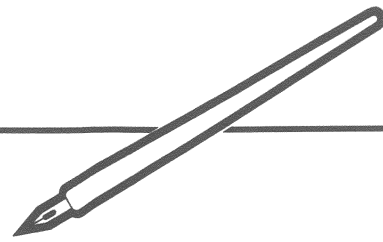




Clarion
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Office bearers, take heed to yourselves

Around the middle of the year, before the holiday season begins, there is a change of office bearers in many of our churches. Some brothers have completed their period of three or four years, the congregations have elected new brothers to take their place, and these newly elected and approved brothers are ordained in their office of elder or deacon. It is good to pay attention to the calling of office bearers.

It is not so much my intention to deal with the work of the office bearers in the congregation itself, but rather to write about the task as expressed in the heading. Because of their calling and work in the congregation, office bearers must take heed to themselves.

These words are taken from Acts 20:28. They were spoken by the apostle Paul to the elders of the church at Ephesus when he was on his way to Jerusalem. He told these Ephesian bishops that affliction was waiting him and that they would not see him again. Paul further said to them that after his departure fierce wolves would come in among them, not sparing the flock, while also from their own midst men would arise who would speak perverse things and try to draw the congregation away from Christ.

In that situation the apostle exhorted the elders: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which He obtained with the blood of His own Son." I shall make a few remarks on some elements in this word of Paul which shows the urgency of the exhortation that office bearers have to take heed to themselves.

The Holy Spirit made you overseers

The church is not a democracy where the people are said to rule themselves through their own elected rulers. Even though there is election of office bearers in the church by the congregation, the one who rules is Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works through His human instruments.

We do not know in exactly which way the Spirit had made the elders of the Ephesian church overseers. Was this done by direct appointment through the apostle Paul? Or was it done in the way of a congregational election? We can only guess, but it does not really matter. The result remains the same: the elders were made overseers through the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the same is true for faithful churches today. The Holy Spirit fills members of the congregation and grants them gifts which make them suitable for one of the offices in the church. The consistory or council nominates such brethren. The congregation, also guided by the Holy Spirit and seeking the spiritual well-being of the church, looks for such men who are gifted with the Holy Spirit, faithful in their Christian life and of good repute in and outside the congregation, and chooses them. When so, nominated by the consistory and elected by the congregation, these men are ordained, it can be correctly said that the Holy Spirit has made them office bearers.

And their task is to take care of the flock of Christ which

He is gathering through His Spirit, after He bought her for a high price.

God bought the church for a high price

The price for which God bought His church was high. It was the blood, the life of His Son. It shows how precious the church is in the eyes of the Lord. Being a shepherd, an overseer, and taking care of the flock of the Lord is therefore a very important task. It must be considered a desirable calling, as Paul says to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:1), but at the same time it is a very responsible one.

The congregation is very precious to the Lord, and therefore we can understand that the Lord warns his servants that he will ask His people from their hand.

Christ gave His life for His church. That was a total self-sacrifice out of perfect human and divine love. This sacrifice showed a total commitment. When we look at the picture which the New Testament gives us of the apostle Paul, we see a total apostolic commitment to the church which Christ bought. Paul gave himself completely to Christ. Christ was for him the Lord and Saviour who bought the church for Himself and for God. Therefore, giving himself totally to Christ meant for Paul giving himself totally to the church of Christ. Faithful office bearers in the church of Christ will seek to follow this example of the apostle. They will give themselves, to the congregation for which Christ paid such a high price with their whole heart, with full commitment and a total dedication. What was and is so precious for Christ is precious for them. That is why they have to take heed to themselves.

Take heed to yourselves as examples

Office bearers must constantly turn their attention, their mind to themselves and watch themselves intensively, because they have a leading position in the church of Christ. This leading position means in the first place that they are called to be good examples for the flock.

Satan directs his assaults in the first place on the leaders in the church. If he can make them unfaithful and careless, seeking their own interests instead of that of the congregation, or if he can make them accept or allow teachings which deviate from the Word of the Lord, the flock so easily follows them on the wrong path.

It is with the church as with a family. The church is called the household of God. When parents turn in a wrong direction, the children almost always follow that way, and often go even farther, although there are exceptions.

Also the opposite is true, although again there are exceptions. Usually, when parents love the Lord and serve Him with their whole heart, keeping His commandments in their own life and so teach the children, taking heed to themselves, the children will follow their teaching and example.

It is, therefore, not strange when Christians are exhorted to remember their leaders, who spoke to them the Word of God, to consider the outcome of their life and to imitate their faith,

Hebrews 13:7. Peter admonishes the elders to be "examples to the flock," 1 Peter 5:4.

When an office bearer is not faithful and diligent, but takes it quite easy in the service of the Lord, he undermines the basis for his work in the church in a double way, for the congregation and for himself. When he lacks commitment and dedication and lives a sloppy, careless life and is for himself not strict with regard to the commandments of the Lord, the members of the congregation will lose respect for him. And when he comes to them to admonish them in connection with certain sinful actions or attitudes, the members will think and perhaps say that he should first look at himself and change his own attitude and way of life. They will not accept His Word.

But a lax attitude will not only weaken the basis for his work with regard to the congregation, it will also undermine the basis for his work with respect to himself. A person who is not living for the Lord with full commitment, but is negligent and feels guilty, has no drive to go to others to admonish them to repent and turn away from sin. His own guilty conscience breaks his moral and psychological strength, and leaves him without mental and spiritual power to convince others of sin and to lead them to repentance and conversion. A man who does not urge himself, cannot truly urge others.

Take heed to yourselves for your task

The apostle Paul spoke about fierce wolves who would not spare the flock and about members of the church who would speak perverse things to lead the congregation astray. That was not only a warning for those days, it was a warning for all time. This warning involves both doctrine and conduct. Satan tries to destroy the church of the Lord mainly by two means: by persecution through fierce wolves who pounce upon their prey; and through deviating doctrines coming up from within the congregations that lead away from the truth and so from the Lord.

In order to ward off false doctrines that often start with minor deviations, the elders, as overseers keeping watch over the flock of the Lord, must themselves know the Scriptures. They must know the true doctrine of the Word of God. They must know what the church confesses to be the true doctrine. For the proper fulfilment of their calling office bearers must, therefore, constantly study. They must study the Word of the Lord and the Confessions of the Church. They are called to read books and articles that can help them to understand Scripture and confession, so that he will be able to work with them in the practical execution of his office.

When the apostle Paul wrote down the requirements for the bishops or overseers, that is, the elders in the church, one of them was that elders must be 'apt teachers' 1 Timothy 3:2. And Titus is instructed to appoint elders in every town according to Paul's directions. One of those directions is that an elder "must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it," Titus 1:9.

Office bearers who (almost) never read to increase their knowledge and insight in God's Word and the doctrine of the church and who do not know what is going on doctrinally in and around the church, and what is right and what is wrong, but just accept what ministers and ecclesiastical meetings say, are not well able to fight off deviations and false teachings and cannot properly take heed to the flock of the Lord.

In this connection the suggestion may be made that office bearers, as much as is possible, attend the meetings of the Men's Society. It is true, this cannot always be realized because of the work that is involved in the execution of their office. There is often not much time left for attending society meetings, especially in the larger congregations. Many evenings are occupied by church work that consists of consistory

meetings and visits. And there is usually also their own family that requires the attention and care of a husband and father. Nevertheless, there should be a striving of office bearers to strengthen the Men's Society through their input.

Take heed to yourselves under pressure

Besides being examples for the flock in doctrinal knowledge and understanding for the purpose of teaching and warding off deviations, office bearers have to be examples in true Christian conduct under the pressures of the surrounding world. The apostle spoke of fierce wolves, of persecution and oppression. Office bearers must be examples of faithfulness and endurance in persecution and under oppression.

Let me take as an example something that has been an important issue for many years in our churches. I mean the matter of membership in the secular trade unions. We realized that total allegiance to a labour organization could not go together with total allegiance to Christ Jesus, because the church confesses that Christ Jesus is Saviour also of our daily labour and for our labour relations. This the unions deny.

Confessing Christ as Redeemer also for labour and labour relations and, per consequence, refusing to accept union membership, brought many people under great economic and social pressure. It was a form of persecution. It can be understood that someone who would give in under that pressure, could not be considered fit for a leading position in one of the offices in the church of the Lord.

Let me take another example. Working on Sunday is more and more required in our secularizing society. More and more people like to shop on Sunday. More and more complicated factories demand uninterrupted production seven days per week and therefore require shift work seven days a week. More and more businesses are open on Sunday. This shows the desecration not only of the day of rest and worship, but also of life in general in our modern society.

This brings along the temptation to give in under the pressure of social and economic circumstances, and to think and teach that the fourth commandment does not have bearing anymore for the New Testament church. It may lead to accepting Sunday work either for yourself or for employees who work for you. It is clear that a church that seeks to live by the Word of the Lord is not served by an office bearer who gives in to social and economic pressures from the world. He cannot give good leadership.

These examples can be multiplied with many. We see that from the requirements for office bearers as Paul gives them to Timothy and Titus, saying, for instance, that "a bishop must be above reproach," 1 Timothy 3:2 or a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright, holy, and self-controlled," Titus 1:7,8.

Conclusion

Our conclusion must be that a true God-fearing attitude and conduct, that shows obedience of faith with respect to God's commandments, has to be the goal of those who have received the responsible task of an office bearer in the church of the Lord. It demands commitment to the LORD and dedication to His cause, His church and kingdom as the all important matter in life, to which everything is made subservient.

Office bearers must take heed to themselves and watch carefully how they speak and act and think for the sake of the church of God, bought for such a high ransom and so precious to Him. Let us who have received an office in the church, take heed to ourselves, praying that the Lord may forgive the shortcomings, and striving for perfection.

J. GEERTSEMA

Marriage and procreation₂

3. Valid reasons

The most frequently heard reason for limitation of the number of children or so-called family-planning is the danger of overpopulation. Not enough food will be available. Poverty and starvation will be the final result. However, is that really an honest reasoning? It is a well-known fact that family planning always has been an issue, especially with well-off families. Those who could financially very well afford to have a large family were often the least willing to accept this responsibility. The size of families is often greater in the poor countries than in the wealthy areas. Overpopulation and starvation is not a real threat for the people who are the most in favour of having a small family. We can understand that the food supply is a problem in some parts of the world, but that are exactly the places with the largest families. However, that is not the problem in the rich countries. There is no overpopulation in our part of the world. On the contrary. In many developed countries there is rather a problem in the opposite direction. Sociologists have figured out that after a number of years we will have many older people to look after, but a relatively small group of people to take care of them. In some countries the government considers measures to reverse this effect by encouraging people to have a larger family, because they are concerned about the decreasing population. The real reason of the smaller families is that people do not like the responsibility. They want to be free, to enjoy life without being bothered too much by the raising of children. They like to have fun, they like to have sexual relations, but they do not want children. And when a girl gets pregnant she wants to have the right to get rid of the baby by abortion. "Don't care about others, just live for your own joy and have fun, as much as possible." That is the mentality today.

Some might wonder whether there are no valid reasons at all to restrict the number of children or to postpone a pregnancy within the scope of our own responsibility. There certainly are valid reasons. The Lord did not give the instruction to mankind to multiply as much and as fast as possible but He said to



Adam and Eve that they should be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and *subdue* it; and have *dominion* over everything upon the earth. Parents have the responsibility, not only to bring forth children but to bring them up in the fear of the Lord. As many children as possible is not necessarily in accordance with the commandment of the Lord. It is irresponsible to procreate a next child if, humanly speaking, the parents know that the life or the health of the mother will be in danger, or that the upbringing of the existing family will become very difficult if not impossible. Many circumstances have to be considered and it is impossible to set a clear-cut rule for every situation. It makes quite a difference whether a family lives in a small apartment, because the father is unemployed and the mother cannot make ends meet, or that a family lives in a huge farmhouse, while the children are working on a family farm. Parents have to consider all aspects. Prayerfully they have to bring this matter before the Lord. They can discuss it with their pastor, with their doctor, with one of the elders or with another

"counselor," but finally *they* have to make the decision before the countenance of the Lord. It is certainly not so that a mother should become pregnant as soon as possible after she has given birth to a baby. Let us not forget that in our present situation the chance that a mother gets pregnant for the second time within a year is much greater than it was, for instance, in the time of the Old Testament. In the Bible we read at different occasions that a child was weaned. For instance in Genesis 21:8 it says about Isaac: "And the child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned." In I Samuel 1:23,24 we read about Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel: "the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, and an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine; and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh; and the child was *young*." In both cases, with Isaac as well as with Samuel, it is very likely that the boys were about five years old before

they were "weaned". Do you realize what that means? A mother was supposed to breast-feed her baby for a number of years. Often three to five years. During that period of time it was very unlikely that she would become pregnant again. That was a "natural" reason why very seldom two children were born within less than a year. There were at least a number of years in between. The question is not whether there can be circumstances which make it advisable or necessary to refrain from the procreation of a next child, but the question is *what* are the proper reasons and *which* measures have to be taken to prevent or avoid a pregnancy for a certain period of time.

4. Different circumstances

It depends on the personal circumstances and the "weight" of the reasons, which measures have to be taken and are appropriate in a certain situation. When the mother is healthy, and nurtures the baby herself for about a year, no special measures might be necessary. If there is some concern about the health of the mother and about the way she will be able to take care of a growing family, a certain period of abstinence and self-control may be in place. If there are more pressing reasons, more rigorous measures may be considered. Which measures have to be taken depends on the circumstances. That counts in two directions. If a couple has been married for half a year and there is still no pregnancy, it is no reason to be alarmed. However, if after a couple of years there still is no baby, the couple might see a doctor and ask for some tests to find out whether there is a specific reason for infertility. After they have been married for more than ten years they may consider a rather complicated operation in an effort to cure the problem. Let us not forget that this is also a human effort to interfere with "nature", in the same way as every visit to the doctor's office is an attempt to use the means available to control a situation, as far as we can. We are allowed to use the means the Lord has made available, as long as we do it in a responsible way. A treatment is not right or wrong per se, but we can use everything in a wrong way. It is the same with the methods to regulate or delay pregnancy. Everything can be used in a wrong way. It always has to be in accordance with the circumstances and in accordance with the responsibility the Lord has given us. If, in a certain situation, a pregnancy, according to medical indications, would be fatal, it is irresponsible to cause such a pregnancy. Of course, we


can never say whether it will be really fatal, but we have to go by what we know, to the best of our ability. If you know that you have a heart disease, and the doctor has given you a warning to avoid certain things, then you should not take the risk of causing a heart attack. It is the same with a pregnancy. In such a situation rigorous measures have to be taken. This is a very delicate matter and we should not think too lightly about it, or be too hasty with our judgment on people, without knowing all the circumstances. Practice has proved that this can be a very difficult decision for the parents concerned and that they are sometimes hurt by inconsiderate remarks from outsiders, who do not understand the problems they have to deal with.

It is a fact that such situations do not occur very often, although it might happen more than most people are aware of. In most cases the reasons are not that dramatic and the postponement of a pregnancy is less urgent. In such situations less dramatic measures are in place. In many cases a periodical abstinence or "rhythm method of birth control" may be the proper way to deal with the matter. This method of regulating or postponing pregnancy is even accepted in the Roman Catholic Church and according to the the Papal Encyclical Letter "Humanae Vitae" the only permitted way. It means that parents take in consideration the fact that the mother is only "fertile" during a restricted number

of days before and after ovulation. If abstinence is applied during those days, a pregnancy can be avoided or postponed. If this method is used under medical supervision and with the help of temperature registration, it is a reliable way. It does not give complete certainty, but in most situations that is not necessary either. As a method for some "regulation" it may be sufficient. We mentioned already before, that there can be situations in which a pregnancy should be avoided under all circumstances. In such a case this method may not be applicable. However, in most cases the situation is not that dramatic.

Basically the question *which* method can be used is a matter of secondary importance. The main question is whether there are *valid reasons* to postpone or avoid pregnancy in the first place. If this point has been discussed and satisfactorily answered, in prayer before the countenance of the Lord, then the question which method is appropriate can be discussed with a doctor, provided that he is prepared to consider the Biblical norms. Because not everyone is in a position to discuss such questions with a physician who understands his or her feelings, it may be worthwhile to say a few more things about this delicate matter in the next installment.

(To be continued.)
W. POWELSE



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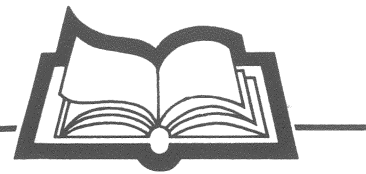
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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial — Office bearers, take heed to yourselves	
— J. Geertsema	322
Marriage and procreation ²	
— W. Pouwelse	324
From the Scriptures — The Hour of Holocaust	
— J. DeJong	326
Press Review — Decisions regarding women deacons	
— J. Geertsema	327
Press Releases	328
Our Cultural Mandate ¹	
— J. DeJong	329
News Medley — W.W.J. VanOene	332
School Crossing — N. Vandoooren	334
College Corner — J. Faber	335
ABC Bible collection	
— Mrs. J. Roza	337
Our Little Magazine	
— Aunt Betty	338



“So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)”

Matthew 24:15

The Hour of Holocaust

In His discourse concerning the last days, the Lord Jesus quotes the prophet Daniel’s reference to the “desolating sacrilege,” and urges that the reader pay particular attention to the dramatic appearance of this horror. Since it is obvious that the words of the Lord Jesus stretch beyond the events immediately flowing out of His death and resurrection to the days immediately prior to His return, we can apply them to our own day as well. But what is the desolating sacrilege Christ speaks of here?

We find the expression three times in the book of Daniel, in chapter 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11, but the form of the expression as used by the Lord Jesus make it clear that He thinks primarily of the latter two of these references. In these places Daniel also speaks generally, just as the Lord Jesus does. This is *apocalyptic*, and one of the characteristics of this kind of writing is that it paints general lines, stretching far into the future, and having more than one fulfillment. Daniel’s immediate reference in the stated passages is to Antioch Epiphanes, the evil Syrian ruler who, around 168 B.C., ransacked the city of Jerusalem, destroyed the temple and pillaged the nation, inflicting harsh cruelties upon the Jews. The Lord Jesus, however, applies the passages to His own day, and in adding a marginal note, points out that these passages have *lasting* significance, and also plays an important role in the final days of the world.

In this way the Lord Jesus teaches us to view our time as an *eschatological* time, that is, a time with the realities of the end-time struggle between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, the Church of the Lord Jesus. This does not mean that we can predict the imminent end of the world. The focus here is on the *character* of the final age, not its duration. And Scripture repeatedly points to this dispensation as the “last days,” “the end of the ages,” the last hour. We, too, must have an open eye for the desolating sacrilege.

What may we look for and expect? Clearly, we only receive a rough sketch here. But the Lord Jesus opens the eyes of His Church for the arrival of unrelenting *sacrilege*, that is, open and public contempt for true worship and true religion, a public mockery of religious forms and customs, and an unrelenting effort to bring down all things to one level, the level of the wicked and profane. Having written off the true God, true worship and religion, modern man is none the less haunted by the true message of salvation and its abiding effects. Bible and cross, Word and sign — they simply cannot be erased from his mind. In the birth of public sacrilege, we can witness the rise of open hostility and public hatred against the God of heaven and earth who

placed cross and Bible, word and sign in this world. And this force of hatred will continue unabated until no stone is left unturned, until all religious symbols and customs have become the object of the profane. Word and sacrament, office and proclamation — all are part of the devil’s continuing onslaught against the truth.

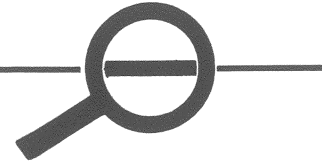
However, the Lord Jesus indicates that the acute pivot point in the arrival of public sacrilege, the point of *crisis*, comes when the sacrilege has reached “the holy place.” This is the beginning of desolation and destruction. In first instance, He speaks of Jerusalem and the earthly temple; but beyond this we may also see a reference here to the birth of sacrilege in the places and forms of *true* worship. Satan’s aim is to drive forward with public sacrilege and bring it *into the Church*. For is not the Church the real object of all his attacks? In his effort to universalize profanity, he concentrates on the people of God so that he might overturn all things spiritual and leave not one semblance of holiness left in the world.

And — as the Scriptures indicate — he will nearly succeed. The great upheaval will come; the antichrist will appear and will form coalitions with the perpetrators of false religion, and will set up the *universal* sacrilege, the devilishly erotic form of worship which will simultaneously demand the unconditional allegiance of *all* men. At the same time, he will devastate true worship and right religion, leaving the witnesses slain in the street, Rev. 11.

Yet there is great comfort in this expression. For it can and should also be read another way, nl. the sacrilege which causes desolation, (cf. NIV). And what does this say? It reminds us that behind the desolator is one who allows and in fact brings the desolation over Church and world. Judgment begins with the house of God! God Himself stands behind the desolator, and acts in Him. When the world’s sacrilege has universalized and come to its peak, He reaches in. He *must* reach in, out of honour for His holy name, and out of jealousy for His own who cling to Him in truth, even in a dark and evil world.

Then He will come to carry up all those who flee to Him in truth. He will take them into the “rapture” which is Himself, and will keep them from the trial coming over the world. Saved from destruction, they will worship Him in holiness for ever. For the dogs, fornicators, sorcerers and idolaters will be thrown outside, but those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb will enter into His courts and rejoice with Him, forever.

J. DEJONG



Decisions regarding women deacons

The Netherlands Reformed Churches

Recently we mentioned here that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is discussing the matter of women deacons. *Nederlands Dagblad* of June 4, 1985 reports that the National Assembly of Enschede of the Netherlands Reformed Churches (formerly called "Buiten Verbanders" which means, those outside the federation) decided to appoint a committee to study the question whether women can become deacons. We read:

On the agenda was a letter from the Church of Amsterdam-Centrum in which the National Assembly was requested to pronounce "that it is a matter of Christian freedom when a local church, with prayer to the Lord, calls a sister to the office of deacon." The argument mentioned in the letter is that, in general, the main task of a deacon differs from that of an elder, and is that of looking after the care for the needy. The moderamen proposed to appoint a committee that must give a biblical answer to the question whether women are allowed to serve in an office. Several delegates pointed out that, in fact, only the matter of women in the office of deacon was on the table, since the letter of the Church at Amsterdam-Centrum requested only a decision on that point. This showed, according to them, that there is no need yet in the churches for a reflection at the National Assembly level on the office of elder and minister. A number of delegates stated overagainst this argument that they considered it impossible to speak separately about the office of deacon without including the other offices.

Elder W. Kooistra made his objections against women in any office in the church known in an extensive speech. He warned the meeting for world conformity. Another delegate, Mr. J.F. Arends, pointed to 1 Corinthians 14. "This Scripture passage is clear," he said. "We must not seek to correct Paul . . ."

After a lengthy and intensive discussion, it was decided, upon the advice of Rev. O. Mooiweer, to appoint a committee that will study the question of women in the office of deacon. This committee has to come with its report to the National Assembly of Enschede before the end of this year. The churches are requested not to appoint women in the office

before the National Assembly has come to a pronouncement.

A number of the Netherlands Reformed Churches, among others in Groningen and Utrecht and Oegstgeest, already have women deacons.

The Christian Reformed Church

The Christian Reformed Synod of this year again had to deal with the same matter. There were many objections at its table asking to reverse the decision to open the office of deacon to women. Decisions were made. The official NEWS RELEASE of this synod informs us of the following:

Women in Church Office. In 1984 the CRC synod ratified an earlier decision to allow women to serve in the office of deacon. Synod 1985 dealt with over 50 communications from churches and classes to reexamine this decision.

The advisory committee that studied the material did not present a unified proposal.

The majority recommended that the 1984 decision should not be overturned. It also recommended that synod declare that only male members may serve in the offices of elder or minister. Further, it asked that the 'conscience clause,' which allowed pastors the option of not taking part in a woman's ordination to the office of deacon, be dropped. Finally, it suggested a pastoral letter from synod to the congregations to restore unity after a year of vigorous disagreement on the 1984 decision.

A minority report recommended that the office of deacon again be closed to women.

A second minority report stated that synod should not say that women are barred from the office of elder and minister, and also requested that the 'conscience clause' not be dropped.

The declaration 'that only male members of the church shall be admitted to the offices of minister and elder,' was approved, but synod did *not sustain* the protests and appeals against the decision of 1984. Women may continue to be deacons in the Christian Reformed Church.

Conscience Clause. When the office of deacon was opened to women in 1984, synod also declared 'that pastors are not expected to participate in the ordination of women if it is against their conscience.'

The advisory committee felt that differences of approach to the ordination of women as deacons should be resolved locally without resorting to the conscience clause. Synod agreed and dropped the clause.

Pastoral Letter. The number of protests and communications that synod received on the matter of women in church office revealed concerned unrest in the denomination. One delegate said, 'Where do we go? If synod is concerned about unity, we need more than speeches at synod . . . we need some effective action that will bring us together.'

The advisory committee recommended a pastoral letter to address 'the potential for continuing disunity.' The officers of synod were authorized to send a letter with the theme 'We are to be one,' according to synod president Bolt.

If I remember well, a General Synod of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, in the forties, having made decisions regarding covenant and baptism and disciplining many of those who disagreed and said so, sent a pastoral letter to the churches to maintain the unity. First decisions are made that disrupt the unity because the decisions cannot be called scriptural; then a letter is sent to maintain and restore unity. It would have been better to take the cause of the disunity away, although also this would not have restored the unity, since so many want the office(s) open for women.

This is evident from a "Soapbox" contribution in *The Banner* of June 17, 1985, written by Dr. George Stob, retired minister in the CRC. He says:

The 1985 *Agenda for Synod* is the saddest and sorriest I have seen in all my years in the ministry and in my survey of the Christian Reformed Church's history. It is pathetic that, after thirteen plus years of study on the issue of women in office, the decision (now twice affirmed) to allow women the tidbit of serving as deacons should be the object of more than fifty protests and appeals seeking a reversal of the 1984 ruling and Church Order change . . .

It is obvious that the Reformed Fellowship has become a (secularized) political action committee in the holy place of the church. . . .

Synod will surely have enough wisdom to neutralize the flood of letters and

documents calculated to register enough pressure for political action. . . .

What Rev. G. Stob says regarding the honestly concerned Reformed Fellowship is quite something.

There is also "The Committee for Women in the Christian Reformed Church" (CW-CRC), publishing a "Newsletter." In the issue of May-June 1985, Sheryl Barlow Smalligan begins her contribution with the following paragraphs:

Several weeks ago Ruth Bandstra called me — exuberant, excited, a little scared, flabbergasted yet sincerely flattered, thrilled to her toes — with the news that she had been asked to give the message at an informal church service. Because of overcrowding in her church's sanctuary, Madison Square CRC in Grand Rapids, groups two 'households,' about 40 persons, alternate in holding a service concurrent to the service held for the rest of the congregation. It was for this smaller group that Ruth was asked to preach.

Could such an open and spontaneous recognition of a woman's gifts have occurred ten years ago? Could it occur in many (of) our churches today, even on an 'unofficial' basis?

I was quite surprised when I first began to attend CW-CRC meetings to discover a rather lengthy (I thought) list of churches which either had women in office or which were deliberately working toward that goal. What I thought might be perhaps a half dozen churches was instead over forty — and the list has grown.

The aim of this Women's Committee in the CRC is clear. They will not rest till all the offices are open for CRC women. Women in office is quite a dividing issue in the CRC. I do not see how a pastoral letter can take the division away.

In a second "Soapbox" contribution on the same page of the issue of *The Banner* mentioned above, K. John Werkema, a semiretired farmer reacts to a previous article in *The Banner*. He writes:

I believe Synod 1984 made a wrong decision, which should be reversed. How come we cannot accept these commands? (He referred to 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15, J.G.) Why do we ask, 'Who wrote that passage? To whom? When? What caused him to write it? What were the circumstances?' Why do we read the Bible through coloured glasses and darken the Word of God, clearly written by people directed by the Holy Spirit?

Mother Needed at Home. We hear from all sides of so much breakdown in marriage and in the family. Is it because many husbands and fathers are not fulfilling their God-given responsibilities as head? Homes today are often only places to sleep and eat. Children are sent to Christian school and to catechism but often have to do without the loving, caring leadership of their parents, who both work for things *they* need and want. Often wives and mothers looking for recognition of their

gifts by church, community, or state also add to the sad home situation. But isn't it really the mother who *makes* the home, *which with the Lord's blessing is the center of a Christian family*, which by the grace of God is the *backbone* of church and state?

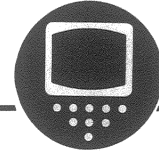
Not even Great Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the Iron Lady, can stand

in the shadow of a true mother in Israel.

I wonder how the division on this issue of women deacons will develop in the CRC as well as in the Netherlands Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. Time will tell. May God's Word win.

J. GEERTSEMA

PRESS RELEASE



Classis Ontario-North, June 20 and 27, 1985

On behalf of the convening church at Orangeville the Rev. M. Werkman called the meeting of delegates to order at 9 a.m. Psalm 138:1,3 was sung, Psalm 138 was read, after which he led in prayer. The brothers were welcomed.

The credentials were reported on by the delegates of the church at Guelph and found in good order. The church at Burlington-West had sent an alternate-elder, and the church at Ottawa had an instruction.

Classis was constituted with serving as officers Rev. J. Mulder, chairman; Rev. D. DeJong, vice-chairman; and Rev. J. DeJong, clerk. The chairman in particular welcomed br. A. VanDelden, present to be examined; Rev. R.J. Gleason, for the first time present as delegate of the church at Toronto; and three guests, one from Alberta. He mentioned that this is the first Classis without Rev. W.W.J. Van-Oene who has retired, and he congratulated Rev. Werkman with his 25th marriage-anniversary.

The required documents for the preparatory examination of br. A. VanDelden were found in good order. Br. VanDelden delivered his sermon-proposal on Isaiah 1:18. After discussion it was decided to continue the examination. Rev. R. Aasman asked about Zechariah 2, Rev. D. DeJong about 1 Corinthians 1, and Rev. J. Mulder about the doctrine of the church.

Since the result of the examination was satisfactory, Classis decided to declare br. A. VanDelden eligible for call in the Canadian Reformed Churches. Br. VanDelden declared to maintain his signature under the Subscription Form, signed by him when he received consent to speak an edifying word in the churches.

For the approbation of the call of Rev. C. Stam to the church at Fergus all the required documents were found in good order, and the call was approved.

Two letters of appeal were dealt with in closed session.

The delegates of the church at Ottawa, who had an instruction from their

consistory, informed Classis that the church at Ottawa experiences growth. At present a manse is rented, which may have to be vacated in a year's time. It is being considered to purchase a highly suitable property for building a manse and perhaps later a church-building. The question was raised: must we first eliminate aid? The consistory feels this would hamper our expansion. Thus our request is, can we keep counting on the same support, while we go ahead purchasing property?

Classis decided that it is favourably inclined to this.

Classical Regulations were partly adopted.

At 8:30 p.m. Classis was adjourned till Thursday June 27, 1985, at 9 a.m.

The continued meeting of Classis was opened on Thursday June 27, 1985 at 9 a.m.

The chairman read Psalm 119:33-48, Psalm 119:13 was sung, and the chairman led in prayer. He welcomed the members, and congratulated Rev. Aasman with his call to the church at Ancaster. The churches at Brampton and Burlington-East presented new credentials, because their delegations were changed. One elder-delegate from the church at Ottawa was not present.

Classical Regulations were now adopted in full. They will be distributed to the churches and others involved.

Report of Committee for Needy Churches was taken note of. The assessment for 1985 is \$6.50 per communicant member.

During the Question-period ad Article 44 Church Order it was noted that church-visitations still to be done should be done before the September-Classis.

The church at Orangeville asked and received advice in a matter of discipline. To the question whether the Acts of Classis and Regional Synods may be made available to church-members on their request it was answered that the Acts of open sessions may be made available. As to Acts of closed sessions it is up to the discretion of the consistory.

An appeal of br. B. VanHuisstede

— Continued on page 333

Our Cultural Mandate¹

Origin of the term

If there ever was a Reformed topic, it is this topic concerning our cultural mandate. The term has grown from our own heritage in The Netherlands, and is relatively unknown on English speaking soil. How did this term find itself in the Reformed vocabulary in The Netherlands? That is our first question and the answer to that question will determine in part whether we should retain the term or not. After all, we should not use terms without being aware of what they mean and without having good reason for using them.

This term became part of the Reformed vocabulary in The Netherlands with the great resurgence of Calvinism in the 19th century. It was especially popularized by Dr. A. Kuyper, who wanted to direct the attention of the Reformed contingent in his country to our calling in all areas of life: the issues and problems of politics, economics, labour relations, education and so on. The central theme in the thought of this great statesman and theologian was the absolute sovereignty of God, and the kingship of the Son over the whole of life, personal life and social life. For Kuyper, Calvinism was not a world-abandoning view of life, but a culturally positive and world-directed system of beliefs that worked as a cleansing power in a sinful world. The gospel of Jesus Christ must cover the whole terrain of human life; art, religion, government, and science — all fall under His victorious leadership.¹

The reason for this strong emphasis on Kuyper's part was the presence of pietistic influences among the Dutch Reformed people of his time. These inward-directed, mystical influences led people to withdraw from the world, and separate their life in the world from their religion. They were more concerned with the salvation of their own souls than with seeking to bring all of life under the lordship of Christ. Kuyper spent his whole life vigorously attacking these influences, not just because he saw them so rampant about him, but also because he was aware of them in his own background, and in his own life.

However, Dr. Kuyper did not present us with a totally integrated Biblical view of culture. His use of the term "cultural mandate" was interwoven with an extremely brilliant but rather complicated theory of common grace, and he built his

whole view of cultural endeavor and Christian cultural activity from this theory. Briefly, Kuyper's theory contained these points: Kuyper believed that God gave grace to the reprobate as well as the elect, and he called this common grace. All cultural endeavor, and every cultural 'success' or 'discovery' was a gift of God, a gift of grace shared commonly by elect and reprobate people alike. Particular, or saving grace, the grace of the gospel, was a special cleansing or purifying force in cultural activity. Yet both elect and reprobate could participate by grace in worthwhile cultural activity.

Although Kuyper's views almost became the standard teaching of the Reformed Church, there were some who were critical of various aspects of his theory. You may have heard of the old Professor Lindeboom who expressed reservations about Kuyper's approach. He was a man who encouraged and put more emphasis on evangelism, and the proclamation of the gospel. He used his extra time in inner city mission, evangelism, and local preaching. He occupies an important place in the history of evangelism in the Reformed Churches.

The debate today

The contrast between these two 19th century figures form the background to the 'quiet debate' that since Kuyper's time has developed in The Netherlands, and still continues today. The substance of this debate forms the content of this speech. The question asked is: Where should the thrust of the Christian endeavor in the world lie? In evangelism and home mission? Or in concerted and united activity in all fields of cultural endeavor? Where must the stress lie? On preaching or on working? What should have priority in our minds: spreading the gospel by word of mouth, or seeking to develop organizations and associations that bring the gospel to bear on different areas of life?

One of the most important works with regard to this subject is Dr. K. Schilder's *Christ and Culture*. Schilder sought to retain Kuyper's broad, all-encompassing vision, but package the aspects he liked about this vision in a more biblically unified and integrated view of culture. Schilder rejected the theory of common grace, but maintained the term "cultural mandate," and stressed the task of believers to let the truth of the gospel be

applied to every area of life. Besides Schilder the philosophers Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd also retained the use of the term cultural mandate, and continued to stress the importance of the social task of believers.

These men, too, have passed on; yet their work is still debated here and in The Netherlands. Over the years, the periodical *De Reformatie* has published an on-going discussion which might well be regarded as a 'quiet debate' between Dr. J. Douma on the one hand, and various opponents on the other. Here in North America this debate has acquired proportions of its own, and we have had some exchanges on this in our own circles. What I would like to do is briefly outline certain aspects of this debate and then look at the Scriptures again with regard to its view of culture.

Mandate or blessing?

While Schilder rejected Kuyper's theory of common grace, he wanted to retain the term "cultural mandate" as an expression summarizing the Christian's task in the world. This term is derived from Genesis 1:28, where the LORD calls Adam to fill the earth, subdue it, and have dominion over all creatures. Schilder linked the mandate with man's office as image of God. Being appointed as image of God, man was called to exercise dominion over the earth and its creatures. "Dress the garden" is the summary of the Christian's calling, the calling extended to Adam, which is still as much in force today as on the day it was spoken. We are called to get out of creation what is in it, including what is in ourselves. In other words, we are to apply all our talents and resources in uncovering the potential in creation and in ourselves, using it all to the glory of God.

Schilder's mandate orientation became the object of some criticism in the dissertation of Dr. J. Douma, *Algemene Genade* (Common Grace). Along with Dr. W.H. Velema, Douma wanted to introduce a culturally reserved stance with regard to this world and its possibilities and activities. Under Calvin's influence, Douma felt that more attention should be placed on the blessings of this present life as a means by which we are directed to seek the fullness of blessing in the life to come.² Douma argued that Genesis 1:28 is more of a blessing than a mandate, and one should be careful not to deduct an entire cultural program out of this verse. The specific concern of this verse is simply that man must rule over the animals and subdue all creatures.

Cultural mandate or gospel mandate?

Dr. Velema went a little farther and

held Schilder's approach to be fundamentally dualistic. If we retain the cultural mandate of the beginning, says Velema, we are forced to conclude that the last day can only come through the fulfillment of two different mandates, the cultural mandate and the gospel mandate. The Kingdom can only appear by means of a two-track line, and a double-pronged thrust. For Velema this view is untenable. Did not our Lord Jesus Christ completely fulfil the cultural mandate? The original covenant of works which man could not keep has now been completely kept and fulfilled by Christ's obedience. For Velema, the redemptive work of Christ is so radical that it changes all the requirements God poses for us. We now receive a command of thankfulness to Christ, for what He has done. Man is no longer at the helm. Rather, Christ as Fulfiller of cultural activity leads history to its end. According to Velema, this means that the period of Pentecost constitutes the special time of mission work, the time for the proclamation of the gospel and the time for repentance. Consequently, the accent must not rest with our cultural mandate, but with the mandate to preach the gospel.

It may be helpful to point out here that Schilder did not deny the Church encompassing task of believers to bring the gospel to bear everywhere, in all areas of life, wherever man is placed, and in whatever social relationships he finds himself. In other words, the task of all believers is wider than the specific task of the Church and her office-bearers.

Middle of history or end of time?

Schilder belonged to a movement of the 30's and 40's that placed considerable stress on the actual presence of the Kingdom of God. In his book on culture, Schilder described Christ as the King, Who appears in the middle of history in order to reveal His Kingship and power on earth, and destroy the evil one and his kingdom. Christ came to bring reconciliation and redirect human life to the service of God.³ That victorious Kingdom is present in our hearts and lives. Notwithstanding the great and continuing power of sin, a new beginning can be made, and a transformation of life is apparent in which we are turned from dead works to visible deeds of love toward God and our neighbour. We are God's co-workers, fellow-workers for Him in the building of His kingdom. That must be manifested in all aspects of life.

At that time another group of pastors warned against unbridled optimism, and taught that the Christian stand towards culture should be very reserved. We should mistrust anything of our own making. We must not be affected by a love

of this world, or by its pleasures. We easily distinguish between sin and the world, but such theoretical distinctions fall away in the hour of temptation. These pastors, to some extent influenced by the Swiss theologian Karl Barth, pleaded for more caution with regard to all kinds of Christian activity, and stressed that we are pilgrims and strangers in this world. Rev. J. Overduin took this line of reasoning, and interestingly enough had to see some of his ideas come alive in his own experience when he was sent to the concentration camp in Dachau.⁴ He survived the ordeal, but remained in the synodical church in the struggle of 1944.

While Douma certainly cannot be connected with this group he, too, has pleaded for less optimism with regard to our cultural aims, and drawn attention to the numerous passages in Scripture that suggest that the time of Christ is really the "last days," the end of history, rather than the middle of history, (I Corinthians 10:11, Hebrews 1:2, I Peter 4:7). The Lord Jesus Himself said, "Behold I come quickly," Revelations 22:12. It is precisely this eschatological or end-time concern of the New Testament that leads, according to Douma, to the priority of the preaching task. We must stress the fact that we live in the last days, and that the hour of repentance is short.

What do the Scriptures say?

In trying to come to an assessment of the conflicting opinions on this point, we must turn to the Scriptures. The Word of God is our only rule in these questions. Few in the debate deny that. But it is

significant that, particularly with regard to this topic two types of texts are continually appealed to. Naturally the whole Bible must be our guide, but here two groups of texts stand out, Old Testament texts and New Testament texts, which might better be typified as protological texts (dealing with the beginning of history) and eschatological texts (dealing with the end time). In my view, both protological and eschatological passages of Scripture must be balanced and combined into a unified view of culture and our cultural task. If we keep both of these perspectives in mind, then we may see that much of the debate is really needless and a matter of words rather than issues.

The Old Testament: protological texts

Actually just about everything in the first 11 chapters of Genesis is important for a Christian view of culture. Our whole basis for looking at creation is laid down in these chapters. Therefore, we must not just appeal to Genesis 1:28, which is both a command and a blessing, but must glean material out of the remaining chapters as well. The creation story forms the general framework, but this is all expanded in the chapters that follow.

Genesis 2 related to us the history of culture, the culture of the beginning. In Genesis 2:4ff. the general command of Genesis 1:28 is made very specific: man is put on a specific place and receives a very specific task. It is almost as if the LORD shows Adam exactly how and where to work the ground. There, too,

General Synod Burlington 1986

The consistory with the deacons of the Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington West, with the concurring advice of the Regional Synod East 1985, convenes General Synod 1986 on Tuesday, April 15, 1986 at 9:00 a.m. in the Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church, 1225 Highway 5, Burlington, ON.

All material for this General Synod should be sent to the address of the convening Church before September 15, 1985 in order that we can "send the first provisional agenda to all Churches at least six months prior to convocation." (Acts, Synod Cloverdale 1983, Article 45, IV I, B)

The Committees appointed by General Synod 1983 are reminded of the decision of General Synod Orangeville 1968 (Acts, Article 41) that "copies of reports which are to be sent to the Churches, shall be in nine months before the opening of Synod."

Consistories are requested to remind the membership of the decision of Synod Cloverdale 1983, that

"all appeals should ordinarily be at the convening Church at least one month before Synod convenes, in thirty copies." (Acts, Article 45, IV, I, D)

On behalf of the consistory,

J. MULDER, chairman, T. VANDERVEEN, clerk

Address for all correspondence to General Synod 1986:

General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, Burlington, 1986
c.o. Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church
1225 Highway 5, R.R. 1, Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

Adam receives his wife. The general mandate to fill the earth is given a very specific rewording, so that it becomes a command that Adam can apply and work with. He knows exactly what to do, and all he may do is within his means.

Genesis 3 relates the immense changes that came upon man and the creation with the fall into sin. The fall into sin certainly does not alter the force of the mandate. Yet it is clear that henceforth man is unable to fulfil it in his own power. The curse comes over man and over the ground. All his labour is filled with futility and fatigue. Cultural endeavor is drastically curtailed and man becomes in many ways a prisoner of the elements and a prey of the creatures, rather than their master. Also, man is destined to return to the dust; aging and decay set in, a pattern of growth and decline.

The stark and dramatic events of Genesis 4 are also very important for a Christian view of culture. Cain murders his brother Abel, and is punished by the loss of his immediate inheritance, his place on earth. Yet he still received the opportunity to repent. His words to the LORD, his Creator make it clear that he does not repent, but only hardens his heart with the punishment the LORD gave. Therefore the LORD put a mark on his forehead, indicating his definite excommunication from the presence of the LORD. Later we read how he builds a city and how his family becomes highly gifted and artistic. They excelled in both the fine arts, and industry.

The Cain culture, which must have been a very highly developed and complex culture, perishes with the flood in Genesis 6-8. Only believing Noah and his family survive. In the New Testament the unbelieving Cain-culture in Noah's day becomes the prototype of the culture of the last days, Matthew 24:37ff. In other words, the period from Cain to Noah foreshadows the events and conditions of the period from Noah to the coming of Christ in the last days. Just as God allowed Cain to live, and his family to develop a highly specialized culture with many gifts and talents, only to punish the entire culture at the time of the flood, so, too, He still allows unbelievers to develop their gifts and form their culture, which is just as complex and specialized and displays just as many talents as its prototype, only to prepare it all for the day of His judg-

ment, when He returns to save His chosen ones at the last day.⁵

Since the Old Testament Church lived within the Cain culture before the great judgment of the flood, one may safely infer that the believers made ample use of the talents, gifts and products of the Cain culture insofar that was permitted and possible. No doubt the pipe and lyre made by Jubal's children were used by the believing sons of Seth in public worship, when they began to call upon the name of the Lord, verse 26. Despite the spiritual antithesis (which must always be maintained) the LORD does not come with immediate judgment, but grants time — room for repentance and room for salvation. He wants to bring His Son into the world, and uses the Cain culture for His all-encompassing purpose. Yet since the time of the Cain culture is certainly made full, the unbelievers are without excuse and completely responsible for the wrath that comes upon them, (cf. Genesis 15:16).

The last chapter of significance is Genesis 11. After the flood the same antithesis appears again and the LORD reaches in to confuse the tongues, in order to prevent man from incurring another flood. The separation of men into various languages and tribes and races forms another definite restriction to the cultural striving of man. His tower of Babel is left incomplete. This confusion of tongues will always form a hindrance to the growth of the anti-Christian culture of the last days. It is a divine check on man's own self-destructive cultural striving, just as the flood was a divine punishment of it.

These are the protological texts. Much more could be added, but we must be content with this. It is clear that the whole pattern of cultural activity in a mixed world, that is, in a world which still 'hosts' the Church, is laid out here. The command, the restrictions, and the punishments are made known.

The New Testament: eschatological texts

We might well expect to find that the same sort of themes come up in the New Testament. And, indeed they do. However, it seems as if the LORD's curtailment and tempering of the power of sin and destruction has only one purpose: to have the gospel proclaimed everywhere. That is

why both Douma and Velema have stressed the importance of the mission mandate, and why many on this continent stress the importance of the Great Commission. In Matthew 24, the Lord Jesus says that the gospel must be preached all over the world before the end will come. Rather than repeat the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28, the Lord Jesus sends out His disciples to preach the gospel, and establish the Church, Matthew 28:19.

The New Testament texts do not seem to put the same stress on cultural development of the earth. Labour is important, but its importance is secondary to the all-important task of letting the truth be made known. In II Thessalonians 3, the apostle Paul admonished the believers to be diligent in labour so that they are not dependant on others, but earn their own living. The Lord is coming soon, but that should not lead us to idleness; rather, we should be living and working to the day of His coming, and taking care of the poor and needy, Ephesians 4:28.

We are definitely cautioned not to become too attached to our work, or the products of our own making, or more generally, the things of this world. A central theme of the letter to the Hebrews is that we do not have a lasting city here, but seek one which is to come, one that the Lord Jesus Christ is preparing for us, John 14:2, Hebrews 13:14. We are to be hospitable, and ready to every good work, but not let ourselves be imprisoned by the goals and aims of this world. The apostle warns us that the form, (the scheme) of this world is passing away, I Corinthians 7:31.

Finally, the Revelation to John is a book which vividly describes the conditions of the end-time, and also indicates that the believers will suffer persecution and hardships in those days. The church must be prepared for this, and must be prepared to endure trial and tribulation, Revelation 2:9, 6:9ff, 11:1ff. It will not be a time of great advances, but a time of flight, Matthew 24:20ff. Christians who openly profess the name of Christ will be driven from the places of work and production, and will be banished from the centers of culture. The follower of Christ will see the destruction of the products that he himself worked on and built, with the talents the LORD gave him.

— *To be continued*

J. DEJONG

¹See his famous *Stone Lectures*

²Cf. Book III, Chap IX of Calvin's *Institutes*: "Of Meditating on the Future Life." This section from which this chapter comes comprises one of the most beautiful sections of the *Institutes*.

³See *Christ and Culture*,

⁴See his *Faith and Victory in Dachau* (Paidia Press, 1977).

⁵Of importance here are the articles of Professor J. Kamphuis, "De langzame haast des Heeren" in the periodical *De Reformatie*, 1951 and 1952. Although these articles deal more specifically with the question of common grace, there is a good deal of basic exegetical material for a Christian view of culture.



We go to Carman. "Is it possible to pay the deaconry by cheque? The deacons will discuss this and report back to the Consistory." For the time being we just mention this, without any evaluation.

Coaldale is next. The Congregation there is still busy with considering which way to follow regarding their Church building. "It is decided to suggest to the Congregation that it is possible to build a new building, of the same style as the present, but with a seating capacity of about 500, for about \$522,000, or about an increase of \$150.00 per year per paying unit. These figures will be investigated further to assume their accuracy and to confirm that nothing is forgotten or omitted. Copies of the details will be submitted to the Congregation at the meeting."

The only point where I uttered a lengthy "Brrrrrr!" was when I read that the seating capacity is to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 500. Terrible, horrible! A seating capacity of 500 amounts to a Congregation of some 700, which is far too large. I am wholeheartedly convinced of it that a total membership of some 500 is the maximum for a Church. As soon as this figure is approached plans should be made for the institution of another Church. Erecting a building with such a seating capacity will hamper growth in that direction and make it more difficult eventually to institute another Church. It is not healthy.

Moving closer to home, we go to Houston. The Organ Committee is active and conducted a few meetings. "The organ we have now is old, and several things are not working. We have come to the conclusion that we should strive to get a new organ. We have discussed several options. We have our eyes set on a 'Johannes Organ,' and are looking at a price of about \$6,000.00." The committee is going to have a drive through the Congregation. Much success! You deserve something new, after so many years.

Our journey ends in the Fraser Valley.

Before going to the individual Churches, we first should like to quote something which the Rev. Visscher wrote in the general section. I do not know whether what he wrote did apply to the situation and specific event he referred to, but his general remarks are well worth considering.

"I see young people who have real academic and analytical skills not bothering to develop them any further. I see young people who could be doctors, lawyers, ministers, psychologists, engineers, teachers go off into areas of the work force that require very little skill, very little thought, very little effort. In saying that it is not my intention to demean any task or occupation. The point is rather: 'Are we really developing our talents to the maximum? Are those among us who have five talents perhaps acting as if we had only one or two?'"

"There are times when I am apprehensive of the direction in which our Church community is moving. We have money for trips to MacDonalds' but not for trips to the local Christian bookstore. We have money for cars but not for further education. We have time for leisure but not for serious study and reflection."

These are questions which should have the attention of our people everywhere.

The Chilliwack Consistory reports that "We discussed it if it would be beneficial for the Congregation if the Apostles' Creed were sung during the Lord's Supper celebration instead of having the minister recite it. A decision regarding this matter will be made at a future meeting."

The Langley Consistory decided that "Ere Zij God" will not be sung during or after the Christmas Day Church service. The same Consistory "decides in principle to have a Church service on Thanksgiving Day, and further to ask the Congregation for input on the issue of services on this and other 'special' days."

We are to be careful that we are not going in the direction which so many follow all around us who become more religious than religious. It is a well-known phenomenon that, the less people care about the pure doctrine, the more religious they become and the more value they ascribe to special events.

In Lord's Day 35 of our Catechism we say that we must not be wiser than God who does not want His Christians to be instructed with the help of dumb images, but by the living preaching of His Word. Although I know that it is different, yet I would remind ourselves of this when discussing the matter of all sorts of special days.

When I was a minister in Schiedam, The Netherlands, we rented the Church building of the Nederlandse Protestanten Bond, a very liberal group where practical freedom of doctrine was the rule. Oftentimes the auditorium was sparingly occupied when they had a service; but on Good Friday it was packed, and there was a celebration of the Lord's Supper. We see it all around us as well: the "special days" receive all attention, but whether the pure doctrine is preached and whether the regular services are attended faithfully, that is something about which they are less concerned. They are amazed at the fact that our parking lots are packed twice a Sunday, but they cannot

50th Wedding Anniversary



Mr. and Mrs. H. Kippers hope to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on August 18, 1985 the Lord willing.

Mr. Kippers emigrated to Canada with his family in 1910 at the age of five. Mrs. Kippers -nee Wierenga emigrated in 1928 at the age of nineteen. They were married in Neerlandia Alberta in 1935 in the Christian Reformed Church. They live in Edmonton Alberta. They both enjoy relatively good health. Sr. Kippers keeps herself occupied with knitting.

understand it that we do not have a service on the special days. We should not follow their path. Perhaps Dr. Deddens could serve us with some articles on this topic. His doctoral thesis deals with it, and so do some of his other publications. Got the hint?

The Church buildings in the Fraser Valley seem to be a favoured target for burglars and thieves. In Cloverdale it was again tried to get access to the safe, and in Langley some equipment used in recording and broadcasting was stolen. Although in the latter case it seems that the perpetrators have been apprehended, yet none of the stolen equipment was

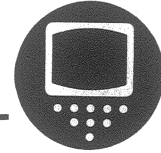
recovered or returned. Although it may not help to affix a note: "No money or valuables are being kept on these premises" it might be worth considering such signs. And: a careful and thorough check of doors and windows before the last person leaves the building might be helpful.

Well, folks, this is the end for this time. I don't know when the next medley will appear, for it might take some time before I receive material for it. Anyway, you have heard from me again and have some points to ponder.

Have a pleasant summer and much strength to you for your work.

Yours faithfully

VO



PRESS RELEASES

against the decision of the church at Guelph to keep the decision of General Synod Cloverdale re Women's Voting Rights for settled and binding is dealt with.

Classis decided to answer this brother that the matter of Women's Voting Rights is a matter which has been decided on by General Synod Cloverdale 1983. It became a matter of the churches in common when General Synod Toronto 1974 was asked to look into this matter. Therefore, it can now only be decided on by a General Synod, and it is thus not in the province of Classis to deal with it.

There was a letter from br. and sr. J.H. Endeman, and a letter from the church at Toronto, both asking Classis to act on the decision of Regional Synod March 1985, Acts Article 10, 4. Classis decided to receive the decision of Regional Synod of October 7, 1983 for settled and binding, and consequently to declare the statement made by Classis Ontario-North of June 16, 1983, "that Rev. C. Olij is no longer subject to the call of the church at Orangeville," invalid, Ground: Article 31 Church Order.

A letter of a brother who requested Classis whether Rev. Olij can be retired according to Article 13 Church Order was declared inadmissible, because the retirement of a minister can only be initiated by the local church.

The next Classis will be convened by the church at Ottawa per September 12, 1985. Suggested officers are Rev. G. Nederveen, chairman; Rev. J. Mulder, clerk; and Rev. R.N. Gleason, vice-chairman.

The following appointments were made. Examiners to replace Rev. W.W.J. VanOene: Rev. C. Stam (Church History); Rev. G. Nederveen (Church Policy). During his absence the Rev. J. DeJong will be replaced by Rev. R.N. Gleason (Ethics).

As church-visitors at Burlington-South appointed were, Rev. D.DeJong and Rev. C. Stam; Burlington-West, Rev.

D. DeJong and Rev. M. Werkman; Guelph, Rev. C. Stam and Rev. M. Werkman.

During the question-period the delegates of the church at Fergus requested Classis for representation at the installation of Rev. Stam on Sunday August 4, 1985. Rev. Werkman was delegated. Rev. J. DeJong informed Classis about his 10-months' leave of absence for study in Kampen, The Netherlands, beginning September 1985. The chairman wished him God's blessing.

Censure according to Article 44 Church Order appeared not to be necessary.

Acts and Press-Release were adopted, and after Hymn 64:1,2 was sung the chairman led in prayer and closed Classis at 5:45 p.m.

On behalf of Classis,
D. DEJONG, Vice-chairman e.t.

Annual Membership Meeting, Canadian Reformed Society for a Home for the Aged, Inc., Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church, Burlington, ON, May 16, 1985

The meeting is opened by the chairman, Br. T. Vanderhout who requests the singing of Psalm 25:1,6, reads Psalm 25:1-10 and leads in prayer.

In his opening remarks he recaps the previous year's highlights, he recalls the need for domestic care at Ebenezer Villa and thanks the outgoing Board members. The agenda is adopted.

Minutes of the last Annual Membership Meeting are read and adopted. Br. Bartels gives the Financial Report and the motion to accept this is carried. Appointed as auditors for next year are the Brs. A. De Jong and W. Smouter.

The administrator of Ebenezer Villa, Br. G. Hart reports on the financial state of this home.

Voting for new board members results in the Brs. G. Hart and L. Knegt elected.

After intermission the conditional

purchase of Mt. Nemo Lodge Nursing Home is discussed. Financing must be arranged by June 28, 1985 and membership approval by May 18, 1985. The Board proposes that membership be raised to at least 200 members and that at least \$200,000 be raised by June 21, 1985 towards the purchase . . . "the society be authorized to proceed to complete the transaction." This is made into a motion and carried unanimously.

The customary resolution that all the actions of the board be confirmed by the membership is approved by the membership.

Hymn 63:1,2 is sung and Rev. Mulder closes the meeting in prayer.

For the Board
ANKO SCHOLTENS Secretary

Executive committee of the Canadian Reformed Teachers College Association, Hamilton, ON, July 5, 1985.

After opening with prayer and Scripture reading followed by the minutes, the treasurer's report is dealt with. Although some funds have trickled in, much more is required to get out of our deficit situation. A letter will be sent to various schoolboards requesting them to consider becoming members of the CRTCA. Also a letter will be sent to all consistories of the churches requesting their support.

The building committee reports on their investigation on possible property. The committee receives further instruction to continue their work.

The principal reports. Next year's expected student enrollment is as follows: 6 students in the 3 year programme and 4 students for the 1 year programme, therefore the total expected student population will be 20. Some of the faculty will be involved in the special committees of the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies.

The next meeting will be DV on September 6, 1985. This meeting is adjourned after prayer.

for the executive C.J. NOBELS

A. Evaluation of students

The final reportcards were sent home a few weeks ago. Besides a very important statement about *promotion*, parents had the opportunity once again to peruse marks, grades and comments. A few questions come to mind in regards to evaluation. First of all — how accurate are those marks? Have you ever discussed with your child's teacher what the various criteria are? Are they based on finding the average of all the term tests and quizzes or perhaps on the ability of a student in regards to his/her peer group? Poor marks are often blamed on a lack of progress of the student. Are there other factors to be considered as well, such as teachers, large classes or lack of provisions for special education? The point to be made is that parents should always keep themselves *informed* in the process of evaluation. If you have questions about this very important aspect of your child's education, contact the school.

Secondly, do we still use reward systems with final reportcards? The wording of this question will suggest my point of view. We expect our children to use their talents properly. If they have done so, do we still then give them money or a gift? Conversely, if the marks are not up to your son's/daughter's capabilities, does he or she owe us money? A tokenism or a small gift could often be used with discretion. In general however, a reward system should have no place in our schools.

Allow me to finish this topic with a fable that most of you have heard before — perhaps a number of times. Perhaps it is overstated and somewhat far-fetched, yet it hits at the core of our educational system.

Animal School

Once upon a time, the animals decided they must do something to meet the problems of a new world, so they organized a school. They adopted the activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing and swimming, as well as flying. To make it easier to administer, all the animals took all the subjects. The duck was excellent in swimming, better in fact than his instructor and had passing grades in flying, but was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and drop swimming to practise running. This was kept up until his web feet were badly worn and he was then only average in swimming. The rabbit started at the top of his class in run-

ning, but had a nervous breakdown because of so much overwork trying to compete in the swimming class. The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed frustration in the flying class where his teacher made him start from the ground up, instead of from the treetop down. The eagle was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class he beat all the others to the top of the tree, but insisted on using his own way to get there. At the end of the school year, an abnormal eel that could swim exceedingly well and also run, climb and fly a little, had the highest marks and was made valedictorian. The prairie dogs took their children out of school because the administration would not add digging and burrowing to the curriculum.

B. Is justice enough??

The following editorial is reprinted from the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools "Communicator." It speaks very clearly about the political view of extended funding to private schools and the role Christian schools should take.

The Election. Premier Miller just announced that the funding extension issue was the cause of the Tory disaster at the polls on May 2. Mr. Peterson commented that that was a faulty excuse. Undoubtedly, there will be many autopsies in the near future. It will be safe to predict that the extension of funding to the separate schools will become a hotly debated topic in the next two years. Consequently, the issue of funding private schools will be on the back burner for some time, while the election results are assessed.

This turn of events should not unduly alarm anyone familiar with the history of education in Ontario. Much of the recent uproar came from familiar and expected quarters. The very emotional reaction from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) leadership, not necessarily the membership, was to be expected. In British Columbia, during the 1960s and early 1970s, the teachers unions were the most antagonistic to any extension of funding. That many public school trustees are upset about the procedures is probably understandable. After all, if you had your schools handed over to someone else with less than one year's discussion, you might be upset too.

The fact that the United Church has made very strong submissions against funding of Catholic schools and definitely against funding of private schools was expected. The "Hitler" outburst by the

Anglican Archbishop was less predictable. The Anglican Church has historically been much more positive about the need for integrated religious education than some other denominations have been. The fact that the "Globe and Mail" and the "London Free Press" still support the Nineteenth Century opposition to separate schools could be foreseen.

Amid all the emotion, most people did not look carefully at the actual arguments being used. Surprisingly, no one was contesting the matter of justice in its normal meanings. Few people raised the question of extra taxation. Not many talked about discrimination of inequality. Few were arguing that the traditional constitutional interpretation should be maintained in its status quo form. In fact, justice seemed not to be a major concern in this debate.

This should not surprise us. It was pointed out in the OACSS brief to the Shapiro Commission "The Christian Day School Alternative," that modern society is utilitarian. So are the educators. Hence the arguments all focus on the social role or function of schools. True utilitarians are persons who use the power of the majority, or the government, to impose socially desirable goals. This can be done politically, if the cause is popular or legally if it is not. Justice is anything that fits the ideal of the future Utopia. Consequently, the arguments against the extension of separate school funding or any funding of private schools, have a sociological or a Utopian flavour and basis.

The arguments are related to the nature of education and to the public expectations for a good society. The major arguments which will be directed against independent schools will be largely of an education or social-cultural nature. Consequently, it is imperative that our community be prepared to deal with these accusations in a calm and informed manner, or else we will all be back to where we started.

The Arguments. The list of charges which will likely be thrown at us can be gleaned from the various official public school trustee/teacher federations submissions to the Shapiro Commission. They were also evident in newspaper editorials in the last weeks of the campaign. First is that religious schools promote intolerance towards other races and religions. This is not good for any society. Second is that many private schools do not teach; they indoctrinate. Third is that even if they teach, they do not teach children how to think in our modern, common, rational ways demanded by the Ministry of Education

or by the future needs of a complex, industrial information society.

All these charges lead to the conclusion that the production of narrow-minded, bigoted citizens is not in the best interest of a modern, pluralistic, democratic society.

The fourth and most traditional argument is that funding private schools will fragment the public system. Now this is not opposed on educational grounds. Rather, this fragmentation is bad because it will create intolerance and divisions psychologically and socially in our society. The main justification for the massive public system with its huge schools is the idea that tolerance is promoted when and where children are forced to live or sit side by side in the same classroom learning the same values (or lack thereof). Thus a love-by-osmosis theory has very little research evidence to support it, but it is being cited frequently.

The fifth argument deals with the right of the government to enforce a common education for the public good. This deals with the modern view of the state. The sixth argument has to do with the destruction of the public system. This prediction is based on the view that if given a choice, most parents would send their children to independent schools. The fear is that, with less funding, the public schools would not survive.

The seventh argument is based on the cost of extra administration and the duplication of services. The assumption here is that there would be a great deal of duplication because, after all, most education is the same and most private schools offer only marginally different education to that given in the public or separate schools. The eighth argument centers on the need to limit diversity and multiculturalism in society. It will be argued that diversity in lifestyle, for example, colour of clothes and type of shoes, or the make of your car, is fine but not when it comes to serious values in society, like democracy.

The ninth argument will be that the private schools will use an American curriculum. In recent evaluation of private schools conducted by the government of Alberta, many of the non-CSI schools were singled out as having problems both with the lack of Canadian content in the curriculum as well as with the quality of the teaching and the curriculum. This will lead to the charge of an anti-Canadian or disloyal character of private education.

Tenth, the public schools are accountable to the public whereas the private schools are not. This argument would then justify non-funding. If you want to be free then you can't have government funds.

Eleventh is the conviction that sectarian religion is irrelevant or dangerous

— Continued on page 336

College Corner

During a meeting of the Finance and Property Committee of our Theological College the suggestion was made to maintain and strengthen the bond between Churches and College by opening a regular column in *Clarion*. Always something can be mentioned that is of interest especially in this period of transition from the old building to our new facilities.

My senior colleague, Professor L. Selles, vividly described our sentiments and feelings, when he typed his piece of information on May 24, his last day at 374 Queen Street South. Let me as librarian only add that the amazingly efficient move of our library was not only facilitated by the careful preparation by our associate and assistant librarians, Mrs. M.K. Marren and Miss Teresa Bouwman, and the energetic and powerful assistance of students but also by a very generous and thoughtful gift of a business man in our community. Scholtens and Trimble-C-Imports Ltd. belong together and I do not know to which name I have to ascribe the gift of hundreds of very handy boxes. Did you ever move more than fifteen thousand heavy books in manageable boxes and count their number?

Now that I am thinking back of our moving experience, I remember the 25th of May. Not only the desk at which colleague Selles typed his survey of our academic year for our *Clarion* readers but the desks of all of us, our furniture and not to forget our vault, had to be removed on Saturday, May 25. Professional movers had quoted us a price of more than one thousand dollars but the Bartels brothers — Henry, George and Hans, strong young farmers — put in their time, muscles, and truck, and, supported by John Hordyk and some Guido de Bres students, saved us a bundle of money. John Venema did the same by hauling away all the rubble that was left in the basement and the garage. He was also the one who in a last act removed the sign of our building. 374 Queen Street South has become history as far as our Theological College is concerned. The first sixteen years will remain unforgettable for those who lived through them.

In the meantime we are already adjusted to our new surroundings and look

forward to the official opening and the open house on September 27, the day of our convocation. Preparing for the first academic year in our new facilities, the faculty decided two things. First of all, I will give the course Symbolics I of the Freshman Year not during daytime but on Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 9:30, starting September 19, 1985 and ending in the beginning of May 1986. It will be the normal Freshman course, which in our Handbook is described as follows:

Symbolics is the study of the symbols (creeds and confessions) of the church. This first course in Symbolics aims at a thorough knowledge of the three Ecumenical Creeds and the Three Forms of Unity. The history and the text of these creeds and confessions are discussed in the freshman year in order to underline the confessional character of our whole study of Reformed theology. Special attention is given to the text of the Heidelberg Catechism and the contents of the Belgic Confession.

Those who want to follow this course for credit have to submit to a December and May examination and to write a paper on a topic related to the Belgic Confession. This course could be of some help for teachers and others who want to deepen their knowledge of our creeds and confessions. Hebrew and Greek are not required for this course, and those who do not want to bother with examinations and paper writing may audit the course for half price. The fee for the credit course is \$90 and the fee for auditors \$45. The course will only be offered at night, if at least ten persons participate. Those who are interested in this course, should register as soon as possible by calling the College or the principal no later than September 5, 1985. Our new address is 110 West 27th St., Hamilton, L9C 5A1 (telephone (416) 575-3688).

The second decision concerns some free lectures for the general public in the months of September through December, six by Professor C. VanDam and six by Doctor K. Deddens. But let us tell you about those general lectures in our next corner. We want to use our new facilities and make our Theological College beneficial for the churches to the utmost of our power.

J. FABER

to education. This was most obvious in T.V. interviews with parents and students. One way of putting this is that we do not want another Ireland over here. Why should children be identified with church labels? This is the old opposition to church control over education. This skeleton may come out of the closet too.

The reasons why these arguments are significant have nothing to do with their accuracy or validity. First, they will be used to discredit the private school. Both the teachers unions and the trustees organizations are going to be digging up all sorts of evidence to support these claims. Second, they will be indirect arguments. The battle will be fought on the basis of research findings and educational practices which will be beyond the experience of the average taxpayer or citizen in Ontario.

If one examines these arguments carefully, it is apparent that they promote two very basic ideas. The first one is that independent schools are inferior or irrelevant for the twentieth century and especially for the twenty-first century. This is a direct attack on the educational integrity of the independent schools, especially the religious ones. Second, these schools are dangerous for Canadian society (Ontario always speaks for Canada) because they do not promote democratic values. In other words, the people supporting these independent schools are of suspect loyalty. Therefore, their second class citizenship status should be continued in the educational matters. Therefore, no funding at all.

CHURCH NEWS

ACCEPTED to Ancaster, ON
REV. R. AASMAN
of Guelph, ON

CALLED and DECLINED to Lynden,
WA, USA

REV. R. AASMAN
of Guelph ON

DECLINED to Lynden, WA, USA
REV. J. VISSCHER
of Cloverdale, BC

DECLINED to Attercliffe, ON
REV. A. DE JAGER
of Neerlandia, AB

CALLED and ACCEPTED to Lincoln, ON
CANDIDATE G. WIESKE
of Hamilton, ON

OUR COVER

Western Brook Gorge in
Newfoundland
Photo courtesy of
Newfoundland and Labrador Tourist
Development Office

The New Challenge. In this new environment our schools will be scrutinized very closely to see whether or not these charges are accurate. Further, a great deal of evidence will be marshalled from American studies to support the claim that these things will also happen in Canada if permitted by misguided politicians. We must be prepared to meet the arguments head on with educational research and other practical evidence about what actually goes on in independent schools. Are we sufficiently versed in the history of education in Ontario to be able to expose various fallacies in the public school proponents' position and claim our own rightful place?

We will have to defend ourselves against the considerable experience of North American educators, when in fact we do not have adequate statistics to defend our cause because of inadequate research facilities and support staff. The problem is that while we were making the justice arguments, the opposition was concerned with the educational problems.

This leads us to the conclusion that we must get our house in order immediately. Are we ready to have our schools scrutinized? Are we ready to make our case with statistics and theory as well as history and evidence from practice? Are we ready to insist on our rights as citizens promoting a specifically useful education vision rather than as immigrants griping about double taxation? In short, are we ready to defend the benefits and achievements of our Christian Schools?

Most important of all, do we have evidence that our schools actually do what we say they are doing? What is our track record? Are we clear on our educational goals? Do we know what our graduates are doing in today's society? Are our curriculum designs up to standard? Are our teachers providing a distinctively Christian education all five days of the week? If the answer to all these questions is yes then we should proceed. If not, then we have more work to do. Let us proceed in faith and continue to press the claims for educational justice in Ontario in the context of quality Christian education.

C. A Canadian Reformed kindergarten (some further comments)

A few months ago, I expressed some reservations about the possible additions of kindergartens to our schools. The following letter has been printed in its entirety so that you as the reader can make your own decision about this topic.

Dear Mr. Van Dooren,

Since you willingly invite responses to your comments in School Crossing, I cannot resist the temptation to say a little about your item "A Canadian Reformed kindergarten?" as was published in

the School Crossing section of the *Clarion*, May 3, 1985.

You accurately stated that many educators call the first years of a child's life as being the most formative. It's my contention that this knowledge has profound implications for the teaching of Christian viewpoints and attitudes to younger children. Do we realize the potential "damage" that may be caused by an atheist, or usually at best, a "neutral" approach to education? While our young children sit wide-eyed and "soak" in the humanistic messages, we cannot sit by and hope that the next seven or eight years will undo the impressions that have formed in the minds of these children. Such irresponsibility does not belong to the Christian parent who whole-heartedly vowed, ". . . to instruct your child in this doctrine, as soon as he (she) is able to understand, and to have him (her) instructed there-in to the utmost of your power." (Baptismal Form).

Perhaps you accurately perceive that many people think that kindergarten is often associated with some sort of a babysitting job. Further, that there is more to the kindergarten program than babysitting or playing with blocks. I would most certainly prefer qualified staff if these were available. But does the lack of these "qualified" people mean the total shelving of this ideal? I would think not. A more positive approach might be the scrutiny of the public kindergarten system and curriculum by some former teachers or mothers who have had tertiary education at least to some degree. With hard work, dedication and perhaps some error, these people should be able to set up a suitable program and operate it together with frequent advice from the "experts."

You suggest it's not "realistic" with the current concern about lack of personnel to fill the vacancies in our elementary schools and the improvements that are needed in the *existing* grades. My question is: How long must we wait? By what criteria do we determine: Now all is ready to proceed to kindergarten — Five, ten, perhaps twenty five years?

Okay, perhaps I'm young and so a little idealistic. But one thing I've learned: Dreaming without subsequent action produces few tangible results.

May this discussion serve to further His glory.

Yours in Christ
Ron Bergsma
R.R. 4

Grand Valley LON 1G0

Until next month, the Lord willing — may all of you continue to enjoy the summer months!

NICK VANDOOREN
John Calvin School
607 Dynes Road, Burlington, ON

ABC BIBLE COLLECTION - by Mrs. John Roza

KKK



K-King

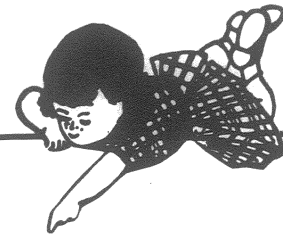
Questions about Bible Kings

Colour me!

1. The elders of Israel demanded a king born from Samuel. The Lord later revealed to Samuel who would be made king. Who is this new King? _____ (I Samuel 8)
2. This young man killed a giant named Goliath, later he was made king of Israel. Who is this King? _____ (II Samuel 5)
3. A king called Daniel to explain a strange vision of fingers writing on the wall. What is the name of this greatly alarmed King? _____ (Daniel 5)
4. This boy was just seven years old when he was made king over Judah. Who is this boy? _____ (II Kings 12)
5. This man was favoured in the eyes of the Lord. But when he became sick he did a very foolish thing. He showed all his possessions to visitors from Babylon who later would take everything away from his descendants. Who is this man? _____ (Isaiah 38, 39)

Answers for the letter "J"

1. Jacob 2. Joseph 3. Jonah 4. Judas 5. John the Baptist 6. Joseph



Dear Busy Beavers,

Summertime is here!
 Time for our BIG CONTEST!
 Let's all join in the fun!
 If you need some help ask your brothers
 and sisters, or your parents.
 You may use your Bible, too.
 I think your story Bible will help you, too!
 Join in! Try your best!
 I'm looking forward to hearing from many, many Busy
 Beavers!

QUIZ I

Remember?

Each of the following things should remind you of a person
 in the Bible. Remember?

1. Ark _____
2. Salt _____
3. Rod _____
4. Axe head _____
5. Big fish _____
6. Rib _____
7. Fleece _____
8. Burning bush _____
9. Rainbow _____
10. Harp _____
11. Pillow _____
12. Pottage _____

QUIZ II ANIMALS IN THE BIBLE

1. Noah sent a _____ out to see if the waters had
gone down.
2. A _____ delivered a coin to Peter.
3. The prodigal son ate the food of _____ in a foreign
country.
4. The _____ licked the sores of Lazarus.
5. Balaam had a talking _____.
6. The _____ fed Elijah at the brook Cherith.
7. David rescued a _____ from a lion.
8. Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a _____.
9. God sent a _____ for Abraham to offer as a sacrifice in
the place of his son.
10. Joseph's brothers dipped his coat in the blood of a
_____.

QUIZ III HOW MANY?

1. How many of the ten lepers returned to thank the Lord
Jesus for healing them? _____
2. How many times did the Devil tempt the Lord Jesus in the
wilderness? _____
3. How many men carried the lame man to Christ and lowered
him through the roof? _____
4. How many loaves of bread did the Lord Jesus have to start
with when he fed the 5,000? _____
5. How many people did the Lord Jesus meet on the road
to Emmaus? _____

6. How many times did God call Samuel in the night? _____
7. How many disciples did the Lord Jesus have? _____
8. How many years did Jacob work for Rachel? _____
9. How many times did the prophet tell Naaman to dip in the
Jordan? _____
10. How many days did it rain at the time of the great flood?



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Andria Vanderpol*. We are happy to have you join us. Be sure to join
 in all our Busy Beaver activities, starting with today's
 Contest! How did you enjoy your holidays, Andria? And thanks
 for the word search.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Colin Meerstra*. How did you
 like your trip to Winnipeg? Will you write and tell us about it?
 Bye for now, Colin.

I think you had lots of fun at your class picnic, right, *David
 Van Raalte*? I'm glad you like your new house. You're very lucky
 to have your very own room! Be sure to join in our big contest,
 David.

Thanks very much for your nice chatty letter, *Krista Ellens*.
 I'm glad your sister's wedding was such a nice day for you. Your
 class parade for graduation sounds like it was fun! Write again
 soon, Krista.

RIDDLES FOR YOU

from Busy Beavers *Corinna Stroop* and *Geraldine Schenkel*

1. Why do bees hum?
2. Why do cows wear bells?
3. What do you get when your head is hot, your feet are cold,
and you see spots in front of your eyes?
4. What do you get when a cow and duck cross each other?
5. If three little pigs were standing under a little umbrella why
didn't they get wet?
6. Why did Goofy throw butter out the window?
7. What tables don't have legs?
8. Why is it hard to talk with a goat around?
9. What does a calf become after it is one year old?

Answers:

1. They don't know the words 2. Their horns don't work 3. A polka
 sock on your head 4. Milk and quackers 5. It wasn't raining 6.
 He wanted to see a butterfly 7. Time tables 8. It always butts
 in 9. Two years old!

How did you enjoy the riddles?
 And how did you do on the quizzes?
 Send in your answers to:

Aunt Betty, Box 54
 Fergus, ON N1M 2W7

Bye for now!
 Love from your
 Aunt Betty