

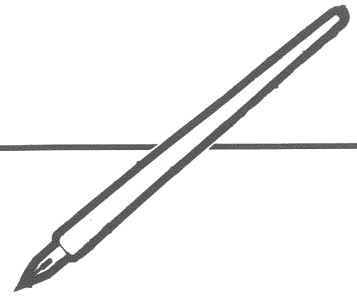
Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 34, No. 6

March 22, 1985





Easter and Israel

In this time of the year we remember the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was crucified, dead and buried and on the third day He rose again from the dead. Somewhere else in this issue more attention will be given to these historical facts and the meaning for our everyday life and for our faith. Here, in this editorial, another aspect will have our attention.

When we hear about the resurrection of our Saviour, it reminds us of the historic side on which this event took place. The local situation may have our special interest. In this time of the year many people are making a trip to see the place where these important event happened. Thousands of people will walk the "via dolorosa," that is the route which, according to the tradition, Jesus has walked before He was crucified. It is the street from the Courthouse of Pontius Pilate to Golgotha, or Calvary, the place of the crucifixion. The narrow street will be overcrowded with thousands of pilgrims, carrying a cross and making stops at the traditional "Holy Stations" on this "via dolorosa." This whole matter has become more and more commercialized. It is for lots of people rather a touristic attraction than a matter of honouring our Saviour.

Moreover, the exact place of the crucifixion and of the tomb is not known, at least there are different opinions about it. According to the Roman Catholic tradition the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the historic side, while according to many Christians the real place can be found a few miles north of it, in the so-called Garden-tomb, discovered by the British general and archeologist Gordon. He excavated a garden and a tomb, just outside the ancient walls of Jerusalem, and according to many Christians it is very likely that this is the real place of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In this garden many "services" are held these days, to commemorate Christ's resurrection. A tomb can be seen and the guide tells the visitors that this is a tomb just as where our Saviour was buried, and that this probably might be the historic side itself. However, he always concludes his explanation, saying that it does not really matter whether this is the real historic place because one thing is important: He is not here, for He has risen. Everyone who wants to venerate and honour Him has to remember Him as the Lord who is now seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven.

Although it might be interesting to visit these so-called historic sides, we do not need it for the strengthening of our faith, and those who make a trip to Israel for that reason are often very disappointed when they come back. It has become a big business and a tourist industry rather than a honouring of our Saviour.

You might wonder why we are mentioning these things in this issue of *Clarion*, if they are not edifying anyway. The reason is that there is also another aspect which we should be aware of. There is an increasing tendency to have a special affection for the people and the country of Israel and everything

that is related with it. In the past we heard about mission work among the Jews but nowadays people seem to be more in favour of a dialogue. The Jewish religion is not considered any longer as a rejection of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour, but it is accepted as just another way to serve the Lord. Some theologians go even so far as to state that the Christian church is only an interim, a period in between. The final purpose is that Jesus will come back to restore the kingdom of David and to rule the whole world from His Royal Throne in Jerusalem, during a thousand years. This so-called millennialism is very strong among all kinds of Christians, more than we are aware of.

Mission among the Jewish people in Israel is formally not forbidden. That is what the Jewish authorities keep telling us. However, there are restrictions, they say, and that is that no one may try to win people for their religion by giving them gifts. That sounds reasonable, but the practical consequence is that it is forbidden to give people a Bible. Even the handing out of literature is not allowed, because it is providing gifts with the purpose to win others for a religion. In this way there can be an official freedom of religion, while it is still almost impossible to "evangelize" among the Jewish people.

Still there are different Christian organizations at work in Israel and it is interesting to notice how they work and what their aim is. Even more important is what the actual result of their work appears to be.

Among many people in Israel there are still hard feelings against all Christians. We have heard from different people the simplistic reasoning: Adolph Hitler called himself a Christian and he has killed six million Jews, therefore all Christians are, to a certain extent, guilty of this massacre. We certainly do not defend the attitude which seems to be growing nowadays against the Jewish people and we do not deny the terrible holocaust which has taken place during the Second World War. Everyone who has visited the Jewish War Memorial "Yad Vashem" in Jerusalem will never forget the terrible crime committed against the Jewish people.

However, there is also another extreme we have to be aware of. People are talking about a "dialogue" with Israel. What does that mean?

The Rev. G.H. Cohen Stuart, who is stationed in Jerusalem as an advisor of the Dutch Reformed Churches says with Paul (in Rom. 1:16) "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel." But at the same time he goes very far in his attempt not to offend the Jewish people who do not want to hear about Jesus as the Saviour. He says that he is enrolled in a Talmud course, given by a rabbi, to get more familiar with the Jewish rules and traditions. He tries to live, as much as possible, according to the Jewish laws and regulations, including the observance of the sabbath. He states that knowledge of the Jewish tradition can enrich our understanding of the New Testament. Although he says that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he does not seem to be too much concerned about the Jewish

people who still reject the Son of God as the only Saviour. He even goes so far as to say that we can see the grace of God in not yet opening the eyes of the Jewish people for the salvation in Jesus Christ, because in this way the Jewish traditions are maintained and we can benefit from it and get a better understanding of the Old as well as the New Testament. Certainly a strange conclusion. It implies that the rejection of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour, and the maintaining of the Old Testamental tradition which were abolished by Christ, should help us to understand better the revelation of the Lord. We do not believe that the rejection of Jesus Christ and the denial of Him as the only Saviour can ever be of any benefit for anyone. This theory, which is meant as being tolerant and lenient to the Jewish people, in order not to hurt their feelings, is basically a denial of the work of Jesus Christ. Also for the Jewish people there is salvation, but only if they accept Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah, promised from of old, and the only One who can take away the wrath of God because of our sins.

Another well-known organization is the "Christian Embassy" in Jerusalem, with its spokesman Jan Willem van der Hoeven. This "embassy" does not represent any nation, but is a private organization. In 1980 the Knesset, the Jewish parliament, declared Jerusalem to be the eternal and undividable Capital of the State of Israel. Many nations did not recognize this declaration, and established their embassies in, or moved them to Tel Aviv, the internationally recognized Capital of the State of Israel. As a reaction a group of Christians made a symbolic move and established a so-called "Christian Embassy" in Jerusalem, as a moral support of the Jewish claim. The purpose of this "embassy" can be summarized in six points as follows:

1. To show the concern of the Christians for the existence of the Jewish people and their political independence. The crucial text of this movement is Isaiah 40:1, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended."

2. To encourage Christians to pray for the people of Israel.

3. To show and teach the whole world what is going on in Israel.

4. To call upon the church leaders in the world to support Israel.

5. To organize and promote projects to support the people of Israel.

6. To seek reconciliation between the Jews and the Arabs. Also this "Christian Embassy" is very cautious not to offend the Jews and they do not try in any way to "win" them for Christ. They defend this attitude with the nice sounding "excuse" or explanation that the true conversion can only be worked by the Holy Spirit. However, Romans 10:13, 14 says clearly: "Every one who calls upon the Name of the Lord will be saved. But how are men to call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?"

What do we learn from all this?

There is a strong movement to accept the Jewish doctrine as just another way to serve the Lord. People want a "dialogue" with Israel, rather than telling them about Jesus Christ the only Saviour. People try to show respect and to be nice to the Jewish people, but it goes at the cost of a denial of our only Saviour Jesus Christ.

The stumbling block of the cross is taken away. Jesus is pictured as the Jewish freedom fighter. He fought against the establishment and was helping the poor and the suffering. In this way He is acceptable as the good example for everyone, but He is not the Messiah anymore.

Let us be careful and on the alert. We should not hate the



Jewish people. In Romans 11 the apostle Paul still calls them, "beloved for the sake of their forefathers." There is salvation for them, but only through faith in Jesus Christ. At the same time we should watch out for the influence of the millennialists and other people who see the Christian church only as an "interim," a period in between, while the final outcome will be: again the Jewish people, ruling all over the world, under the leadership of Jesus Christ, seated upon His throne in the earthly Jerusalem for a thousand years.

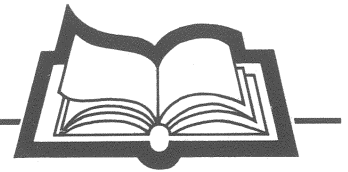
We expect Him back as our King and ruler, but not to reign from His throne in the present Jerusalem but as the King of the New Earth.

It is Easter. We remember the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He overcame death to make us partakers of all His benefits. He went to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come back as our glorious King.

We do not know exactly where the place of His tomb is. It does not really matter. He is not here but in heaven.

Let us pray, also for the people of Israel, not only and in the first place that they may live in peace in their own country. Let us pray in the first place that they may understand where the real place comes from: Peace with God through Jesus Christ.

W. POWELSE



“. . . He Himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil”

Hebrews 2:14b

The Triumph of Divine Justice

In explaining to the readers why the Lord Jesus became man, the writer of this letter outlines how the Lord Jesus had to become man and die in the flesh in order to destroy the devil and his power. The salvation of man includes the defeat of Satan. Yet the writer leaves us with the question exactly how the death of the Son effectively destroys the devil's works. What kind of a contest was this? And how is Satan effectively disarmed?

The term that this passage uses for Christ's act "to destroy" the devil and his power gives us the answer. Literally this term means, "to nullify, to bring to naught, to make powerless, or ineffective," and so it is used with regard to death in several places in the New Testament, I Cor. 15:26, II Tim. 1:10. The term shows that Satan is not overpowered by sheer divine strength, but simply "played out." At a certain point, he simply has no further *right* to act. And once his right of action is removed, then — and only then — does his judgment come.

All this makes sense when we recall that Satan has no *absolute* power over death. His power is given to him by God, who sets and determines the limits of all His creatures, including the disobedient angels. Satan's *right* to act, his freedom of movement and speech, is strictly determined by the original covenantal terms laid down by God. It was the LORD who first announced death as the punishment to man in case of disobedience in the covenant. Satan, as one who loves and cherishes death, only administers and carries it out. His power comes from his right; his right is dependant on God's established *word*, the word of the covenant, Gen. 2:17.

As long as Satan retains his right from God, he also may exercise his power over death. So we see him in the Bible as the "accuser" of the brethren, Rev. 12:10, an enemy who has access to heaven and convicts men of sin before God's throne, for example Job. 1, and who disputes with the faithful messengers of God concerning the lives of the saints, Jude 9. Why does God allow it? Could He not have immediately destroyed him with the breath of His mouth? Again, the LORD delivers His people by *right* and not by *force*. Satan has a right to a fair trial, and he is only eliminated from the field by due process of law.

Here is where a *man* is required, as the writer says. Our forefather, Adam, was placed in a position of lordship, having rule over all creation, standing even above the angels, Psalm 8:5, 6. Although they were closer to God and thus belonged to His realm, the angels were also "minister-

ing spirits" called to serve man in his office in creation. According to the sovereign terms of the covenant, man was, in part, lord of the angels, and they were sent to do his bidding. However, sin overturned this wonderful order of paradise, and we became slaves to Satan, misled men who were trapped into his schemes, his plans, hopes, and dreams for this world. No one is able to escape this power in himself. Satan took control, and every man is bound to him. And as long as he has man in his control, he freely *accuses* man before God's throne. To break the power of accusation a man is required, who, in accordance with the sovereign covenantal terms laid down by God in the beginning, effectively passes judgment on the accuser! Only then is his right removed.

And where we cannot find a man among us, God grants us the Man, the Righteous One, Jesus Christ! He is the "right Man on our side," who, taking the form of flesh and blood, allows the accuser to spend all his arrows of temptation on Him in full strength, and still perseveres victoriously. Indeed, Satan wields his divinely given power of death against Him. But He stands victorious! In and through death, He holds fast to the Father, and never compromises the position of lordship and authority given to Him. He never becomes Satan's wilful slave — even in the supreme sacrifice.

Therefore, God raises Him from the dead. And now the court case can begin! With the righteous Man present, Satan's trial can proceed. Now Satan stands speechless before the divine tribunal. For here is a Man, perfectly righteous, altogether divine, who reverses the judgment, turning the tables on the ancient accuser! And here, according to the established ordinances, God and man *together*, by fair trial, pass judgment on Satan's lot. So Paul says, "He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in Him," Col. 2:15.

Therefore the church can shout with joy today — even in sorrow and persecution. The basic court case has already taken place! Satan has been dethroned, and his fate is sealed! We only wait for the last man to stand up, and be fully ingrafted in the Son! Then the heavenly court case will pass on to earth, and then the new mankind, washed and cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, renewed to lordship through the power of His Spirit, will stand before the throne, and with the Father make the *final* judgment, I Cor. 6:2, 3. Then death and hades will be thrown into the lake of fire, their power perfectly broken, and we will live in the light of life forever!

J. DEJONG

“Christian” in the Creed?³

The addition of the word “Christian” to the confession concerning the holy catholic church in the Apostles’ Creed is no improvement in the light of the Scriptures and in the light of the ecumenical creeds. Scripture and creeds speak about the church of God. This indicates that the congregation of Christ is the continuation of the assembly of the people of the LORD in the Old dispensation. The church is of the triune God, for Jahweh has revealed Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the ecumenical creeds the church is described in this encompassing, trinitarian manner. Arius spoke in his creed of A.D. 328 of the “one catholic church of God which extends to the end of the earth” and in this expression he was in agreement with the orthodoxy of the early church.

One could add that in 374, Epiphanius introduced his first creed with the remark that “this is the holy faith of the Catholic Church, as the holy and only Virgin of God received from the holy Apostles and the Lord to keep.” The catholic church is the Virgin of God. One finds this formula in the well-known work of Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. II, p. 33. Seven years later, in 381, the *Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed* came about and our readers know how this most beautiful ecumenical creed contains the words, “And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church.” In Schaff’s book, we find a remarkable note on page 59:

The Lutheran symbols substitute, in the article on the Church, the term *christliche* (Christian) for *Catholic*. Luther did the same in his German version of the Apostles’ Creed, unwisely leaving the Romanists to monopolize the name *Catholic*.


Our readers should pay close attention to these last words of Philip Schaff. I could not agree more with them: Luther unwisely left the Romanists to monopolize the name *Catholic*. In a Dutch article in 1973, now reprinted in the last issue of *Clarion*, I sketched out the development on the basis of a note written by Dr. J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink. Luther deemed the words “church” and “catholic” to be useless. They reminded him of the papal church of Rome and he often replaced “church” by “congregation” and “catholic” by “chris-

tian.” Calvin, however, did not do so; he did not abandon the word “catholic” and stuck to the original text of the Apostles’ Creed. But the Heidelberg Catechism in its German text sought a compromise between Luther and Calvin: it translated “catholic” by “universal” and added “Christian.” “Algemeen” and “Christelijk” in the Dutch text of the Apostles’ Creed, as quoted in the Heidelberg Catechism, is, therefore, a double translation of the one word “catholic.” With a view to the original text and the tradition in English-speaking countries, I proposed that the Canadian Reformed Churches should stick to the confession of the holy catholic church and not add the word “Christian” in the English text of the Apostles’ Creed.

The reader can understand that I was amazed when Synod Cloverdale 1983 fell for the suggestion of br. L. Van Zandwijk that Synod Toronto 1974 had deleted an essential word and discarded an heirloom of great historical value. In his submission to Synod of April 5, 1983, this brother wrote of an abandonment of a vital element of our Reformed heritage. According to br. Van Zandwijk the word had “for

over 400 years been part and parcel of the specific *Reformed* version of the Apostles’ Creed, adopted by the Reformed Churches.” He referred to a lecture by Prof. J. Kamphuis on the 1980 “School-dag” in Kampen, published in *De Reformatie* of September 13, 1980 (“Mag de Apostolische Geloofsbelijdenis veranderd worden?”). What shall we say of these things? Let me make three remarks.

First of all: br. Van Zandwijk did neither the Canadian Reformed Churches nor Prof. Kamphuis a service by using this 1980 lecture uncritically. Such a lecture has what theologians call a “Sitz im Leben”: it comes up in a specific situation of life — in this case: the life of our sister churches in The Netherlands — and should not be translated or transposed into the life of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The Dutch churches have indeed lived for over four-hundred years with a compromise of the Apostles’ Creed, introduced by the German and Dutch rendering in the Heidelberg Catechism. Reformed and Presbyterian churches in English-speaking countries have another history. Our Dutch sister churches had to



Published bi-weekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, MB
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Surrey, BC, Canada V3V 7E1

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):
CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
1249 Plessis Road
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2C 3L9
Phone: (204) 222-5218

SUBSCRIPTION RATES	Regular	Air
FOR 1985	Mail	Mail
Canada	\$23.50	\$41.50
U.S.A. U.S. Funds	\$25.75	\$40.00
International	\$34.50	\$57.00

Advertisements: \$5.00 per column inch
Second class mail registration number 1025
ISSN 0383-0438

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deal with the question: Will we go along with the Netherlands Reformed Church, the Reformed Churches (synodical) and the Free Reformed Churches and revert back to “de heilige katholieke Kerk?” The readers know the answer I would have given. I would have said: Yes. In an article, entitled “The Apostles’ Creed in Dutch” (*Clarion*, June 5, 1981), I warned against what I called a “self-imposed isolation” with respect to an ecumenical creed. If the great majority of Dutch Christians — from Roman Catholics to Free Reformed — speak of their belief in the holy catholic church and these words are undoubtedly the original words that have been used since the beginning of Christianity in The Netherlands, why should the liberated Reformed Churches make an exception? Nevertheless, the deputies reported to Synod 1978 that “o.i. is het een geloofselement, dat in de reformatietijd in de bagage van het Apostolicum is terechtgekomen en door ons dient te worden meegenomen.” They deemed it to be an element of faith that in the time of the Reformation happened to land in the baggage of the Apostolicum and now ought to be taken along by the Dutch Reformed Churches.

When I read this report, I regretted its decision, and thought that the deputies at least should have investigated and reported on the basis of studies by Dutch church historians — such as Bakhuizen van den Brink and Dankbaar — *how* this element happened to land in the luggage of the Dutch Apostles’ Creed and *why* it should be called a “geloofselement” that ought to be taken along also for the future. I wrote in the above-mentioned *Clarion*: “We may leave this opinion to our Dutch sister churches; it should not be any reason for our Canadian churches now to deviate from the Latin text and from the custom in English-speaking countries and to add the word “Christian.” This was inadvertently done in a previous edition of our *Book of Praise* but is in the meantime corrected.”

Although I did not agree with the Synod Groningen 1978, I could at least appreciate that the Dutch situation is different from that in our English- and French-speaking country. I could even smile about the laconic expression and vivid description of an element that in the time of the Reformation “happened to land in the baggage” of the Dutch version of the Apostles’ Creed.

Prof. Kamphuis, however, went a little bit further and wanted to deliver a broader plea for the Dutch addition of the word “Christian.” When I read the enthusiastic defense in his “Schooldag” speech, I smiled again and thought: My dear colleague, you now try to make a virtue of necessity. Nevertheless, this lecture should

be read within the *Dutch* context and nobody should suggest that Prof. Kamphuis has given an advice to Reformed and Presbyterian Churches in English-speaking countries. We should acknowledge what I called the “Sitz im Leben,” in this case, the situation in a specific church life of The Netherlands.

My second remark is this: br. Van Zandwijk did not read the lecture of Prof. Kamphuis carefully. He wrote to Synod Cloverdale that Luther spoke of a holy, catholic, Christian church, whereas Prof. Kamphuis rightly remarked that the word “catholic” was rendered by “Christian”: “Let wel: we hebben dan dus niet met een *toevoeging* of een *aanvulling* te doen, maar met een soort *vertaling* van het vreemde woord ‘katholiek.’” My Kampen colleague knows that the word “Christian” in Luther’s Catechisms of 1529 is not an addition but a kind of translation of the word “catholic.” Did the Committee of Synod Cloverdale notice this difference between the submission of br. Van Zandwijk and the article of Prof. Kamphuis? It is not unimportant, as far as Luther’s German text of the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed is concerned: in Luther’s text “Christian” is no addition but a rendition of “catholic.”

In my third remark, I have to go more critically into the details of the lecture of Prof. Kamphuis itself. My main objection is that, whereas the deputies in Groningen 1978 cautiously spoke of something that happened in *the time* of the Reformation, Prof. Kamphuis sweepingly speaks of “een erfenis van de reformatie” (a heritage of the Reformation), what br. Van Zandwijk described as an “heirloom” of great historical value. Kamphuis speaks glowingly of the addition “Christian” as “reformatoische karakteristiek bij ‘de kerk’” (reformatioal characteristic of the church) and of its critical function and positive significance. He even comments: “When the Reformation called the church ‘christian,’ it referred this *specific* article to the centre of our faith: Jesus Christ, the One Whom the Father sent.”

This must have brought br. Van Zandwijk to his forceful words of “Christian” being “part and parcel of the specific *Reformed* version of the Apostles’ Creed, *adopted by the Reformed Churches*” (emphasis his). But this is precisely the point where I thought that Prof. Kamphuis made a virtue of necessity and even made a methodological and terminological mistake. Let me make some subdivisions in this third remark:

a. Prof. Kamphuis did not analyze the original text of the Apostles’ Creed and its Scriptural background in the expression “the church of God” as found in early Christian writings and even in the Creed of Arius (328). He speaks about

Jesus Christ, the centre of our faith, but does not consider the question whether the early church did not speak in a *theo*-centric, trinitarian manner. Therefore, he also does not consider the question whether the predominately Lutheran replacement of “catholic” by “Christian” could mean a subtle switch into a *Christocentric* way of speaking.

b. Prof. Kamphuis himself mentioned that already in the period which immediately *preceded* the Reformation, the word “catholic” was replaced by “Christian,” but again, he does not analyze the situation. As far as I know, one finds this replacement already in the thirteenth century. I do not call this “de tijd die *onmiddellijk* aan de reformatie voorafging.” One should investigate the motives of this medieval usage and be careful not to speak of “a heritage of the Reformation,” “a reformatioal characteristic of the church,” “a specialty of the Reformation of the 16th century,” etc.

c. Prof. Kamphuis does not deal with the question whether it was right that Luther in his German texts abandoned the word “catholic.” Is Schaff’s remark not correct that Luther unwisely left the Romanists to monopolize the name *Catholic*? And if Luther’s action was not right, how can br. Van Zandwijk defend the introduction of the now vague and colourless word “Christian” in an English text of 1983?

d. In the notes to his lecture Prof. Kamphuis justly indicates that the *Latin* texts of Luther’s Catechisms read “holy catholic church” and that the Latin text of the Large Catechism instead of “Christian church” reads *christianorum communi* (community of Christians). The first fact should make even Lutherans cautious not to introduce immediately their German peculiarity into other languages. The second fact indicates that Luther’s word “Christian” — again in the line of the Middle Ages? — not always refers to Christ Himself, but rather to *Christians*.

e. My main objection, however, is that Prof. Kamphuis spoke of “*the* church of the Reformation” in an indiscriminate manner. He should have spoken of the church in Germany and in The Netherlands. Or do Calvin, Cranmer and Knox, do the Huguenots and the Puritans — to mention only a few names — not belong to the Reformation? Br. Van Zandwijk should not have written to Synod Cloverdale about “the specific *Reformed* version of the Apostles’ Creed, *adopted by the Reformed Churches*.” It is nothing but a predominately German or Lutheran peculiarity that should not be introduced in English or French Reformed Canada.

J. FABER

— To be continued

Prayer₂

5. Childlike prayer

How do we pray? That is an important question. Sometimes our prayer seems to be a sort of an inventory or a checklist of all our wishes, desires and complaints. We bring it all before the Lord in order that He can fulfil all our wishes. And when the Lord does not act immediately according to our requests we get upset and impatient. But that is not the right attitude. That is not the way our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us to pray. The first and most important thing in our prayer should not be the fulfilment of all *our* desires, but the glory and honour of the Lord. The main issue has to be: His Name, His Kingdom and His Will. Prayer is service of gratitude. A real prayer can be said only by a true believer, by someone who knows that Jesus Christ is his Saviour and that God is his Father. That is what we can learn from Christ's teaching. Prayer is something that has to be learned. It does not just come, spontaneously, from the bottom of our heart as a natural reaction. It has to be a matter of submission and obedience to the Lord. Of course, it also has to come from the bottom of our heart, otherwise it would be hypocritical. But it has to be more than that. Lord's Day 45 mentions the requirements for a prayer God is pleased with and will hear. The apostle Paul says in Romans 8:26 "we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words."

In Matthew 7 our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us to pray like children, with childlike trust in God our Father. To pray like children is not easy, we must train ourselves. In Matthew 7:9 and 11 Jesus says: "what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? . . . If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

The meaning of this example might not be clear to everyone of us. Who will give a child a stone instead of bread? The child will not even accept the stone but rather throw it away. This example does not seem to fit, does it? However, we have to consider the situation in Jesus' time. His audience understood the meaning better than we do. In that time people did not have sliced white bread like we have now-

adays. They did not use yeast nor baking pans. They used sour dough and baked the bread in an oven which first was heated with a wood fire or they baked the bread upon an open fire. The size of the bread was more or less like our buns but more flat. The bread was not as fluffy and light as we have, but rather heavy. The stones referred to are not building bricks as we know them but pieces of pumice stone, as can be found on the shores of the river Jordan and in the hill country. These stones have about the same shape, colour and weight as bread. When we consider this we understand what it means to give a child a stone instead of bread. It is a dirty trick, because the child, trusting his parents, will accept the stone, he will not notice the difference but put the stone in his mouth and break his teeth or choke on it. Well, our Lord Jesus Christ says, which father will deal with his child in such a way? No real father, who cares for his children, will do so. Much less our heavenly Father. He never gives us something to deceive us. He never fools us in giving us something that later turns out to be dangerous or the opposite of what we thought it was. That is the meaning of the example of the bread and the stone. However, there is also another message in it. It teaches us to pray like children who trust their parents.

Parents will never give their children a stone instead of bread, but sometimes they let their children wait. When a child comes home from school and asks for a slice of bread, the parents might say "no,

that would spoil your appetite for supper. Go outside and play for a while, I will call you at suppertime." Or when the child asks for a candy the parents might say "no, here, have an apple. That is better for you." The parents know what is good for the child. They will give the children all they need, but the children must learn, that what the parents give them, is not always what they have asked for, although it might be even better for them.

It is the same with our prayers and the way our Father in heaven deals with us. He always listens to us and provides us with everything we need. But He might give us something else than we asked for or let us wait until His time. He knows what we need, much better than we know.

If we put it this way, the question may arise: why do we pray after all? Our Father knows, even better than we, what we need anyway. He gives, not what we think is good for us, but He gives according to His divine wisdom. Why do we bother to pray? He knows it all along. Let us just leave it up to Him to provide us with all we need. Why should we pray after all?

The answer to this question is given in Lord's Day 45. "Because God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only who with hearty sighing unceasingly beg them of Him and thank Him for them." Is that not the way parents deal with their children? They have to learn to ask politely. They do not rush into the house to grasp a cookie or a candy. If they want something, the parents will not deny it, but they expect



them to ask for it. Why? To show their respect and to recognize the authority of their parents. They also have to learn to say thank you. They should realize that it is the parents who provide them with all they need. They must be thankful for it and show their gratitude.

The same counts in our relation to the Lord our Father in heaven. He knows what we need. He is willing and able to give us everything, according to His wisdom, but He wants us to pray for it. In our prayer we have to show our respect, our trust in Him and our thankfulness for all He has given us and gives us every day. That is what answer 120 calls "a childlike reverence and trust towards God which should be the ground of our prayer."

6. Unanswered prayers

Is there such a thing as an unanswered prayer? It all depends on what we mean by it. In Isaiah 65:24 we read: "Before they

"Let us as children trust in Him and His care. Let us not, like impatient children, get upset or blame the Lord that He does not answer."

call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear." That is not yet the case. Isaiah speaks there (according to verse 17) about "new heavens and a new earth." In our present situation the opposite seems to be true once in a while. We call but we do not receive any answer. We speak but it seems that no one hears. We pray, sometimes for many years, but nothing happens. Still our Lord Jesus Christ says in Matthew 7:7 and 8 "Ask and it will be given to you . . . For everyone who asks receives." How can we tally these two with each other? Do unanswered prayers exist or not?

The answer to this question can be found in Matthew 7:7-12. Our heavenly Father listens to His children. He never gives us a stone instead of a bread. He never fools us, but He answers our prayers as a real Father. That means that He sometimes let us wait, in our opinion way too long, or that He gives us something else than we have asked for. Let us as children trust in Him and His care. Let us not, like impatient children, get upset or blame the Lord that He does not answer. That happens quite often. But that is not caused by unanswered prayers but by our shortsightedness. We as children do not see the hand of our Father. But, none-the-less, He is at work.

It is not always easy to accept this. Especially not when we are really in trouble and have to wait very long. Sometimes our faith is put to the test. We have to learn to accept the will of our Father. We have to trust in Him and believe that He knows and gives us what is good for us.

7. The contents of our prayer

What belongs to a faithful prayer? What are we allowed to ask for and what not?

Are we allowed to ask for everything we wish? Yes, we are, at least if we do it with childlike reverence and trust toward God. That means that we must be aware of the fact that our Father knows what is good for us.

There are even things we *have to* ask for. Question 117 Heidelberg Catechism says: "What belongs to such a prayer as God is pleased with and will hear?" The answer is that we have to call upon Him "for all He has *commanded* us to ask of Him." That means that there are things we *have to* ask for. It shows us clearly that there are requirements for our prayer. It is not just a matter of our personal feelings and emotions but a *commandment* of the Lord.

In the following Lord's Day the Heidel-

berg Catechism shows us what the contents of our prayers should be. It is, in the first place, the honour and glory of the Lord, His Name, His Kingdom and His Will.

We pray Thy Kingdom come. That is not a wish. At the end of the Lord's Prayer it says: For thine *is* the Kingdom. We pray for the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven and, at the same time, we confess Thine *is* the Kingdom. We know that His Kingdom is already at hand and coming. In answer 128 we confess, "Thou, as our King who hast power over all things, art both willing and able to give us all good."

We are allowed to ask for everything, as long as we do it with the confession: not my will but Thy will be done. We do not have a promise that the Lord will give us everything we ask for. There are certain things we have been promised. There are things we can ask without saying: "If it pleases Thee," because we know that the Lord is pleased to give it. We are allowed to call upon His promises, to use our baptism, to ask for the forgiveness of our sins and the guidance of the Holy Spirit "for Christ's sake." We know that the Lord will give us what we are asking for because He has given us His promise. We can count on it. We do not have to add, "if it pleases Thee," or, "Thy will be done," because we know the will of the Lord in this respect, we know that He is pleased to hear us.

There are things the Lord has not promised to give us. Still we are allowed to ask for them if we add, "not as I will but as Thou wilt."

Some people wonder whether we are allowed to ask for the impossible. Are we allowed to ask for restoration to health, when we know that someone is incurably ill? Are we allowed to ask for recovery, although we know that it is impossible? Are we allowed to ask for a miracle?

Yes, we are, because what is a "miracle?" What is impossible? When is someone "incurably ill?" There are miracles in our life, at least if we are willing to see it! Every birth is a miracle. And in the sight of the Lord no one is "incurably" ill. We are always allowed to ask for recovery, although we do not always receive what we are asking for. Sometimes the will of the Lord is different. But because we do not know the will of the Lord in this respect, we are allowed to pray. As long as we do it with reverence and not as impatient children who try to get their way and who get upset if they do not succeed. We should never oppose the will of the Lord. We always have to submit to Him and His decisions.

Another question is whether someone who is sick always *has* to ask for recovery. That is certainly not the case. We see very often that the Lord "prepares" someone for the end. First we hear a fervent prayer for recovery. After a while the contents of the prayer changes. More emphasis is given to the strength to carry on and to accept the suffering. We have seen very often during visits and discussions with terminally ill people that they are growing in a certain direction. Finally they pray that the Lord will take them away and relieve them from their suffering. They are looking forward to the end, to be united with Christ. We are also allowed to pray for the end. We do not know what the will of the Lord is. Therefore we say, "not as I will but as Thou wilt." And if the Lord does not give us what we are asking for, we must accept His decision as the right one. It happens that people who were prepared to die and who asked the Lord to be taken away soon, recover. They might find it very difficult to go back to normal life. They wish they could have died. We can understand how people feel in such a situation. However, in all circumstances of life we must learn to accept the will of our heavenly Father. He gives us all we need, every time we ask Him. He gives us the strength to carry the burden we have to bear. He gives us the strength when we *need* it. He does not give us the strength to die as long as we have the task to live. We have no promise that He will give us today what we need tomorrow or next year. According to Hebrews 4:16 we have a High-priest in heaven from whom we will receive mercy and grace to help in time of need. Just in time. Not up front, but also never too late.

W. POUWELSE
— To be continued

Take one or two with you³

Still one witness

Although this is the procedure we usually follow and has been the procedure for as long as I can remember, I have had doubts about its correctness for quite a while.

Basically, if we follow this route and accept this procedure as correct, *we could condemn a man on the basis of the testimony of one person.*

For clarity's sake: If only one brother knows of the sin and if the witness(es) goes along only to be witness(es) of fruitless admonitions, not of the sin, we do *not* have the testimony, the witness of two or three persons, but only of *one*.

Would we thereby not act contrary to what the LORD commanded His people through the mouth of Moses? These commandments are still valid and in force for us today. The Lord Jesus did not invalidate any Old Testament rule; He only fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. Thus we are still bound by the command that on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be determined.

However, we do *not* have the witness of two or three persons when one comes with the charge — which is a better word than “accusation” in this connection — and when one or two confirm that the procedure which brother number One describes to the Consistory has indeed been followed. Then we still have the witness of only one brother.

Secret-public?

There is, perhaps, a basic mistake in our practice in this respect. Are we not differentiating between secret and public sins? But is that a correct dilemma?

What is the opposite of secret? It is “open” or “known.”

What is the opposite of public? It is “private” or “personal.”

In our Church Order we do not speak of “secret” sins; we speak of a public sin or a sin which had to be reported to the consistory.

Article 67 says, “The consistory shall not deal with any matter pertaining to purity of doctrine or piety of life that is reported to it unless it has first ascertained that both private admonitions and admonitions in the presence of one or two witnesses

have remained fruitless, or that the sin committed is of a public character.”

“Secret” sins are not the same as “private” sins, “not-public” sins.

Witness of what?

Does it not follow from what we found in Deuteronomy 17 that the witnesses whom the accuser brings along should be witnesses of the *sin* instead of his fruitless admonitions?

How can the hand of the second and of the third witness take up a stone as required by the LORD through Moses' mouth if they have not been witnesses of the transgression? No one shall be put to death upon the testimony of only one person!

Does it not follow from this that, if someone comes with witnesses who were merely witnesses of his fruitless admonitions, we should *refuse* such a brother or sister admission to the Consistory meeting and that we should refuse to listen to his charges?

Even if he brings *ten* people along who witnessed that his admonitions remained without effect, even then we would base a condemnation of a brother upon the testimony of only one person, namely, the accuser.

This would be in direct conflict with the express command of our God.

Listen to them

Certainly, the Lord Jesus tells us that, if a brother has sinned against us, we shall go and admonish him between him and us alone. We should not say, “Let someone else do it, for there are more people who know about it.” Go yourself, is the command of the Saviour, tell him where he went wrong and try to bring him back from a path which, ultimately, must lead to eternal ruin. Don't go to him with a whole crowd, do not organize an assault-force. Go by yourself. It is your aim to win the brother, isn't it? Act then accordingly and do not aggravate the situation in any way.

Only when he does not heed your admonitions and does not wish to come back from his sinful way, you are to take one or two with you.

These one or two must be equally informed about the sin and know every as-

pect of it. They must together, the two or three of them, with one voice admonish and try to bring back the sinner from his disastrous way, for the Saviour says, “If he refuses to listen to *them*”

This implies that both or all three of them speak and say the same thing, speaking from their own knowledge and experience.

Let me say a little more about this.

The Lord Jesus did not say, “If he does not listen to *him* in the presence of one or two others.” The Lord said, “If he does not listen to *them*.” Both must speak, therefore, or, in case there are two that have been taken along, the three of them must speak, admonish the brother.

However, if I have been taken along as a witness — that is: to witness that br. A. admonishes br. B., and that br. B. refuses to heed the admonitions — I cannot admonish br. B., for I was not a witness of his transgression. And if I had lived in the Old Testament dispensation, I could never have taken up a stone to make a beginning to the execution, for I did not witness the transgression. I could only go by what br. A. said and tell about br. B's reaction to it.

It is, therefore, incorrect to state that the witnesses go along only as witnesses of admonitions and the reaction to them.

It is equally incorrect to state that these witnesses only have to be present at the admonitions and have to keep silent, not taking sides, be silent partners in the whole procedure.

It is incorrect — as our practice has been, I must admit — to state that these witnesses may speak only before the Consistory, somewhat in this vein: When the accuser says, “I admonished br. A., and he refused to listen, didn't he, brethren?” they are supposed to say only “Yes, Mr. Chairman, he did.” Upon which the chairman says, “Thank you, brethren, for your presence and your testimony, you may leave now; the Consistory will have to deal with it further.”

Once again

Although it is some kind of repetition, I still would like to recapitulate our conclusion.

When we are correct in our understanding of the Scriptures, we are to

refuse as Consistories to receive any brother who comes with charges based only on his own testimony, never mind how many witnesses to his admonitions he brings along.

We are allowed to receive a brother only when he can say, "Here is another brother who was also a witness of the sin and whom I took along, together to admonish the sinner. This brother can also testify that the sin was committed and can do so from his own personal observation and knowledge. He went with me to admonish the brother. My admonitions remained fruitless; let *him* now speak and tell his experience and the reaction to his admonitions."

Only in such a case there is the testimony of two witnesses.

Only then the matter shall be established.

Investigate

What is the Consistory to do when two have appeared before it with the same testimony?

Take action right away, send two elders down to admonish the brother?

No way!

Moses says expressly and emphatically that they shall diligently inquire and only upon finding the charges true and well-founded, act further.

This still applies to our Consistories. Even when a unanimous testimony concerning the sin and concerning the reaction to admonitions has been brought before the Consistory, the latter has to investigate the matter on its own in order to see whether there are any discrepancies, whether the sin has been committed indeed, and whether there is no repentance with the brother or sister.

It happened before that there were two witnesses who testified the same thing, upon which testimony someone was put to death while innocent. Who does not recall what we read about Naboth in Jezreel?

There is only one proper way in which the hand of all can be against the sinner if there is no repentance. It is the way of thorough investigation.

What about secret sins?

Meanwhile someone could ask, "But what about the secret sins, the sins committed against one person of whom no one else knows? What about the sins which have been witnessed by one person only? Can these sins, then, never be brought legitimately before the Consistory?"

If the "Yes" of the one stands over-against the "No" of the other, and if there are no further witnesses, what else can we do but leave the matter in the hands of the Lord who sees in secret and who will reward openly? In this case we cannot

CHRISTUS IST ERSTANDEN

*Christ the Lord is risen again;
Christ hath broken every chain;
Hark! angelic voices cry,
Singing evermore on high, Alleluia!*

*He, Who gave for us His Life,
Who for us endured the strife,
Is our Paschal Lamb to-day;
We too sing for joy, and say, Alleluia!*

*He Who slumbered in the grave
Is exalted now to save;
Now through Christendom it rings
That the Lamb is King of kings, Alleluia!*

CATHERINE WINKWORTH,
From an old Bohemian Hymn.

investigate, apart from the fact that we are not allowed to do this except upon the testimony of at least *two* persons.

There is, of course, the possibility that the brother whom it concerns blabs it all over the place and that in no time flat everyone knows about it. Alas, this oftentimes happens, contrary to the command of our Lord.

However, does a secret sin become a public sin or a non-secret sin by the indiscretion of the brother who broadcasts it all around? (Here I use the word "public" because everyone *knows* about it.) The sin itself still remains a secret sin although it has become common knowledge. It is and remains a sin of which only one brother was witness.

It would be completely wrong if the Consistory took action on the basis of what are mere rumours, however true these rumours may be!

The person who spreads the story should be admonished and, if necessary, be further disciplined because of his sin against the ninth commandment.

It is conceivable that this brother who knows about the secret sin takes some other person along to witness his admonitions.

From our above conclusions it will be clear that a Consistory will never be allowed to take the matter to hand if such a brother should come with his witness, for the witness did not witness the sin.

No direct reply

In the New Testament dispensation

we no longer receive a direct reply from the Lord when we have difficulties which we cannot solve or questions we cannot answer. This was different in the Old Testament days.

In Numbers 5 we read of a woman who has committed adultery, but there are no witnesses, except, of course, the man with whom she committed adultery, but he won't come forward to cast the first stone.

The husband, however, suspects something but has no witness. He becomes jealous, we read.

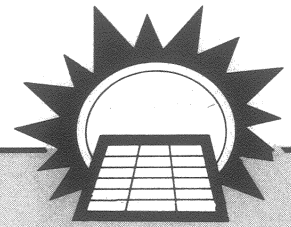
Then he shall bring his wife to the priests, who shall take some of the dust from the floor of the tabernacle, put it into water, and make the woman drink it.

If she is innocent and the man suspects her unjustly, nothing will happen; if she is guilty she will have pain, swelling of her body.

This is the result of a direct action by the LORD. *He* gives the verdict, which no one else could do.

The LORD no longer speaks to us by these means. We have His Word and should pray for the illumination by the Holy Spirit that we may understand the Scriptures and more and more direct also our Church-life according to the will of our Lord.

It was in order to contribute towards a better understanding of the will of the Lord as revealed to us in His Word that the above lines were written.



God's Love

When you fully trust
in God,
You know that God's love
will never fail you,
Nothing can separate you
from God's love.

Circumstances
may sometimes cause you
to *feel* forsaken,
But you never are.

You may temporarily fail
to *enjoy* the presence
and love of God
because of your hurts
or fears,
But God's love is still there!

Circumstances
don't change the reality
of God's presence and love,
Even though you may change
in your awareness
of them.

God remains lovingly faithful,
and faithfully loving.

God doesn't change!

The Bible says . . .

Who shall separate us
from the love of Christ?
Shall trouble or hardships
or persecution or famine
or nakedness or danger or sword?
No, in all these things
we are more than conquerors
through him who loved us,
For I am convinced
that neither death nor life,
neither angels nor demons,
nor any powers,
Neither height nor depth,

nor anything else
in all creation,
Will be able to separate us
from the love of God
that is in Christ Jesus
our Lord.

Romans 8:35, 37, 39

*Birthdays in the month of April show as follows
on our calendar:*

*The Lord willing, two brothers and one sister
will celebrate their birthdays that month.*

DEREK KOK

337 Dominion Street
Strathsroy, ON N7G 3G9

*Derek hopes to celebrate his 15th birthday on
April 2. Derek is physically and mentally handicapped.
(I have no updated information on him.)*

MARINUS FOEKENS

Oxford 2
Southwestern Regional Centre
Cedar Springs, ON

*Marinus hopes to celebrate his 33rd birthday
on April 19. He is very fond of children, he loves
music, and will very much enjoy receiving colour-
ful cards for his birthday.*

ARLENE DEWIT

Barnston Island
Surrey, BC V3T 4W2

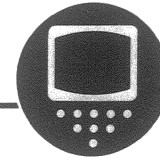
*Arlene's birthday is on April 23rd. She will be
24 years old on that day. She is an active girl re-
gardless of her handicap. She can only see with one
eye and her speech is limited. Please send an up
to date picture, Arlene?*

A thought for today:

*"Better to trust the man who is frequently in
error than the one who is never in doubt."*

Send your requests and updated information to:

MRS. J.K. RIEMERSMA
380 St. Andrew Street East
Fergus, ON N1M 1R1



Regional Synod West, Carman, MB, February 5, 6, 7, 1985.

Art. 1: Opening. The chairman of the convening church, the Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer calls the meeting to order, asks to sing Psalm 111:1, 2, reads I Peter 3:8-22 and leads in prayer.

Art. 2: Credentials. The credentials are read and found in good order. Both Classes are duly represented.

Art. 3: Constitution. The officers are elected as follows: Rev. J. Geertsema, chairman; Rev. W. Pouwelse, vice-chairman; Rev. J. Visscher, clerk. Regional Synod is constituted.

Art. 4: Agenda. After some additions have been made, the agenda is adopted.

Art. 5: Correspondence. A letter from the Classis Pacific May 23, 1985 with the names of the delegates to Regional Synod and two copies of the Acts of Classis Pacific are taken note of.

Art. 6: Instructions. There appear to be no instructions.

Art. 7: Appeals. a: Appeal of the Church at Neerlandia. The Church at Neerlandia, Alberta, appeals a decision of the Classis Alberta/Manitoba March/May 1984. An Advisory Committee is appointed. After ample discussion in plenary session the following report is adopted:

A. The Regional Synod *observes* that

1. The Church at Neerlandia is concerned because the Consistory of the Immanuel Church has decided to appeal certain decisions of General Synod 1983 but did not give "any proof for grounds" of their disagreement.

2. The Church at Neerlandia is concerned that this may set a dangerous precedent, undermining the strength of the federation of Churches.

3. The Church at Neerlandia states that

a. this proof should be forwarded to the first Classis or Regional Synod;

b. this evidence (proof) must be judged by Classis or Regional Synod as to whether it is in reality valid in the light of God's Word;

c. Classis or Regional Synod must instruct the appellant to retract or advise him to proceed with the appeal to the next major assembly.

4. Classis Alberta/Manitoba in its Acts, Article 35 (March-May, 1984) stated under *consideration* 1. "Article 31 safeguards the right of all members of the church not to accept for settled and binding any decision by a major assembly

which is found contrary to the Word of God."

It also *judges*:

"1. That it is not in the province of Classis to advise the presbytery to instruct Rev. DeBruin in the sense of appellant's request (consideration 1).

2. That it can be expected that presbytery and minister while exercising their church orderly right, will do so mindful of their duty to promote and enhance peace and unity in the congregation (observ. 4; consider. 2)."

5. The Church at Neerlandia request Regional Synod to judge

"1. On the use and interpretation of Article 31 C.O. by Classis Alberta-Manitoba;

2. That Classis Alberta-Manitoba be urged to rescind the judgment as made, and instruct Edmonton's Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church and/or Rev. DeBruin, to as yet provide Classis with proof that the decision of General Synod Cloverdale was contrary to God's Word, and thereby must be appealed. If this cannot be done, than appellant must submit to the decision made, and then, if not satisfied, request additional proof and/or clarification of evidence given with the decision, from the next General Synod. In this manner unity and peace may prevail in the church and the federation. This will then also, in practice, enhance the meaning of the subscription form for ministers."

B. The Regional Synod *considers* that

1. Article 31 C.O. says that "whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, *unless* it is *proved* to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order." This Article safeguards the right *not* to execute a decision if it be proven to be in conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order.

2. The Church Order does not demand that a church which is appealing a decision of the General Synod has to submit its appeal first to Classis and/or Regional Synod in order to have it judged by these major assemblies. If a church does not bind itself to a decision of General Synod, it would be fitting that it notify Classis and/or Regional Synod of its decision and supply the grounds for its decision.

3. While the Church at Neerlandia is in error in its demand that the Immanuel Church has to submit its appeal, along with accompanying proof to Classis and/

or Regional Synod in order to have that appeal judged by them, it is a fact that a Classis or Regional Synod can be asked to support a request for revision of a General Synod decision or to take it over.

4. When a consistory informs the congregation of its intent to appeal a decision of General Synod and declares that no member of the congregation is bound by the particular General Synod decision, it should at the same time inform the congregation of the *grounds* for its decision.

C. The Regional Synod *judges* that

1. The Church at Neerlandia has not proven that Classis Alberta-Manitoba's use of Article 31 C.O. was incorrect.

2. It cannot grant the request of the Church at Neerlandia (sub. Obs. 5, b.)

Art. 7b: Appeal br. H. De Jong. Br. H. De Jong appeals a decision to the Classis Alberta/Manitoba March/May 1984. An Advisory Committee is appointed. After ample discussion in plenary session the following report is adopted:

A. The Regional Synod *observes* that

1. Br. H. De Jong complains that every major Assembly has refused to deal with his complaints.

2. The Immanuel Church Consistory, according to the decisions of major assemblies, has replied to br. H. De Jong's complaints in a letter dated August 20, 1984, which was after the date for which this Regional Synod (June 1984) was first scheduled to be convened.

3. Br. H. De Jong agrees with the decision of General Synod concerning the teaching of the Rev. S. DeBruin which were made in reply to the Noot/Werkman appeals.

4. Br. H. De Jong complains that the Immanuel Church did not implement the decisions of General Synod concerning the teachings of the Rev. DeBruin while not providing proof that it conflicts with the Word of God and the Church Order (Article 31 C.O.) via Classis and Regional Synod.

5. Br. H. De Jong complains that the Consistory and Classis have bound themselves to a decision concerning which a major assembly has made a contrary judgment.

6. Br. H. De Jong complains that not he, but the Consistory of the Immanuel Church caused schism while maintaining doctrines and teachings which the General Synod judged must be rejected.

7. Br. H. De Jong complains that

matters which deal with the Confessions and therefore pertain to all the churches of the federation have been dealt with in closed session.

B. The Regional Synod *considers* that

1. The major Assemblies have replied to br. H. De Jong's complaints by instructing the Immanuel Church Consistory to answer this brother's complaints. (Regional Synod West Sept. 1983 Article 5; General Synod 1983 Article 157; Classis Alberta/Manitoba March/May 1984 Article 31)

2. From the requests of this brother (observation 3) it is clear that he considers the judgment of General Synod concerning the Noot/Werkman appeal an answer to his complaints against the teachings of the Rev. DeBruin.

3. The General Synod itself does not apply the decisions the way br. H. De Jong does. General Synod also stated: "Although some statements and teachings of Rev. DeBruin are to be rejected, yet it cannot be said that he attacks the Confessions and has thereby broken the promise given when he signed the subscription form for ministers of the Word. Coming with a certain interpretation of the Confession which is to be rejected does not necessarily mean launching an attack on the Confession."

4. Br. H. De Jong is wrong when he assumes that if he again joins the Immanuel Church, he, by that very fact, withdraws all his objections against the teachings of the Rev. DeBruin concerning which General Synod has already made a decision. But he must withdraw the schismatic act of leaving the church before the church orderly way had been fully exhausted.

5. When a major assembly makes a judgment which objects to a decision of a minor assembly, the decision of the major assembly stands and must be binding according to Article 31 C.O. The minor assembly does not have to withdraw its previous decision in a formal way, but is accepted as being wrong while the decision of the major assembly stands.

6. The appellant has received no assurance from the Immanuel Church Consistory that the decision of General Synod (namely that "some statements and teachings of Rev. DeBruin must be rejected) is implemented nor has Classis seen to it that the church hold to what they have bound themselves to. Neither the Consistory of the Immanuel Church, nor Classis have proven that the decision of General Synod is in conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order.

7. The Classis and Regional Synod, while in closed session, did not deal with the Confessions themselves, but with the question whether the confessions are maintained. To do this confidential



45th Wedding Anniversary



Mr. and Mrs. John and Helen de Haas will celebrate their forty-fifth Wedding Anniversary on April 10. They were married just one month before the Second World War engulfed The Netherlands as well. During the war they were living in The Hague, and in 1947 they emigrated to Canada. At first they settled in Burdett but soon moved to Coaldale, Alberta. One cannot read up on the history of the Canadian Reformed Churches without being told about the "Holland Yard." In 1951 the family moved to New Westminster, or rather Burnaby, British Columbia, where Mr. de Haas established a vegetable sales route which later on developed into a store of his own, the Holland Shopping Centre. Now living in Langley, BC, both Mr. and Mrs. de Haas may still enjoy a good health and be active in all sorts of endeavours.

Recently we could read in Clarion about a book, written by Mr. de Haas, containing particulars of all ministers who served in the Netherlands churches which found their origin in the Secession of 1834 or the Doleantie of 1886. This concluded the work of almost a lifetime.

Enjoying their retirement, they also like travelling and are thankful for the grace of the Lord which allows them to do it.



material from the Consistory archives was used.

C. The Regional Synod *judges* that

1. Br. H. De Jong is unjustified in his complaint that the major assemblies refused to deal with his complaints.

2. It was unrealistic of br. H. De Jong and of the Classis to expect a reply from the Consistory to br. H. De Jong concerning a matter which the General Synod had already made a decision.

3. It is unjust of the appellant to assume that the minor assemblies refused to accept the decisions of the major assemblies when they did not formally withdraw a previous decision now judged to be wrong.

4. When the Immanuel Church instructed its congregation not to hold a decision of General Synod settled and binding it should immediately have provided the grounds to the congregation to show that the decision in question was contrary to the Word of God or Church Order.

5. Classis was correct to instruct br. H. De Jong to take up contact with the Immanuel Church and be united with it as a member. Br. H. De Jong should recognize that through his withdrawal from the church he has placed himself outside the jurisdiction of the General Synod to which he has appealed. He has thereby undermined his ability to act as a living

member of the church. He should also recognize that Rev. S. DeBruin was not judged to be worthy of suspension by General Synod 1983 and hence he should cease to agitate for his suspension. If he cannot accept the decision of General Synod 1983 he should seek to have it revised by appealing to the next General Synod.

Furthermore, Regional Synod deplores the spirit in which br. H. De Jong has written his appeal and the unsubstantiated condemnations that he utters. It would remind him of the need to exercise Christian charity and compassion in his utterances and actions.

Art. 7c: Appeal br. J. Werkman. Br. J. Werkman appeals a decision of the Classis Alberta/Manitoba March/May 1984. An Advisory Committee is appointed. After ample discussion in plenary session the following report is adopted:

A. The Regional Synod *observes* that

1. Br. J. Werkman objects to a Classis decision by which Classis judges that "br. Werkman should immediately take up contact with the consistory of the Immanuel Church in order to be re-instated as member of the church and place himself under the supervision of the God given office-bearers."

2. Br. J. Werkman states that he cannot accept this decision of Classis because it would mean to "1. Retract our objections. 2. Go against the General Synod decision. 3. Go against Scripture and Confession. 4. Go against our conscience." He also makes the claim that the Consistory demands that he bind himself to the views of Rev. S. DeBruin.

3. Br. J. Werkman had requested Classis "...not to accept Rev. S. DeBruin and any other delegate from the Immanuel Church at Edmonton who does not stand behind our confession." "Not to recognize the Rev. S. DeBruin as a minister of the Word, to admonish and instruct the Consistory of the Immanuel Church to suspend their minister, and to declare Rev. S. DeBruin worthy of being suspended." And to give advice "in a situation I find myself and other faithful members in."

4. The appellant in his letter to Regional Synod states that; "The General Synod judges that Rev. DeBruin 'Nullifies' and 'Undermines' the confessions. We agree with that decision for that is what our objections are all about."

5. Classis decided "Not to deal with br. J. Werkman's request since General Synod Cloverdale has already given a judgment in appellant's case," and "br. J. Werkman should immediately take up contact with the consistory of the Immanuel Church in order to be reinstated as a member of the church and place him-

self under the supervision of the God-given office-bearers."

6. As quoted by br. J. Werkman, Rev. S. DeBruin has made the following statement:

"Until the matter has been dealt with by General Synod 1986 I will do my utmost when on the pulpit or in the catechism classes, from making any use of or reference to the statements 'all true believers are already members of the Christ's church,' and 'there is a plurality of churches,' since these statements are considered by the General Synod 1983 to be of such a nature that they are judged to nullify and undermine Article 28 of the Belgic Confession."

7. Br. J. Werkman states that "no other major assembly has instructed him to go back to the Immanuel Church."

B. The Regional Synod *considers* that

1. From the requests of this brother it is clear that he did not request Classis to judge the matter concerning which General Synod had made a judgment but states what he thinks must be the consequent application of the General Synod decision.

2. Br. J. Werkman is wrong when he assumes that if he again joins the Immanuel Church, he by that very fact withdraws all his objections against the Rev. DeBruin concerning which General Synod has already made a decision.

3. The General Synod itself does not apply the decision the way br. J. Werkman does. General Synod also stated; "Although some statements and teachings of Rev. DeBruin are to be rejected, yet it cannot be said that he attacks the Confessions and has thereby broken the promise given when he signed the subscription form for ministers of the Word. Coming with a certain interpretation of the Confession which is to be rejected *does not necessarily mean launching* an attack on the Confession."

4. Rev. S. DeBruin does not consider his conscience to be bound by the General Synod decision, however, the fact that Rev. DeBruin voluntarily promised that he, pending his appeal to the next General Synod, will do his utmost to refrain from making use of or reference to the statements rejected by General Synod 1983, warranted the judgment of Classis that "it can be expected that presbytery and minister while exercising their church orderly right, will do so mindful of their duty to promote and enhance peace and unity in the congregation."

5. Regional Synod (Sept. 1983) *Acts*, Article 7, II, (e) in addressing br. J. Werkman expressed itself on the impropriety of withdrawing from the church without following the appeal process to

its logical end. Furthermore, the same Regional Synod in addressing br. H. De Jong stated that his withdrawal "short-circuits the appeal process laid out in the Church Order, and as such, he should request readmission to the church and follow the church orderly way." (*Acts*, Article 5, III, (b))

C. The Regional Synod *judges* that

1. It cannot sustain br. J. Werkman's requests and objections;

2. Br. J. Werkman should recognize that through his act of withdrawal from the church he has placed himself outside the jurisdiction of the General Synod to which he has appealed. He has thereby undermined his ability to act as a living member of the church. He should also recognize that Rev. S. DeBruin was not judged to be worthy of suspension by General Synod 1983 and hence he should cease to agitate for his suspension. If he cannot accept the decision of General Synod 1983 he should seek to have it revised by appealing to the next General Synod.

3. The Immanuel Consistory cannot and does not force br. J. Werkman to accept the views of the Rev. S. DeBruin and therefore he should never have withdrawn himself from the church and should rejoin it. He should cease making unsubstantiated accusations, and if demands are made upon him which he deems unacceptable he has the right to appeal them. If he would conduct himself in this manner and if the Immanuel Consistory continues to deal with him in a brotherly spirit, the peace of Jerusalem would be promoted.

Art. 8: Overtures. A proposal of the Providence Church at Edmonton to have the Regional Synod convened every time at the same place, in order to save travelling costs, is defeated.

Art. 9: Reports. a. Reports of the deputies ad Article 48 C.O. re peremptory examination of two candidates for the Ministry are taken gratefully note of.

b. Report of the treasurer with attached report re auditing of the books by a Certified Accountant is taken note of, with gratitude for the work done by both of them.

Art. 10: Appointments. a. Regional Synod Treasurer: Mr. H. Lubbers, 1906 - 9A Street, Coaldale, AB T0K 0L0

b. Archive Church — The Providence Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton.

c. Church for the Inspection of the Archives — The Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton.

d. Deputies ad Article 48 C.O. — for Alberta-Manitoba - Rev. M. VanBeveren, Rev. J.D. Wielenga (alternate: Rev. A. De Jager) Pacific - Rev. M. VanderWel, Rev. J. Visscher (alternate: Rev. J. Geertsema)

e. Nominations for Governor of the Theological College.

The following brothers are nominated: Rev. J. Geertsema, Rev. M. VanBeveren, Rev. J. Visscher (alternates: Rev. M. VanderWel, Rev. B.J. Berends, Rev. C. Van Spronsen, in that order)

f. Delegates to General Synod 1986 — *Ministers:* Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer, Rev. J. Geertsema, Rev. W. Pouwelse, Rev. M. VanBeveren (alternates: Rev. B.J. Berends, Rev. J. Visscher, Rev. M. VanderWel, Rev. A. De Jager, in that order)

Elders: H.A. Berends, P. deRuiter, E.J. VanWoudenberg, H. Veenendaal (alternates: J. deHaas Sr., C. Hoogerdijk, M. Hooijmeijer, R. Klaver, in that order).

Art. 11: Next Regional Synod. Convening Church for the next Regional Synod is Chilliwack. This Regional Synod will be held, D.V. November 1986 in Chilliwack.

Art. 12: Question Period. Some questions are asked and answered.

Art. 13: Censure Ad. Article 44 C.O. No censure has to be exercised.

Art. 14: Acts and Press Release. The Acts are read and adopted.

The press release is read and approved.

Art. 15: Closing. The chairman thanks the Church at Carman for the work done in preparation for this Regional

Synod and for the hospitality shown to the members of Synod. In some well chosen words the ladies are thanked for their excellent care and their work behind the scenes in the kitchen.

The vice-chairman, the Rev. W. Pouwelse, thanks the chairman for his leadership. He asks to sing Psalm 145:1 and leads in prayer.

The chairman, the Rev. J. Geertsema, closes the Regional Synod West February 1985.

On behalf of the Regional Synod
W. POUWELSE
vice-chairman

“Anchor” Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, Inc., February 15, 1985

After the singing of Psalm 139:1, the chairman opened the meeting with prayer and read Matthew 5:1-16.

Minutes of the meeting held on January 11 were adopted.

Incoming Mail, consisting of:

1. Bill 82, which was obtained to check on the duties of schoolboards in relation to handicapped children.

2. Eight responses to postings

placed at manpower in St. Catharines. P. Veenstra and L. De Jong are to draft replies to these applications.

Outgoing Mail:

A letter to K. Brouwer was read and approved.

Committee Reports:

No summer camp report. A question arose concerning attendance of children outside of our own churches. The board will deal with each case individually.

Financial Report: In 1985, \$31,000 were obtained by various means.

A discussion follows on how to increase the membership and fees. This is to be discussed again when the budget is presented.

Difficulties in drawing up a budget are brought forward by the treasurer.

P. Veenstra reported for the building committee on difficulties experienced with the severance of land.

A copy of a building sketch is passed around.

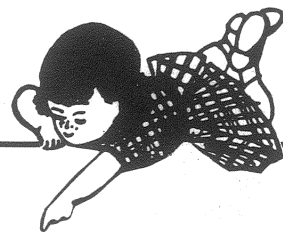
A letter to br. Zomer is drafted and approved.

A discussion on alternate board member representation follows.

After the singing of Psalm 139:13, sr. A. Koning closes the meeting with prayer.

E.J. DE JONG

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



Dear Busy Beavers,

Here is a beautiful Easter hymn.
Do you know it already?

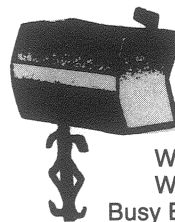
THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED

1. The Lord is risen, yes indeed! Hallelujah!
Jesus made our death to die.
So we loudly sing and cry:
The Lord is risen, yes indeed! Hallelujah!
2. Daughters of Jerusalem
come at dawn and look for Him.
The Lord is risen, yes indeed! Hallelujah!
4. Here's the news an angel gives:
"He was dead but now He lives."
The Lord is risen, yes indeed! Hallelujah!
7. "Seek Him not among the dead.
Sing a song of joy instead."
The Lord is risen, yes indeed! Hallelujah!

Would you like to learn this hymn?

You can find it in the little hymn book called "All Will Be New."

Try it!



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Angela Paize*. We are happy to have you join us. You're a real Busy Beaver already, I see. Thanks for the puzzles. You're a very lucky girl to be skiing at school, Angela!

And a big welcome to you, too, *Julie Stieva*. We hope you will really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver fun! Did you have fun on your birthday, Julie?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Linda Nap*. I see you had lots of fun in the snow this winter. Do you practise your organ lessons every day, Linda? Let me hear how you are doing, all right?

Welcome to the Club *Ray Buitenbos*. We are happy to have an American Busy Beaver join us! How are your pet pigeons doing, Ray? And thank you very much for the puzzle.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Geraldine Schenkel*. Thank you for your big letter. Maybe when you get a pen pal you can trade stickers and pennies, and maybe even stamps! Thanks for the puzzle, Geraldine.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Hinrik Nap*. I see you really are a Busy Beaver! Will you write and tell us about picking eggs, Hinrik? Be sure to let us know about your greenhouse!

Welcome to the Club *Stacey Schutten*! Thank you for a

very nice letter and especially the riddles! The Busy Beavers will really like them, I know. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver fun, Stacey.

Hello, *Mariet Nap*. It was nice to hear from you again. Do you think it might be a good idea, Mariet, to keep your wintry wordsearch till NEXT winter because everybody is thinking SPRING by now?

Thank you very much for sharing your recipe, *Kerri-Anne Wierenga*. I know the Busy Beavers will love your treats. Congratulations on a good report, Kerri-Anne.

You've been very busy, I see, *Debbie Jagt!* Thank you for the puzzle, the jokes and the poem. Did you enjoy your March break, Debbie?

Hello, *Alice Van Woudenberg*. I was glad to hear from you again. I can see you and your family have had some really good times together! Were you in one of the skits, too, Alice? Thanks for the puzzle.

What a lot of fun you had at your birthday party *Mary-Lynn DeBoer!* Thank you for your colourful picture, I really like it! Keep up the good work, Mary-Lynn.

You're another one of those lucky people who ski at school, *Sheila Wierenga!* Congratulations on a good report card. Thanks, Sheila, for the jokes. Did you have a good holiday?

Quiz Time!

WORD SEARCH from the PSALMS by Busy Beaver Cheryl VandeBurgt

Look for:
heavens
bountifully
righteous
inhabitants
congregation
affliction
Zion
Hermon

wicked
Canaan
Pharaoh
Jerusalem
Almighty
salvation
serpent
Lord
house

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

EASTER QUIZ

"WE HAVE SEEN THE LORD"

- John 20:18 _____ went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord."
- Matt. 28:9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Hail!" And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. (Who were "they"?)

- Mark 16:12 After this He (the Lord) appeared in another form to _____, as they were walking into the country.
- John 20:20 Then the _____ were glad when they saw the Lord.
- Luke 24:34 (The eleven) said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to _____!"
- I Cor. 15:6 Then He appeared to more than _____ at one time, most of whom are still alive
- I Cor. 15:8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me. (Who was "me"?)

- Luke 24:48 You are _____ of these things.
- John 20:29 Jesus said to (Thomas) "Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who _____ and yet believe."

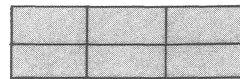
Answers below

PUZZLE

by Busy Beaver Alice Van Woudenberg

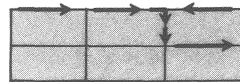
The object of this game is to trace all of the segments the least number of times. You may have to trace some segments twice.

What is the least number of times you can trace it before it is complete?



It can be done in only 19 times to complete it. But it's not easy!

example:



In this case you'll have to retrace a segment

Answers:

EASTER QUIZ: 1. Mary Magdalene 2. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary 3. two of them 4. disciples 5. Simon 6. five hundred brethren 7. Paul, the author of the letter to the Corinthians 8. witnesses 9. have not seen

BIRD NAME SCRAMBLE (from last time) 1. junco 2. sparrow 3. cardinal 4. blue jay 5. nuthatch 6. mourning dove

NEXT TIME, Busy Beavers I hope to tell you about our new Contest!

Be sure to watch!

Hope to "see" you then!

With love from your Aunt Betty

You know my address!
Aunt Betty, Box 54
Fergus, ON N1M 2W7



Colour me!

Luke 23,24

Mark 15,16

Matthew 27,28

Quiz Questions

Jesus was executed by being nailed to the c_____1 (Matthew 27:35). He was crucified with two c_____2 (Mark 15:27). While He was dying He cried in a loud voice to God. (Mark 15:34) His b_____3 was taken down and wrapped in linen cloth and laid in a t_____4 (Luke 23:53). Pilate ordered a g_____5 be placed at the tomb (Matthew 27:65,66). Some women brought spices and saw the s_____6 from the entrance was r_____7 away (Mark 16:1-3). They did not see the body of Jesus and were perplexed. He had r_____8 (Luke 23:1-12). Jesus went to G_____9 (Matthew 27:7). Jesus spoke with His d_____10 and told them to go into all the world and preach the G_____11, and whoever believes and is baptised shall be saved (Mark 16:15,16).

Answers for letter "D"

1. David 2. Daniel 3. Delilah 4. disciples 5. Devil