

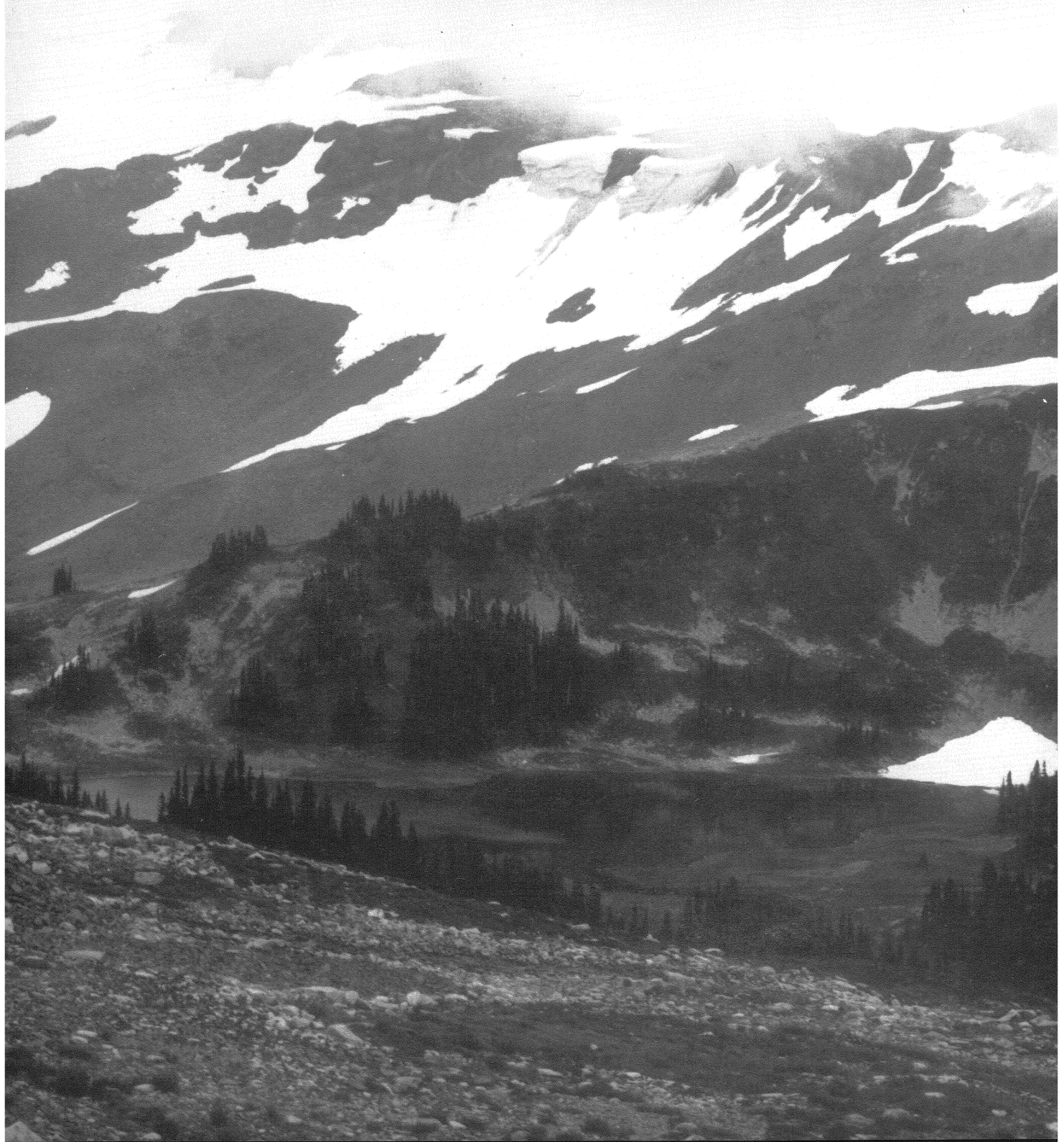


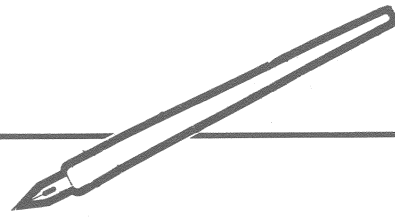
Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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International Young People Year

The United Nations proclaimed the present year International Youth Year. An association of Evangelical Churches in Germany followed this example by making 1985 its Young People Year. They plan to focus their attention on their young people during this year.

Now we can say a number of things. We can say that we should not follow the humanistic United Nations Organization. We can also say that a church should not focus its attention on its young people especially during a certain year, but should do so always. We can further say that we are aware of the great importance of caring for the youth of the church, and that we show that awareness, among others, in providing our Reformed schools for them. We can add that they have the privilege to grow up in Christian homes and receive Christian instruction in a Reformed church, both in the Sunday's preaching and in the catechetical teaching. Besides this they have their Young People's Society, where they study God's Word together. Our conclusion can be: with all this care we do not need to have our special attention focused this year or any year on our young people. They receive enough attention.

However, such a conclusion would not be wise. It would also not be right. We must always be willing to ask ourselves critical questions. Why are we doing what we do? Is the way we do things the right way? Is it in accordance with the Word of the LORD? Is it for the LORD? Is it wise? Therefore, it is only healthy that we, when reading what the United Nations did, followed by a group of churches, ask ourselves the question: is the care and love that we give to our young people sufficient? Are we, perhaps lacking somewhere?

There is a reason for such questions. Also many a family among us struggles with teenagers who are rebellious, who just go their own way and do their own thing; who regularly use excessive alcohol and are on drugs; who have their worldly parties and go to pubs and bars, and so on. Not only families, also congregations and consistories have their problems with some of the young people.

It is necessary to say "some young people." Not all live in such a rebellious way, while there is also conversion and a return to the LORD. Looking at the negative side, should not prevent us from being thankful for the many positive side. There are many of our young people whose desire is to serve the LORD.

Nevertheless, the fact that there are problems with young people, and not only them, should cause us to examine ourselves and ask ourselves critical questions. Do we as older generation, not only parents, but in general, show ourselves still dedicated to the LORD and to His service? Do we still live in a self-sacrificing faith in which we give ourselves to the Lord and also to one another?

We must take care of our young people. Therefore, we must live in a strong bond of faith with Christ. Rooted in Him as the source of our existence through the Holy Spirit, our life must be devoted to our God. This must mean two things: there must be the awareness that it is our calling to be holy for the LORD, and to love one another with a true holy Christian love.

This holiness for the LORD is not a thing of the Sunday, but of everyday life in all its aspects. Our young people must see in the manner of life of the older generation that love and holiness for the LORD is a matter of one's whole life, of work,

of free time, of everything. Holy we must be in our work, in our doing business, in our entertainment. Let our children see integrity, and not pious words and at the same time dishonesty and cheating.

Besides this there must be visible that very important characteristic of a Christian: loving care for the neighbour. In our Christian homes and in our Christian church our young people must not hear and see a negative condemning attitude. We say it so easily: this person is no good. That office-bearer is wrong. That teacher does not do a good job. Such a negative attitude does not build up. It breaks down. Certainly, our homes must show a true Scriptural hatred against all that is evil. But there must be a positive attitude toward our fellowman, especially in the church; the attitude of loving care in which we try to help one another, support one another, defend one another. I Corinthians 13 is a clear guide, although so very difficult to practice.

Of great importance in the care for the youth of the church is also that parents and children keep the communication lines open. Parents must not only be people that lay down the law. They must be good listeners first of all. They must have an open ear for the needs of their children. The same is true for the teacher and for the office-bearer in the church. A minister or elder must be willing to listen and try to understand, and then also to guide with the Word of the LORD. At the family visits the children and the young people must not get the feeling that they can sit in but cannot contribute.

I like to mention another point. Do we as parents, as older generation in general still have our Christian ideals? Or is our life more and more a matter of certain customs and patterns? Is it still our ideal to build up holy Christian lives for the Lord? Is it still our strong desire to which we are dedicated: to be and to remain a faithful Reformed church that lives by the Word of God knowing, and adhering to, the Reformed Confession? Is the Reformed school education still a strong principle? Or did it become a matter of peer pressure and custom, but not something that has the love of our heart, because we see it as our God-given calling? Do we have the strong desire to let others share in the rich heritage that we received from the Lord? Are we working on it to become and to be enthusiastic witnesses of Christ and of the Reformed faith as light that shines in the darkness?

Things that become a pattern and custom easily are turned into laws. And laws do not save. We are saved by faith, that is the living bond with Christ. And when patterns and customs are part of that life out of Christ as source, then there can be that Christian enthusiasm and dedication. And our young people in the church will take this over, under the blessing of the LORD, and themselves become enthusiastic and dedicated.

What is written here is meant to be a little contribution to the care for the young people in the church. Young people, give your life to the Lord. Place yourself in His holy service. Fight for the preservation of the church for which Christ gave His life and of which you have the privilege to be members. Keep yourselves holy for the Lord. Then you do your part to keep the church holy. Accept that charge with the enthusiasm of faith through the Holy Spirit.

J. GEERTSEMA

Prayer₁

1. Ora et labora

An old Latin proverb says "Ora et labora." That means pray and work. This saying teaches us an important lesson which we have to adhere to in all circumstances of life. It should not be just another wise proverb but a living reality in our life. To pray and to work must go together, the one cannot be without the other. This saying shows a danger in two directions. The Word of God teaches us that it is in vain to work without prayer. But we also confess that if we ignore our task and responsibility, if we do not work faithfully our prayer is an empty using of words. James 2:26 says: "... faith, apart from works is dead."

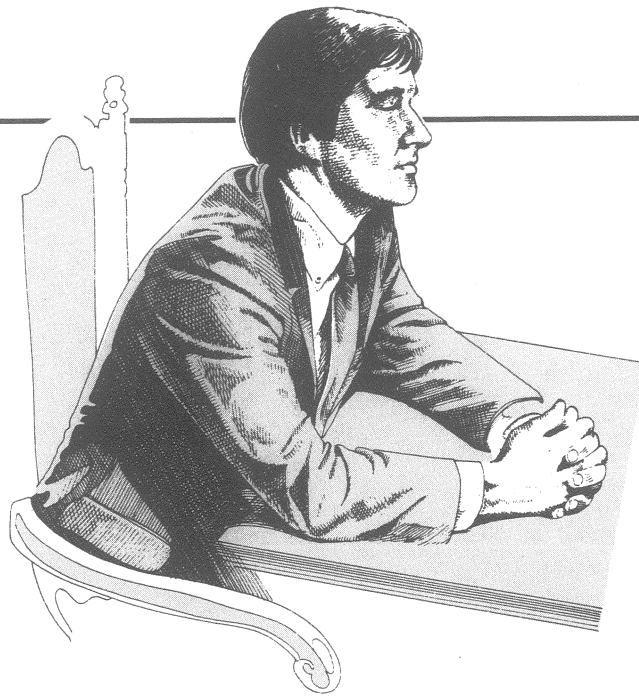
In this article we will deal with both aspects of prayer.

2. To work without prayer

It is in vain to work without prayer. That is what the Bible clearly says in Psalm 127. "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for He gives to His beloved sleep."

When the Lord does not give His blessing upon our work, all our effort is in vain. It might look like we have "success" in our life or in our business. The results might be very impressive but we know by experience that all of a sudden it can be gone. The recent depression has shown how vulnerable and feeble wealth and prosperity are. That counts for the results of our labour in the short term. It is even more so in the long run, especially when we think about the lasting or everlasting consequences. In Rev. 14:13 we read: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labour, for their deeds follow them!"

We all know this very well. At least we are supposed to know it. But do we live and act accordingly? I am afraid we do not. We are all working hard. We are all very busy with our job, with our study, with fixing our own house, our car and what have you. But do we really pray for all these things? Is it a living reality for us that without the blessing of the Lord our



labour is in vain? Do we have priorities straight?

We are involved and busy with evangelism or home mission. We speak about people in other churches and are concerned about the developments over there. We are frightened by the increasing lawlessness and by the spirit of revolution which becomes manifest everywhere. But do we also pray for those who are in danger of going astray and who have been caught in the entangling net of the evil one?

In our societies we are studying the Word of God (if we, at least, participate in these activities at all). We try to find the right attitude and approach in all kinds of practical matters. That is not always easy and sometimes we might have different opinions about them. But do we really pray that the Lord may guide us by His Holy Spirit and show us the way we have to go?

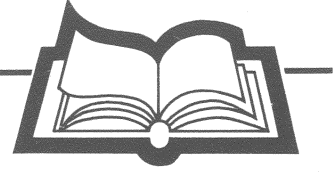
We are confronted with the problems in our society. Unemployment, recession, and in other parts of the world famine and starvation. There is not much we can do. We talk about it and we are scared by what we read, hear, and see in the news. But do we really pray to the Lord that He might give relief and do we expect the help from Him alone?

Sometimes we feel powerless, unable to do anything. That can be very frustrating. In such a situation we hear quite often the remark: the only thing we can do is to pray. That might be true and it sounds very pious, but sometimes it is almost a matter of desperation, a last resort: let us try, if it does not help, it does not hurt either; there is nothing else and nothing better we can do anyway. After we have tried everything, we finally take

refuge in prayer. If that is our attitude, we are very late with our prayer and apparently expect not too much of it either. We would rather try to do it in our own strength than to depend on the help of the Lord.

I am afraid that too often this is our attitude, although we are not always aware of it. However, in this way we underestimate the effect and the power of our prayers. The prayer of the children of the Lord can cause world-shocking effects. In James 5:16 we read: "The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects." Do we really expect such great things as the result of our prayer? Or do we only use our prayer as a last resort, after everything else has failed? In James 5:17, 18 we read: "Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit." That does not mean that we will always receive an answer in the same way Elijah did, but it certainly shows us that the LORD will use the prayer of believers and that He can and will do great things as an answer upon our prayers. However, He will do it according to His divine plan. We have to be patient. Sometimes, when we pray and the Lord does not answer our prayers immediately or in the way we want it, we become upset, just like children who do not get their way. When we pray we have to trust in the Lord that He, as a Father, hears our prayers and that He will give us all we need according to His wisdom. We have to do our task, work hard, fulfil our mandate, and live up to our own hu-

— Continued on page 101



“... since the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall never return that way again.’ ”

Deuteronomy 17:16b

Forbidden Return

Tucked away in the LORD’s statement allowing His people to choose for them a king as other nations did, we find an abiding injunction for the people, warning them never to return to the land of Egypt. Egypt symbolized everything associated with bondage and death, and the LORD had delivered them from this prison of destruction, “with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm,” Deut. 5:15. Any thought of return was tantamount to a rejection of the LORD’s great act of deliverance, and a wilful rebellion against His sovereign grace through which the people were placed in freedom, and directed to serve Him. The LORD drew them *forward*; thus, they were never to go *backwards* again.

However, it is remarkable how often the people of the LORD lost courage, threw up their hands in despair, and longed to return to the bondage of Egypt. The complaints begin immediately, Ex. 16:3, and carry on in the wilderness, Num. 11:5ff; 14:2ff. Repeatedly the people prefer the fleshpots of Egypt to the gentle guiding hand of the Father. And in Israel’s later history, Jerusalem’s kings take the same route. Threatened by outside forces, one king after another forms alliances with Egypt, trusting in the weapons and horses of Egypt rather than in the might and power of the LORD. And it all comes to a horrible end in the gruesome episode of the rebellious remnant that, despite the repeated pleas of the LORD, returns to Egypt, only to perish by sword, famine and pestilence, Jer. 42-44.

Israel’s history begins and ends in Egypt. Is it any wonder that Hosea’s words, “. . . out of Egypt I called my son,” cry out for fulfillment, Hos. 11:1? He took them out, but through their own wilful disobedience, He drove them back again — as a punishment for their sin and rebellion, Hos. 11:5. Ultimately, God gives His people what they ask for; Israel receives the fleshpots she cried out for as her final, due reward.

But the LORD cannot completely cut off His people. Hosea’s words find their fulfillment in Christ Jesus, who, as an obedient Son in God’s house nonetheless had to return to the bondage, and assume the place of a slave in order to seal and effect the LORD’s deliverance of all His people, Matt. 2:15. Where Israel fails, He triumphs. He obeys the divine command, and refuses to trust in human strength or to make alliances with the power of sin. He rests firmly in the LORD and, as a faithful Son in the royal house of David, executes the justice of the LORD through humility and sacrifice, offering Himself in the death of the cross. And in this death the real deliverance takes effect. In Him, the true remnant of Israel is spared from final judgment. In Him, the church is delivered from the house of bondage of Satan,

and brought into the freedom of His light. The blessings of this freedom are administered to us week after week and day after day.

Clearly then, God’s ancient warning applies more pointedly to the church today. “You are not your own; you were bought with a price,” says Paul, I Cor. 6:20. And he adds, “do not submit again to a yoke of slavery,” Gal. 5:1. That is the New Testament formulation of the ancient command, and it stands as an abiding warning for us all. The church is called to live and stand fast in the freedom of sonship, glorifying the Lord in reverence and fear.

However, human nature remains the same, also in the dispensation of the outpoured spirit. We, too, have been brought out of the house of bondage with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. But how often are we not caught wanting to go back that way again? All too often, longing eyes look back to what we were before we had any knowledge of God and His ways. God calls us forward; the old nature of sin always draws us back to the bondage from which we were taken. This remains the struggle of faith to the end.

Yet we may have continual hope and assurance in this struggle. Has not the Spirit of the Holy One been poured out into our hearts? And, as Paul says, “the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom,” II Cor. 3:17. Through the spirit we are drawn out of bondage more and more, and learn to stand in the freedom that Christ gives. This is the freedom of the *covenant*, where every believer gives his free, heartfelt “I do” to the call of the gospel, and acts accordingly. So we are all brought to the one “body,” and in the fellowship of the Spirit we may freely sing our thanksgiving song to Him.

Let the church continually guard this freedom. We are called *never* to return to the house of bondage again. The vistas of a greater, more blessed future open up to us with ever greater intensity. That means that the way back is closed with ever greater finality to us. In the civil army, deserters are courtmartialled and shot; in the army of the Son, a deserter may expect the spiritual judgment of death — especially considering the spiritual armour we have received, Eph. 6:10ff. Let then none in the fellowship of the church today be counted among the deserters, who in fear and rejection turn back to the bondage of the enemy. Take up arms and go forward, to the full revelation of the freedom and the glory of the Lord. “For we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith, and keep their souls,” Heb. 10:39.

J. DEJONG

man responsibility, but we must do it in the awareness that we have to work *and* to pray. Without the blessing of the Lord our effort is in vain.

2. To pray without working

In the previous section we saw that our work is in vain without prayer. Now we will pay attention to the other side of the matter. Our prayer becomes a matter of idle words if we do not fulfil our own task and act responsibly. That is what, among others, the Heidelberg Catechism teaches us from the Word of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples to pray. He taught them, and also us, to use the perfect prayer, as we can find it in the Bible. Not in order to use always and only the Lord's Prayer, but rather to give us an example how to pray and to show us what belongs to such a prayer the Lord is pleased with and will hear.

In our catechism, Lord's Days 34-44, we can find the explanation of this prayer. Lord's Day 48 speaks about the second petition: "Thy kingdom come." That is not a sort of pious wish like: we hope that Thy kingdom might come after all; we hope and pray and now we will wait and see what will happen. We should not pray without working for it. On the contrary. Read Answer 123. Thy kingdom come means: "so rule us by Thy Word and Spirit that we may *submit* ourselves more and more unto Thee." The second petition puts us to work. We pray but at the same time we have to work.

It is the same with the third petition "Thy will be done. . . ." That is not a wish: we hope and trust that Thy will might be done and Thy plan might be fulfilled. No, let us take to heart what it says in Answer 124: "grant that we and all men may *renounce* our own will, and without any gainsaying *obey* Thy will, which alone is good; that so everyone may *discharge* the duties of his office and calling as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven." Also this prayer puts us to work. We have to obey and to fulfil the will of God. It is the same with all six petitions. It is always: to pray and to work, "ora et labora."

Is that a living reality in our life? Do we think about it when we pray? Prayer can become just another custom, we can let ourselves get into a rut. According to tradition we open and close our meetings with prayer. However, is it more than a tradition? If so then we must work hard and exert ourselves to reach the goal. If we do not make any "fore-study," if we do not try to get involved in the discussion, to find an answer to the many questions and to understand the message, then our prayer for a blessing upon our study-meeting becomes a matter of idle words. Pray and work!

The same counts for all kinds of situations in everyday life. In the sixth petition we pray: "bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Answer 127 shows us the meaning of this petition: ". . . strengthen us by Thy Holy Spirit, that we . . . always offer strong resistance, till at last we obtain a complete victory." That is a clear instruction to offer strong resistance! We are allowed to pray: ". . . bring us not into temptation." We can trust in the Lord that He is always willing and able to help us in time of need. But we should not *seek* temptation or put ourselves in a position in which we know we are exposed to strong temptations. That would make our prayer not only idle words but would contradict our prayer and make it a farce. Also in this respect, to pray and to work have to go together.

4. What is prayer?

This question may seem to be superfluous. Everyone knows what prayer means? Still I am not so sure about that. Nowadays a discussion is going on about the meaning of prayer, if it has a meaning at all. The opinions in this respect appear to be miles apart. For a lot of people prayer is something that belongs to the imaginary world of children and some antiquated and conservative older people. Prayer presupposes someone to speak to and who is listening. That is a thing of the past. It might still belong to the imaginary world of underdeveloped people but it has no place in the mind of well-educated modern man. Prayer has been replaced by meditation. Because of

this, especially the Eastern religions seem to be very attractive to modern man. People like devotion, meditation, and religion, but they do not believe in a real God who dwells in heaven and is listening to us. Even modern theologians are reasoning along these lines. How is it possible that one divine Being should be able to listen to so many millions of people who are praying, all at the same time? How can one God listen to all of them and answer their prayer?

We do not feel obliged to fight this heresy with extensive refutations. We simply believe and go by what Holy Scripture teaches us in many places, for instance in James 5:16 "The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects" and in Matthew 7:11 ". . . your Father in heaven will give good things to those who ask Him!" We should never underestimate the effect and power of our prayers.

About such prayers we will make some remarks in what follows. What are the requirements and what should be the contents of such a prayer? What are we allowed to ask for, what are we even *required* to ask for and what are we not allowed to ask for?

Some might wonder whether it is right to deal in this way with prayer. Can we set standards and requirements? Is prayer not such an intimate matter that no one should interfere? Is it not a matter just between the Lord and the person who prays? Is prayer not something that has to come right from the bottom of our heart? Does a "discussion" of the requirements of prayer not make prayer



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less natural and spontaneous? Such questions do exist and are often heard, but they are caused by a completely wrong idea of what prayer is all about. To work and to pray are two things which belong together. Would it be possible to judge the work of someone and not his prayer? The Bible teaches us very clearly that there are requirements for our work as well as for our prayer. We can even put it this way: praying is also working. Prayer is part of our "good works." This statement needs some explanation!

The expression that our prayers are part of our good works seems to tend in the direction of the Roman Catholic doctrine. However, that is certainly not the case. It is rather a conclusion of what the Heidelberg Catechism teaches us. Let us have a closer look at what our confession says in this respect.

In Lord's Day 32 we confess that "... we are delivered from our misery by grace alone, through Christ, without any merit of ours." Therefore the question is asked. "... why must we yet do good works?" The answer is clear. "... that

with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful to God for His benefits, and that He may be praised by us." Good works are a matter of thankfulness. We do not do good works to deserve something. Christ has paid for our sins. He has made full satisfaction. We are saved by mere grace, without any merit of ours. But through His Holy Spirit Christ renews us after His own image, that we should show ourselves thankful to God for His benefits. Our good works are the result of His work in our life and the fruits of the work of the Holy Spirit in our heart. It is our thankfulness to the Lord.

What are the "good works" which we are supposed to do in this way? Answer 91 of the Heidelberg Catechism says: "Only those who are done from true faith, according to the law of God, and to His glory."

To do good works is a matter of thankfulness, and the chief part of it is prayer! That is what Answer 116 says. Prayer is not only a part of the good works, done in thankfulness to the Lord, but even the *chief part* of our

thankfulness. And the Lord *requires* from us such a prayer.

This shows us that prayer is not just an intimate relation between the Lord and the believer and not something that has to come spontaneously from the bottom of our heart, without applying any rules. No, it is a requirement, there are rules and regulations. Of course, it has to come spontaneously from the bottom of our heart, otherwise it is a matter of hypocrisy. But that is not enough. It also has to be subject to the Law of the Lord and the Biblical teaching. Because prayer is part of the good works the Lord requires of us, it has to meet strict standards. We do not deserve anything by it, but that does not make it less necessary.

In this way we are going to deal with prayer. We are going to listen to what the Word of God says about it and what we confess in the Heidelberg Catechism. Successively we will give our attention to different aspects of our prayer.

W. POUWELSE
—To be continued

Schools and taxes

In the *Clarion* of February 8, I had placed a short item suggesting that taxpayers claim the total amount they paid to private schools, rather than the net balance which results after the allocation to tuition according to bulletin 75-23 has been deducted.

In contrast with that suggestion the CPJ release placed in the February 22 *Clarion* states that "... each parent should claim the lesser amount." This is likely to result in some confusion. Furthermore, some people suggested that I had proposed a route that is either dangerous, unlawful, or unethical.

This seems to betray a basic misconception about the Canadian tax system, as if the department has administrative powers or even the ability at a later date to review all tax returns and allow higher donation amounts. The text of the CPJ release could give that impression.

What should be clearly understood is that the Canadian tax system is based on the "self-assessment" method. Let us assume that your receipt shows you paid \$2,000, and that \$1,200 was allocated to tuition. If you claim \$800, you will be assessed on the basis of your claim. A logical ground for objecting against such an assessment seems hardly to exist.

The CPJ mentioned the possibility of a group notice of objection. The present status of the tax law would not allow such a thing. Section 165 of the Income Tax Act clearly speaks of the right of "A taxpayer," either corporate or individual, to object against "an assessment." If group action were to be allowed, the objectors would at least have to be on a list, referring to their individual assessments. It would be more reasonable to expect that the minister will consent to grouping the individual notices of objection for joint action.

Therefore I maintain: claim the total amount you paid. To the receipt you could add a note that reads: "In view of the *McBurney* decision by the Ontario Federal Court trial division (Justice Muldoen) I claim the total amount paid to the school as indicated on the receipt." The department will most likely alter your claim and indicate so on your notice of assessment. It is also possible that your claim is accepted during the processing rush, but that at a later date you will be reassessed, disallowing the tuition portion. In either case you have "an assessment" against which you can object.

In most cases of disagreement a taxpayer should follow the courteous proce-

dure of first writing a letter, requesting that the disallowance be reversed. If in the meantime the Ontario appeal has been resolved in favour of the taxpayer, such a letter will likely suffice. However, if the appeal case has not been resolved, writing a letter will have no effect. In any case, if you received no satisfaction and if you want to protect your legal right, a notice of objection must be filed within 90 days from the date of the assessment (or the reassessment). Filing such an objection is not very complicated; when the time comes it might be possible to publish an illustration. Not filing a notice of objection, or filing it late will cause you to lose your legal right.

One more note: If you have forfeited your legal rights by failing to file your notice of objection, do not despair. If you have a legitimate claim for a reduction, the department, contrary to recent publicity, is usually quite willing to take your claims into account. Therefore, if you have claimed the lower amount and if the appeal case is won by the taxpayer, you should still write a letter asking that the tuition portion be allowed. It would certainly not be a waste of time.

JOHN DE VOS

Take one or two with you₂

Not by rumour

There is the sin of idolatry, and “you are told,” we read. When you are told, you hear about something, don’t you? And when you hear about something you are aware of it.

One big question here is: “How are they told?”

Are they told by hearing the rumour about it and when word goes around about such a sin? When they become aware of it in this way, is it then their obligation, that is: the obligation of the people to go and “enquire diligently?” Does Moses say here, “Whenever you have heard a rumour of such a sin being committed, you are to do your best to find out whether this rumour is correct and trustworthy so that you can find out who is the one who commits this horrible sin and, after having found out who did such a thing, take him and bring him or her to trial?”

Not at all.

From the very words of Moses it appears that the hand of the witnesses must be the first hand to take up a stone and make a beginning to the execution.

Rumours always start somewhere in the dark and it is our experience that it is practically impossible to find out who started the rumour. Nowhere does the Scripture teach us to go by rumours or to go and investigate whether a rumour is true or to try to find out who started it or where it started. Rumours should be left for what they are: just rumours. If someone is not brave enough or not sufficiently certain of his cause so that he comes frankly and openly with his accusation, no one should pay any attention to it.

How, then, does the matter come to the attention of the people, of the congregation?

We can see this from the fact that the hand of the witnesses must be the first hand to take up the stone and cast it. It is evident from this that these witnesses are the first ones and the proper persons to bring the matter to the attention of the congregation.

When, therefore, the elders of the city or town “hear” of a case, when they “are told,” this must come from the witnesses, the ones who were witness of

the transgression and who now bring it to the attention of the official judges, of the elders of the people.

What is the basis on which the conviction and the subsequent execution rests?

The basis is: this declaration by the witnesses.

For this reason it is also correct to state that the witness is the same one as the accuser: he was witness of the transgression, now he comes and brings in his accusation or charge against the brother or sister.

Not alone

However, he is not allowed to come alone, all by himself, being the only witness.

It could very well happen that someone, eager to get rid of his neighbour or of someone else whom he hates, comes with a false accusation and that this neighbour or other member of the people is put to death unjustly.

The LORD says that there should be at least two witnesses, that is, two persons who, from their own observation and personal knowledge, can testify that this person has committed this particular sin. It would even be better if there were three persons who, from their own observation and personal knowledge, brought this accusation, this testimony.

It is mandatory that the other witnesses can testify precisely the same

were plenty of witnesses: You *all* heard His blasphemy, the high priest exclaimed. We do not know how many persons were present there; but if there were twenty or fifty, there were twenty or fifty witnesses.

From the fact that the witnesses must come with identical testimony it is also clear that the second and third witness are *not* persons who were present when the first witness admonished the transgressor with the result that his admonitions were rejected.

No, the second and third witness are witnesses of the *transgression*, not of what the first witness said or did. They are persons who must substantiate the original accusation from their own personal knowledge.

In other words: they are not witnesses of the admonitions given, but they are witnesses of the transgression and their testimony is needed to support the accusation itself, *not* the claim that admonitions were not heeded.

It will be clear that this is of great importance for our understanding of the words of our Saviour which we quoted above. However, we’ll return to this later.

Certainty necessary

Both the witnesses and the judges must be absolutely certain that the sin has been committed.

That the witnesses must be absolutely sure appears from the fact that their hand must be against the sinner first of

“Discipline is never something which bypasses the congregation, but the whole people of God is involved, becomes involved at the proper time.”

thing that was heard out of the mouth of the first witness.

That’s why the Sanhedrin had so much trouble finding two witnesses who said exactly the same thing. And that’s why the high priest, in spite of his outward show of utter grief, was so happy when the Lord Jesus affirmed that He was the Son of God, the Messiah. Then there

all. When such a heavy responsibility rests upon the witnesses, upon the two or three who came with their testimony, they will think twice before coming with an accusation, the consequences of which they certainly must bear in mind.

From this, too, we can see that the witnesses were not people who came in to the picture later on in the process, but

that they were people who were well-informed right from the start, having the same knowledge about the matter as the first witness, the official "accuser."

Not only the witnesses must be absolutely certain of their accusation and its correctness, the same applies to the officials who have to pass the official sentence. Moses commands the people that the matter shall be investigated before sentence is passed and executed. "You shall enquire diligently."

Even when there are two or three people who come with the very same testimony, judgment shall not be passed on the ground of their accusation. The judges among Israel themselves shall first investigate the whole matter whether it is indeed true that such an abominable thing has been done in Israel, whether, indeed, the constitution of the people as the covenant people of God has been violated, whether indeed such a sin has been committed which is intolerable within the circle of the covenant.

We find here the expression "in Israel," an expression which we find more often in Scripture: "Such a thing is not done in Israel," which means: such a thing is in direct and open conflict with the character of Israel as the people of God, as the people of the covenant.

Whether, therefore, this covenant-character of the people has been violated shall not be determined solely on the testimony of two or three people who were witnesses of the sin, but shall be determined by the people, for the whole congregation is involved. The hand of ALL shall be against him.

The LORD gives us here an important principle which has to be taken into account with all disciplinary cases: discipline is never something which bypasses the congregation, but the whole people of God is involved, becomes involved at the proper time.

However, it is and remains a fact that also the action of the whole congregation is based on the testimony of two or three witnesses, be it that their accusation must have been substantiated by a diligent investigation on the part of the people, that is: on the part of the judges appointed to this end.

It would lead us too far and take too much time to investigate other places in Scripture where witnesses are mentioned, but study of these other places will only confirm what we found in Deuteronomy 17.

Witness defined

There is a well-known dictionary which explains the various words and expressions which we find in the New Testament. When you mention "Kittel" to ministers or to students of theology they know right away what you are referring to.

Let us listen to a few lines from this dictionary, taken from the explanation of the word "witness."

A witness, we read, was probably one "who remembers, who has knowledge of something by recollection, and who can thus tell about it." The proper sphere, we read, of "witness" is the legal one, where it denotes one who can and does speak from personal experience about actions in which he took part and which happened to him, or about persons and relations known to him.

Also in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, the term "witness" belongs to the legal world and denotes the witness before the judgment, in the first instance the witness for the prosecution.

Thus far the above mentioned dictionary.

The question may be raised whether it is correct to speak of a "witness for the prosecution," since the first witness *is* the one who prosecutes, the one who comes with the accusation. Apart from this, however, we find that the above is in accordance with what we found in Deuteronomy 17.

Matthew 18

We now proceed to what we read in Matthew 18.

There we read that the Lord Jesus commands us that the one against whom a brother sinned is to go and admonish him between the two of them.

Our Saviour does not speak here of so-called secret sins, that is: sins which are known only to this other brother. The issue is not: a *sin* which is only between the two of them, but *admonitions* which are to take place between the two of them.

This is a point which we are to bear in mind for a good understanding of the witnesses mentioned in this chapter, of their task, their place, their authority.

Secret sins?

Oftentimes we differentiate between secret sins and public sins. By "secret

sins" we then for the most part understand such sins as are known to one other person only.

What is our practice in such cases?

Our common practice is as follows.

The brother who is aware of this secret sin goes and admonishes the sinner — if he does so, that is — and that, if no desired effect and fruit is achieved, he asks one or two brothers to go with him. The only task of these brothers is then to be witnesses to the fact that he admonishes the sinner and that this admonition does not have the desired effect or even that this brother denies ever having committed this sin.

The offended party then approaches the consistory with the information that brother A. committed this specific sin, that he refuses to heed the admonitions and, on the contrary, hardens himself in his sin. In support of this accusation he brings with him the witness or witnesses who can confirm that the brother refuses to repent. Now he gives the matter into the hands of the consistory to continue the admonitions and, if they, too, remain fruitless, proceed towards and with the excommunication.

I must admit that this was the way in which I was convinced things should be done, and I have acted accordingly, also at Consistory meetings and in the rare instances in which I was asked to accompany a brother as a witness.

By the way, it is never wise to ask an office-bearer to go along as a witness, because then he is prejudiced to a certain extent if the matter ever comes to the Consistory for further consideration and action.

According to the practice described above, a person asked to go along as a witness did or does not have to know about the sin at all: he will learn about it when the alleged sinner is admonished. Nor does the person who is asked to go along have to say anything. He is simply a silent witness to the admonitions so that later on he may be able to tell the Consistory that the admonitions were given. It is even possible that the witness disagrees with the admonitions, but this is irrelevant: all he has to do is testify that admonitions were given and were rejected.

Also according to the practice described above, our Consistories accepted as a fact that "now the ball was in their court," when informed by one brother accompanied by one or two witnesses. "Now we as a Consistory have to continue; that is according to Matthew 18 and according to what we confess in Lord's Day 31." Is this not how it usually goes?

VO

—To be continued

OUR COVER

Panorama ridge
Garibaldi, BC
Photo courtesy
John van Laar

“Christian” in the Creed?²

This is a continuation of the article under the same title in “Clarion”, Number 3, Volume 34.

General Synod Cloverdale 1983 of the Canadian Reformed Churches added the word “Christian” in Section III of the Apostles’ Creed and adopted the reading “I believe a holy catholic Christian church.” The word is not found in the original and authentic Latin text or in the more than one-thousand-year-old English text. Although this addition is not un-Scriptural, it is no improvement in the light of Holy Scripture and in the light of the history of the ecumenical creeds of the catholic church. I promised to argue this broader and bring my remarks under the following points:

1. My first remark about the adjective “Christian” is that it has become a vague and colourless word. When one consults *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, one finds that it is used as an adjective and as a noun and that it means:

(Person) believing in, professing, or belonging to the religion of Christ (also as adjective of communities); of Christ or his religion; (person) showing character consistent with Christ’s teaching, of genuine piety, Christ-like, (also as adjective of conduct, feelings, communities, etc.); human (person) as opposed to *brute*, *brutal*; (slang) civilized, decent, (person).

This dictionary gives examples as Christian burial (with the ceremonies of the church); Christian name, given at baptism; Christian era; Christian Science.

It is clear that the adjective “Christian” can refer to a person who believes in Christ or to Christ Himself. When it refers to a person professing the Christian religion it has become a vague and colourless word so that it even may indicate nothing more than civilized or decent behaviour. At best the word refers to Christ Himself: when we speak, for example of the Christian era we mean the period of history reckoned from the birth of Christ.

So it is possible to describe the words “Christian church” as the church of *Christians* (Christian persons) but also as the church of *Christ*. If Synod Cloverdale meant by the new addition to the Apostles’ Creed to refer to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, it would have expressed the meaning clearer by using the expression “a holy catholic church of *Christ*.”

In the following discussion I will suppose that this is the significance of the otherwise vague and colourless adjective “Christian.”

Now that we deal with the present day usage of the adjective “Christian,” I add the observation that the word is not typically Reformed. Somewhere I read a defense of the new English text of the Apostles’ Creed as if we now would regain something valuable of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. I hope to come back to this mistaken idea, but mention now already that the word “Christian” — sometimes even over against “Reformed” — has become a common denominator. If one would study the list of names of denominations in America — from the Christian Reformed Church and the United Church of Christ to all sorts of obscure sects — one would become aware of the fact that the adjective is overused, lacks a specific meaning, and that its use is not typical of the Reformation.

When, e.g., the First Vatican Council defined the primacy and the infallible authority of the pope, it did so under the heading: “The First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ.” It is evident that the addition “of Christ” and certainly the use of the vague adjective “Christian” is not a Reformed mark. One finds the expression “Christian church” often in the official documents of the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore even apart from the question whether a Reformed mark — or Lutheran or Anglican or Roman Catholic — should be set on an ecumenical creed that dates from the early church (my answer is: by no means!), the Canadian Reformed new addition to the English text of the Apostles’ Creed is certainly not of a typically Reformed colour.

It may be that the classic words “holy catholic church” — *sanctam ecclesiam catholicam* — so resound in my heart and ears that I wince when I now hear the new rendition. The word “Christian” limps weakly behind the powerful adjectives “holy” and “catholic.” It simply does not fit there.

My conclusion is that, also in linguistic respect, the new text is not an improvement.

2. More important is that it is no confessional improvement in the light of Holy Scripture.

In Holy Scripture the church is first and foremost called the church of *God*. Scripture does not speak in a Christocentric but in a theocentric manner: not the Christ is in the center but God. Also with respect to the church we hear the revelation of the triune God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

This is already the case in the Old Testament. The Greek word used in the New Testament for “church” or “assembly” (*ekklesia*) is in the Septuagint the translation of the Hebrew word *qahal*, assembly, gathering, or congregation. The question is who assembles or who constitutes the assembly. Well, the Old Testament speaks time and again of the *qahal Jahweh*, the assembly of the LORD. The addition “of the LORD” makes it plain that the church is the assembled people or congregation of God. In Deut. 23:2 we read: “No bastard shall enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD.” Our readers may compare passages as I Chron. 28:8, Neh. 13:1, and Micah 2:5. All these texts speak of the congregation or assembly of the LORD. In other cases there is no addition, since the context makes it plain that the assembly or church is the community of God. “The assembly” or “the church” almost becomes a technical term and in any case the addition “of God” is either explicit or implicit.

When we now turn to the New Testament, we make use of the well-known *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1967, Vol. III). In describing the data from the book of Acts, K.L. Schmidt writes: “We never find ornamental epithets. The only attribute, if we may call it such, is the genitive ‘of God’ ” (my translation, J.F.). This genitive is of Old Testament origin. Even when it does not occur, we should understand it, since otherwise the full significance of *ekklesia* (church, J.F.) cannot be appreciated. The congregation or church of God always stands in contrast and even in opposition to other forms of society” (505). For this use of the word “church” in Acts, I refer especially to Chapter 20:28, where we read about the church of *God* which He obtained with the blood of His own Son. The addition of *God* tells us who assembles or who causes men to assemble. From Acts 20:28 it is plain that

God assembles His own. To the church belong those who are His.

The letters of the apostle Paul are also very instructive in this respect. Will we read together some verses and underline the addition to the word "church"?

I Cor. 1:2: To the church of God which is at Corinth. . . . I Cor. 10:32: Give no offence . . . to the church of God. I Cor. 11:22: Or do you despise the church of God? . . . I Cor. 15:9: I persecuted the church of God . . . Gal. 1:13: I persecuted the church of God violently . . . I Tim. 3:5: . . . How can he care for God's church? . . . 3:15: . . . the household of God, which is the church of the living God.

K.L. Schmidt remarks: "When Paul gives an attributive or predicative definition of *ekklesia*, he uses primarily the genitive "of God," which is added both to the singular and to the plural." For the latter usage, he gives the following examples:

I Cor. 11:16: We recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God. I Thess. 2:14: . . . the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea. II Thess. 1:4: We ourselves boast of you in the churches of God.

Therefore, we may speak of the church of God in singular but also of the congregations of God in plural. Just as the kingdom in the New Testament always means the kingdom of God, so the church always means the church of God, even where the last words are not specifically added. The One who is at work in and with the church is always God. Think of what Paul writes in I Cor. 12:28: "And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers. . . ."

When we scan the data from the epistles of Paul, we are impressed by the frequency that he uses the expression, "The church (or the churches) of God." For Paul it is the broadest description of the church and even when he writes about the church without any addition, he thinks of the church of God. This description of the church as the assembly or congregation of God is in the line of the Old Testament. It indicates the continuity of the church in the Old and New Dispensation. It is broader and more comprehensive than the image of the church as the body of Christ or as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Let me now already state that the early church had a clear insight in this Scriptural usage of the word "church" and therefore, in its creeds, did not speak of the *Christian* church but about the church without anymore that is, the church of God, the church of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We are not wise to add now the word "Christian," for we should not obscure the broad and comprehensive usage of the words "holy, catholic Church" as indicating the church

of God. Calvin had in this respect a finer understanding than Luther, as we hope to see in a following issue. Calvin thought in a *theocentric* and trinitarian manner, also with respect to the church.

Returning to the New Testament, we should see that the Lord Jesus Christ is certainly mentioned. In the list of the above quoted Scripture passages, we read the expression in I Thess. 2:14, "the churches of God in Christ Jesus." The Lord Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and men. God acts in Christ, and therefore the churches of God in Judea are called churches in Christ. This is the literal text in Gal. 1:22, and the NIV rightly translates: "I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ." The only text in Scripture where we hear directly the expression "church of Christ" is, as far as I can see, Romans 16:16. K.L. Schmidt justly remarks that here the genitive "of Christ" has the same sense as the formula "in Christ" and he adds: "Certainly we cannot render [it] by the colourless adjective 'Christian.'" (TDNT, III, 507). Paul is not speaking merely of a Christian Church or congregation beside which there may be others. He is referring to the assembly of God in Christ.

To be sure, it is not un-Scriptural to use the colourless expression "*Christian* church," in order to indicate the church which God gathers in Christ Jesus. Holy Scripture also calls the church the body of Christ of which He is Head and Saviour. Nevertheless, the most encompassing and primary usage in Scripture is to speak of the church of God. While "*Christian* church" often is used of the body of Christ in the New Testament dispensation — think of "*Christian* era" — the Scriptural expression "church of God" indicates the gathering or assembly of God's people throughout the ages in both the Old and New dispensation. While "*Christian* church" in its best application means to speak of the church of Christ, the classic words "the holy and catholic church" indicate the church of the LORD, the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. The addition "Christian" to the Apostles' Creed is not only no amendment in the light of Holy Scripture, it is also no improvement in the light of the history of the ecumenical creeds. As far as I know, the word is not found in any local baptismal creed of the early church. If one reads the Apostolic Fathers, one is amazed about the Scriptural indication of the church. The first letter of Clement to the Corinthians begins with the words: "The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth." Polycarp and the presbyters with him write "to the Church of God so-

journing at Philippi." And when he dies a martyr, the letter concerning his martyrdom begins with the words: "The Church of God which sojourns at Smyrna, to the Church of God sojourning in Philomelium, and to all the congregations of the holy and catholic church in every place." We see that the holy, catholic church is the church of God.

How interesting this may be for the background and development of the creeds of the early church, more important is the text of those creeds. As far as I know, we never find the adjective "Christian." We do find the usage of the words "the holy church" or "the holy catholic church," without anything more. I read this in the light of the Holy Scripture: when Paul writes about "the church," he means the church of God, as is evident from the passages mentioned above. When the early creeds speak about the church, they mean the church of God.

Philip Schaff, in his standard works *The Creeds of Christendom* (Vol. II, The Greek and Latin creeds, with translations), gives us the creed of Arius, A.D. 328. This confession was to pave the way for his restoration. Schaff says that Arius skilfully avoided his peculiar tenets in this private confession. We read in Section III: "We believe in the Holy Spirit; and in the resurrection of the flesh; and in the life of the world to come; and in a kingdom of heaven; and in one catholic church of God which extends to the ends of the earth" (29).

It should be clear by now that the Canadian Reformed Churches should not add any word to the authentic text of the Apostles' Creed or to the English translation, but certainly not the word "Christian."

J. FABER

The following article is a reprint of Dr. Faber's contribution on the text of the Apostles' Creed as it appeared in Vol. 22 No. 11, June 2, 1973.

References are made to the old Book of Praise and not in the 1984 edition of the Book of Praise.

IK GELOOF DE HEILIGE KATHOLIEKE KERK

Een vorig maal schreef ik over de tekst van art. 9 van de Apostolische Geloofsbelijdenis en verdedigde dat wij dienen terug te keren tot de tekst "I believe a holy catholic church" en dus het woord "Christian" weer moeten laten vallen.

'k Beloofde, indien het U niet verveelde, iets te vertellen over de oorsprong van de afwijkende tekst in

onze Nederlandse zusterkerken, die ongetwijfeld van invloed is geweest op de nieuwe Engelse tekst in ons *Book of Praise*.

Graag maak ik daartoe gebruik van een belangwekkende aantekening die ik vond in de uitgave *De belijdenisgeschriften volgens Artikel X van de Kerkorde van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, verzorgd door Dr. J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink ('s-Gravenhage 1957). Deze kerk-historicus schrijft:

"Artikel 9 van de Apostolische Geloofsbelijdenis worde gelezen: ik geloof de heilige, algemene Kerk" (blz. 241). Hij stelt dus een verandering voor, waarbij het woord "Christelijke" wordt weggelaten en wordt teruggekeerd tot de oorspronkelijke tekst. Tussen haakjes merk ik op dat het wel ietwat wonderlijk zou zijn, wanneer wij in de Engels sprekende wereld een tekstvorm zouden trachten in te voeren, die daar nimmer in gebruik is geweest, juist terwijl men bijv. in Nederland tracht naar de oorspronkelijke tekst van de Apostolische Geloofsbelijdenis terug te keren!

Over de tot voor kort ook in de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk gebruikte tekstvorm zegt de schrijver: "Deze vorm berust niet op de oorspronkelijke tekst, want daarin komt "Christelijke" niet voor, maar op de weergave van het Credo in Zondag 7 van de Heidelbergse Catechismus. Hoe eerwaardig deze vorm daardoor ook zij, erkend moet worden, dat hij van de grondtekst afwijkt. "Algemene" en "Christelijke" naast elkander vormen een dubbele vertaling van "catholicam" en dus een overvloedigheid. Bij Calvijn zal men deze beide woorden dan ook niet vinden . . . , evenmin als bij Ursinus, een van de vaders van de Heidelberger, in zijn Catechismus minor van 1562, in het Book of Common Prayer; wel een enkele maal bij Zwingli en Leo Jud.

De dubbele vertaling komt uit de Duits sprekende wereld...."

We maken weer even een paar tussenopmerkingen. Het is goed duidelijk te noteren dat ook Calvijn niet beide woorden naast elkaar gebruikt. 'k Heb nog even de bekende uitgave van Gereformeerde belijdenisgeschriften en kerkordeningen nageslagen, die onder reactie van W. Niesel in 1938 is gepubliceerd. Daar vindt U bijv. in de Franse tekst van de Catechismus van Geneve uit 1541/2: *le croy la sainte Eglise catholique*; dus: ik geloof de heilige katholieke kerk.

Het is goed dat we voor ogen houden dat we met de tekst van de vorige uitgave van het *Book of Praise* niet alleen in de Angelsaksische traditie stonden - o.a. van het *Book of Common Prayer* - maak ook in die van de Franstalige gereformeerde

reformatie, met name in die van Calvijn.

Dr. Bakhuizen van den Brink schetst de ontwikkeling als volgt:

"In de middeleeuwen, voor de Reformatie, gaf men het woord Kerk in dit geloofstartikel gaarne door Christenheid of gemeente weer, omdat men er - terecht - niet de georganiseerde, hiërarchische Kerk onder verstond maar, onder invloed van de onmiddellijk volgende artikelen en niet zonder eschatologisch accent, het volk dat door Christus geroepen is en Hem toebehoort.

Er is zelfs wel eens bepaald bezwaar gemaakt, met name door Zwingli, tegen het gebruik van het woord kerk omdat dit ook zou kunnen dienen ter aanduiding van een gewone, staatkundige gemeenschap - hetgeen in het Nederlands nooit voorgekomen is, een bezwaar dus, dat wij niet kunnen gevoelen."

We pauzeren weer even, nu om U er aan te herinneren dat ook onze Statenvertaling een bepaalde voorkeur had voor het woord "gemeente" en dat ook uit de Nieuwe Vertaling van het Bijbelgenootschap nog blijkt, welk een invloed deze voorkeur tot op onze tijd uitoefent. In Uw "Trommius"- *Nederlandsche Concordantie des Bijbels* - zult U het woord "kerk" niet tegenkomen!

We luisteren verder naar Dr. Bakhuizen van den Brink:

"Luther was van oordeel, dat mogelijk misverstand ten aanzien van de ware aard der Kerk kon worden voorkomen door het bijvoeglijk naamwoord 'catholicam', dat trouwens verschillende nuancerings in betekenis gekend heeft, door 'Christelijke' weer te geven. Luther kon zich daarvoor inderdaad op middeleeuws gebruik beroepen. Zo vindt men dan in zijn Kleine en zijn Grote Catechismus en ook in de Augsburgse Geloofsbelijdenis van 1530, art. 7: ik geloof een heilige, Christelijke Kerk. Christelijk betekent dan: van Christus."

Hier hebben we dus de oorsprong van het woord "Christelijke" in de tekst die in onze Nederlandse gereformeerde zusterkerken gebruikt wordt.

Ook J.N.D. Kelly schrijft in *Early Christian Creeds* dat "the reformers themselves adopted (the received text) as their norm - except that Luther read *Christian for Catholic*" (blz. 369).

De lezer heeft goed begrepen, dat bij Luther het woord "Christelijke" in de plaats kwam van "katholieke" of "algemene."

Dat de Duitse hervormer zich op middeleeuws gebruik kon beroepen, blijkt o.a. uit het feit dat men ook in de wellicht oudste, Middelnederlandse tekst van het Credo, uit de 13e eeuw, leest: die heilige karstine Kerke.

Nu, via Luther is deze vorm terecht gekomen bij leidende figuren van onze

Nederlandse Reformatie. Zo spreekt Johannes a Lasco in zijn Catechismus van London, 1551 over "een heilige, Christelijke gemeente" en in de Kinderlere en de Catechismus van Emden over "een heilige, Christelijke Kerk." Marten Micron gewaagt in zijn Kleine Catechismus van "de heilige, Christelijke gemeente."

Wanneer men over deze ontwikkeling nadenkt, kan men het een beetje betreuren dat Luther en in zijn gevolg Johannes a Lasco en Marten Micron het oude woord "katholiek" prijsgaven. Zelf heb ik er altijd een soort geestelijke vreugde in geschept aan catechisanten duidelijk te maken dat de gereformeerde belijdenis echt katholiek is en misschien herinnert U zich nog wel dat ons Theological College geopend is o.a. met een rede over het katholieke karakter van onze Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis. In dit opzicht kan 'k me geheel vinden in de lijn van Calvijn, die het woord "katholiek" niet prijs gaf, maar de juiste Schriftmatige betekenis er van trachtte aan te wijzen.

Het is dan ook niet verwonderlijk dat Bakhuizen van den Brink meedeelt, dat hoewel de nieuwe vorm in de Reformatie enige tientallen jaren het getij mee gehad heeft, men er toch niet tevreden mee is gebleken. Waarschijnlijk was men zich toen niet meer klaar bewust van het feit, dat "Christelijke" reeds een weergave van "catholicam" was. Men heeft toen dit laatste woord nogmaals, en nu meer precies, vertaald door "algemene." Zo kan men onderstellen, dat de dubbele bewoording "algemene, Christelijke" ontstaan is.

De auteur eindigt zijn beschouwing aldus: "Een dergelijk historisch proces levert geen voldoende grond om deze Lutherse en Heidelbergse traditie ook voor het Credo op zich zelf, buiten de Catechismus, te handhaven. Hier zal de Kerk zich aan de oorspronkelijke tekst dienen te houden zonder die te wijzigen of aan te vullen. De Kerk, in het geloofsartikel bedoeld, is niet een van onze georganiseerde, maar verdeelde Kerken op aarde, dat weten wij allen, ook niet de som daarvan. Zij is het Lichaam van Christus. Daarvoor moet in de Apostolische Geloofsbelijdenis het woord Kerk met de beide vaststaande praedicaten: heilige, algemene, ons voldoende zijn."

De lezer zal verstaan dat ik een groot vraagteken zet bij de tirade over de Kerk, in het geloofsartikel bedoeld. Ze dunkt me niet gereformeerd. Ook al weten we dat er meer Kerk in de wereld is dan de gemeente van Christus die ik door het geloof mag kennen in de plaats van mijn inwoning, dat sluit niet uit dat ik ook, en zelfs niet allerlaatst, aan haar denk wanneer ik belijd: Ik geloof de heilige, algemene kerk. Paulus tekent de ge-

meente Gods te Corinthe als een lichaam van Christus (1Cor. 12).

Ook valt er nog wel iets op te merken over de voorgestelde handhaving van de Lutherse traditie in de Heidelbergse Catechismus.

Maar dat gereformeerde kerken, zeker in een Engelstalig land, goed doen zich aan de oorspronkelijke tekst te houden en dat de beide vaststaande bijvoeglijke naamwoorden "holy, catholic" ons voldoende dienen te zijn, is mijn hartelijke overtuiging.

Nogmaals: wat mij betreft schrap U het woord "Christian" in de tekst van het Apostolicum op blz. 395, 403, 468, 480, 490 en 512 van ons *Book of Praise*. Maar voordat U zulks doet, moet ik toch nog wel even ingaan op de zaak van de Heidelbergse Catechismus en de Dordtse Leerregels. Op blz. 403 en 442 kunnen we m.i. niet met een simpele schrapping volstaan maar moeten we er iets anders voor in de plaats zetten.

Allereerst merk ik op dat Dr. Bakhuizen van den Brink zelf in zijn tekst van de Catechismus de Lutherse en Heidelbergse traditie niet handhaaft. In Zondag 7 geeft hij als tekst "Ik geloof de heilige, algemene Kerk" en in Zondag 21 luidt de vraag "Wat gelooft gij van de heilige, algemene Kerk?" Hij is dus consequent, evenals de derde editie van ons *Book of Praise* las, "What do you believe concerning the *holy catholic Church*?"

Naar de andere kant is ook de nieuwe uitgave van het *Book of Praise* consequent. We lezen nu op blz. 403, "What do you believe concerning the *holy catholic Christian Church*?"

Wanneer we de oorspronkelijke teksten van de Heidelbergse Catechismus

nagaan, zien we het volgende: De Duitse tekst heeft beide malen "heilige algemene Christelijke." De Latijnse tekst daarentegen heeft in Zondag 7 "Credo sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam" (dus zonder het woord "Christelijke"), maar leest in Zondag 21 "Quid credis de sancto et catholica Christi ecclesia?" Daar spreekt men dus over de heilige en katholieke kerk van Christus. Het dunkt me dat wij deze Latijnse tekst, die evenals de Duitse uit 1563 dateert, moeten volgen.

Het kan immers niet ontkend worden dat de nieuwe vorm van het Apostolicum invloed heeft gehad op de uitlegging. Dat in het antwoord op de vraag "de Zone Gods" onderwerp is, is niet toevallig. Om het even dogmatisch uit te drukken: dat de leer over de kerk niet pneumatologisch doch christologisch wordt opgezet (dus: dat deze leer niet vanuit het werk van de Heilige Geest wordt opgezet, maar vanuit het werk van Christus), hoewel het artikel over de kerk in het derde deel van de Apostolische Geloofsbelijdenis voorkomt, hangt allicht o.a. samen met het feit dat het woord "Christelijke" in de Duitse tekst van de vraag stond.

Daarom voldoet het mij niet geheel dat Dr. Bakhuizen van den Brink en vorige uitgaven van het *Book of Praise* het woord "Christelijke" in vraag 54 simpel schrappen. Zouden we niet het beste doen deze vraag aldus te formuleren: What do you believe concerning the *holy catholic Church of Christ*? Zo houden we vast aan de oorspronkelijke tekst van de Apostolische Geloofsbelijdenis en tegelijkertijd verliezen we niet de band tussen de vraag en het antwoord 54.

Een soortgelijk geval hebben we in

Dordtse Leerregels, hoofdstuk II, Verwering der Dwalingen, par. 1. Onze Nederlandse tekst heeft daar: "Eindelijk, zij stoot om het artikel des geloofs, waarmede wij geloven: *de algemene Christelijke Kerk*." De Latijnse tekst spreekt simpel over het artikel des geloofs, "waarmede wij de Kerk geloven." Daar is dus zowel "Christelijk" als "algemeen" weggelaten! We zouden in de Engelse tekst kunnen spreken over "the catholic Church of Christ."

Op deze wijze brengen we de aanhalingen van de Apostolische Geloofsbelijdenis in onze Drie Formulieren van Enigheid in overeenstemming met de oorspronkelijke en in de Angelsaksische landen nog steeds gevolgde tekst en we verliezen tegelijk niets van het eigene van de Gereformeerde Belijdenisgeschriften uit de zestiende en de zeventiende eeuw.

SUMMARY

In two articles I dealt with the text of the Apostles' Creed in our *Book of Praise*, especially with the words: I believe a holy catholic *Christian Church*.

With a view to the original text and the tradition in English-speaking countries I proposed a return to the text in the previous editions: I believe a holy catholic Church. So we cross out the word "Christian" on pages 395, 468, 480, 490, and 512.

With a view to the own history and character of the Three Forms of Unity I proposed to change the words on pages 403 and 442 into this reading: the *holy catholic Church of Christ* (403), and: *the catholic Church of Christ* (442).

J FABER

— To be continued

NEWS MEDLEY

The other time we concluded our medley with a dessert of Latin.

Let us start with a Latin appetizer this time.

The previous news medley had been completed when I received some more bulletins, and in one of them I discovered that all I had learned about the Latin language was wrong. Language is a living thing after all, isn't it? Who speaks of "dead languages?"

Anyway, in one bulletin the writer spoke of the years 1984 and 1985. It was pointed out that as children of the Lord we do not have to worry. That was good. But then it followed: "Are not both years and all times *Years of the Lord* (Anno Domino)."

There is the slight possibility, of course, that the typist made these mistakes, for the i and o are next to each other on the typewriter, but it would be strange if the same mistake were made in both words. Is not the plural of *annus* (year) *anni* (years)? And is the genitive of *Dominus* (Lord) not *Domini* (of the Lord)? It is nice when bulletin writers wish to display

their knowledge of the Latin language, but let them do it correctly and not, soon after their graduation from the College, treat the congregation to such beauties. It gives the College a bad name, and who would want that?

And now the meal.

The Toronto Church received word that the Gleason family received permission to immigrate and by the time these lines are written they have arrived, we hope, unless the weather conditions prevented them from reaching Toronto. Rev. Gleason will have a colloquium at the Classis of February 21, and the installation is scheduled for February 24. Welcome!

Some other good news from Toronto — which I gathered from the bulletin of Burlington West — is "that also the Versteeg family most probably will arrive in Toronto in the beginning of March to start their well-deserved furlough. Our prayers have been heard and they received the necessary documents to reenter Indonesia."

Once again we see that the Lord takes care of His work and that He will not permit the evil spirits so to influence the



hearts of those in authority that Satan achieves his goal.

Although the Versteegs will be anxious to see some snow again after the years in the tropics, they will be happy that the worst is over when they arrive here and that they did not have to wade through the piles which fell on Southern Ontario during the past couple of days.

Regarding Fergus I may report that not only they will have another minister a few months after the present one has retired, but also that the visible signs are there of increased activity regarding the organ. The great organ has been removed, so that we now are singing accompanied by the swell and pedal organs only. This would not be too bad if these two were in perfect shape, but such is not the case. Of the swell organ quite a few stops cannot be used and the same applies to the pedal organ. As long as we don't sing unknown tunes, we'll manage. Besides, the present misery is only temporary: it is the promise of better times ahead.

A last piece of information from Ontario: "In response to a question raised at a home visit, it is decided that at the conclusion of the service the minister and the elder on duty will proceed to the foyer of the church where it will be easier for the minister to greet members and visitors." This is a quotation from the Ottawa bulletin.

Yes, and herewith we have to leave Ontario to proceed to Manitoba's regions.

We mentioned before that the Carman Consistory has been discussing the question whether marriages should be solemnized during an official worship service. This was namely the custom in Carman till some time ago. The Consistory went about it with great care as we learn from the various bulletins, and now decided — after having received advice from Classis — that "members who deem the wedding ceremonies un-Scriptural will be given the opportunity to have their marriages solemnized in a worship service." The Consistory is not compelling anyone: the brethren themselves are of the opinion that marriages are private matters and not ecclesiastical affairs, and should be conducted accordingly; but they do express their willingness to call the Congregation together for a special worship service upon the request of members who are getting married. This is a very cautious approach.

Members, however, should think not just twice but four or five times before asking the Consistory to call the Congregation together because they want to get married in an official worship service! This requires quite some nerve, I should say. And they will have an extremely hard time to prove from the Word of God that this is the only proper way of getting married.

One can speak very easily of "conscientious objections," but the conscience itself is no standard to go by. Does not conscience mean that we know something together with something or someone else? In the case of Christians it means: God's Word says this, now we look at what is asked of us or at the course which people demand of us we shall follow: Knowing the situation and what the Lord requires, we have conscientious objections: comparing the Lord's will and the demands of people brings us to that conclusion.

Too often a person's "conscience" is accepted as a standard, a norm in its own right, something which may not be touched or doubted. Too often it is thought that when one says, "My conscience forbids me to do this," others have to yield to this. This would amount to a dictatorship of one over the whole community. That is the other side of the coin.

Besides, if the Lord really requires that marriages shall be solemnized in a worship service, all those who have their marriage solemnized in a private ceremony — even though this private ceremony is conducted in a church auditorium! — are disobedient to the Lord. This would come pretty close to considering marriage a sacrament. Yet this would be the only conclusion possible if in this case we could really speak of

40th Wedding Anniversary



On March 19, 1985, the Lord willing, Mr. and Mrs. Simon Tuininga (nee Wierenga) hope to celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary. Mr. Tuininga was born July 11, 1919, in Neerlandia, Alberta, in a log shack. Mrs. Tuininga was also born in 1919, but in The Netherlands, and emigrated with her family to Neerlandia in 1928. Mr. Tuininga served in both the Canadian Air Forced and Army before they were married in 1945. They are still living on the farm that Mr. Tuininga bought from his dad. Mr. Tuininga is not as active on the farm as he once was, due to an illness with which he has struggled for the last fourteen years. Mrs. Tuininga is in excellent health and enjoys gardening. Both are very involved in church life. They were blessed with five children and presently have twenty-eight grandchildren.

"conscientious objections." What applies to the one applies to the other as well.

We have spent enough time in Manitoba now, and go on to Alberta.

In Neerlandia "building plans for a new church building are discussed. The building committee will be given a list of items which will be formulated for investigation and cost factors."

Neerlandia has come a long way from the little "chicken coop" or old schoolhouse which was remodelled so that it resembled a little country church building. I must confess that I have never seen the present building except on a photo, but who knows, we might possibly some time in the future.

The Immanuel Consistory of Edmonton discussed the matter of the manse. "A report on relocation of the manse to the church property was presented. This report was received for information. It was decided, in principle, to build a manse on the church property."

The only thing I was wondering about here is how you can receive a report "for information" and yet in connection with it decide to do something.

Something which may be well worth bearing in mind in every place is the following from the Providence Edmonton bulletin.

"There have been reports recently of theft of wallets in the church basement. It is almost sure that during our worship services outsiders have entered the building and ransacked the coats for money. Some time ago our baby-sitters discovered strangers who were in the kitchen for unclear reasons."

The Providence Consistory also decided "to overture the forthcoming Regional Synod that future Regional Synods — do you note the correct formulation? Not "that Regional Synod also in the future . . ." but "future Regional Synods"! — to

be held in a location which is most central for the delegates to minimize travelling costs."

It will always remain a point of discussion, I presume, whether a central location should be chosen and whether it does make all that much difference in cost. I realize that the distances in the West are larger than in Ontario, at least for Regional Synods, but I do not think that it makes all that much difference in Ontario whether a Regional Synod is held in Burlington or in London. We definitely have to be careful with the money belonging to the churches of the Lord, and we have to seek for the best ways and the most profitable arrangements, but then figures have to be presented and concrete facts have to be considered. If it does not make all that much difference, rotation-to-a-certain-extent is to be preferred, also for the reason that thereby any impression as if we have headquarters or ecclesiastical centers is avoided.

This much is clear, that if all delegates have to travel to the extreme east or the extreme western point of a region, unnecessary time and money are involved; then things could be done much more efficiently.

"It has been decided by joint agreement of the Immanuel and Providence Church Councils to rescind the April 1981 decision regarding the church boundary. The old boundary will be used only as a guideline."

If I understand this decision well, it means that there is no longer a fixed boundary between the two Edmonton Churches. I can only applaud such a decision, for it is quite arbitrary to decide, "If you live on the east side of such and such a street, you have to go there; if you live on the west side of the same street, just across from your brother, you have to go to the other church."

A "no boundary" situation does not mean, however, that people are now allowed to move back and forth at will; that, for instance, if they get into trouble with the one Consistory, they have the right to ask for an attestation and join the other Church. Such would not promote the good order and would cause more problems than solving them.

In Houston "We also had a discussion concerning the time of the year most suitable for having a changeover of office-bearers. It has long been the custom here to have new office-bearers start their term in January. The advantage of a later date, in the spring for example, would be that a season of activities is completed, and new office-bearers do not have to jump in in midstream." No decision was taken as yet, but will be at a later date.

In the Fraser Valley a meeting was held dealing with the broadcasting.

One of the issues discussed was the continuation or discontinuation of the one-hour broadcast during which a service is aired, condensed so that it fits within the time slot. Some felt that, since the sermons are directed to the Congregation and not to outsiders, such a broadcast might mean very little to people who do not know anything about God's Word and about the confession of the Church.

There is some value in this argument, although I should like to remark that the circle of listeners to the station via which this service is broadcast every Sunday evening cannot be considered to be a circle of people who are completely devoid of knowledge in this respect. There are many religious broadcasts coming into people's homes via this station. All sorts of doctrines are propagated and all sorts of theories are pushed. Then it is extremely important, I think, that the true preaching be heard amidst this cacophony. The Church is a pillar of the truth and this "pillar" does not mean that the Church is to support the truth but that it is to proclaim, to publish the truth. If even one person could be brought back from his errors and be led on the path of truth, the path of the catholic Church, this would render it worth all the effort and expense. It is one of the things

which we can do for those who are outside and are caught in all sorts of false doctrines.

If we proclaimed the Word of God via the airwaves only to those who do not now anything about it, then, indeed, it would be a waste of time and money to broadcast our services. But we have an obligation towards all, not just to some. It must be proclaimed that we uphold the truth of God's Word and that we reject all errors that "militate against it," to use the words of the Subscription Form. What better means to use than airing a worship service?

At the meeting it was also considered to have the ministers in the Valley prepare material for the broadcasts. "It becomes clear that spoken material from all our ministers in the Valley on a regular basis will not be available because of the busy schedule and workload some of these ministers already have."

Honestly, I cannot accept this. Five ministers would mean one message per five weeks. Is that now really unattainable? Speaking of a heavy workload, I think that I have a little experience with such a phenomenon as well. I certainly do not intend to give myself a pat on the back shoulder, for there were and are many things lacking in my work. But I simply cannot understand and do not believe that one message per five weeks would put such a burden on the ministers that it amounts to the straw that breaks the camel's back. When we are really concerned about those who are estranged from the Word of God, should we then not do our utmost to bring the glad tidings to them, to bring the evangel to them?

It is not necessary that they deliver the messages themselves. We should have a person who does not have a Dutch accent or any other accent for that matter; we should have someone to read the messages who has a good "radio voice." And if there is not sufficient time for the ministers to prepare one speech per five weeks, I know of a solution.

Let them exchange pulpits somewhat more often than once every four weeks.

The Surrey Consistory report mentions that "the chairman asks and receives input in the matter of pulpit exchange." I do not know in what connection this question was asked and this input was given. What I do know is that the Churches in the Fraser Valley are so close together that such more frequent exchanges are very well possible. It is something to be happy about when a Congregation want to have their own minister in the pulpit all the time; it is also gratifying when they more or less resent it when he is away. But if the workload is so heavy as we were told, then it is the Churches' obligation to use various means to lighten it.

Enough about this for this time.

Preparations are well underway for the institution of the Church in Lynden, Washington. A special Classis is convened for this. I question whether a special Classis is the proper way to go about it and whether not Classis should have been convened at an earlier date. Our Church Order does not speak of special Classes. However, this point could be subject of discussion. We are thankful for the progress made.

The Maranatha, Surrey Consistory received a report in which "Rev. Boersema informs Council that an addition will be built to the church building to facilitate the parental school. The cost for this will be covered by contributions of the Congregation in Brazil."

And, in conclusion, we know that the request was made to have the morning service begin half an hour later so that in this Congregation the Sunday School could be held somewhat later than at present. Now we read, "A previous request from the Home Mission Committee for a half hour change in the time of worship is discussed and defeated in the vote." This means that the morning services will continue to start at 10:00 o'clock.

See you in Church.

VO



Douma, J., *Politieke Verantwoordelijkheid*, Kampen: Uitgeverij van den Berg, 1984. 210 pp. Hfl. 23.50.

By way of introduction it ought to be said that Prof. Dr. J. Douma is professor of Ethics at the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Churches (Liberated; Dutch: *vrijgemaakt*) in Holland, Broederweg 15, Kampen, The Netherlands.

This book is characterized by simplicity of style, readability, depth of study, fine nuancing and sound Reformed political principles. In six chapters Douma covers a wide gambit of persons and issues in discussing political responsibility for the Reformed Christian. The appearance of this book is quite timely for Americans who are searching for a strong political base for their faith. Douma, who is politically active in The Netherlands has a thorough grasp of the "political scene" both from an historical and contemporary standpoint, both within The Netherlands and in foreign countries.

The first chapter, "Faith and politics", is an introduction to the book, itself. Douma explains that he intends to devote time and attention to the relation between Christian faith and politics (9). When one speaks about a "theocracy" one must remember that the word means "that *God* rules, and not that the *church* rules" (19). This definition gives Douma a two-fold advantage: (1) he rightly obviates the problem of the *church* ruling politics, and (2) he avoids false dilemmas. Allow me to explain the latter. One often hears, "We must separate church and state." This is correct but the implication which is inherent in this statement is that we must separate *God* and state, which is incorrect. The state is a creation of God and thereby must be responsible to Him.

Instead of immediately beginning with a thetic exposition of the relation between faith and politics, Douma first provides the reader with an historical development. Yet, when one examines the structure of the book, one cannot help but have initial questions. Chapters two, three and four are devoted to St. Augustine, Luther, and A. Kuyper, respectively. We shall discuss why Douma chooses this structure directly. Suffice it to say at this juncture that the structure is not so strange as it at first glance appears.

The time devoted to St. Augustine

need not surprise us. Douma explicates the doctrine of the *civitate terrena* and the *civitate Dei* as developed by Augustine at length. He rightly says that when we think of the two kingdoms in Augustine's doctrine we are not discussing geographic boundaries but spiritual realities (29). Douma speaks of a "reserved acceptance" of the *civitate terrena* in Augustine's theology wherein Augustine nowhere ascribes the *civitate terrena* wholly to the demonic (32). He further concludes that the relation church and state is not *clearly* defined in this *magnum opus* of Augustine.

The third chapter is devoted to Luther. It is here that the questions begin to arise. Why does Douma deal with Luther instead of Calvin? If Douma is truly Reformed why are we not given an exposition of what Calvin says in the *Institutes*? In order to answer these questions a few clarifications need to be made. In the first place, it is rather refreshing to find a Reformed theologian dealing so openly and fairly with Luther in an in-depth analysis. Secondly, Douma reminds all Reformed theologians how dependent Geneva is on Wittenberg. Thirdly, when one compares the 1536 edition of the *Institutes* to what Luther has said on the subject of the two kingdoms, one could just as well be reading Luther. Luther, is, indeed, our spiritual father in this doctrine. He speaks of two *kingdoms* and two *regiments*. In the one kingdom the sword is indispensable, in the other, it is not needed. The two regiments are divided into a spiritual and worldly one. "The *spiritual* regiment makes men Christians and justified members of the Christ by the Holy Spirit. The *worldly* regiment keeps the non-Christians and immoral people in check so that they, against their will, must keep the peace and keep themselves peaceable." (46). Here one clearly observes the *usus legis primus*. These distinctions and separations are to be found in an early work of Luther, *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit, wie weit man ihr Gehorsam schuldig sei* (1523). Luther gives us some very clear directives as to how a ruler ought to conduct himself in regard to those under him. Douma also rightly points out the place of the Sermon on the Mount in Luther's political thought. Douma also avoids false dilemmas by reminding us that *both* regiments are in the

hands of God (54). Because this is true, Luther calls upon the Christian to be actively involved in politics. Just as with St. Augustine the goal of politics is *peace* (67). It is precisely for this reason that Douma says that political involvement is so difficult (25). He emphasizes Luther's use of reason, but then reason bound to the Holy Scriptures (76). Finally, in this chapter, Douma praises Luther's christocentric political life (79).

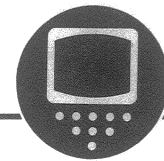
Chapter four is a description of the political thought of A. Kuyper. Again, for those somewhat abreast of the political development in The Netherlands the question arises, "Why Kuyper and not Groen van Prinsterer?" For Douma the answer is quite obvious. Groen died in 1876 after which Kuyper took over the leadership of the Anti-Revolutionary Party. It should be noted that Kuyper is in disrepute in some circles in The Netherlands due to his view of Common Grace and the pluriformity of the church. Yet Douma, because he has so thoroughly studied Kuyper and because he is writing in such a nuanced fashion, endeavors to express the "valuable" in Kuyper's thoughts, and let there be no mistake there is *much* that we can learn from Kuyper. Douma finds in Kuyper's doctrine of "sphere sovereignty" a healthy attempt to place the responsibilities in the proper places and to discourage unnecessary government intervention in places where government has no jurisdiction. The notion of the two kingdoms and the two regiments plays an important role here, too.

I would mention one criticism of the book and that is the last chapter which deals with civil disobedience. This chapter is just as interesting and erudite as the other chapters, but one receives the notion that this chapter is a rather disjunctive addendum. Certainly it deals *indirectly* with the subject at hand, but then again, so do numerous other subjects.

Viewed as a whole, however, this book provides a veritable gold mine for those Christians — Reformed or otherwise — who are seeking to understand the relation between church and state.

DRS. R. GLEASON

Rijswijk
The Netherlands



Classis Ontario-South, London, ON, December 12, 1984.

1. On behalf of the convening church, the Rev. J. Moesker, opens the meeting of delegates. He requests the singing of Psalm 125:1, 4 and reads from Scripture Isaiah chapter 54. After this he leads in prayer.

Rev. Moesker welcomes the delegates, Cand. C. Bosch and the deputies of Regional Synod, the ministers W.W.J. VanOene and M. Werkman, who are present for the peremptory examination of Cand. C. Bosch.

Rev. Moesker draws the attention of the brothers to the ordinations of the ministers J. Moesker and M.H. VanLuik to the ministry at London and Watford, respectively. The Church at Lincoln was not successful in calling the Rev. R. Aasman of Guelph. At this moment the delegates of Lincoln make it known that their congregation has called the Rev. J. Visscher of Cloverdale BC.

2. *The delegates* of the Church at Lincoln examine the credentials. All churches are lawfully represented. The Church at Hamilton has two instructions.

3. *Classis is constituted.* The moderation consists of: Rev. W. Huizinga, chairman; Rev. P. Kingma, clerk; Rev. J. Van Rietschoten, assessor.

4. *The Agenda is adopted.* Question period ad Art. 44 C.O. is moved down on the agenda to give preference to the examination of Cand. C. Bosch.

5. *Examination of Cand. C. Bosch.* All documents are found in order.

5.1 Sermon proposal on I Peter 1:9, 10 is held and discussed. Classis decides to proceed with the examination.

5.2 Exegesis Old Testament I Sam. 11 and 12 by Rev. J. Van Rietschoten.

5.3 Exegesis New Testament I Peter 2, and 3 by Rev. W. Huizinga

5.4 Doctrine of the Church, Ecclesiology and Christology by Rev. P. Kingma.

5.5 Church History, Pietism, and Methodism by Rev. P. Kingma.

5.6 Ethics J. Douma, *Verantwoord Handelen*, and Lord's Days 34-44 of the Heidelberg Catechism by the Rev. C. Stam.

5.7 Knowledge of the Scriptures, Wisdom Literature and Hebrews by Rev. C. Stam.

5.8 Diaconology, *Introduction*, C. Trimp, and General Principles by Rev. P. Kingma.

5.9 Church Polity, General Principles by Rev. J. Van Rietschoten.

5.10 Classis decides to admit Cand. C. Bosch to the ministry of the Word and the sacraments in the Canadian Reformed Churches. The Deputies of Regional Synod concur in the decision. Cand. C. Bosch endorses the Form of Subscription with his signature.

The chairman congratulates Cand. C. Bosch on behalf of Classis.

The members of Classis address br. Bosch in song with Psalm 118:6. After this the brothers personally congratulate Cand. Bosch.

6. *Question Period ad Art. 44 C.O.* The Church at Smithville asks what the required contribution for the Fund For Needy Students to the Ministry (Art. 20 C.O.) will be for the year 1985. The answer is: There will be no contribution needed, since no applications for support have been received.

The Church at Hamilton asks advice in a disciplinary matter. In closed session advice is given.

7. There are no reports.

8. *Instructions.*

8.1 The Church at Hamilton informs Classis of the changed borderline between the Churches of Hamilton and Burlington West.

8.2 The Church at Hamilton informs Classis that a number of persons have requested the Consistory to institute a new congregation in the municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth. This institution is planned for the month of May 1985.

The Church at Hamilton asks what information the Consistory should provide Classis when the need to ask advice from Classis concerning institution arises.

The Church at Hamilton is advised to request the Archive-keeping Church at London to provide the Consistory at Hamilton with the list of documents provided to Classis by the Church at Smithville respecting the institution of the Church at Lincoln.

9. *Convening of Regional Synod.*

The Church at Hamilton informs Classis by letter that Regional Synod has

been convened for March 27, 1985, the Lord willing. Matters for Regional Synod are to be submitted before February 15, 1985.

9.1 The following delegates to Regional Synod are appointed:

Ministers: W. Huizinga; P. Kingma; C. Stam; J. Van Rietschoten. *Alternates:* J. Moesker; M.H. Van Luik. *Elders:* G. Gritter; R. Jager; A. Koster; H.J. Wildeboer. *Alternates:* L. Haan; A. Ruggi; M. VanderVelde; H.T. VanderVelde.

10. The Church at Smithville requests Classis to be represented at the ordination and installation of their minister, the Rev. C. Bosch, on Sunday, January 6, 1985. Classis appoints the Rev. W. Huizinga to represent Classis.

11. *Question Period* is held.

12. *Arrangements* for next Classis, *Convening church:* Church at Smithville. *Date:* Wednesday, March 13, 1985 at 10 a.m. *Place:* London. *Proposed moderamen:* chairman, Rev. J. Moesker; clerk, Rev. W. Huizinga; assessor, Rev. P. Kingma.

13. The Acts of this Classis are read and *adopted.*

14. The Press Release is read and *approved.*

15. Censure ad Art. 44 C.O. is not needed.

16. The chairman requests the singing of Hymn 8:3, 5 and leads in prayer. Classis is closed.

On behalf of Classis,
J. VAN RIETSCHOTEN

P.S. The late appearance of this Press Release is not to be blamed on the management of *Clarion*, but on me, J. Van R.

“Anchor” Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, Burlington, ON, January 11, 1985.


The chairman, br. J. Witten opened the meeting, and requested the singing of Psalm 8:1, after which he lead in prayer and read Psalm 8.

Minutes were adopted as presented. The Agenda for the meeting was adopted.

Incoming mail. Tapes of the mass choir concert are still available from K. Brouwer. Letter from Mr. Zomer stating acceptance of position of director of our home.

Committee reports. Building. Some tentative figures for an eight-resident building with possibility for extension.

Treasurer. Our bank statements look

CHURCH NEWS 

CALLED to Lincoln, ON
REV. J. GEERTSEMA
of Surrey, BC.

promising now, but much more will be needed now that we have hired a director and might build a home this year.

Board of directors were appointed. J. Witten, president; J. Boersema, vice-president; W. Sipkema, treasurer; H. Nobel, recording secretary; L. DeJong, corresponding secretary. An Executive Board consisting of the elected officers is appointed.

Liaison persons to the standing committees are appointed as follows: J. Boersema for Building Committee, B. Hoogland for Public Relations Committee, B. DeVries for Summer Camp Committee. Finance Committee will be established by br. Sipkema. Length of term of office was established for all board members.

Next meeting will be held February 15.

We sang Psalm 8:3, and br. DeVries closed in prayer.

P. FEENSTRA

Board of Governors meeting, Canadian Reformed Teachers' College Association, Hamilton, ON, February 9, 1985.

Due to illness of the chairman, A.J. Hordijk, the appointed chairman C.J. Nobels of Brampton opens the meeting. He reads Psalm 100 and leads in prayer.

The following governors are present: J. Kingma, Smithville/Lincoln; J. Tillema, Chatham; W. VanAssen, Carman; J.F. De

Leeuw, Abbotsford; J. Jonker, Orangeville; H. Slaa, Winnipeg (Representative); C. Hoff, London; R. Klaver, Smithers; P. VanderPol, Surrey; C.J. Nobels, Brampton; H.J. Nobel, Hamilton; and J. Gelderman, Burlington (Representative).

The agenda is established.

Minutes of the Executive Meeting held on January 4, 1985 are read and adopted.

A letter from the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario has been received acknowledging receipt of our brief re funding.

The secretary reads his annual report stating all went well during the past year under the blessing of the Lord.

The treasurer presents his financial report. He stresses the fact that every month we need \$13,000.00 and this amount is not collected every month. He emphasizes the need for regular contributions.

Principal's report. All students have done their work satisfactorily. Academic policies have been adjusted. A bi-annual resource package will be mailed to all school societies. The principal asks permission to approach some persons to assist in the Art course. This is granted.

There is some money left in the equipment fund. The principal suggests to use this money to buy an Apple compatible 64K computer. This is granted.

Some discussion ensues about en-

trance requirements and how to select students in case we get more applications than we have room for in the College. The calendar for 1985/86 is discussed and adopted.

The budget for 1985/86 is discussed and adopted.

After much consideration, the student fees were set at \$1500.00 and membership fees at \$175.00.

Br. J. Gelderman is reappointed as treasurer for the next college year.

Public relations report. Br. C. Hoff reports on his efforts to increase the membership of the College. Some positive reactions have been received. He is in the process of establishing a contact person in each congregation where there are no contacts as yet. This contact person is to approach every member of the congregation who is not as yet supporting the College.

Building Committee report. Br. H. Nobel reports on the discussions with the Theological College re sharing of their facilities. This has not been successful. We will keep our eyes open for any possibilities in the Hamilton area.

Membership and proportionate representation is discussed briefly.

Br. H. Slaa leads in thanksgiving prayer.

The chairman closed the meeting.

W. VANASSEN

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

Hello Busy Beavers,

April will soon be here.

And what a lot of birthdays!

Here is a birthday poem for all the Busy Beavers celebrating in April.

"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature,
And favour with God and man."

You should grow wiser and try hard this year
To please God as much as you can.

Have a happy and thankful day, Busy Beavers! May the Lord bless and guide you all in the year ahead.

APRIL

Angela Van Laar	7	Kimberley VanderZwaag	18
Marion Vandenbos	13	Christine Riemersma	19
Brian Vandenbos	13	Chris Van Middelkoop	19
Henry Sikkema	14	Gerard Torenvliet	20
James Teitsma	14	Marie Hamoen	21
Irma Van Ellenberg	15	Cindy Oosterveld	21
Geoffrey Hoogstra	16	Kristy Van Meeteren	23
Sylvia Van Bodegom	16	Alida Knol	24
Margaret Admiraal	17	Karen Stam	25
Angela Kippers	18	Kerry Roodzant	30



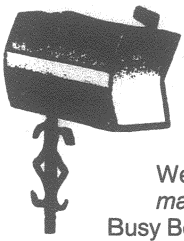
RIDDLE FUN

from Busy Beaver Alice Blom

1. When do lions have 8 feet?
2. What has 4 eyes yet cannot see?
3. What is the smallest bridge in the world?
4. What travels on and on yet never moves?
5. How can you have water above and below without getting wet?
6. Why did the cow walk away from the milking machine?
7. Why are fish smart?

Answers:

1. When there's 2 of them. 2. Mississippi! 3. The bridge over a bridge! 4. road 5. Put a pail of water on your head and walk over a bridge! 6. She thought it was udderly ridiculous! 7. They travel in schools!



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Chad Pieterman*. We hope you'll really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities! I see you have lots to keep you busy now that you live in the country. I think you'll love exploring once spring comes!

And a big welcome to you too, *Tammi Pieterman*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already. Keep it up! Be sure to keep us posted, Tammi, on the wildlife around your house. Animal-loving Busy Beavers will be happy to hear from you.

Welcome to the Club, *Jason Tenhage*. We are happy to have you join us. Do you still play hockey after school, or are you looking forward to other spring-things-to-do?

A big welcome to you, too, *Wendy VanderGaag*. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver activities, Wendy. What are you planning to do during your spring break? Bye for now. Write again soon!

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Karen VanderGaag*. Thank you for your nice letter. I'm glad you like the puzzles in Our Little Magazine, Karen. Maybe you and your sister will make a puzzle to share with the Busy Beavers, sometime. How about during the spring break?

Hello, *Kerri-Anne Wierenga*. It was nice to hear from you again. Are your chickens laying better now that spring is coming? Did you have fun during your spring break? Thanks for the puzzle, Kerri-Anne.

Thank you very much for the interesting puzzle, *Gerard Torenvliet*. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing it! Did it take you long to make? Are you looking forward to your holidays, Gerard?

Hello, *Debbie Jagt*. That's quite a letter you wrote! I do hope you'll write about your visit to the synagogue. I think the Busy Beavers will be interested. And you can stop wondering, Debbie if I'm real. I'm just as real as you are. We Busy Beavers can't all see each other, but we can visit by means of letters. The more my "nieces" and "nephews" write, the better I like it! You can be sure that I'm really proud of everyone of you!

You've been busy for us, *Jacoba Harlaar*. Good for you! Thank you for the puzzle and the poem. We don't have a contest going just now. But keep watching. We'll have one very soon. Bye for now, Jacoba.

Hello *Hannah Harlaar*. You're a real Busy Beaver, too, I see. What are you planning to do during your spring break, Hannah? Do you like to draw pictures? Maybe you'll share some with us, sometime?

Busy Beavers we need a pen pal for:

Debbie Jagt (Age 10)
Box 6
Waterdown, ON
L0R 2H0

Quiz Time!

Busy Beaver *Tammi Pieterman* writes: "Here are some names of birds that we see in our birdfeeder. They are all mixed up! Can you unscramble them?"

1. JNOCU —
2. ROWPARS —
3. DIANCLAR —
4. YAJLEBU —
5. ACHTUNT —
6. OVED NGRINUOM —

(Answers next time)

THINGS TO WEAR

by Busy Beaver *Nadine Woudenberg*

A F H A T N K L Z G G H N
M I T T S K P H I Y W N D
I L B C K S S D N E I R F
C F E D H J O K E R B O P
U B P A W V U C T S R I Q
N N B A D F D E K X L Y Z
D F D H N K J R T S L K E
E M L E N T O P E I L B A
R E R Q R P S O T S E O R
W S W X Y S Z T X R S W M
E U V T Z C H R Y S U T U
A O U R T A S I R Q P I F
R L K I L R M H R N O E F
J B I K H F G S F T E D S
T I U S G N I H T A B C A

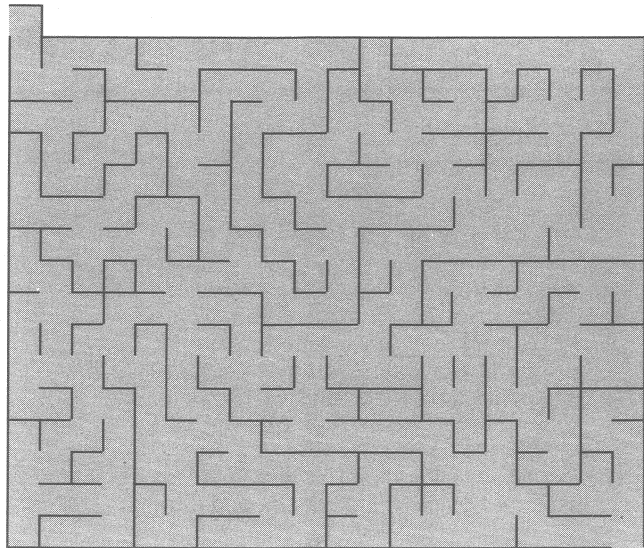
Look for:

hat	tie
pants	bow tie
dress	skirt
mitts	blouse
shirt	slip
socks	bathing suit
undershirt	ear muffs
underwear	scarf

MAZE

by Busy Beaver *Gerard Torenvliet*

start



you made it!!!

Did you enjoy the puzzles?

That's great!

Watch for news for a NEW CONTEST next time, Busy Beavers!

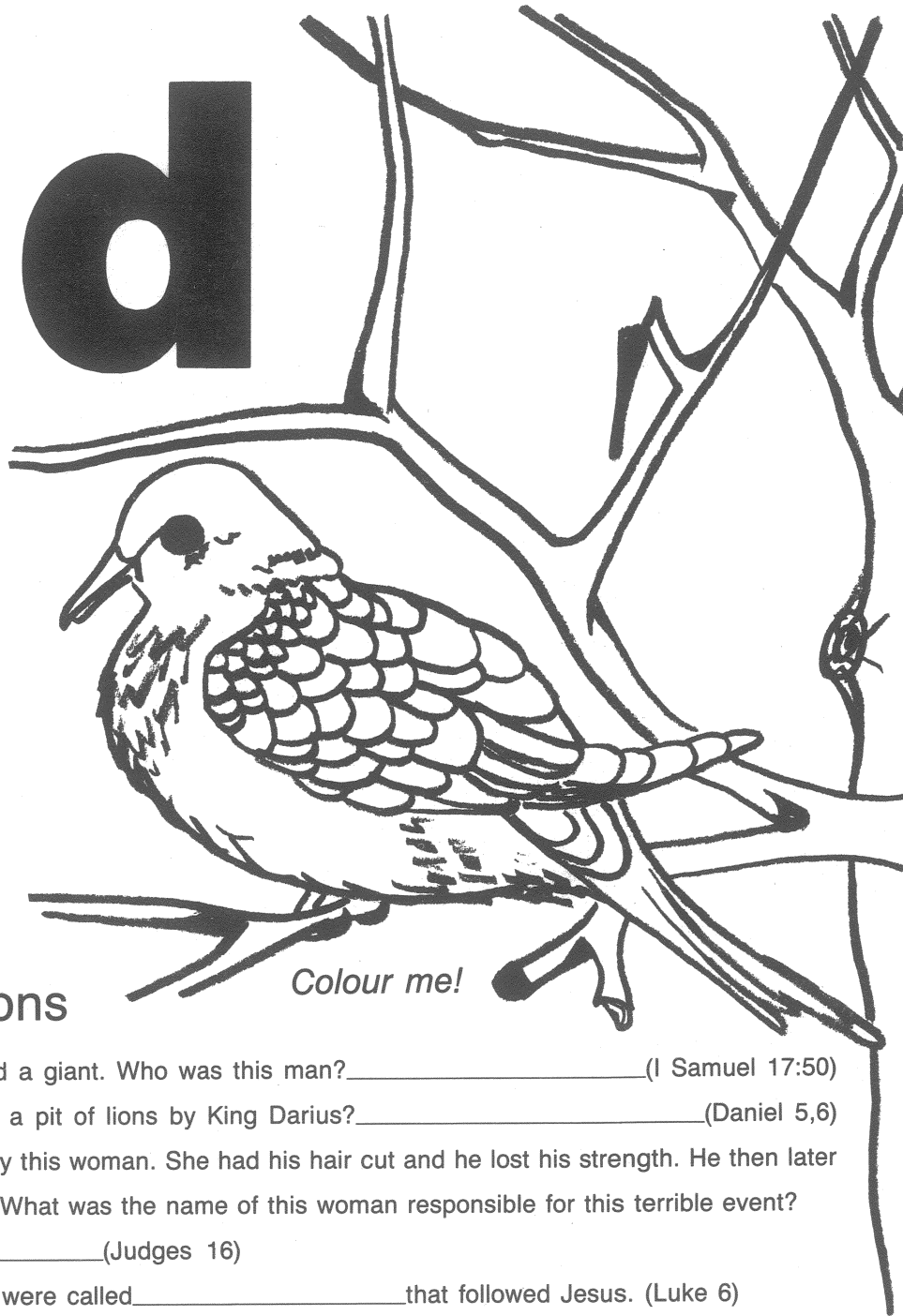
Bye for now.

With love from your
Aunt Betty

You know my address!
Aunt Betty, Box 54
Fergus, ON N1W 2W7

ABC BIBLE COLLECTION - by Mrs. John Roza

D d



D-dove
(Genesis 8)

Colour me!

Quiz Questions

1. This young man killed a giant. Who was this man? _____ (I Samuel 17:50)
2. Who was thrown into a pit of lions by King Darius? _____ (Daniel 5,6)
3. Samson was tricked by this woman. She had his hair cut and he lost his strength. He then later had his eyes cut out. What was the name of this woman responsible for this terrible event?
_____ (Judges 16)
4. Twelve of these men were called _____ that followed Jesus. (Luke 6)
5. What is another name for Satan? _____

Answers for the letter "C"

1. Crucifixion 2. Church 3. Calf 4. Cattle 5. Cross