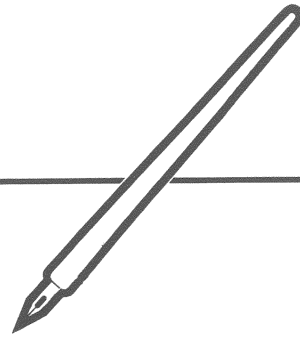




Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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We need mother

In my previous *Editorial* I pointed at the church as mother who has and has to have a central place in the life of her children. I like to make some more remarks here about this important point.

The church bears children. Through the preaching of God's Word by the church the Holy Spirit regenerates natural man and makes unbelievers into believers and enemies of God into beloved children. The church also nourishes her children. With that same Word of God as the food for eternal life the church feeds unto life her children, who are God's children.

The church is the bride of Christ. Comparing a Christian marriage with the relation between Christ and His church, the apostle Paul writes "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, have cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present the church to Himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). Peter writes to the church in Asia Minor, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Peter 2:9). "God's own people" means, God's precious possession.

The church is of such great importance for God that He gave His only beloved Son, and placed all His wrath against sin upon Him, in order to save the church. And God's only Son so loved His bride that He died for her on the cross under God's wrath against her sin. Therefore, the apostle Paul bound the congregation at Ephesus upon the hearts of her elders when he said to them, "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which He obtained with the blood of His own Son."

John the Baptist said, "He who has the bride is the Bridegroom; the friend of the Bridegroom, who stands and hears Him, rejoices greatly at the Bridegroom's voice; . . . He must increase, but I must decrease." Fully in line with these words, the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband." A servant, even the friend of the Bridegroom, is not important. Only the Bridegroom and the bride are. Not John the Baptist, not Paul, but only Christ and His church count. A servant is allowed to be consumed in the service of His Lord, as Christ spoke concerning Himself, according to what was written, "Zeal for Thy house will consume me" (John 2:17, Psalm 69:9).

Where the church was so important for Christ and, therefore, also for the apostle Paul, she had to have the same important place in the heart and lives of the elders in Ephesus, and of all leaders in the church (Heb. 13:17, those leaders will have to give account). It is a terrible thing for the flock, but even worse for the elder himself, when his own name and glory, his own life and convenience, and whatever else there is, is more important to him than the flock. All that counts for him

must be that bride of Christ, the flock of the Lord, the house of God that is entrusted to him. That flock and bride is for the elder first and foremost the local church.

The church and her well-being must not only have such a significant place in the attention of the office-bearers, but also in the minds and lives of all the members. Their spiritual well-being, their faithfulness, their obedience to God's Word as it is written, their commitment to the Lord and dedication to His cause is the well-being, the faithfulness, and the commitment of the church, and vice versa. The church is its members.

The church with her worship services must have a central place in our life on the Sunday. Of course, something is wrong when we do not "go to church" and assemble with God's people for worship on the day of rest. But something is also wrong when attending church is not more than a formality that belongs to our pattern of life and that we experience as just a fulfilment of a religious duty, while the day is first and foremost a day for our convenience and fun. Then the consequence will easily be that we attend only once, or not at all, especially when on vacation.

But when we give the church and her calling to worship the main place in our life, we prepare for the services, we attend both as much as we can, not as just a duty but as a precious gift; we discuss what took place and what was preached. In this way the church activity of the Sunday will have its impact also during the other days of the week. The Word of God as preached will more and more rule all of life.

That means that the church will keep that central place during the week. We do our job, we manage our business, we do our housekeeping, or whatever we do with the church in our mind. We do business, we work, we keep house, we plan our holidays and go on vacation, caring for the well-being of the church. No blame must come on the church of the Lord. It would be a blame on His holy Name.

With the Word of God as it is preached and received on Sunday, the church rules the lives of her members. That Word of her Lord tells the church how to live a holy, blameless and reconciled life in Him, all the days of the week, in all the different aspects of life. With that Word of her Lord the church encourages and comforts her members so that they have the courage and strength to go on in the service of the Lord.

It is clear, then, that the church has and must have such a central place in the lives of her members. A central place for the church means a central place for the Lord of the church and for His service. Where this central place is given to the church, there also will be found faithfulness to the Lord of the church. And that is the goal of the lives of those who believe to be members of the church, that is: the bride of Christ.

J. GEERTSEMA

On the picket line

Some remarks on the labour organizations³

10. On strike

When we consider the question whether we can participate in a strike, we have to make a distinction between the legal and the moral aspects.

The strike is a phenomenon that existed already as early as the Middle Ages. The oldest strike we have heard about was in 1372. The textile workers went on strike in the city of Leiden in The Netherlands. However, such a strike was illegal. Strong sentences were meted out against those who participated in or incited such a strike. Even the death penalty was used. During, and especially at the end of the nineteenth century a different approach arose. The labour movement became active and the regulations with respect to strikes were softened. Slowly the strike became a legally accepted phenomenon.

In Canada a strike is legal, at least when certain conditions are fulfilled. We quite often hear that a union or the workers in a certain branch of industry are "in a legal position to strike." The same can be said about the employers. Under some conditions they have the right to "lock out" the workers in a certain work place. In both cases the workers leave the work site and do not receive their paycheque. Although this might be legally correct, it does not mean that it is also morally acceptable.

In a previous section we have seen that the purpose of our daily work is not in the first place to make money. It has to be the fulfillment of our God-given mandate. We have also referred to the abuse of power. In the past some employers have abused their powerful position in order to make lots of money at the expense of their workers, who lived in very poor situations, at the edge of starvation, and who had to work hard under very bad and unhealthy conditions. We should not ignore or deny this and we should not try to condone it either. That has been one of the incentives to the establishment of labour organizations.

However, what happens today is also a matter of abuse of a powerful position. There is an old saying: someone

else's dirt is not our soap. It means that we should not use the mistakes and wrongdoings of others as an excuse for our actions or to whitewash and defend our own misbehaviour.

There is not anything wrong with labourers joining and working together to

solidarity is oftentimes only a matter of putting pressure on other workers to support a certain cause, whether they like it or not. Workers are threatened and even violence is used against those who are not willing to follow the revolutionary actions. Recently we have seen how even



get a better deal and a more favourable contract. However, the question we must ask is which methods they use to reach their goal.

There are different aspects to a strike which prevent us from using it as an acceptable tool to reach a goal.

It is in the first place a denial of our God-given mandate to labour faithfully. The daily process of labour is interrupted to force others to give in to demands which otherwise cannot be reached. That means an abuse of a powerful position. People talk about "solidarity" but this

a work site of a non-union company was closed by picket lines. Workers who had nothing to do with the unions were prevented from doing their work. Equipment was damaged and personal injury was caused.

We have to reject such a revolutionary movement. This has nothing to do with democracy but is rather a step on the way to anarchy. Even the laws of the country are violated and a small group of people tries to impose their will upon the rest of society. It is clear that such actions are illegal but also the so-called "legal"

strikes are morally unacceptable. It is not only a matter of abusing a powerful position, but it also puts a burden on innocent people. A strike often costs millions of dollars. This burden has to be carried not only by the workers and their employers, but many other people suffer as well. During a bus strike the general public suffers in the first place. A strike of public workers can cause much harm for the public as well. A strike of hospital workers can even endanger human life and health. And the irony of it all is that often the workers lose more money through a strike than they can gain during the whole term of a new contract.

Nowadays we face a revolutionary development which is defeating its own purpose. No wonder that there is increasing unhappiness and frustration about the work of the unions. The aversion to this development can be seen in many sectors of industry.

We, as believers, have to take a strong stand against these actions. We do not defend or condone the abuse of power on the part of the employers as it has been manifest in the past. There might have been a good reason for workers to defend their rights and to work together for the improvement of their working conditions, however, the way the labour unions work now is certainly not a good alternative. It is just the other extreme.

11. Serving two masters

In a previous section we have explained the character of the personal commitment of the members to their union. It is a position of full allegiance. We have quoted as an example the "subscription form" of a certain union. Every member has to "pledge his honour to faithfully observe the Constitution and

no choice. But I am not going to participate in a strike or to walk the picketline. If they ever ask me to do so I will quit my job. But for the time being I am just paying my fee and I do not ask for trouble. If the time comes I will see." However, that does not solve the problem. If someone "pledges his honour to faithfully observe the Constitution and the laws of the Union and to comply with all the rules and regulations for the government thereof" he has to keep his promise and he has to be faithful to his "word of honour." It is simply not fair to the union, and even in conflict with the ninth commandment of the law of the Lord, to make such a pledge with the clear intention not to stick to it.

In Matthew 6:24 Jesus warned us saying, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

A believing Christian cannot make a full commitment the way some unions demand from their members and *at the same time* commit his whole life in true obedience to the service of the Lord. We cannot serve two masters. Either someone is faithful in his commitment to the union and his "brothers and sisters" in the labour movement, but then he has to put the word of men above the Word of God, or he is faithful in his commitment to the Lord and His service, but then he cannot "comply with all the rules and regulations" of the unions. We cannot serve two masters! Either we will "hate the one and love the other" or we will "be devoted to the one and despise the other."

Our conclusion must be that membership in a union as mentioned above is incompatible with the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ.

"A believing Christian cannot make a full commitment the way some unions demand from their members and at the same time commit his whole life in true obedience to the service of the Lord. We cannot serve two masters."

laws of the Union; to comply with all the rules and regulations for the government thereof." To comply with these rules and regulations includes going on strike if the National Executive Board so decides. It also includes "honouring" the picket lines of all other unions and to perform picket duty if requested to do so.

Some people might say, "I have to join a union to get a certain job. I have

12. Other organizations

There is still one aspect we have to deal with and to elaborate on more and that is our attitude with respect to all kinds of trade associations, products- and marketing boards etc.

There is a broad scale of different organizations. It is impossible to go into detail with all of them. In a previous section

we took as an example one particular labour union and we quoted from the official constitution. There might be some difference between the constitutions of the different unions. Some are more, others less demanding. Some require from their members to subscribe an obligation, others only require a written application for membership without mentioning the wordings of the "oath" on the application form. Others might even consider a verbal agreement and payment of the fees sufficient for becoming a member. The most important thing, however, is what the official constitution says about the obligations of the members of an organization.

Most products- and marketing boards are appointed by a cabinet minister or by the Governor in Council. They receive their power and authority by law from the civil government and the producers and sellers (or marketers) of certain products have to pay a levy, set by the government. As long as no other obligations are involved or are incumbent upon the "members" we cannot see anything wrong with obeying these rules. It is even questionable whether in these cases the term "members" can be used. At least in some instances it is rather like a sales tax which has to be paid. However, if other obligations are involved, then they have to be considered on their own merit.

The same counts for some trade associations and other organizations of workers in a certain area of science or technology. If this is just an organization to exchange know-how and experience and to administer matters of common interest, it is not necessarily wrong to participate in such an organization. The main point remains: what does the constitution say and what are the obligations of the members? Careful scrutiny is always necessary. Experience teaches us that in an increasing number of cases a cooperation which from the outset seemed to be very innocent, becomes more difficult because of the spirit of revolution and lawlessness which is creeping in.

Let us be on the alert and let us help each other in these difficult times. The spirit of revolution is active. We have to fight against an enemy, not in the first place against flesh and blood but against "the wiles of the devil" (cp. Eph. 6:10-20). It might be a difficult task, but we have a strong armor, the whole armor of God. The sword of the Spirit and the Word of God are our weapons. Counting on the promises given to us in Ephesians 6 we can overcome.

May these articles be of some help in the studying of these matters as a training for the battle.

W. POUWELSE



Decisions on women in office in the CRC

In previous issues we paid attention to the issue of "women in office" in the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). As we all know, the matter was brought before this year's synod and decisions were made. For the information of the readers of *Clarion*, I will pass on those decisions as I found them in *THE BANNER* of July 2. I would like to make one remark. The synod carefully avoided, in the decisions regarding the "headship of men," to use the words "submissive" and "subject" which are used by the apostles Paul (Eph. 5:22, 24; Col. 3:18) and Peter (1Peter 3:1, 5). But, here are the decisions:

"That synod declare that the headship role of husbands in marriage involves a direction-setting role which is to be exercised (first) in loving their wives in a self-sacrificing way, and (second) in loving their wives in an enabling way, after the pattern of Christ's headship over the church." (*Approved Monday, June 18, by voice vote.*)

"That synod declare that 'the headship principle,' which means that the man should exercise primary leadership and direction-setting in the home and in the church, is a biblical teaching recognized in both the Old and New Testament." (*Approved Monday, June 18, by 81—76 tally.*)

"That synod declare that there is insufficient scriptural evidence to warrant the conclusion that a headship principle holding man's rulership/primary leadership and direction-setting over woman is a creation norm extending over the whole of human life." (*Approved Tuesday, June 19, by voice vote.*)

"That synod declare that the headship of the man in the church implies that women should not be admitted to the offices of minister, elder, or evangelist." (*Defeated Tuesday, June 19, by 82—77 tally.*)

"That synod encourage the churches to recognize, develop, and use spiritual gifts found in female members by allowing qualified women to assist the ordained elders in their ministry." (*Defeated Wednesday, June 20, by voice vote.*)

That synod reaffirm the decision of the Synod of 1978: 'That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders.' " (*Approved Thursday, June 21, by voice vote.*)

"That synod ratify the amended form

of Article 3 of the Church Order and its supplement adopted by the Synod of 1978:

'Article 3

a. Confessing male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the offices of minister, elder, (and evangelist).

b. All confessing members of the church who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the office of deacon.

c. Only those who have been officially called and ordained or installed shall hold and exercise office in the church.

**Supplement, Article 3
Women as Deacons**

The work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of elders.' " (*Approved Thursday, June 21, by voice vote.*)

"That synod declare that the decision as to whether women should be ordained as deacons in any specific congregation be left to the judgment of the local consistory." (*Approved Wednesday, June 20, by voice vote.*)

"That synod declare that pastors are not expected to participate in the ordination of women if it is against their consciences." (*Approved Wednesday, June 20, by 87—70 tally.*)

"That synod declare that in consistories where the distinction between the general and the restricted consistory is not made, women deacons may not function as elders." (*Approved Wednesday, June 20, by 91—68 tally.*)

A decision on paying taxes

The same issue of *THE BANNER* reports also on a decision of the CRC synod 1984 regarding the refusal of a CRC couple to pay all the tax money which the American Internal Revenue Service charged them to pay. Let me first give the report.

"As I was sitting in the living room, I began to imagine the world at peace. People were communicating with each other—there was indeed a chance for people to talk and solve their problems without war. My heart was full, and I knew this vision had just come from the Lord."

Paul Stoub, a young freelance artist known to the CRC through his illustrations in *A Place to Stand* and *Beyond Doubt*, told delegates the story of how he and his wife, Fenna, had decided to commit themselves to world peace.

"I heard a voice that said, 'Do you follow me?'—and I knew that this was the

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Report on the Women's League Day in the Fraser Valley

On Tuesday, June 26, 1984, 166 women met in the Chilliwack Church building for the Twenty-First Annual Women's League Day of the Womens' Societies in the Fraser Valley. This year it was hosted by the Women's Society "The Lord is our Refuge" of Chilliwack. As the women arrived, they busied themselves with registration; putting on name tags; signing the five cards for our Mission and Mission Aid women and for Tereza Vieira, all in Brazil, refreshing themselves with coffee and goodies; or chatting with friends and renewing acquaintances. Shortly after 10:00 a.m. our chair woman for the morning session, Mrs. Hanna Lengkeek, called the meeting to order. We were asked to sing Psalm 89:1 and 13, after which the chairwoman

led in prayer. Mrs. Lengkeek expressed a word of welcome to all and then extended wishes received in a telegram from the Women's Society "Deborah" in Smithers, BC, and in a telephone call from Mrs. Tiggelaar in Barrhead, Alberta. We then sang Psalm 86:3 and 4 after which the chairwoman read Ephesians 1:3 to 23.

Our speaker for the morning, Mrs. Alice Hoeksema, was then given the opportunity to read her introduction on the book of Ruth. She informed us that this book accounts for the period between the Judges and the Kings and was actually written during the reign of King David. The Israelites had fallen away, yet God prepared for the coming of the Messiah even in dark times. Elimelech sinned by

leaving Bethlehem. Even though the land was cursed by famine, this should have led to self-examination and repentance. By fleeing, Elimelech showed he did not trust in the Lord. The Lord then punished the family for leaving Israel. Moabites married into the assembly of the Lord, which was strictly forbidden. Their two sons died. Even though Orpah decided to stay with her own people, the Lord guided Ruth back to Israel. That the Holy Spirit was working in Ruth, was shown in the oath she stated. Naomi realized that the Lord had punished her, for instead of a charming, pleasant Naomi, she called herself "bitter" when she returned to Israel. God's guidance then led Ruth to the fields of Boaz, who took the law of the Lord to heart. She received protection,

Decisions on women in office *continued*

most important question that could be asked of me." Stoub spoke after an unusual request from the floor had allowed him to take the podium.

The Stoubs' quest for peace began with open tax resistance. Following their consciences, they refused to pay the 50 percent of their income taxes they claim supports "idolatrous militarism."

In January the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) placed a levy on the Stoubs' income and demanded that one of Paul's employers, the CRC Board of Publications, pay a part of the taxes owed.

In February the board voted to pay the amount over the Stoubs' objections, but agreed to postpone payment until synod could hear Paul and Fenna's appeal.

An IRS-threatened lawsuit against the board in May, however, prompted the board to issue payment.

Supported by their local church and their classis, the Stoubs appealed the Board of Publications' decision, claiming that the board's payment didn't constitute the support they felt they should have received—according to synod's own "Guidelines for Ethical Decisions about War" (1977).

"The issue here," said Calvin Seminary Professor of Systematic Theology Dr. Neal Plantinga, "is whether the Board of Publications had some Christian responsibility to support the Stoubs' tax resistance by refusing to act as an agent of the IRS."

Seminary advisor Harold Dekker asked synod not to consider the board guilty of lack of support for the Stoubs. "The board gave ample evidence of substantial sympathy,"

Dekker said. "Nonpayment would not only have been support but a violation of the law." He argued that it would have been improper for a 40-person board to represent an entire denomination in disobeying the law.

After nearly two hours of intense discussion, synod voted to approve the Board of Publications' decision to pay the IRS.

But Stoub's own five minutes of testimony prompted delegates to vote in favor of establishing a study committee to create more specific guidelines for churches facing similar cases of conscientious objection.—JCS

One can be thankful that the synod did not go along with the reasoning of the Stoubs, and that advisor Dekker stated that: "Nonpayment would not only have been support but a violation of the law." I hope that in the debate not only the law of the country was mentioned but also the law of God. Through the apostle Paul our Lord commands His followers regarding the authorities, "Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due . . ." (Rom. 13:7).

At the same time, this word of the Lord should have made the appointment of a study committee to study the matter and come with guidelines completely superfluous.

That brings me to another remark. I do not understand that a Reformed synod can go for the reasoning as it is given here by Mr. Stoub. He had a vision while

sitting in the living room. He heard a voice that said, "Do you follow me?" It is suggested that this was the voice of the Lord. And on that basis there was the refusal to pay the full amount of the tax money. In other words, Mr. Stoub suggests that the voice of the Lord made him decide to pay only part of the taxes due. My question is: can the Lord say: in His written Word, "Pay your taxes to whom taxes are due" and, at the same time, tell someone in his heart: do not pay? Can the Lord contradict Himself? But if that is not possible, Mr. Stoub did not follow the Lord's voice, but his own idea, or must we say the whispering voice of an evil, misleading spirit? The apostle Paul warns: because people refuse to love the truth, God sends upon them a strong delusion (an energy of error) to make them believe what is false (II Thess. 2:10, 11). The apostle Paul knew quite well, that the authorities in those days used the tax moneys of the Christians for their own ungodly purposes. Nevertheless, he commands them to pay that money. The Spirit of Christ is not a Spirit of revolution and rebellion. Here we have no longer a Reformed, Scriptural thinking, but an Anabaptist, revolutionary reasoning that was rejected by the Reformed Churches when they accepted the Belgic Confession, Art. 36 which pointed to Romans 13:7.

But, are we faithful in paying taxes to the government?

J. GEERTSEMA

food and water from him and was overwhelmed by this care. According to an old law (Lev. 25:25) Boaz could, as kinsman, redeem Elimelechs' lost land. According to a Levirate law (Deuteronomy 25:5-10), the next of kin could marry Ruth and the first son born would carry Elimelech's name. Ruth's laying by his feet was not a strange request and Boaz understood her willingness to carry the line. But the nearer of kin had the first right, which this man chose not to take it.

Boaz received his reward; he was blessed by the elders and people gathered at the gate, and is named in the genealogy of Christ. The Lord blessed the union of Ruth and Boaz, and so also blessed Naomi. Their son Obed ("servant"), now had a name and place in Israel. The story of Ruth is a foreshadowing of our own redemption in Christ. That Ruth's name is included in the line of Christ foreshadows the lifting of the curse over all heathen nations. Through this, the universal meaning of the Messiah is shown.

After this introduction we sang Hymn 43:3. The Chilliwack Women's Society next gave us a pleasant surprise by very nicely singing the "Song of Ruth" in four part harmony. The discussion dealt basically with the following six questions:

1. Did Elimelech's family actually leave the "assembly of Israel" when they left Bethlehem?
2. Of what significance is the book of Ruth for us today in 1984?
3. How can we explain the verse in Deut. that states that if one marries a Moabite, the following ten generations are not a part of Israel?
4. In what particular character was Boaz the "type of Christ"?
5. How do we understand that Rehab the harlot was in the line of Christ even though she was not an Israelite?
6. Was it right or wrong of Naomi to tell Orpah to return to her own people?

Many differences of opinions were expressed on these matters, but we could agree that we have once again seen that the Lord guides us through our life, and that it is His will that is done!

Mrs. Lengkeek closed the discussion and thanked those who had participated. Mrs. Jenny Janzen of Abbotsford, then read a Dutch poem about Ruth, and also a very appropriate poem entitled "God Works in a Mysterious Way". Mrs. Lengkeek thanked all the ladies who had worked so hard to organize the day. We sang the "League Song" after which we were all treated to a delicious cold plate lunch downstairs, prepared by the women of the Chilliwack Society. We all sang "Happy Birthday" to Mrs. Roelie Hoeksema, after which she led us in scripture reading and prayer.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”

Ephesians 1:3, 4

After relaxing a short while longer, the chairwoman for the afternoon session, Mrs. Aat Onderwater called the meeting to order. We sang Psalm 113: 1, 2, and 3, after which Mrs. Audrey VanWoudenberg read an interesting and informative introduction on the group R.E.A.L. Women of Canada." This group was formed in the spring of 1983 by 12 ladies including one of our own Canadian Reformed members in Burlington. The R.E.A.L. stands for Realistic, Equal, Active, for Life, which indicates that it speaks for women as they really are, not as feminists want us to be. Some of their aims are:

- to reaffirm that the family is society's most important unit
- to promote legislation which upholds the christian view of the family
- to support the right of life from conception

(For more information see Reformed Perspective magazine, June 1983—Vol. 2. No. 8) What if we don't join R.E.A.L. Women? Then the government-funded National Action Committee on the Status of Women speaks for us. The N.A.C. claims to speak for all Canadian women, but actually they are only speaking for feminists, with their pro-abortion stand. Since no one was speaking in defence of women who chose to remain at home, groups such as R.E.A.L. Women were formed. In the discussion which followed, several questions and comments were expressed, such as:

1. Is their constitution based on God's Word?
2. How effective are they?
3. In an article by Professor Kamphuis given at a League Day in The Netherlands, it is stated that women should not become politically active. As time was quickly running out, the discussion had to be closed. Mrs. VanWoudenberg was thanked for her interesting introduction, and we sang Hymn 5:1 and 8. The Clover-

dale societies entertained us with a "Front Page Challenge" guessing game. Two panelists from each of the other four Women's Societies in the Valley had to ask questions to the "mystery guest" to determine who she was or which event she represented. Events were: the Return of the Kuiks, Synod of Cloverdale '83, and the 10th Annual Convocation of the Theological College. Persons represented were Professor K. Deddens, Mrs. G.B. Wendt, and Dirk Janz Zwart, who a certain lady from Maranatha church excitedly guessed to be the Pope!

After a brief general discussion period, the chairlady expressed appreciation to the Chilliwack Women's Society for all the work they had put into organizing this League Day. We sang Psalm 33: 1 and 6 and Mrs. Onderwater ended with us in thanksgiving prayer. Everyone was again invited downstairs for refreshments before the journey homeward. We may thank our gracious Father for bringing us together once again to study His Word, and enjoy Christian fellowship.

MRS. I. BREDENHOF



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No. 1, Manitoba
Photo courtesy John F. Vanveen



Fifty, forty-five, forty — we can count our blessings again when mentioning the brothers and sisters who received these many years together as husband and wife. It is a good thing that I never started mentioning those who celebrate their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, for the list would become too long. We are thinking of the others as well, and then specifically those at whose wedding I was allowed to officiate. Yes, one gets patriarchal feelings when looking at those names and dates and when standing at the baptismal font, administering the sacrament of holy baptism to children of parents whom I also baptized and at the wedding of whose parents I officiated. It is a great joy to see the faithfulness of the LORD in the line of the generations and to sing of it with His Church. At the same time it is a constant reminder that time goes on and the part of life that still lies ahead — at least on this present earth — becomes smaller and smaller.

It is, therefore, with the more gratitude that we mention the names of brother and sister J. Zietsma of Burlington, who celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary on August 20; of brother and sister Grijpstra of Burlington East who celebrated their 45th anniversary in the beginning of July, of brother and sister J. Klaver of Edmonton whose date for the same event was July 27, and of brother and sister H. Schutten of Orangeville who, on August 31, will remember that the LORD spared them for one another for forty years.

Of some of the above brothers and sisters I know that they went through severe trials, but all together will have to acknowledge that the light which the LORD causes to shine upon the lives of His children ultimately dispels all shadows and that it is the experience of God's children that nothing can separate them from God's love in Christ the Saviour.

May this light continue to accompany you on your journey towards perfection.

When, after the holidays, one looks at the big stack of bulletins that have to be read, the impression is received that there will be much to be mentioned and that it will become a long medley. Every year, however, the same has to be said: there are not all that many important things going on during the summer months, and thus it is practically impossible to make up for the time we had to skip because of laziness during the allotted weeks of holidays.

Some activities did go on, e.g. building activities. Burlington West's parsonage is being built, Smithers received a permit for the building of a new manse, and they will be busy with hammering and sawing right now, I presume. London purchased another manse, selling the previous one, and Brampton is planning to relocate the pulpit, providing thereby more seating capacity in the auditorium.

As for Brampton, "The pulpit will be moved back about four feet and positioned slightly off center. Cedar wood with oak trim will be used to construct the pulpit." The additional room provided hereby is needed for increased seating capacity.

Brampton is in a position to increase the seating capacity without all too much trouble and without too great expenses. I hope that the pulpit is not too much off-center, for the Reformed architecture is characterized, among other things, by the central place of the pulpit: the preaching of the Word is the central activity in the Reformed worship service.

The Brampton Consistory also decided that "The *Book of Praise* will be subsidized in the amount of \$4.00 per copy

for children going to elementary or secondary school."

The Ottawa Church instituted a Fellowship Committee which is to organize various activities. "Every second Sunday of the month there will be coffee held at the church after the second service." This is one of the fruits of this Committee's activities. It is obvious that a coffee hour after the first service is out of the question, as the building has to be vacated by 10:20 at the latest. For visitors to Ottawa it will, at the same time, be a splendid opportunity to talk with the members.

Apart from the things already mentioned regarding Ontario Churches, there is nothing that should be related and therefore we continue towards Alberta, reaching it in Edmonton first of all.

The Immanuel bulletin contains the sentence, "It is decided to change the name Presbytery back to Consistory. This is done due to confusion in dealing with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and also within our own Confederation." Whatever one may think of the reasons given, I am happy with it that the usual terminology is back. This is also in agreement with the form for the ordination of elders and deacons.

The Immanuel bulletin also makes mention of receipt of an anonymous pamphlet, sent into the Congregation. Anonymous submissions should be discarded without even being read. It is a cowardly way of doing things, and a despicable effort to influence people and bodies without being brave enough to stand for one's assertions.

Mind you, I do not know what was in that pamphlet; perhaps it was the same thing that the Consistory here ignored when it arrived during my holidays. However, even if something contains the purest truth, we are still to reject anonymous submissions. They do not serve the Truth.

Yet I have a question.

Does not the same judgment apply to an envelope which was addressed to the clerk of our Consistory but bore no address or name of sender and contained a photocopy of the page of Immanuel's bulletin from which I quoted above? I do not know who sent it, but can assure our readers that this piece of paper went the way of all unsolicited mail. What is good for the goose is good for the gander, we think over here.

We move on to Coaldale.

The Consistory there discussed suggestions to change the place of announcements from the pulpit. "We now have our announcements as a part of the worship service, because they are made during the worship service. There is a feeling that *ordinary* announcements do not, perhaps, belong there . . . The discussion does not produce adequate reason for change; hence, no change will be made."

I do not know what the Consistory means by "ordinary announcements," I do know that there are only a few things which *have* to be announced to the Congregation during the worship service; and I also know that there should be good reasons for it when a change is made. As these good reasons were not made clear, the Consistory chose the proper course: just keep going.

There was something in what Rev. Wielenga wrote that disturbs me. No, he did not make this statement himself. He described the reasoning of the latest Classis Alberta/Manitoba. I trust that our brother did not make a mistake in rendering Classis' statement, although I hoped that this was not precisely what Classis pronounced, for what I read is utterly wrong. I

do not know where the formulation comes from or how the proposal became accepted; I do know that as far as Church Polity is concerned it is un-Reformed and that the synodical decision referred to is distorted in the lines which I will now quote.

Classis "considered that the Consistory and the minister of Immanuel Church had made known that they would appeal the decision of Synod at a next Synod and that Art. 31 Church Order in that situation gives the right not to teach what Synod wanted to be taught in the Churches."

Would you please read this again before proceeding?

There is, as I said, in the first place the distortion of what Synod 1983 decided. You all have the Acts, so you can examine what I say, and see whether it is the correct representation of what Synod decided.

Synod did not "want" anything "to be taught in the Churches" except what we confess in our Confessions. Synod did not make any (new) pronouncement nor made any statement as to: This is what you must teach from now on. All Synod did was examine certain statements submitted to it for its scrutiny, and come to a conclusion as to whether these statements were in accordance with what we confess in the Belgic Confession and Catechism, or not.

Now one may agree or disagree with Synod's conclusion and "verdict," but what certainly is not permissible is to misrepresent Synod's action.

If one states — as allegedly that Classis did — that Synod "wants" something "to be taught in the Churches," I would challenge such person or assembly to make clear what, then, the things are that this Synod has laid upon the Churches or preachers of the Gospel.

To say that a certain statement is not in accordance with the Confession is not imposing something on the Churches, or telling the Churches what they are to believe and to teach.

The first conclusion is that this Classis stated something which amounts to a distortion of what Synod decided.

Our readers will bear in mind that I base this on Rev. Wielenga's rendering of this part of the Classical decision and that I trust that he did not misunderstand the reasoning of Classis.

Thus I come to the second point: this is, briefly: If you have made known that you are going to appeal a decision as meant here, Article 31 of the Church Order gives you the right not to teach what a Synod says you must teach.

This apparently is the newest in Church Polity. Whatever it is, Reformed it certainly is not; far from it!

In the first place: I would like to remind the brethren in Alberta/Manitoba of something they all have heard several times, something to which they even have affixed their signature. I mean the subscription form. No, I don't want to throw big words around and be it far from me even to suggest that action is needed against certain brethren, i.e. all the members of that latest Classis. I also realize that in tense situations one simply is so pre-occupied with the matter at hand that certain aspects are completely overlooked. For this reason it is good that I remind the brethren — and us all — of a certain promise we have made when affixing our signatures to the subscription form. I mean the following promise:

" . . . being always ready cheerfully to submit to their judgment . . . reserving for ourselves, however, the right of appeal, in case we should believe ourselves aggrieved by the sentence of the Consistory, Classis, or Synod."

The Form of Subscription for those who teach at our College contains even an additional promise which should be included in each and every subscription form. "And until a decision is made upon such an appeal to Synod, I will acquiesce in the determination and judgment already passed."

What do we promise? Submission to the judgment, although we reserve the right to appeal the judgment.

Nowhere do I read anything of being free not to submit to the judgment as long as I have given notice of appeal. I read the opposite: we promise to submit but meanwhile refuse to be restricted in our freedom to appeal. Submitting an appeal does *not* give the freedom not to submit to the judgment passed.

I do not read anything in the Classical consideration which points into the direction of the Synodical decision being in conflict with the Word of God, the Confession or the Church Order. Only in that case it would be mandatory to say, "Sorry, this is what you demand of me, but the Lord forbids it; I am not allowed to do it."

Only in that case it would be our duty to say, "You forbid me to do this, but the Lord says in His Word that I must do it, see this or that text."

Synod did not do either of the above. If it demanded that something be taught it was only that which we confess. Of certain statements it said, "When it comes to the point, this undoes what we confess. 'At bottom' they nullify our confession in a certain respect."

A superficial allusion to the issues in the days of the Liberation and of the procedures followed at that time may impress the gullible, close scrutiny does not leave any of it.

We proceed with news from the Churches.

At the Smithers Consistory there was a "suggestion for a table for the Lord's Supper in the morning as well as in the afternoon; it is decided not to change this, in order to have one table for the whole congregation, and a full sermon in the afternoon."

If I understand this well, Smithers celebrates the Lord's Supper on specific Sundays only in the morning and it stays that way.

Abbotsford is still looking for ways and means to implement the decision to start with separate services in the State of Washington on the first Sunday in September.

"A report was brought by the Committee for preparation services in the U.S.A. Although the Committee has been looking at several places in the Sumas area, so far they have been unable to obtain a suitable place. Preaching arrangements were looked into as to pulpit supply and time. The Committee will continue its investigations."

As for general "Valley News," the Board of the Resthome Society states that construction is right on target and that it is expected that the completion date of September 1984 will be very realistic.

Having started off with personal news, we close with the same type of information.

The Rev. Pouwelse was immobilized by back-trouble for some time, and had to undergo surgery. The Lord blessed this surgery to such an extent that he could return home, there to recuperate further. Initially not much progress was made, but when physiotherapy came into the picture matters improved. When we visited our brother and sister this summer they were in good spirits and thankful for the preserving hand of our Father.

No official news has reached us, but I heard that there were plans of preaching at least once a Sunday.

In closing, be it made known that all four of the brothers who completed their studies at our College this summer have received a call, two of which have been accepted. It seems that Ontario will reap the greatest benefits this time with three of the vacancies filled. But then: that's where the bulk of the vacancies were.

By the way, could we try to bring together the amount needed to let our College remain without debts or mortgages? By rumour I heard that this can be achieved if \$100,000.00 is collected. This amounts to approximately \$20 per communicant member. Insurmountable???

VO



Hello Busy Beavers,

Busy Beaver *Michelle Dehaas* writes:
"Here's a poem I made up:

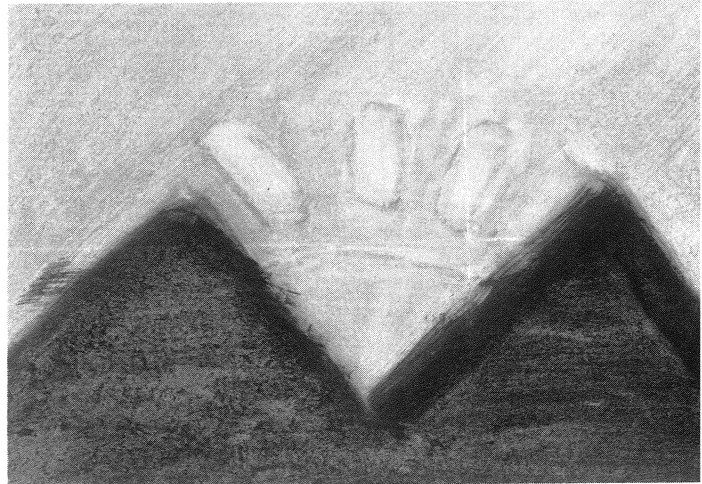
SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Summer Holidays are fun,
They make you want to jump and run.
School is done,
Let's play in the sun,
Let's have some fun!

Let's go camp
In a place not too damp,
Let's go swim
When the sun's not too dim.

Then we could fly a kite,
And then the next night
We could sleep in a tent,
(Make sure it doesn't have a dent!)

In summer holidays
There are lots of ways
To have lots of fun
Since school is done!"



Busy Beaver *Terri-Lyn Schulenberg* painted this picture for us. Did any of you see sights like this on your holidays?



BOOK REVIEW

The Covenant in Creation by Mrs. J. Tillema

This unpretentious booklet deals with a very important part of the Bible, the first three chapters of the book of Genesis. It is particularly this portion of God's Word that has been under attack, not only in the past, but especially in our days. Modernist and neo-modernist have concentrated their assault on these chapters so strongly, that many have fallen for their errors.

Genesis one, two and three are according to their opinion is nothing else than a myth, a human presentation of how things could have been. "Sure," they say, "you can learn from it, but it is no divine revelation." The Biblical viewpoint is ridiculed and declared obsolete, since science has "proven" that it cannot be true. Mighty man in his arrogance has the last word, not God, Almighty Creator of heaven and earth.

Even Reformed exegetes have lost their footing in this storm, succumbing under the devastating attacks and have joined the ranks of the so-called modern theologians. Knowingly or unknowingly these men have contributed to an immense victory of Satan, who first destroyed God's beautiful creation and now robs His glory of being the Creator of all things visible and invisible. They have destroyed one of the foundation stones of the divine revelation concerning our salvation, with disastrous consequences. For if God is not the Creator, and Adam and Eve are not historical persons, where is then the fall into sin? Then man is free from the guilt of the original sin in Paradise and has shaken off the shackles of being born in sin and misery, deprived of everything he possessed before the fall. Then man is basically good and can redeem himself. Consequently Christ's redeeming work has lost its significance and is therefore denied. How gratifying it is then to read this book where we hear the plain language of the Bible in

all its richness and beauty. God's faithfulness to His covenant which He made with man and with creation is displayed here in all its glory and simplicity. Hardly anything is added to what the Bible tells us, only it is set, and rightly so, in New Testament light.

The material in this book is intended in the first place for children who are able to read with discretion and understanding. Students of the intermediate grades and up will be able to make excellent use of it. That is not to say that it cannot be used with younger children, but then some help and explanation is certainly needed.

The book is illustrated with pictures in black and white, centering around main thoughts in the stories. Especially for young children this feature will make the material more attractive and understandable. Under every lesson is a number of questions to test oneself whether the main contents of the lesson have been understood. Each lesson starts again with a short summary of the previous lesson, honouring the good rule that repetition is the secret of all studies.

In these twenty-five lessons we find a treasury of Scriptural knowledge. Therefore, we hope that this booklet may come into the hands of many, specifically, young people, because it is so necessary that our children simply learn again to accept what God says in His Word. That Word is reliable and true in all respects. That same Word instructs us: "Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not turn from it." That is a promise!

The book *The Covenant in Creation* is published by Premier Publishing, 1249 Plessis Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2C 3L9. It is also sold by Gospel Text Publishers, 56 Grand Avenue E., Chatham, ON N7L 1V7 and Family Christian Bookstore, 750 Guelph Line, Burlington, ON L7R 3N5.

M. VANDERVELDE

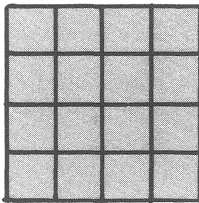
TRAVELING GAMES

One Busy Beaver suggested this ABC traveling game: Look for an "A" on any kind of sign. When you've found the "A" look for a "B." Then "C" "D" "E" "F." Sounds easy, right? What happens when you get to "X" "Y" and "Z"?

Busy Beaver *Marjorie Barendregt* sends this game:

You need: ruler, markers (pen will do), cardboard. Then:

1. Cut the cardboard to the size you want to use.
2. Using your ruler and markers, divide the cardboard into even "squares" big enough to write the names of cars in. Like this:



HOW TO PLAY IT

When you're driving along and you see a car pass, quickly look at the name of the car and write it down in a "square." You may not mark two cars in the same square.

Have fun trying it out!

From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Henrietta Dewitt*. We are happy to have you join us. Where do you swim, Henrietta? Have you joined in our Big Summer Contest?

Welcome to the Club *Matthew Onderwater*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already sending us all those riddles! How was your holiday in Smithers, Matthew?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Jacoba Harlaar*. Be sure you join in all our Busy Beaver activities, Jacoba! What are you doing to keep busy during the holidays, Jacoba?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Hannah Harlaar*. Have you joined in our big contest already, Hannah? Did you see it last time?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Amy Hofsink*. We are happy to have you join us. How did you like your holiday at the lake, Amy? And how did your swimming lessons go? Thank you for the picture, too!

Hello, *Joanne Visscher*. I see you are keeping very busy! Good for you. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will enjoy your puzzle. I think your Dad liked your Father's Day present, am I right?

Sounds to me as if you had a very nice graduation evening, *Alice Van Woudenberg*. How are your kittens doing? Thanks for the puzzle, Alice. Keep up the good work!

You had lots of excitement celebrating your birthday, and camping, too, *Jeannie Barendregt*. Did the weather clear for your barbecue? Thanks for a nice chatty letter, Jeannie.

Did you have fun with your cousins from B.C., *Sylvia Van Bodegom*? Thanks for your traveling game. Be sure to enter our Big Summer Contest, Sylvia!

Hello, *Marjorie Barendregt*. It was nice to hear from you again. I see you are keeping busy. Keep it up!

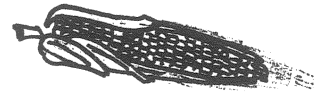
How was your camping holiday, *Cynthia Van Raalte*? Sounds like you had fun the last days of school! Thanks for the puzzle, Cynthia. Be sure to enter our Big Summer Contest.

Thank you for your nice poem, *Michelle Dehaas*. I see you are very busy looking after the chickens and pets. Think you'll get a chance to enter our contest, Michelle?

Congratulations on your new baby brother, *Corinne Schuilenberg*. Are you allowed to help look after him? Thanks for the puzzle, Corinne. Write again soon!

Quiz Time!

THE MOUSE



AND

THE CORN

Sent in by Busy Beaver *Jeannie Barendregt*

A farmer plucked nine ears of corn and threw them aside into a box. A field mouse found this little store and visited it daily; but, strangely enough, although the mouse brought three ears out of this box each day, it took nine days to remove all the corn.

Why?

Answer on page 364



WHAT KIND OF TREE?



by Busy Beaver *Joanne Visscher*

- | | | |
|-----------|-------|------|
| leamp | _____ | tree |
| mel | _____ | tree |
| eplap | _____ | tree |
| erpa | _____ | tree |
| kao | _____ | tree |
| eragon | _____ | tree |
| inpe | _____ | tree |
| veregeren | _____ | tree |
| rif | _____ | tree |
| yicorhk | _____ | tree |
| hcibr | _____ | tree |