot?

I'm glad you got the rain you needed, Shirley Van Raalte. Is your new home and your new school very different? Bye for now.