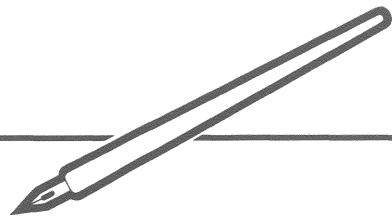




Clarion
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Christ must be preached

The church has as its source of life the living Christ Jesus. As believers we (must) live out of Christ like branches receive their life from the vine. Christ Jesus gives Himself to those whom the Father has given Him through His Spirit and Word. The Spirit regenerates them and works faith in their hearts. In this regeneration and through this faith, the Holy Spirit places those who believe in communion with Christ. In that communion or fellowship with Christ the believers receive that new life that comes from Christ.

It is evident from the teaching of the Scriptures that Christ comes to us and gives Himself to us, placing us in His fellowship, in and through His Word. Calling upon the Name of the Lord is there through faith. Faith is there through hearing the Gospel. Hearing the Gospel is there through preaching. This is what Paul teaches us in Romans 10. And Peter writes that believers are born anew of imperishable seed. This seed is the living and abiding Word of God, that is preached (I Peter 1:23, 25).

When so Christ is the only source of that new, regenerated life, and when He gives Himself and His saving fellowship in His Word that is preached, it is clear not only that preaching is a must, but also that Christ has to be the contents of that preaching. What is preached must be Christ, and Christ only. Not experience, not the law or anything else, only Christ must be preached.

Of course, herewith we do not deny that in the preaching of Christ the spiritual experience of a true faith can and must receive its proper place. The apostle Paul speaks about joy in the Lord, about love for Him, about willingness to obey Him, and so on. Dealing with conversion our Heidelberg Catechism speaks of a heartfelt sorrow because of sin and a heartfelt joy in God through Christ and delight to live according to all His commandments, (Lord's Day 33). The experience of faith is also mentioned in the Canons of Dort, e.g., Chapter III/IV, Article 12.

That Christ must be preached does also not deny that in this preaching the law with its commandments and prohibitions must have its own proper place. Christ said Himself that those who love Him will keep His commandments, e.g., John 15:10. He told His apostles that they had to go and preach the Gospel and make the nations His disciples, and that they had to teach them *to observe all that He had commanded them*, (Matthew 28:19).

Nevertheless, this giving the proper place to the experience of faith and to the law in the preaching must never degenerate in preaching experience or preaching the law. The experience of faith is fruit of a life in fellowship with Christ through faith. And so is keeping God's commandments. The source of new life is and remains the living Christ Himself. And the commandments must always flow forth from the living Christ. Experience does not save us. Neither does the law. Christ Jesus does. That is why He must be preached. Salvation with its experience and with its keeping of Christ's commandments is found only in the living fellowship with Christ.

Now it is so that, as far as I know, we do not run the danger to preach subjective spiritual and psychological experience as basis for the certainty of salvation. It is rather so that we are scared of subjectivism. But how is that with preaching the law?

Is there not a danger that in our preaching the law is sometimes stressed in such a way that it tends to become a preaching of the law?

Preaching the law — is so easy, not only in the Church of Rome, but also in a Reformed church. You must attend church twice on Sunday; you must be faithful in your church contribution; you must send your children to a Reformed school; you must support such schools even when you have no children (anymore) that go there; you must be a member of a true church; you must be against divorce and abortion and revolution. You must maintain the law of God. You must adhere to the confession of the church. I mention only a few things.

Now these are things that we stand for and should stand for, as well as for many more things. But why is it that here and there the afternoon service is attended less than the morning service? Why are there quite a few who do not financially contribute to the church? Why do quite a few not see the need to support the schools with their membership and involvement or anyway with donations? Why is there among us a growing lack of church consciousness and do we so easily attend worship services of other denominations? Why is there also in our churches among our young people, our teenagers, that spirit of rebellion? Why is there divorce, dishonesty in business, jealousy? And so I could continue.

One could give as an answer: this is because we are all sinful and inclined to backsliding. Someone else could say: the need for regeneration is not stressed enough, and the call for conversion and repentance is not sufficiently heard. This is possible. But we must also ask the question: are those things that we must do or not do which I mentioned above, and more, perhaps, preached to us in a legalistic way as just laws and commandments? Let us not forget that the law cannot deliver us from the power of a sinful nature. The law cannot convert people. The law cannot change our heart. It cannot sanctify us and make us obedient in faithful dedication to our God. Conversion and obedience is only possible through Christ. It can only be found in the living communion of faith with Him. Only when the Holy Spirit has regenerated a person, and ingrafted him into the fellowship with Christ, can that person begin to live in humble obedience. Only those who are truly born again or born from above can see and enter the Kingdom of God. Only in them the just requirement of the law will be fulfilled, as the apostle Paul writes in Romans 8:4.

We know these things. We must maintain them in our churches, in our schools, and not less in our homes. Whatever commandment is given and maintained, whatever prohibition is established in our families, from the pulpit and on the family visit, or in our schools, it must not be separated from Christ but flow forth from Him. Christ must be taught, shown, preached. To the communion with Christ we must call each other. Only in the true living communion with Christ, true obedience in humble submission to what Christ has commanded will flourish. Only in the living fellowship with Christ through faith, through the Holy Spirit will there be a keeping of God's law. Christ as the living active Saviour and Lord must be preached. Then there is also place for the law, His law.

J. GEERTSEMA

Prayer₃

8. The power of prayer

We should never underestimate the power of our prayers. We mentioned already James 5:16 where we read: "The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects." The meaning of this statement has to be understood from what follows in the verses 17 and 18. There he uses the example of the prophet Elijah. "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."

This shows us the power of prayer. It can move heaven and earth. Does that mean that we, by our prayers, can rule and command everything? Can we simply command the heavens to give rain and they will obey? In Matthew 17:20 Jesus says: "For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you." Does that mean that we have such power at our disposal at any time, to use the way we wish? No, certainly not! That is what the preachers of so-called faith healing try to make us believe. If you pray, or rather if they pray for and with you, you will be healed at any time, no matter what your disease might be. Is that true? Do they rightly refer to James 5 and Matthew 17 in this respect?

Many discussions have taken place on this issue. The question is not whether "faith healing" exists or whether health can be restored as a result of prayer. The question rather is whether we see the relation between our prayer and our recovery. Every day people are healed as a result of their prayer. When a believer receives recovery of health we may see it as the work of the Lord and as an answer upon our prayers. The Lord can use the means, the medications prescribed by the doctor, and the surgery or other treatment given in the hospital. But still it is the Lord who works and it is also a result of our prayers. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects.

However, we have to pray in a childlike manner, believing and confessing that our heavenly Father knows what is good for us and that He will give us all we need. The big demonstrations of so-called faith healers are oftentimes rather

manifestations of their own human pretence. People try to make us believe that they can work miracles and that they have at their disposal the power to make decisions the Father has reserved for Himself. It is to the glory of the "faith healers" rather than to the glory of God. And it does not really help the sick either. On the contrary. Many sick people, who in true faith could carry the burden of their illness, have gone to such faith healers without receiving recovery. Afterwards they had great problems in accepting their situation, because the faith healer had let them believe that it was because of a lack of faith that they did not receive recovery. In this way some believers have almost lost their faith.

We always have to pray in childlike trust toward the Lord. We do not have any promise that the Lord will give recovery to all those who pray for it. When Jesus was on earth He healed many sick but not all of them. About the man who was born blind Jesus said in John 9:3 "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be manifest in him." And Job lost all his possessions, not because of a lack of faith, but to show the victory of God's grace in his life, in spite of the temptation of the devil. We do not always understand why the Lord deals with us in a certain way, but we have to trust, like children trust their parents, that He knows what is best for

help it does not hurt either. No, it is the most powerful weapon we have. At least if we pray in a childlike way, for ourselves and for each other. That brings us to our next point.

9. To pray for others

In our conversations we talk about others. We are concerned that others might go astray. We *talk* about others, but do we also pray for them? We are concerned about the developments in other churches. We are concerned about the increasing lawlessness in the world and about the spirit of revolution which becomes manifest everywhere. We are concerned about the hunger and misery in third world countries and about the persecution of Christians in many parts of the world. We feel powerless and cannot do much about it! Do we really bring all these matters before the countenance of the Lord in our prayer? Do we realize the power of our prayers? Evangelism might be important but it is not the first and most important thing. We have to pray for others, also for repentance and conversion of those who are going astray. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us to pray: "Forgive *us our debts*." That is in the plural. Not just forgive me my debts but also others. That does not mean an attitude of, "there is safety in numbers." That is not a matter of "hiding among the crowd." The statement, "we are all sinners, no-

"Others say, 'Why should I pray? It does not change anything. The Lord has already decided everything. We have to take things as they come anyway.'"

us. Still we are allowed to pray, continually, even when everything seems to be against us.

Sometimes we hear people say that the only thing we can do is pray. That can be a dangerous attitude. The only thing we can do? That sounds like a last resort. When everything else fails, we must rely on prayer. But that should not be our attitude. We should always begin with prayer. Without the blessing of the Lord all our effort is in vain. Pray and work. Without prayer our work does not help. At the same time we have to confess that prayer is not just a last resort, like: if it does not

body is perfect" is an easy attempt to escape responsibility and to avoid a personal confession of sin. That should not be our attitude. We have to confess our sin. We have to be very specific before the Lord when we ask forgiveness of our sins. But at the same time we have to pray for the salvation of others, for the forgiveness of their sin. In the fifth petition our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." To forgive our neighbours their sins is not just a condition to receive forgiveness of our sins. It is more than that. The Heidelberg Cate-

chism calls it “the witness of Thy grace in us that it is our full purpose heartily to forgive our neighbour.” That is a strong and clear statement. If we are not prepared to forgive our neighbour, we are missing the “witness of God’s grace in us.” We have to consider the question whether our sins are forgiven. A good tree bears fruit.

In this way we see that prayer is not a strictly personal thing but rather a matter of the communion of saints. This communion must be shown and become evident in the way we care for each other and in the way we pray for others.

Our prayer should also have a personal aspect, especially when we confess our sins before the Lord.

10. Prayer as personal confession of sins

In our Reformed Churches we do not have the penance or the confession of sins before a priest or other “clergyman,” as they have in the Roman Catholic Church. We do not have to confess our secret sins before man in order to receive forgiveness of our sins. Still, we need a personal confession of sins, not before man, but, before the Lord. That is not always possible during the common prayer before or after our meals. There are many things in life, which are hidden from others. Therefore, apart from the common prayer in the family, we all need our personal prayers, to bring before the Lord everything that bothers us, especially our personal sins and shortcomings. When we confess our sins before the Lord we should be specific. It is not enough to say,

“The big demonstrations of so-called faith healers are oftentimes rather manifestations of their own human pretence.”

“forgive us our sins.” If the Lord would answer and ask us “which sin do you mean,” I am afraid that many of us would hesitate and say, “I do not know, I am not aware of any sin.” If that is the case our prayer is a matter of idle words. Let us mention our sins before the Lord, think about our shortcomings and ask forgiveness for specific transgressions of His commandments. If we are not aware of our sins, there is some very basic things missing in our life. The Heidelberg Catechism teaches us clearly in Lord’s Day 1 that we first have to know how great our sins and misery are and that only in this way we will be delivered from our sins and misery and be able to show our thankfulness unto God for such deliverance. Without knowledge of our sins and misery we cannot live and die happily in the only comfort.

It is very unfortunate that there is sometimes a standstill in our prayers and consequently we fall back in our spiritual life and in our relation with the Lord. The reason is often a lack of awareness of our sins and, therefore, also a lack of thankfulness to the Lord for the salvation in Jesus Christ. If that happens our prayers might stop altogether for a while.

11. When prayer is neglected

In the Canons of Dort we read that the believers must be constant in watching and prayer because, “when these are neglected, they are not only liable to be drawn into great and heinous sins . . . but sometimes . . . are drawn into these evils.”

How come that people stop praying? When we talk with people we hear all kinds of reasons. In what follows we will deal with a number of them.

Some say why should I pray? The Lord knows everything. He knows it all, even better than I do. He will give me what I need anyway. When I ask for something which is not good for me, He will not give it to me, but He will give me something else. Why should I bother the Lord with my wishes, if He has made His decision already long ago?

Of course, we do not tell the Lord something new. That is correct. But the Lord has revealed Himself as our Father and He wants to be honoured as a Father in that we, in childlike reverence, go to Him with everything that is in our heart. We have to show that we expect everything out of His hand, in the same way as a child asks his parents. If we give up our prayers we lose the covenantal rela-

tion and communication with our Father in heaven.

Others say, “Why should I pray? It does not change anything. The Lord has already decided everything. We have to take things as they come anyway.” Also this seemingly logical reasoning does not hold water. Of course, we believe that the Lord, in His providence, rules the whole world and knows everything that will happen. But we do not know the “secret counsel” of the Lord. We have our own task and responsibility and our prayer has also a place in God’s providence and in His eternal counsel. When we are sick we do not know whether the Lord will give us restoration to health and when or how the Lord will do it. Still we go to the doctor and we use the medication he prescribes. Also the use of medicines is part of God’s providence. The same counts for our pray-

ers. The Lord will use our prayers to give recovery. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects.

Another says, “The Lord is so far away I cannot pray anymore. It seems that He does not hear and does not answer, even as if God does not exist. I have lost everything. I feel doubt about everything. It scares me but I cannot change the situation. I am stuck with it.” This happens among believers, more often than we are aware of. It does not always come into the open but lots of church members go through a crisis at one time or other. That is why we should talk about these things, with one another, to support each other as members of the same body of Christ. This attitude can have different backgrounds. One thing is clear: it is always an attack of the devil. He tries to lead us astray. Sometimes people have to fight against a certain sin in their life and they fall back into this sin time and again until they give up. However, in such a situation we should take to heart what we confess in Lord’s Day 52: “. . . be pleased to preserve and strengthen us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may not succumb in this spiritual warfare but always offer strong resistance, till at last we obtain a complete victory.” We can count on the promises of the Lord. When we come into the sifter of Satan, Christ will not forsake us. In Luke 22:31 He has given the promise that He will pray for us that our faith may not fail. We should not despair of God’s mercy. Even when we cannot find the words to pray, the Spirit himself prays for us with sighs too deep for words (Rom. 8:26).

In such a situation we have to fight with everything that is in us. That is why we need, even more than in other situations, the strength through prayer. We are allowed to call upon the Name of the Lord and to hold on to His promises.

It is also possible that prayer comes to an end because of indifference, because there is no fight at all and no awareness of sin. In discussions with such people we notice that they are not really impressed by their sins. They feel they are doing very well. They are satisfied with themselves. In such a situation we cannot expect that there is a real prayer. If people do not see their sins, why should they seek salvation and redemption? And what do they have to be thankful for?

Our personal prayer should never become just another habit but it should always be a living reality. Apart from our personal prayer we should also have our common prayers, our joint prayer, together with others, within the communion of saints. That is what we will discuss next time.

W. POUWELSE
— To be continued



STILL MEMBER RES

The Reformed Church in South Africa (Dopperkerk) will remain a member of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, at least for the time being. "Because of the extremely important character of a definitive decision regarding membership in the RES, the ecclesiastical way has to be followed to the very end in accordance with the Holy Scripture, the Confession and the Church Order, and great patience has to be exercised at this stage," synod said in the grounds for its decision.

Here we see one of the dangers of calling such an international organization a "Synod." The Reformed Church in South Africa speaks about the "ecclesiastical way" as if the provisions of Scripture, Confession and Church Order which apply to the life within the federation equally applies to such an international organization. Besides, one could perhaps state that this "ecclesiastical way" has already been followed to the end.

CHANGE OF NAME

The above mentioned Reformed church in South Africa (Dopperkerk) has changed the name of the federation and is now called The Reformed Churches in South Africa. The background of this change is to be sought in the polity of the church: "Holy Scripture teaches us that the Church of Jesus Christ manifests itself (IVO) locally. When all these local churches . . . gather in a general synod this does not constitute the birth of a new church. Therefore the name of the Reformed Church (which oftentimes is denoted as Dopperkerk) is to be adapted to this principle."

PAPUA NEW GUINEA DRAWS ATTENTION

It is possible that within the foreseeable future Reformed church life will be built up in and around Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea. The Free Reformed Church at Albany, Australia, extended a call to a minister in The Netherlands to work among the Christian Papuas who originate in Irian Jaya. It is the intention to work towards the institution of a church in the former Australian part of New Guinea.

If we remember well, one of the churches in Australia had for some time a member who came from that region and has since returned. For the mission work in Irian Jaya it would be of great importance if there were a church or churches in the

Eastern part of the island from which they could get support and with whom they could have contact, especially if in due time the missionaries have to leave Irian Jaya and no new ones are admitted.

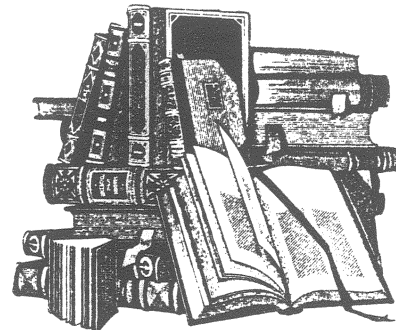
LOCAL AUTHORITY UPHELD

The US Supreme Court has declined to review a lower court ruling leaving church property under the control of a local Presbyterian church. In 1977, a congregation in Schenectady, New York, voted to sever relations with the Presbyterian Church (USA) over doctrinal differences. The Presbytery of Albany then appointed an administrative commission to replace the church's governing board, saying the congregation's action violated church law. By declining to review the case, the Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling that the congregation is not subject to the jurisdiction of the presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

FOUR BILLION SCRIPTURES OR PARTS OF THEM

The American Bible Society (ABS) has announced that it distributed its four billionth Scripture this year. Four billion Bibles, New Testaments, Portions and Selections from Scripture have been disseminated by the Society since it was founded in 1816; included in that landmark figure are 107,929,776 Bibles. ABS

reached the three billion mark in 1979, only five years ago.



THE BIBLE IN 1808 LANGUAGES

At the end of last year the Bible could be read in 1808 languages. The complete Bible has been published in 186 languages, the New Testament separately in 594 languages. Further, translations of parts of the Bible appeared in 928 languages.

Complete translations are available in 109 African, 90 Asian, and 55 European languages; in Latin America the Bible has been translated into Spanish and Portuguese, while soon translations in two Indian languages will appear. The New Testament has been translated into 175 African and 146 Latin American languages.

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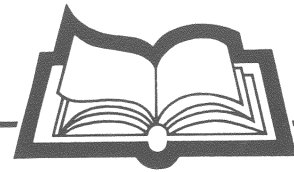
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“. . . the doors being shut where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them. . .”
John 20:19b

Victory Under the Cross

Normally we say that the new dispensation began when the temple curtain was torn in two at the moment of Christ's death, Matt. 27:51. This signified the end of the dispensation of shadows, the removal of the veil to the inner shrine, and the breaking down of the “dividing wall of hostility” between Jew and Gentile, as Paul calls it in Eph. 2:14. Now Easter has come. But what do we see? The disciples are huddled together in a room in the city, whispering quietly, and the doors are shut for fear of the Jews. What happened to the victory of Easter? Satan has been defeated and the grave overcome! Why are the doors shut so tightly? Is there room for fear after Easter? Why do we not see greater fruits of victory?

This fear has an important place in the Scriptures. It only wants to remind us that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is not the *end* of the road, but rather a new *beginning*. This new beginning starts off slowly, and connects back with the situation before the cross, and the ensuing relationships effected by the cross. The Easter victory remains a victory conditioned by the cross, standing in the light of the cross. The Jews had put the Lord Jesus to death. He had said before His death, “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you,” John 15:20. Is it any wonder that the disciples lock the doors?

Still we may wonder what happened to the Easter victory. The first church service is marked by the *threat* of the enemy. The doors *need* to be shut. How is he then defeated? But the victory is outlined in the words: “Jesus came and stood among them.” Sometimes this passage is regarded as a denial of the true humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection. After all, how could one otherwise enter these doors than as a ghost? However, the *how* of entry is not at all in focus here. When Jesus appears to the disciples, He convinces them of His victory! His way of appearance is the sign that He has won the victory, and that the enemy is no longer to be feared. Satan can still put up his walls and erect his barriers, barriers of fear and hate. But these are no obstacle for the Lord Jesus, and His disciples. This enemy need no longer be feared!

This is how the Easter victory is manifested: Jesus came and stood among them. This is how the Easter offensive carries on and makes progress in the world. He had said, “So have no fear of them,” Matt. 10:26. Indeed, *they* begin with fear; but *He* shatters the walls of fear and leads them — all in time — to deeds of boldness and power in the Kingdom. After Pentecost we see the doors that were shut open more and more; we see the marketplace filled with the wonders of the Spirit; and finally we see the *synagogue* itself

open the doors to the apostles, (Acts 13:14, 14:1, 17:1, etc.). The Head of the Church, who pours out His Spirit on His people, also opens a pathway for them so that the Gospel may be preached, not in open revolution to the established synagogue, (Acts 24:14), but *lawfully* in legal, divinely appointed confrontation with it. And the heart of this preaching is the Easter victory — the *resurrection* of Christ, Acts 17:31, 23:6ff.

So we see the birth of a twofold line that begins at Easter and follows through in the new dispensation. First of all, we see the first public worship service as a service under threat, a service under attack. The cross has already produced this hostility against the truth of God. The lingering guilt of the Jews arising from their unjust condemnation of Christ cannot leave them alone. It drives them to ever greater hatred against the apostles. But second, alongside this assault, we see the ever triumphant march of victory. Victory under the cross! The way is opened, and more and more we see the apostles overcome every fear, obstacle, and threat in the power of the Spirit, so that the truth of Christ is proclaimed far and wide for the salvation of many.

That twofold line still continues today. The church may enjoy many freedoms and many blessings; however, as long as the Lord Jesus has not returned again, the church remains the church *under the cross*, that is, the church that must endure the continual assault of the evil one and the hostility of those who stumble over the cross and cannot be restrained from reviling it. Yet we need not fear. From the first day, the Easter victory has been present in the church. For the doors were shut, but, “Jesus came and stood among them.” In Word and Spirit, in love and faithfulness, He still does the same today. Indeed, from Easter onwards, we see the ascending line of His victory manifest more and more in the world, compare Phil. 1:20, I Tim. 3:13.

All this does not mean that the time of fear is fully over for us. Preaching still requires its precautions, the enemy still proceeds with the assault. But the Word of God is not bound! And the truth of God will triumph in fullness at the last day, just as it in this age triumphs daily, leading all God's own to His throne. When that final triumph comes, *all* fear will be removed, and we will live in the Easter freedom of open and unhindered worship, uninhibited praise, and thanksgiving, because the cross has gained full victory over fear and bondage in this world.

J. DEJONG

“Christian” in the Creed?⁴

Since our last issue someone showed me the *Una Sancta* of Nov. 24, 1984. It is the fortnightly of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. The Rev. G. Van Rongen writes about our new *Book of Praise* and especially about the line concerning the church in the Apostles' Creed. How will it read: “I believe a holy catholic Christian church” or “I believe a holy catholic church”? He agrees with me that we should stick to the traditional English text (without “Christian”) because it is a literal translation of the Latin “received text.” An interesting part of his article is his translation of a passage about the medieval German tradition to replace the word “catholic” by “Christian.” He found it in a book that was presented to a German professor, Robert Stupperich, on the occasion of his 65th birthday, in an essay written by the Dutch professor W.F. Dankbaar and dealing with a certain Ulrich Surgant:

The German text offered by Surgant is that of the Apostles' Creed. Apparently he was not interested in the usual mixed forms. We may draw the attention to the fact that he translated “sanctam ecclesiam catholicam” by “die heilige Christenliche Kirche” (the holy Christian church). From texts that originate from the Middle Ages it is evident that “Christenheit” (Christianity) was the oldest German rendering of “ecclesia,” in the sense of the gathering of all believers. However, next to it “Kirche” (church) came into use as well. “Catholicam” which was first translated by “allicha” i.e. comprehensive, all-inclusive, has since the 15th century in several German tracts been translated by “Christenlich” (Christian).

In a note he adds the following — again in the translation of the Rev. G. Van Rongen:

On this ground Luther deemed the words “Kirche” (church) and “catholicam” to be useless. He preferred “Gemeinde” (congregation) and “ein Christlich heilig Volk” (a Christian holy people), but nevertheless maintained “Kirche”, because this word was quite current, and, to prevent misunderstandings, translated by “eine heilige Christliche Kirche” (a holy Christian church)."

Rev. Van Rongen rightly states that Prof. Dankbaar's observations confirm those made by me in my 1973 *Clarion* articles. Let me add that also Theodore G. Tapert, in his standard edition of the con-

fessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church *The Book of Concord*, time and again indicates: It had been customary since the fifteenth century to translate *catholica* with *Christlich*. Now everyone knows that the fifteenth century is not the time of the Reformation. Therefore, it was a wrong statement of the brother who addressed Synod Cloverdale 1983 that the word “Christian” in the Apostles' Creed is a vital element of our Reformed heritage and has “for over 400 years been part and parcel of the specific *Reformed* version of the Apostles' Creed, *adopted by the Reformed Churches.*” He also wrote: “The word played a significant role in the polemics of Luther against the papacy. The question was: Who shall have supremacy in the House of God: Christ as our King and Saviour or a pope as the alleged ‘Vicar of Christ’?”

What will we say about this? First of all: Br. L. Van Zandwijk did not give any quotation of Luther himself. On what passage does he base his idea that Luther, adopting the medieval usage of “Christian” instead of “catholic,” was thinking of *Christ* as Head of the church? From my reading of Luther I have the impression that Luther primarily thought of the *Christians*, the *believers* in Christ. The contrast of Luther here is not so much Christ and the pope but the Christians and the clergy. Already in his Large Catechism (1529) Luther says that the Holy Spirit has a unique community in the world. “It is the mother that begets and bears every *Christian* through the Word of God.” The Latin translation of this Large Catechism reads for the expression “Christian church” *Christianorum communio*, community of *Christians*. In this Large Catechism Luther states that in German the church ought to be called “a holy Christian people” *eine heilige Christenheit*.

In the Smalcald Articles of 1537 Luther writes: “Thank God, a seven-year-old child knows what the church is, namely, holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd. So children pray, ‘I believe in one holy Christian church.’”

But especially Luther's treatise *On the Councils and the Church* of 1539 made it clear to me that Luther explained the word “Christian” in the German medieval text of the Apostles' Creed of Christians, that is believers in Christ. He writes:

Here the creed clearly indicates what the church is, namely a communion of saints, that is, a crowd or *assembly of people who are Christians*, and holy, which is called a Christian holy assembly, or church (*Luther's Works* Vol. 41, p. 143).

He speaks of the church as “a Christian holy people” who believe in Christ, and even states: “If the words ‘I believe that there is a holy Christian people’ had been used in the Children's Creed, all the misery connected with this meaningless and obscure word ‘church’ might easily have been avoided.”

He who does not truly believe in Christ is not Christian or a Christian. He who does not have the Holy Spirit is not holy. Consequently, they cannot be “a Christian holy people,” that is *sancta et catholica ecclesia*.

It is clear that for Luther not popes, cardinals, bishops and prelates compose the church but the people who truly believe. The church is an assembly of people who are Christians.

Although a Reformed confessor will certainly say that the catholic church is a holy congregation of true Christian believers (Belgic Confession, Art. 27), he will regret that Luther adopted the medieval substitution of “catholic” by “Christian.” He will be thankful that the French and English Reformation (Calvin and de Brès, Cranmer and Knox) had more appreciation for the words “church” and “catholic” and he will do everything possible to maintain these words in their original power in the English version of the Apostles' Creed. Therefore, he will not insert the medieval word “Christian” into this ecumenical text, not even as an addition to “catholic.”

This brings us to a discussion of the Heidelberg Catechism. Bakhuizen van den Brink suggested that the authors were not satisfied by the German medieval tradition, which was followed in Lutheranism and by Dutch refugees. In the meantime the awareness that “Christian” was a translation of “catholic” was lost. They now translated “catholic” by “universal” while the word “Christian” was maintained. So the double wording “universal, Christian” came about; in Dutch: “Ik geloof een heilige, algemene, Christelijke kerk.”

One may ask: Why did they not simply return to the original word “catholic”? It is possible that the German text of the

Heidelberg Catechism is a deliberate compromise. On the one hand the authors did not dare to reintroduce the word "catholic." On the other hand they wanted to regain something of the original confession of the universality of the church. Therefore they chose a middle-of-the-road position: they maintained the German usage of "Christian" and inserted the word "universal." It was not a definite solution and the authors themselves probably knew it. At least, in the Latin text, published in the same year as the German (1563), we read in Lord's Day 7 simply the ancient words *Credo sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam*. Let me add that even in the Dutch text of the famous *Book of Forms* of Richard Schilders (Middelburg 1611) we still read, "Ick gheloove een heylighe alghemeyne Kercke", I believe a holy universal church (without "Christian"). Bakhuisen van den Brink states that this text must have been on the table of the Synod of Dordt 1619 and must at least be regarded as basis of an authentic Dutch text that never was published. In the line of this Dutch text of 1611 and in agreement with the authentic Latin text of the Apostles' Creed, most Protestant churches in the Netherlands have now returned to the original form and have dropped the word "Christian." Why should we in Canada then not

follow the 1563 Latin text of Lord's Day 7?

Synod Cloverdale 1983 of the Canadian Reformed Churches was not consistent. It inserted the word "Christian" in Lord's Day 7 but it followed the Latin text of the Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 21. As everyone can check Question 54 in our new *Book of Praise* now reads: "What do you believe concerning the *holy catholic church* of Christ?" If Synod would have been consistent, it would have changed these words into the *holy catholic Christian church*. As it stands now, it is clearly indicated that the words "of Christ" do not belong to the quotation of the clause in the Apostles' Creed.

One can notice a similar inconsistency in Synod's fourth consideration (*Acts* 1983, p. 51). Synod states "that the deletion of this word is an impoverishment of the expression of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith (in Canons of Dordt II, Rejection of Errors, Paragraph 1 the word 'Christian' can hardly be missed in view of the contents of this paragraph)."

I do not believe at all that it is an impoverishment to return to the authentic text of the Apostles' Creed. It is clear that the early church spoke of the church of God, and the word "Christian" is ambiguous. Does it speak of Christ or of Christians? The word as such does not express too much and it clutters up the original majestic expression of faith concerning the *sancta ecclesia catholica*. Deletion of the word "Christian" does not take anything away of the confession in the Canons of Dordt. The remarkable thing is that when one looks at the passage in the new *Book of Praise* on page 548 one does not even find the expression "the catholic Christian church" anymore. The same Synod that said "Deletion is an impoverishment" deleted the word in the Canons of Dordt and simply stated: "Finally this error contradicts the article of faith concerning the Church." I call this a gross inconsistency and another evidence of regrettable sloppiness with respect to the text of our creeds and confessions.

Mind you, the inconsistencies are felicitous from my point of view. In the translation of Lord's day 21 and the Canons of Dordt Synod followed the report of Deputies who in these instances rightly took their lead from the Latin texts. Precisely the fact that in the authentic Latin text of the Canons of Dordt the word "Christian" is *not* found, shows that it is no impoverishment to delete it. The brothers in the Synod of Dordt knew that the word was a peculiar addition to their Dutch text of the Apostles' Creed (it had happened to show up in their baggage, to speak with Committee Bremmer 1978) and it was not present in, e.g., the text of their English-speaking brother-dele-

gates. Therefore, they wisely restricted themselves in their authentic Latin text of the Canons of Dordt to mentioning "the article of faith concerning the Church."

A third felicitous inconsistency is that Synod of Cloverdale adopted Hymn 1A. It gives the Apostles' Creed in the familiar Christian Reformed text that, since Synod 1958 has been used in our Canadian Reformed Churches for more than twenty-five years. It is still the best text that we have available in our new *Book of Praise*. Churches that always sing the Creed, e.g. the Church of Toronto may seem progressive but they are really conservative in the good sense of the word. They use in Hymn 1A the authentic words as rendered in the English language for more than one thousand years. Schools do wise to teach their children this hymn and these words.

As far as our Australian sister churches are concerned, the Rev. G. Van Rongen in the publication mentioned at the beginning of this article agrees with the words that I wrote in 1973: Let us hurry and delete the word "Christian" and return to the text "I believe a holy catholic church"!

He rightly states: We here in Australia are not bound to the new text of the Canadian Reformed Churches and could go our own way. He continues:

Is this a little thing only? But it's the little things that matter in this respect. Our *Book of Praise* prints the three Creeds under the heading "Ecumenical Creeds" and refers not only to the fact that "they have been approved and accepted by nearly all the churches of Christendom" but also to "the first centuries of the Christian church." Why would we confess our faith differently from the early generations of our fellow-Christians? For is this not "ecumenical" also, to live in a communion of believers of all centuries?

The reader understands that I could not agree more. The Australian churches should go their own way and not imitate the decision of Cloverdale 1983. They should even approach the Canadian Reformed Churches for the sake of true ecumenicity and ask for a revision of our wrong decision.

To be sure, such requests for revision should come first of all from Canadian Reformed church members and consistories. I wrote these articles to help in preparing such requests. Let us hope that the following Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches will reverse the unfelicitous decision of Cloverdale 1983 and repair the damage that has been done to the English text of our beloved ecumenical Apostles' Creed.

Credo sanctam ecclesiam catholicam.

J. FABER



DECLINED to Lincoln, ON:

REV. J. GEERTSEMA

of Surrey, BC

* * *

Church at Lynden, WA

Address: American Reformed Church
Box 455, Lynden WA 98264
USA

* * *

The Committee for Correspondence with Churches Abroad in its meeting of Thursday, March 7, 1985, has delegated the Revs. M. VanBeveren and J. Visscher to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) which will meet in Edinburgh, Scotland from Sept. 3-13, 1985. General Synod 1983 had earlier specified that Prof. Dr. J. Faber should accompany the delegation as advisor.

The Rev. M. VanBeveren serves the ICRC in his capacity as Provisional Secretary.

Prof. Dr. J. Faber will address the Conference on the topic: "The Doctrine of the Church in the Reformed Confessions."

Rev. J. Visscher will address the Conference on the topic: "The Exercise of InterChurch Relations."

Those stubborn, never satisfied, Canadian Reformed Churches!

The *Banner* of February 18, 1985 was devoted to the Canadian Reformed Churches, like the issue of February 4 contained a few articles on the Protestant Reformed Churches. Why did *The Banner* pay so much attention to these two "conservative" denominations?

The February 18 issue contains two articles besides the editorial on our churches. The articles are written by Rev. Anthony DeJager and Rev. Henry Vander Kam. The editorial is from the hand of Rev. A. Kuyvenhoven. It is to this editorial that I react here.

Dr. Kuyvenhoven gives his readers, first, some statistical data in comparison with the Christian Reformed Church (about 84,000 members in Canada) and the Reformed Church of America (about 10,000 members, like the Canadian Reformed Churches). He then, writes:

Still No Bridge. Thus far our talks with the Canadian Reformed and all overtures toward union have been unsuccessful.

Thirty-five years ago, when a stream of Reformed immigrants came from The Netherlands to Canada, the majority came from the "synodical" Reformed Churches, and a smaller percentage came from the "liberated" Reformed Churches (liberated, that is, from the yoke of certain synodical requirements). Those who came from the "synodical" Reformed joined the Christian Reformed Church, and so did some of the "liberated," but the latter did not feel at home. Being Christian Reformed in Canada thirty-five years ago looked very much like belonging to a transplanted "synodical" church; at least that's how the "liberated" Reformed people saw it.

Is this how it was? Did the "liberated" Reformed immigrants not "feel at home" in the CRC? Is the reason that to them it "looked very much like belonging to a transplanted 'synodical' church?" Is that how they saw it? Even if this was an element, it was a minor one. There is much more to say. It was not just a "not feeling at home." That is clear from the effort of many to remain members of the CRC.

For the "liberated" people the liberation from sinful decisions in both doctrine and church government had been a matter of obedience of faith to the Lord of the church. But the CRC synods were not willing to investigate and study what had happened in The Netherlands, they just wanted to maintain the sister church



relation with the (synodical) Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (GKN). And many local CRC consistories were gladly willing to accept "liberated" people as members, if only they kept silent about the Liberation. That is why for many "liberated" people membership in the CRC meant stepping back to the synodical GKN via the connection with the CRC. They could not make this step, because the Liberation had been for them an act of faith. It had been an act of obedience to the LORD, of separating from sin. That is different from "not feeling at home."

The editor of *The Banner* continues with the following paragraph:

At first the Christian Reformed synod and the Board of Home Missions did not deal very tactfully with the sensitivities of the "liberated" Reformed people. Later, when the Canadian immigrants had a voice at synods of the CRC, our synods were willing to remove as many obstacles as their consciences would allow. But it was never enough. Even in the conversations with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Canadian Reformed insisted that the OP's break their relationship with the Reformed Ecumenical Synod because the "synodical" Reformed were members of that synod. Before the Canadian Reformed could get serious about a unity with the Orthodox Presbyterians, it was necessary that the OPC break off relationships with all denominations that had a relationship with the

"synodical" Reformed. For how could one be yoked with Belial?

The impression is given here that the CRC was very willing to have close contact, but that the Canadian Reformed Churches were never satisfied. Let me quote here the Acts, Art. 31, of the Synod at Edmonton, 1965. This Synod had to deal with a request from the CRC to come to closer contact with us in reaction to our *Appeal* (of 1962) to the CRC.

The article reads:

"Committee III reports about the request of the synod of the Christian Reformed Church that synod appoint a Committee 'which could meet with our Committee to discuss together how closer relationship can be established between our churches.'"

Synod considers

1. It is the Son of God Who by His Spirit and Word gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself a church in the unity of faith. It is the duty of all believers to gather with Christ by maintaining together the unity of the church in uniformity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God in the concrete present-day situation.

2. This situation, as far as the Christian Reformed Church and our churches are concerned, is determined by, among others, the following conditions:

a. The Christian Reformed Church and our churches have adopted the same confessional forms as Forms of Unity: the

Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort;

b. Besides, the Christian Reformed Church has adopted The Conclusions of Utrecht (1905/1908) and an official interpretation of them (1962); The Three Points of Kalamazoo (1924) and an official interpretation of them (1959/1960). Our churches have not adopted any other declarations concerning the doctrine of the church beside the Three Forms of Unity.

c. The Christian Reformed Church maintains correspondence with the "synodical" Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands. Our churches maintain correspondence with the "liberated" Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands.

d. The Christian Reformed Church has adopted a new Church Order; our churches do still abide by the Church Order of Dort/Utrecht (1619/1905).

Synod decides to appoint four deputies with the mandate:

1. "to examine, together with the Contact Committee of the Christian Reformed Church, how their and our churches are to enter into and to maintain together the unity of the church in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God on the foundation of the apostles of the Lamb, and therefore to examine, together with the said Committee, the concrete situation, as it is also determined by the differences mentioned under B2, by the light of the Three Forms of Unity.

2. to keep the churches informed about the matters dealt with in their contact with the said Committee, and to submit a report to the next General Synod."

The Synod of Orangeville, 1968, (*Acts*, Article 134) took "note of the fact that the mandate of Synod Edmonton 1965 as to The Conclusions of Utrecht (1905/1908) and an official interpretation of them (Christian Reformed Synod 1962), has been completed and resulted in the removal of this obstacle for unity by the Christian Reformed Church. The same was said regarding the "Three Points of Kalamazoo and its official interpretation. Binding to these statements was taken away.

With regard to the newly accepted Church Order of the CRC (in 1966) the Synod of Orangeville declared that it "is not an insurmountable obstacle for further and closer contact, and eventual unity of both churches." But "the question whether we feel that before we could be united with the Christian Reformed Church, the latter's relationship with the (synodical) 'Gereformeerde Kerken' should be broken," was answered "in the affirmative." That had "now become the most important item . . . especially in the light of recent developments in the Christian Reformed Church" (VI, 3).

The Synod of Orangeville decided that our deputies for contact with the CRC:

"Shall point out that the contact on the part of the Canadian Reformed Churches started with the 'Appeal 1962,' in which the reasons for our separate existence were given and the Christian Reformed Church was earnestly warned not to proceed with the course of recognizing the synodical 'Gereformeerde Kerken' as faithful Reformed Churches" (VIII, 2).

It is clear from these articles taken from the *Acts* of two of our synods how things went. We did not want to be bound by anything that was beyond the Three Forms of Unity. This is simply Reformed. And, in my opinion, our churches served the CRC when they asked it to withdraw the above mentioned decisions. It was not a matter of coming with many demands. It was a matter of paving the way for a truly Reformed basis for unity.

When *The Banner's* editor writes that for us "it was never enough," where we insisted on the CRC's breaking with the GKN, he would have given a more honest picture if he would have provided the reason for this "demand." That reason was not just the past, 1944. That reason was just as much the present. In the *Appeal* of 1962, as well as in the *Appeal* of 1977, it was pointed out to the CRC that the GKN had become un-Reformed and that their proceeding in an un-Reformed direction was accelerating, while the influence of this un-Reformed thinking became more and more visible also in the CRC. That it was "never enough" for us is an unfair statement, unworthy for an editor of a magazine that wants to be Christian and Reformed. This is the more unfair since the CRC have come to the insight that everything is not good with the GKN.

The CRC itself has restricted the official contact. GKN attestations are not automatically accepted and GKN ministers not either. The editor should have written, on the basis of the official CRC synodical decisions: the Canadian Reformed Churches had a good reason for their appeals and "demand" regarding the ties with the GKN.

I like to give the readers of *Clarion* part of the decision of the 1983 CRC Synod. This Synod had to deal with overtures to sever all ties with the GKN on the basis of their pronouncements regarding the authority of Scripture and admittance of practicing homosexuals to the table of the Lord. The 1983 CRC Synod did not want to adopt such overtures. It pointed at the 1974 decision. The 1974 CRC Synod had changed the sister church relationship into a relationship "of Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship." A sister church relationship was stricter. It demanded full unity and did not allow for aberrations in a sister church. The relationship of "Fellowship" makes things easier and tolerates aberrations in the

sister church without having to break the relationship.

Article 57 of the *Acts* of the 1983 CRC Synod (D, 1, a) declares that this Synod did not want to sever the ties with the GKN on the ground that:

"a. Overture 2 mistakenly assumes that the relationship of churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship inherently involves all six elements specified by the Synod of 1974 (*Acts of Synod 1974*, p. 57). The new structure for ecclesiastical contacts initiated by the Synod of 1974 was designed specifically to make it possible to differentiate in our contacts with various churches with whom we are in ecclesiastical fellowship, thus affording opportunities for continued mutual assistance, encouragement, and admonition without compromising our own denominational integrity."

However, under point 3 the same 1983 Synod decided:

"That Synod redefine the terms of 'Ecclesiastical Fellowship' with the GKN by declaring that the elements referring to pulpit and table fellowship no longer apply, except at the discretion of the local consistories, based on the Holy Scriptures, the confessions, and decisions of Synod (such as those of 1973 concerning the issue of homosexuality).

Grounds:

a. The recent decisions of the synods of the GKN allow ministers and members to engage in a life-style that in our judgment is contrary to the Scriptures and in conflict with the decisions of our Synod of 1973; nor have our concerns and protests regarding these decisions moved the synod of the GKN to modify its position.

b. The laxity within the GKN in dealing with ministers and other leaders who openly promote views conflicting with the Reformed confessions."

These aberrations in the GKN did not appear all of a sudden. They were the result of a process of deviating from Scripture and from the Reformed Confessions that started many years ago. After the decisions of the synods of 1942-1945 were made, the GKN accepted objections against the Canons of Dort; they joined the World Council of Churches; opened all offices for women in the church; permitted evolutionistic views regarding Genesis, to mention only these points. And from literature from and about the CRC it appears that the same points have come up in their midst. Can one really deny any connection? Were the Canadian Reformed Churches really demanding too much? Were they really never to satisfy, when they required as *basis for unity* that the CRC first break with the GKN?

I have dealt with only the first part of the editorial. There is more to say. That has to wait till the next time.

J. GEERTSEMA



Let us begin this time with some personal particulars.

Our congratulations go to Prof. L. Selles, who celebrated his 70th birthday. We are thankful for all the Lord has given to His Churches in this brother, first as an active minister of the Gospel, and then, since 1969, as professor New Testament. Mind you, when I say "first as an active minister of the Gospel," I do not wish to imply at all that he became inactive as soon as the work for the College started. On the contrary, everyone who knows our brother is aware of it that inactivity is farthest from him. While the search for a successor is going on, we express the wish that Prof. Selles may receive health and strength to bring his "active life" to a God pleasing conclusion and that he also be allowed to enjoy the "rest" after this.

We welcome Rev. Versteeg and family into our midst. It was the intention that they should arrive in Toronto on March 4th. I do not know whether the big snowstorm influenced the execution of the plans to any degree; in any case it is very refreshing when coming from the steaming jungles of Irian Jaya to dive into a snowbath, followed by freezing rain which pelts the face. It is our wish for them that they may enjoy their furlough and gain new strength, courage, and zeal to continue the mission work to which they have given themselves. It is the fruit of the prayers also of the Churches here that they could come, having seen their work permit extended till well beyond the planned date of return. Have a good time.

Yes, and then there is another personal thing which I wish to mention. It is something which was promised long ago.

First of all, I express my gratitude to Dr. Faber for the article which he wrote concerning the English text of the Apostles' Creed. I have been waiting for this article — of which I knew it was in the making — before telling my little story. At first I thought, "I am going to write an article, too, in which I submit the arguments of Synod Cloverdale for inserting the word 'Christian' into the Apostles' Creed to a close scrutiny," but then I changed my mind. In the first place I could not improve on the arguments which Dr. Faber brings to the fore; and in the second place, after I have told my little story the fallacy of Cloverdale 1983's arguments will be clear to everyone. I still find it almost unbelievable that, after they heard what I had to tell, still Synod 1983 went for the arguments in the report.

Dr. Faber is completely correct: the word "Christian" was never part of the English text of the Apostles' Creed as the Canadian Reformed Churches had it. Yes, in the beginning we said that only the Dutch text of the Heidelberg Catechism should be authentic (*Acts* 1958, Article 190), but the question is what this means. The text of the Catechism as the Netherlands Churches had it has not thereby been elevated to a sort of inspired document. What we meant was simply this: We have not been able to examine the English text as the Christian Reformed Church has it in such a measure that we can judge whether it is completely acceptable. Our knowledge of the English language was not yet such that we considered ourselves capable of passing a definitive judgment. Besides, we considered, there has always been a sister Church relationship and while this relationship was there, the Christian Reformed Church had this English text of the Catechism. Thus we feel free to recommend this text to the Churches for their use. However, since we are not yet able to form an adequate judgment, we also provide that the Dutch text of the Heidelberg Catechism and the other confessional forms is "authentic," that means: when you wish to prove a certain point of doctrine

and if there should be a *conflict* between the Dutch text and the English text, then the Dutch text will have to prevail, for we know this text and know that it is trustworthy.

Granted, the word "authentic" should not have been used, for now we get that from the fact that 1958 stated this an argument is derived to impose upon the Churches a certain text of the Apostles' Creed as if that text as it is found in the Dutch translation of the Catechism were the original one. A very superficial and sloppy argument. We have always been taught to go back to the original text when we wish to see whether a translation is correct. The Dutch text is not the original text.

Anyway, let me not go into all the arguments of Synod.

The word "reinsert" has been used. At Synod I argued that the word "reinsert" gives a wrong impression and is incorrect. When you *reinsert* something you correct a mistake that was made, you correct an omission, you put something back which was there before. The word "Christian" was never before in the English text of the Apostles' Creed as the Canadian Reformed Churches had it. It gives a false impression to use the word "reinsert."

How, then, did it get into some printings of the *Book of Praise*?

This is not an ecclesiastical decision, this is not a printer's error. This is simply yours truly's stupidity, his Dutch background.

Don't misunderstand me: I do not claim that a Dutch background is identical to stupidity. Not at all. In his stupidity he simply went by his Dutch background instead of going back to the original text or consulting with others.

At the meetings of the Committee for the *Book of Praise* the complete edition was discussed and it was considered necessary to change some things also in the Psalms from the provisional, partial editions that were to be inserted into the complete edition. Let me take Psalm 2 to make this clear. In stanza 5 the rhyming spoke of "Thy awful threatening sceptre." This should be changed to "awesome," it was decided. You can see that the (Dutch) printer did not understand the correction, for now it read (in the complete edition) "Thy awesome threatening sceptre." In stanza 6, line 3, the word "thy" was to be replaced by "your" as it refers to those who have to submit to the Son. The printer, again, made a mistake when he made it read ". . . revenge yourthy bold neglect."

Yours truly was charged with going through the whole book and to take out all the printing mistakes and to change those things which had to be changed.

Would someone else had been appointed for this, for then the disaster which now occurred would never have happened.

Going by the Dutch text, the corrector noticed that the word "Christian" was not found in the English text of the Apostles' Creed. He should have inquired about this curious absence. He did not do so. He simply inserted it wherever the Apostles' Creed was found in our *Book of Praise*. And that's how the word "Christian" came to be inserted into the text. It never was there, it never should have been there.

When the complete book appeared, and the change was noticed, Dr. Faber said already, "You should not have done this, for the word does not belong in the Apostles' Creed. The English text has never had it." To which yours truly replied, "Then we shall correct this mistake in the next printing."

Synod Toronto 1974 correctly criticized this change and justly decided that it should be undone. As Dr. Faber wrote, you don't have to give weighty and important sounding grounds

for the correction of a mistake which was made.

After yours truly had told his story at the Synod Cloverdale 1983, there was a stunned silence, until one of the brethren said — in Dutch — “Daar zitten we nou!” (Here we are in a nice scrape!)

Yet the unbelievable happened: Synod decided to “reinsert” the word “Christian” into the Apostles’ Creed!

All I can do is express the fervent wish and hope that the next Synod will undo this decision of Synod Cloverdale 1983. The decision rests on flimsy and partially imaginary grounds; besides, it is an unecumenical act.

Thus far my story and my remarks.

As we were talking about events which took place in the West anyway, we stay there for a minute.

The institution of an American Reformed Church in Lynden, Washington, was scheduled for the 10th of March. Somewhere I read that the new congregation will have a membership of approximately 19% of Abbotsford’s present membership; which means that they will number about 130. We wish our youngest sister well.

In connection with this institution, a special classis was convened to deal with the request for approval. I agree with the criticism which Rev. Kampen expressed in the *Bulkley Valley Echo*, that such a special classis — which, by the way, is an unknown phenomenon in our Church Order — was not really necessary; the regular classis was scheduled for six weeks later. Could this one not have been convened earlier or could the institution — which had been in the making for a long time already — not have waited a few more weeks? If the institution had been set for three weeks later, and classis had been convened three weeks earlier, nothing extraordinary would have been needed.

I did get a shock when, in one bulletin, I read that “From the Church at Chilliwack, which is the convening Church for the next classis, we received notice that a special Classis is being convened for February 22, 1985. This Classis will be asked to institute a Church.” Are we, I thought, that far already on the road of hierarchy that a Classis is asked to institute a Church? My pulse became more rapid. It calmed down somewhat when the Abbotsford part of the *Church News* showed that the institution will take place along Reformed lines.

Returning to Houston: they decided that the ordination of new elders and deacons will take place in the beginning of May from now on, a change from the previous practice which saw a “changing of the guard” in midwinter.

In connection with thefts which took place on Sundays, the Providence Church in Edmonton decided “to install a warning light that operates as soon as the outside door is opened in order to be able to check on unwanted persons entering the church building during services.” Hopefully this measure will prevent further unpleasant experiences.

The Coaldale Consistory decided to put before the Congregation a proposal implying that the present Church building be sold and that a new one be erected. An impressive list of arguments was published in the bulletin, although one still could ask whether institution of another Church would not solve most — if not all — of the difficulties listed. But this is not for others to decide. I have not yet read what the reaction of the Congregation was at the scheduled meeting, but we’ll hear it soon enough.

There is another decision of this same Consistory which — if I understand it well — has to be called completely wrong.

“The ‘Committee for Needy Churches’ requests statistical information regarding paying units of the Congregation. It is decided that we deduct from the list those members of the Congregation who do not pay anything or who do not pay enough to cover the cost of membership in the Church, and to supply such other information as Council sees fit to send.”

Do I have to conclude from this that, for the purpose of enabling a Committee (classical committee) to come to a conclusion how much per communicant member has to be asked for needy Churches, only the number of those members will be given who pay more than is needed to “cover the cost of membership?” If this is the case indeed, I do not hesitate to call such practice unfair and dishonest towards the sister Churches. When we are asked how many members or how many communicant members we have, we are not allowed to give only the number of those who fulfil their financial contributions towards the Church. Then we have to give the full number.

I can well see the difficulty: it is a difficulty with which each Church has to struggle: there are always members who either do not pay anything or who pay so little that they might as well not have contributed anything. There are amounts which have to be paid per communicant member: the contributions for the Theological College, for the support of needy Churches, for the costs of major assemblies or of the federation as such, for the Mission, and so on. It is a respectable amount which has to be brought together even before the local needs can be met. And when someone does not pay, this means that others have to pay more than their share.

However, the way in which to correct this evil — and an evil it is! — is then not to include them when the figures are given, but to discipline them and, if there is no repentance, to exclude them from the Church of Christ because of their unwillingness to meet their obligations as members of His Church. But as long as they are members, they are to be included in the figures; otherwise the Church that does include them will have to pay proportionately more than the Church that does not include them; and in this manner the sister Churches are compelled — by means of incorrect, purposely incorrect figures — to pay an extra share.

We move on to Ontario.

“Nothing ever happens in Fergus,” a brother repeated recently.

Perhaps things will become a little more lively once I have left that Congregation, and we’ll see. Now, however, I may reveal that the first part of the Great Organ has been installed and that work on the other parts has progressed quite well. For a few weeks we have had to sing at the accompaniment of the Swell Organ and on purpose on “unknown” tunes were selected. Pretty soon there is sufficient volume to guide the Congregation also in the event a lesser-known tune has to be sung.

Brampton decided that from now on the Creed shall be sung in the afternoon services. This is a gratifying development. I also express the wish that some uniformity may be achieved in the singing of the Credo now that the definitive *Book of Praise* is there.

Hamilton mentions that “A proposed form ‘for the installation of ministers of the Word set apart for the training to the ministry’ was tabled. It was decided to first ask the professors of the Theological College for their comments.”

Although I am not one of the professors, I venture to give my comment. This can be very brief: We should not go into this direction. It would tend to create a special group of ministers and this is highly undesirable.

I can well see why such a thought has come up. Hamilton is the Church which is requested to call any minister who has been appointed as professor at our College and who is not yet a minister within the Canadian Reformed Churches. If one is already a minister here, there is no problem: the Church whose minister he is is asked to release him from his work to be able to dedicate himself completely to the task of teaching students of theology. No special form is needed; and we do have a form for the installation of professors, but this is not a concern of a local Church; this is something of the Churches in general.

It is only when a minister from abroad is appointed as professor, that difficulties arise. Then you get this phenomenon that he is called by Hamilton, is installed as minister of Hamilton with the regular form for the installation of ministers, but at the same time is not expected to do any of the work of a local minister, for he is immediately released for the work at the College. Installation with the use of the present form may be felt as something of an empty gesture, a show. Thus it can be understood that Hamilton tries to find a more satisfactory solution.

Yet it would be wrong to have a special form for these exceptional cases.

In the first place, may we not expect that in the future vacancies can be filled from our own midst? We did have this already and we hope that these possibilities will be increased in number. That we get professors from abroad is an abnormal thing and should become more and more abnormal. Once the vacancies can be filled from our own midst, there is no need for Hamilton to call anyone and then to release him for this specific task.

Secondly, such a form would be for use in one Church only. No other Church would be asked to call a specific minister for this particular task. We should not have forms for just one Church; whatever forms we have should be for all the Churches.

Thirdly, as I remarked above, this would tend to create a special group of ministers. But what kind of ministers would they be? Basically, they would have entered upon another vocation. This would relieve Hamilton of the need to call them: they are no longer Minister of the Word.

No, forget about it.

We go to London.

“Letter from the Church at Chatham requesting regular pulpit exchange between the three Churches of Chatham, Watford and London. The suggestion is one exchange per month. The Consistory decides that such an idea is not preferable at this time. Such exchange should be on an occasional basis.”

I always like it when Consistories do not like to see their minister go for a Sunday but love to have him in their midst all the time. And: it is good for a man that he bears the yoke in his youth or, to say it in other words, it is good for a minister especially at the beginning of his ministry that he has to prepare two sermons every week. It is quite a chore, I can tell you, but it can be done; it has to be done, and it has been done.

Sometimes, however, I wonder whether Consistories are always aware of the difficulties which are encountered by ministers when they have to prepare two sermons every week, week after week, month after month. It is quite a tension every week anew to have the two sermons ready by the time Sunday comes along. Many a nightly hour has been spent on this task and much midnight oil has been used.

It is an enormous relief for a minister when this burden is lightened somewhat. I do not “believe” in giving ministers Sundays off except for their regular summer holidays. But I am a strong defender of giving ministers the right to exchange pulpits with their colleagues. Personally I prefer two services per month rather than one whole Sunday per month: the former gives me more satisfaction and relaxes more than the latter. And I am convinced that the Consistories should give their ministers the freedom to exchange pulpits with their colleagues within certain limits. They should not be away every Sunday or exchange as much as they fill their own pulpit. They should, however, have the right to make their own arrangements within certain guidelines, and they should not have to ask the Consistory every time when they want an exchange. Both ministers and Congregations will benefit from such freedom.

I deplore it, therefore, that London did not accede to the request of Chatham. If an exchange takes place on an occasional basis, as it is said, then you get this, that the minister perhaps hates it to ask for it or that one of the brethren, when

he asks, says, “What, again?” This can create unpleasant situations. It may make the minister feel sort of guilty, even though he has received the right to exchange once in a while, and it brings about an unpleasant atmosphere. Let everyone know what he is up to and what the rights and possibilities are. The minimum, I think, a minister should be allowed to exchange pulpits would be two services per month. That helps; longer time between two exchanges does not help all that much. Once, when a neighbouring Consistory said, “We don’t want our minister to exchange every month, but he is allowed to exchange once every six weeks,” I replied to my colleague: “Forget about it then, for those few sermons more per year won’t break my back.” Then I rather not exchange at all.

We end our journey in Grand Rapids.

I just pass on what I read in *Pro Ecclesia*.

“Besides the Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel, Maryland (Rev. Hofford c.s.) and the Blue Bell Church at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, another contact has been made with people in Virginia, who requested information concerning possible affiliation with the American Reformed Church. Ministers in Grand Rapids have requested us to deliver a speech on: A Comparison between the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Confession. Some responses to the Radio Broadcast Sunday evenings at 10:30 p.m. make further contact also necessary. The Reformation movement in the Christian Reformed Church, locally and abroad, requires active involvement from our side. Attendance of Conferences is another necessary thing to make our Churches known, and to establish more contacts.

“There is more needed. We should have reformed literature available: a pamphlet about the history of our Church, its Standards and Church Order and copies of the new *Book of Praise* should be handed out as soon as they are available. Besides, tapes with sermons and speeches have to be offered Explanations on the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort, including an explanation of our Church are in demand.”

Grand Rapids was appointed as address Church for the USA. I think that Rev. Kingma is right when he writes, “We think that this includes that we can ask money from the Churches to cover the cost of sending free copies to people and Churches interested in reformed material available from our side.”

Let them, however, go the correct way: I think that the General Fund is the proper address from which to obtain such moneys as may be required.

For this time I shall put a period behind it. The previous medley has not even been published and, lo and behold, here you have another one already.

May you read it to your edification.

This is the wish of yours truly,

VO

P.S. A few medleys ago, I sent a cobbler hobbling with only one b. Sorry about that.

VO

OUR COVER

Weni River in Wawena, Central Highlands
of Irian Jaya, Indonesia

Photo courtesy — Bram Vegter

A report of the Institution of the American Reformed Church in Lynden, Washington

Some thirty years after the institution of the first American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids, Michigan, a second American Reformed congregation was instituted in the United States. Although a number of brothers and sisters recently moved almost 2500 miles away from Grand Rapids to the Lynden area, the Church at Grand Rapids is not the mother church of the newly formed Church in Lynden. That honour truly belongs to the Canadian Reformed Church at Abbotsford. For many years brothers and sisters and their families living in the Western part of the United States, close to the Canadian border, had been members of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the Fraser Valley in the beautiful province of British Columbia. Most of them were members of the Church at Abbotsford which is located only one mile from the US Canadian border. (see map)

Although previous interest in starting



Rev. M. VanderWel, minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Abbotsford, after the first worship service he conducted in Lynden, Washington.

a church in the State of Washington had been voiced before, it wasn't until April 9, 1984, that in response to a request of some members of the Church at Abbotsford, the consistory of this church organized a meeting of its members living in the United States, for the purpose of discussing the possibility of starting a church in the USA. Out of this meeting a proposal to start worship services in the States under the auspices of the Church at Abbotsford was adopted and subsequently approved by the consistory of this church. A committee for the preparation of these services was appointed. The Christian Covenant School building of the Protestant Reformed Church at Lynden was rented for worship services.

Sunday, September 2, 1984 was a very memorable day for the brothers and sisters in Washington, in that they for the first time could worship together in their own country. I will never forget the first psalm we sang there, namely, Psalm 122: "How glad I was when unto me they said, Let us with one accord, go to the Temple of the Lord." How nice, and what a blessing to be able to worship the Lord in the country in which He placed us. Shortly after this the group formed a Bible Study Society which has met every other Wednesday evening in the same building where the worship services are being held.

On November 14, 1984 a petition was signed by brothers and sisters living in the State of Washington requesting the consistory of the Church at Abbotsford to call for a special meeting of Classis Pacific of the Canadian Reformed Churches, in order to obtain advice about instituting a church in the State of Washington. This request was granted and a special Classis Pacific was convened on February 22, 1985. Favourable advice was given by classis for church institution in the States to take place on Sunday, March 10, 1985. At a meeting on February 24, 1985 the male members of the future Church in Lynden elected the brothers R. Faber, C. Petter and M. Vreugdenhil as elders, and br. Henry Veldman as deacon.

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon on March 10, 1985 the official institution of the Church at Lynden took place with the ordination of the newly elected and appointed office-bearers. The majority of the ninety-two charter members and at least as many guests packed into the auditorium of the rented school building to attend this historic worship service.

Rev. M. VanderWel, minister of the mother Church at Abbotsford led the worship service. He preached on II Timothy 2:19 under the theme: "Paul's encouragement to Timothy with respect to the future of the church by pointing to God's firm foundation." Three points were emphasized: 1. The solidity of the church; 2. The comfort to the church, and 3. The obligation of the church. Briefly, Christ as the risen Lord has instituted the New Testament Church. He Himself is the cornerstone, the solid and firm foundation of the church. The great comfort we have as His Church is that the Lord knows His people, and as long as we know the Lord with a sincere heart and acknowledge Christ as the Head of the Church, He will be with us and protect us in the midst of the turmoil of this world. Our obligation and responsibility in serving the Lord is to depart from iniquity and to do the will of the Father. Although the office-bearers have a special responsibility to ward off evil influences on the congregation, all of the members must be willing instruments in God's hands to build together on the *one* firm foundation which He gave to the church. Rev. VanderWel concluded his sermon with the words: "If you give heed to the obligation of the covenant in departing from all iniquity, you will certainly, brothers and sisters, experience, however dark it may become in this age that the Lord does know the ones who are His, when you believe and honour that seal that is found on your foundation, then you will stand as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ according to Christ's promise that the gates of hell will not prevail against you as a congregation."

After the ordination of the office-bearers and the closing prayer, the con-

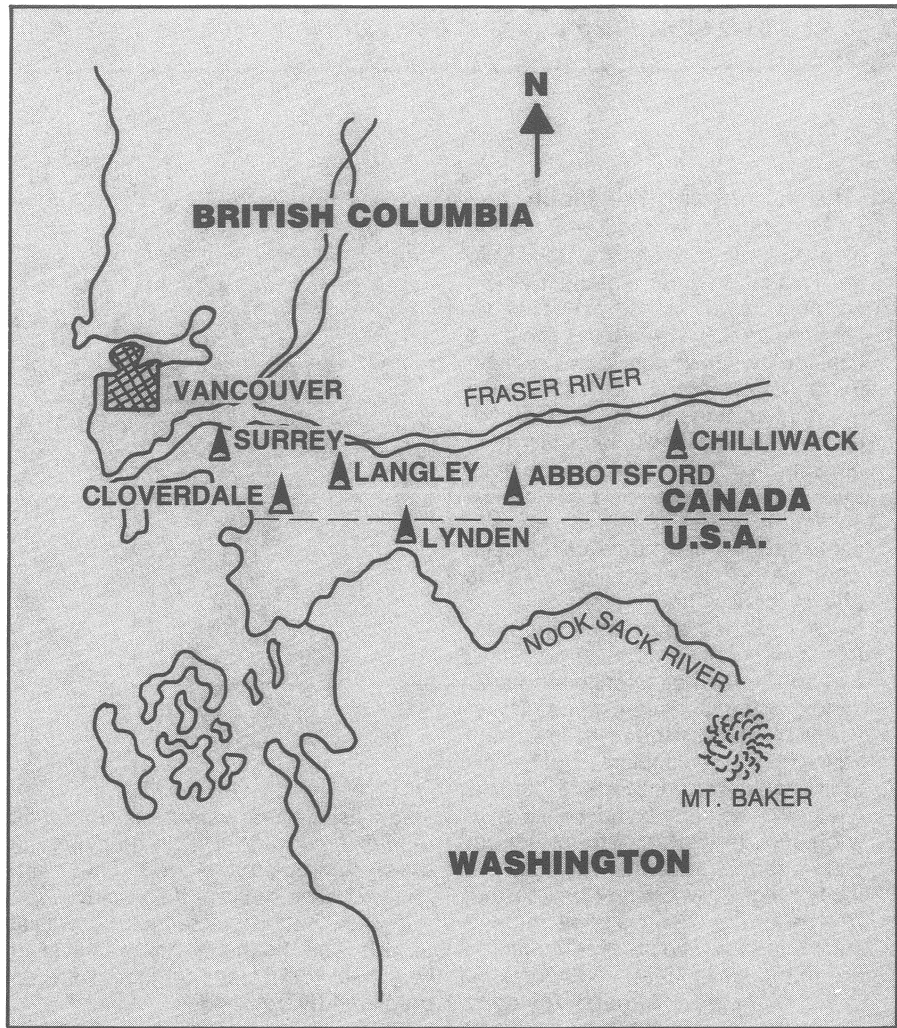
gregation jubilantly joined in the singing of Psalm 118:1 and 6. "Oh come with thanks, God's goodness praising; His firm and steadfast love endures."

Following the worship service, delegates from other churches were given an opportunity to speak. Br. H. Berends of the Church at Cloverdale spoke on behalf of Classis Pacific. He expressed the wish that in the promotion of God's Kingdom the newly formed congregation may grow and increase, not only in number, but also in faith and knowledge, and that she may be a light in her surroundings, a useful tool in the Lord's hand in His church-gathering work until the day dawns when our Lord shall appear and shall say: "It is enough; the number of the elect is complete." For that day we long with a most ardent desire to the end that we all may fully enjoy the promise of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Br. F.M. Flokstra spoke on behalf of the Church at Abbotsford, extending congratulations and best wishes for the blessings of the Lord. He thanked the brothers and sisters for their contributions in the past to the churches in the Fraser Valley, and he wished them the Lord's guiding hand in the future.

A surprise telephone message was received from the American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids, extending their Christian greetings. They specially remembered the new Church in Lynden in their worship service and wished them the Lord's blessings; also that the new church may be a blessing to those surrounding them in the great country of America.

Rev. VanderWel spoke a few words of farewell to the congregation. He said that usually a minister says farewell when he leaves a congregation, but in this case part of his congregation walked away;



Map of the location of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the Fraser Valley.

however for a joyful reason. He expressed the hope that the Lord may strengthen the brothers and sisters in their new position;

that He may bind them together with the bond of faith and love, and in due time grant them a new minister.

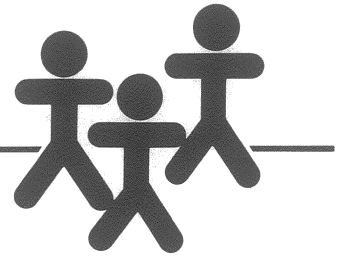
In response to the speakers, br. Vreugdenhil, on behalf of the new Church at Lynden, first of all thanked God for making it all possible. He also thanked the speakers for their well wishes, and especially thanked the mother Church at Abbotsford for their efforts and the good cooperation in the delivery of the "new baby." In addition he thanked Rev. VanderWel for a job well done. He closed with the words: "We don't know what the Lord has in store for us in the future developments, but by the grace of God we take our place in the Federation to the glory of His Name and the upbuilding of His Church."

During the social hour which followed, coffee and refreshments were served. It was a wonderful day in the progress of God's coming Kingdom.



Congregating after church on the first Sunday that worship services were held in Lynden, Washington.

WALTER D. MEESTER



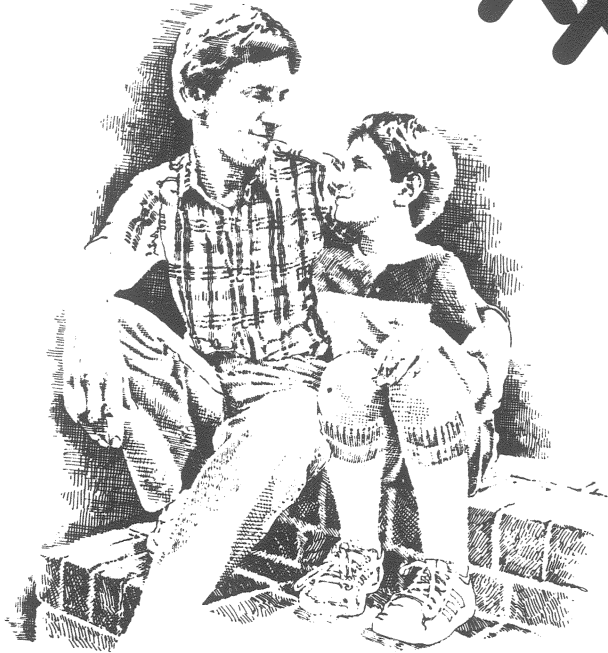
A. The school and the family

Educate — or in other words, to give intellectual and moral training to the student. In order that this training correspond with what the parents believe, the following factors must be considered within our school society. First, that as parents, we do not have the qualifications to instruct our children in the specific subjects taught in our school. For this purpose we have trained educators, who are one with us in faith, to assist us in this task. We can see the importance of our faith when we look, for example, to a Grade one student. This student is not a blank page, as some may suppose. Not at all; for this student should have had six years of early childhood education in the Christian home. These years are termed the most important years by many scholars. But at this moment a very important step is made. We, as parents, now have to rely on another instructor to further our child's formal education, to build on the basis given at home. This does not imply that our responsibility shifts to someone else. The parents' concerns are that their children shall continue in the faith of their fathers. The need in our society is that the parents and instructors are of the same mind.

(from a *Newsletter* of the Canadian Reformed School, Smithers, BC)

The responsibility of education for both home and school, remains a current and well-discussed topic. Parents and instructors must be "of the same mind" so that the children may "continue in the faith of their fathers." Obviously, we all agree. These conditions are fundamental to our schools. What happens however, when children display a life-style which contradicts our Reformed heritage? This trait, which so often seems to present itself at the high school level, dismays us all. It produces feelings of guilt and sometimes perhaps, some doubt as to the effectiveness of the school and/or the home, as far as meaningful education is concerned. The report that follows has been taken from a recent bulletin of Guido de Brès High School. The contents are useful in providing a better perspective. Some excellent food for thought . . .

On Friday, January 25th, our parent evening was held in the school gymnasium, under the leadership of Dr. Helder.



Two presentations were made, one by our guidance counsellor Mr. Torenvliet, the other by the undersigned. They were followed by a general discussion.

The meeting was reasonably well attended, and the discussion was lively. It was clear that closer contacts were appreciated by both sides.

Since it is impossible to get all the parents together for this type of evening, we thought that it might be good to give some summaries or excerpts of the presentations in this issue, and in subsequent issues of our magazine. I will attempt to do that, and deal first with Mr. Torenvliet's remarks.

Mr. Torenvliet stressed the overriding importance of the home in teaching values and in establishing attitudes and habits. The school can do very little "remedial" work in these areas if the home has not laid the foundations, and if it has not started to do so when the children are still young.

This function of teaching values, habits, and general life-style has traditionally belonged to the parents. In the world around us, however, there is a drastic weakening of the family bonds. An alarmingly large number of children are being raised in single parent homes, and even in those cases where the parents stay together, they are often both working. That, too, contributes to far-reaching changes in the traditional family structure. Because of these changes the homes, to a large extent, have ceased to perform their basic "socializing" function, and the

children have begun to look to friends and the media for their values and life-style.

If we stop to consider what this implies, we must shudder. When we look around us today we see plenty of evidence of media-directed behaviour in teenagers. One of the most pervasive forces in shaping attitudes and behaviour nowadays is modern music, Rock to most. A person's preference in this type of music dictates his dress, his behaviour, his language, and in many cases his friends. Rock culture has stepped in to fill the vacuum left by the disintegrating family and the changing family roles, and its functions as the means by which many young people interpret reality and gain a sense of identity.

The attitudes advanced by this culture are diabolical. Much of that influence is visibly displayed in the styles of dress which each group wears. The bullet bandoleers, handcuffs and bottleopeners of the punkers and heavy metal enthusiasts adequately demonstrate their attitudes towards violence, sex and booze. To many who are trapped in this culture, life is an endless string of parties in which one gives free reign to one's passions and desires. What kind of a future can we expect for a society where this type of media has replaced the family as the inculcator of values and attitudes?

So much for the others. The question remains, where do we stand in relation to all this? To what extent are we affected by what is happening in the society in which we all live and function?

Although many examples could be given, two will have to suffice to make the point. In the first place let us consider the music and media problem that I mentioned earlier. At school we often get the impression that many of our parents are unaware of what their children listen to, and that few take up the issue with their children and engage in an open, ongoing discussion with them about these things. In recognition of this apparent lack we at school make a point of speaking with the students, and although it is often difficult, we attempt to increase their awareness of the potential evils in this type of media. This is done in music classes, but also in literature, Bible and various other classes, and in counselling.

As a second example I would like to mention the area of interpersonal relations among our students. Students often show themselves insensitive to the needs and concerns of others. Often they display a glaring lack of respect for each other's differences and consequently cause considerable harm to fellow students. In many cases, when these things are pointed out to them, they respond favourably. As a result the area of interpersonal relations is worked into various units of study in many subject areas.

Now I am convinced that the school should deal with these areas, but my question is: how large should that role be? There are many things that we at school cannot adequately convey to our students if the home is not equally active. For example, if the parents do not instill in their children a proper respect for others, then the school's efforts will meet with only limited success. To take another example: if children are not taught to support Kingdom work and to share with those in need, then the student will find that the Math teacher is unreasonable if he or she puts church and school at the top of the young married couple's budget. Other examples could be added; teaching the proper respect for members of the opposite sex, respect for authority, honesty in dealing with others, self-discipline, a respect for the environment, and Scriptural attitudes towards our sexuality.

In other words: education is a shared responsibility. Parents must be actively involved; in fact, they must be the first. In the early years of a child's life a firm basis must be laid upon which later nurture and instruction can build. And as children reach their teens, this work must continue. Furthermore, there must be unity of action and purpose between the home and the school. Also, as we all know, education cannot take place without meaningful communication. I know that teenagers can be difficult to communicate with, especially if they have opinions that differ from ours. How often

don't we experience that heavy sullen silence when we have reached that formidable impasse and opinions clash. At times like this we must also be prepared to enforce what we, listening to the Bible, know to be correct.

Only in this way, with continual parental involvement and effective communication can parents and teachers carry out their respective responsibilities in educating the children the Lord entrusted to their care. And let's never forget, underneath it all teenagers are lovable people!

Sofar Mr. Torenvliet's presentation. Because of parental requests, I repeat here the title of the book on rock music that we mentioned Friday night. It is *The god of Rock*, by Michael K. Haynes. Price: \$9.50.

F.G. Oosterhoff

B. Teaching Dutch in our schools

Although I do not agree with most of the points raised in the request found in one of our school bulletins, it may be of interest to parents who have similar thoughts. What do you think?

Hereby I make a request to have the Dutch language taught for various reasons.

1. In our great country of Canada, the authorities recognize the valuable input of all the various cultural heritages of the peoples of this nation. To stimulate the importance of these cultures, the educational system has made room in its curriculum to accommodate a time period for the study of these languages (as credit courses).

2. Not only do we have the resources (teachers, parents, ideal literature) and last but not the least, *Our Reformed Heritage* to stimulate us to such a course.

3. Most ethnic groups in this land of ours would sacrifice a great deal for such an opportunity as we have — and what are we doing with ours?

4. Any educator will express the benefit to the students if they could master an extra language, and with our resources, it would even be with a minimum effort.

Would all parents who have similar opinions, please contact the principal to see if some things can be worked out? If the interest is high enough, then I'm sure we can find a lot of benefit in such a course. With some research, we may even be able to have it taught replacing a correspondence course!

A Parent

C. Our annual headache revisited

Many Canadian Reformed Schools still have not finalized their staffing arrangements for the 1985-86 school year.

Statistics indicate that approximately 10 percent of our 120 teachers must be replaced on an annual basis. Most vacancies seem to occur among our female teachers due to marriage and/or family plans. Statistics also show that the number of male teachers in our schools is declining gradually. This is not a good sign and something that will need more attention in the years to come!

Hopefully all vacancies will be filled during the next few months so that the teaching/learning process may continue in a proper manner. Some more attention should be paid to *due dates*. In the zeal of making sure that the school is staffed properly, some arrangements are being made earlier and earlier. In some schools, teachers are asked to state their intentions before January 1, hardly a proper time to consider plans for the following school year. Some teachers admit to signing a contract well before so-called accepted due dates. The fact is that too many schools pay lip service to these dates. A few reminders which were adhered to a few years ago:

a. February 15 — all teachers must hand in "statement of intention;"

b. March 1 — boards may offer contracts to teachers presently employed;

c. March 15 — deadline for these contracts — board may begin to make offers of employment to applicants.

D. Thoughts of the month

What kind of school member are you??
A lot of members are like wheelbarrows:

No good unless pushed.

Some are like canoes:

Need to be paddled.

Some are like kites:

If a string isn't kept on them,
they fly away.

Some are like kittens:

They are more content when petted.

Some are like footballs:

You can't tell which way they'll
bounce next.

Some are like balloons:

Full of wind and ready to blow up.

Some are like trailers:

They have to be pulled along.

Some are like lights:

They keep on going off and on.

Many — thankfully — are like the
North Star:

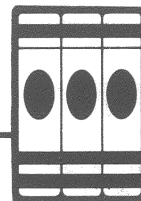
There when you need them, dependable,
ever loyal

and a guide to all people.

—Anonymous

Until next month (D.V.), with a new season and the third school term!

NICK VANDOOREN
John Calvin School
607 Dynes Road
Burlington, ON



***Good Friday*, by Jeremias de Decker. Translated by Henrietta Ten Harmsel. Paideia Press, 1984. Paperback, 148 pp.; \$9.95 Can. Reviewed by W. Helder.**

Henrietta Ten Harmsel, professor of English at Calvin College, has provided us with a translation of *Good Friday*, a long poem by the Dutch author Jeremias de Decker (1609-66). In about 1100 lines, this work offers an account of the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Although the poet does sometimes add elements of his own invention to what we find narrated in the Gospels — for example, when in a moralizing way he elaborates on the sin of greed as Judas' motive for betraying His Master — the poem is for the most part quite faithful to Scrip-

ture. And in spite of a few instances of sensuously baroque blood imagery to which we today may object, the modern reader will no doubt discover much to appreciate in De Decker's often moving and sensitive treatment of his subject.

Ten Harmsel is no novice as a translator of verse. In 1968 Wayne State University Press published her outstanding parallel edition of selected poems by the seventeenth-century Dutch Calvinist Jacobus Revius (entitled *Jacobus Revius: Dutch Metaphysical Poet*). It seems to me that to both the general reader acquainted with the Dutch language and the student interested in comparative literature the parallel Dutch/English arrangement found in this book is preferable to the layout used for *Good Friday*. In the latter,

the Dutch text and accompanying footnotes are relegated to a 60-page appendix — an awkward format for those who wish to compare the English version with the original in order to enjoy the art and precision of Ten Harmsel's translation more fully.

Nine etchings by Rembrandt, who was not only De Decker's contemporary but also his friend, have been reprinted to illustrate the translated text. Also included are the translator's introduction, entitled "De Decker, Rembrandt, and the Bible," and a concluding essay on "De Decker, *Good Friday*, and the Baroque."

All in all, a fine contribution to the study of comparative literature as well as to the appreciation of Christian devotional poetry. WH

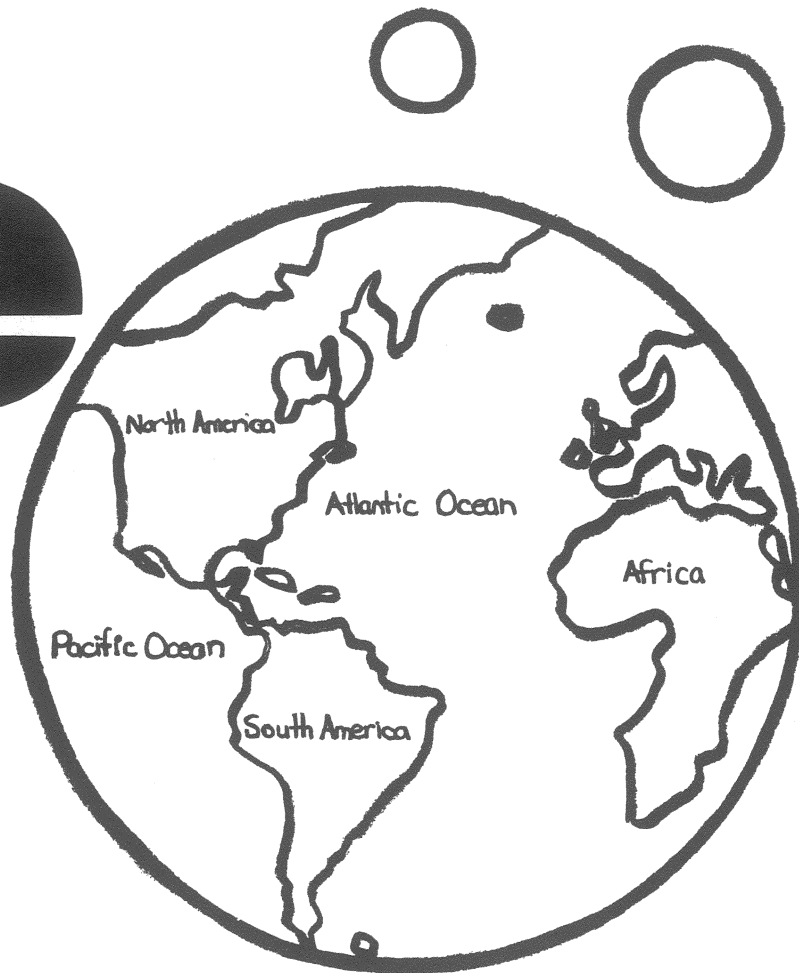
CHRIST CRUCIFIED

*I hear the iron nails, blow after cruel blow —
 Through hands and wood they go
 With pounding strong and fierce;
 By turns, the right hand first, then through the left they pierce.
 And now against the wood His tender feet are set;
 First hammered through the right,
 Then hammered through the left,
 Ah me, what awful blows that grate through bone and flesh.
 The cross is raised; oh, oh, this turning, swaying, leaning,
 This swinging and careening —
 First up, then to the ground —
 Each move anew a blow that strikes in every wound.
 Now see the cross raised high, and see the Savior's limbs;
 From head to foot the skin
 Is pitifully stretched,
 Revealing each thin rib, each muscle through the flesh.
 See from those bleeding wounds two streams now flow and spread,
 Two rivulets of blood —
 From wood and from His hands —
 Two purifying streams to wash the soul of man.
 My soul (I say) look on, but also see your sins,
 The cause of all His pains
 And undeserved curse.
 Here see how foul they are and see what they are worth.
 So foul that God preferred to pour His wrath on Him,
 On His own perfect Son —
 Completely guiltless, He,
 His only Son — than that the evil should go free.*

— from *Good Friday*, by Jeremias de Decker; translated by Henrietta Ten Harmsel
 (Paideia Press, 1984). Reprinted with permission.

ABC BIBLE COLLECTION - by Mrs. John Roza

E e



E-earth
(Genesis 1)

Quiz Questions

Colour me!

1. In the beginning God planted a garden for Adam that is known as Paradise. What is another name for this garden? _____ (Genesis 2)
2. God had Adam fall into a deep sleep. Adam had a rib removed by God to make Adam a woman and he named her _____ (Genesis 3).
3. King Pharaoh ruled over this land called _____ (Exodus 1).
4. This man was taken up into heaven by a chariot of fire and horses.
Who was this man? _____ (II Kings 2)
5. After Elijah was taken up into heaven, who took over his ministry? _____ (II Kings 2)

Answers for the "Easter"

1. cross 2. criminals 3. body 4. tomb 5. guard 6. stone 7. rolled 8. risen 9. Galilee 10. disciples 11. Gospel



Dear Busy Beavers,

Let's start with a poem from Busy Beaver *Debbie Jagt*.

SPRING

Spring is coming very soon,
Flowers grow and start to bloom.
Animals come out of their dens,
Robins fly and so do wrens.
We jump up and joyfully play,
Spring has come, "Hurray!"

Busy Beaver *Mary-Lynn DeBoer* has a picture she made for you.



Now it's time for *Birthday Wishes!*

Here's wishing all the Busy Beavers that celebrate their birthday in the beautiful month of May a very happy day and many, many happy returns of the day.

May the Lord bless and keep you all in the coming year.
Have a good time celebrating with your family and friends!

M A Y

Melanie Veenendaal	1 Cynthia Barendregt	19
Hilda Buitenhuis	4 Tracy Bos	21
Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg	4 Jason Wierenga	22
Felicia Viersen	5 Derek Hoogstra	23
Jacoba Harlaar	6 Becky Heemskerk	25
Donna Pieffers	7 Loren Van Assen	25
Geraldine Schenkel	7 Wendy Vander Veen	26
Lawrence Stam	8 Jim Witteveen	26
Timothy Van Popta	9 Sylvia Admiraal	28
Linda Knol	10 Michelle DeHaas	28
Mariet Nap	16 Donald Woltjer	29
Les Haan	17 Bryan Bos	31
Jennifer Siebenga	18	

Busy Beaver *Kerri-Anne Wierenga* has sent in this recipe to share with you.

Maybe the birthday people will try them for the party! Anyway, it looks like these are fun to make! Thanks for sharing, Kerri-Anne!

RICE KRISPIES TREATS

You Need: ¼ cup margerine
40 large marshmallows (or 4 cups miniature)
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
5 cups Rice Krispies

TO MAKE:

1. Melt margerine, put in marshmallows, cook over low heat until melted.
2. Remove from heat, add vanilla, and gradually add Rice Krispies until well covered.
3. Put on greased cookie sheet. Cool. Cut in squares.

Quiz Time!

What flower is very popular in Spring?
from Busy Beaver *Alice Van Woudenberg*

Fill in the blanks to spell names of animals.

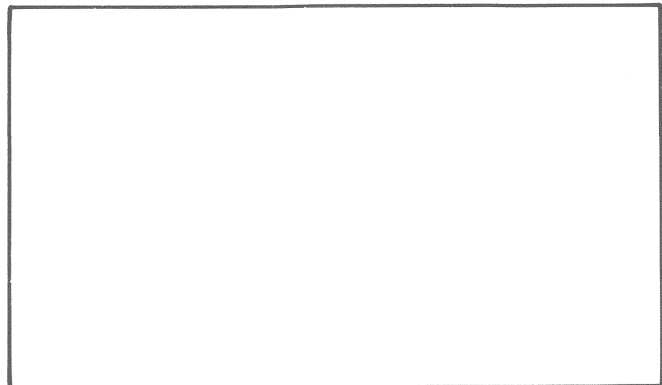
The letters in the blanks will tell you the name of a very popular SPRING FLOWER!

___ ONKEY H ___ RSE

GIR ___ FFE ___ EER

___ ROG K ___ TTEN

___ ISH F ___ Y



Make your picture of it here!