

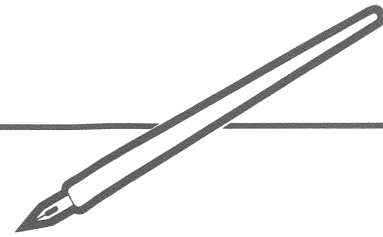


Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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Welcome to the Blue Bell Reformation Church

In the November 1 issue of *Clarion* the readers were informed, via a Press Release of Classis Ontario-South held on September 11 and 12 and a notification written by Rev. J. VanRietschoten, that the churches in Classis Ontario-South had decided to receive the Blue Bell Reformation Church at Blue Bell, PA, into the federation of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. We also could read that this classis admitted this church to the federation on the ground that this church has the same basis, the Three Forms of Unity, while it has accepted the Church Order of Dort as revised by the General Synod of Cloverdale, 1983.

Words of welcome were spoken at the receiving classis and joy was expressed. It was the joy of brothers who recognize their unity in faith, unity in the Scriptural, Reformed faith. We like to add our words of welcome and joy for the same reason.

The classis decision

The third ground for the classis decision reads: "The separation of the Church at Blue Bell from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was warranted in order to continue their Scriptural and Reformed distinctives which were at stake, namely, the doctrine of the covenant, confessional membership, restricted communion, the visible church, the true church and the autonomy of the local church. Moreover, the manner in which this separation took place was in agreement with the Form of Government of the OPC (FOG XVI, 6)."

The information in this classis decision is summary. More extensive knowledge is welcome. I am glad that I can give some additional insight. The reference to Ch. XVI, 6 of the Form of Government of the OPC means to say that the Blue Bell Church did not act in a revolutionary way, but followed the way of that article. The article reads, "A congregation may withdraw from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church only by an affirmative vote of the congregation at two successive meetings of the congregation, duly called by the session, notice of the proposed action having been included in the calls for the meetings. The meetings shall be held not less than three weeks, nor more than one year, apart. If the vote of the first meeting is in favour of withdrawal the session shall inform the presbytery promptly, and the presbytery shall have the opportunity, at the second meeting, to dissuade the congregation from withdrawing. If the congregation, at the second meeting, reaffirms its previous action it shall be the duty of the presbytery to prepare a roll of members who desire to continue as members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and to provide for the oversight of these continuing members."

I received an official report concerning "The Controversy at Blue Bell OPC," signed by some of the elders, and, as far as I understand, issued by the consistory. It describes the history of the struggle that led to the separation and gives ample information regarding the views of the brothers on the points of Reformed doctrine as mentioned in the third ground of the classis.

The covenant

The view of the brothers in Blue Bell regarding the covenant is our view. The report mentions names of Dr. John Murray and Dr. Klaas Schilder as teachers who are followed. In summary, their view is that the covenant is one-sided in its being established. It comes from God without human cooperation. But once it has been established, the covenant becomes two-sided. God and His people are both responsible parties. The covenant is not made with the elect only, or with elected believers and their *elect* seed, but with believers and all their children. In the covenant God comes to His people with the covenant promise (basically: I am the LORD your God and Redeemer in Christ Jesus) and with the covenant requirement (basically: believe this promise and live in that faith, walking sincerely and blamelessly before the LORD). This faith can be called a condition in the covenant. Condition must not be understood in the Arminian way as something that we have to fulfill in our own power, but in the Reformed way: God has connected the promise of salvation with the requirement of faith. Hereby it is fully recognized that true faith is God's gift to the elect. It is also recognized that covenant children can break the covenant by unbelief and disobedience. This in summary is the doctrine of the covenant as we have learned to understand it from the Scriptures, in the days of the Liberation, through the teaching of K. Schilder and others.

Confessional membership

What do the brothers mean with "confessional membership"? It is simply this: not only the office-bearers, but all the members of a Reformed church, when making profession of their faith, may be expected and required to profess the Reformed faith as taught in the Reformed standards which that church has accepted. The reader can say, "Is that not self-evident?" I can respond: of course. The first question in the Form for the Public Profession of Faith asks: "Do you wholeheartedly believe the doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian Church?"

For the brothers in Blue Bell public profession of faith was profession of the Reformed faith as expressed in the Westminster standards, not just in the Apostles' Creed. (Today it is for them the faith that is confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. But that is not the issue.) This view of the brothers in Blue Bell differs from the general view in the OPC. The general thinking in the OPC is that knowledge of the Reformed faith, the Reformed standards and agreement with them is not a requirement for the public profession of faith. Required is that those who make public profession of their faith in Christ as their Saviour must be willing to receive further instruction in the Reformed faith.

Not only is it so that the view of the brothers in Blue Bell is not the generally accepted view in the OPC, but their view is even considered not acceptable by some members of the

presbytery to which the Blue Bell congregation belonged. This, especially, I find regrettable. The brothers came with good grounds to defend their position.

Restricted communion

Regarding “restricted communion,” the best thing I can do is quote from the report. It says, “Restricted communion is not to be confused with closed communion. The latter position would limit access to the Table to the members of one congregation; in its most virulent forms, it would restrict communion to those who ‘knew’ beyond doubt their election and who could demonstrate that election to the satisfaction of the elders. Restricted communion does not fence the Table in such a way as to keep out those who have a right to partake. On the contrary, restricted communion opens the Table to those to whom it belongs. But it opens that Table by following the objective command of Christ and not by setting up various man-made subjective criteria.

Restricted communion, then, involves the elders and revolves about their proper exercise of the keys of the kingdom. The Table is not open to every individual; and it is not up to the individual to decide whether or not he ought to partake. That is the role of the elders. It is their duty to ensure that all who partake of the Table fulfill the Biblical requirements for Table fellowship.

Thus, to say that a mere oral warning from the pulpit suffices to discharge the elders’ responsibility is simply wrong. Unlike the call of the Gospel, the fellowship of the Table is not indiscriminately offered to all. The Table is only for those who rightly discern the body and blood of Christ; and it is the task of the elders to determine who it is that has this discernment. The individual, then, may not decide for himself on the basis of an oral warning. The elders must see to it that they uphold the Word of God. And this they do by applying the Biblical criteria: a profession of the true religion, a godly life, and membership in a true church.”

As grounds for this view many references are made to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and also to the *Collected Writings* of Dr. John Murray. They say, “Clearly, then, those who confessed doctrines contrary to the true reformed religion would be at least ignorant and perhaps scandalous. They must be kept from the Table.”

The visible church, the true church

After having referred to the writings of John Murray and Klaas Schilder, the brothers of Blue Bell write, “. . . it is true that there are hypocrites who are in the visible Church and there are yet sheep to be gathered into the fold. Does this not warrant the description of the Church as invisible? Is it not the case that the hypocrite is part of the visible Church, and not of the invisible Church? And is the elect person outside of the visible Church not part of the invisible Church? This leads to hopeless confusion; and it gives an almost irresistible call to decretal thinking. The Bible makes it clear that there is chaff mixed with the wheat and Paul tells us that not all of Israel is of Israel. Still the one Church — and not the invisible Church as opposed to the visible Church — is the body of Christ. It is far more simple (and far more Biblical) to say that the hypocrite is in, but not of, the Church. And those who are now outside of the Church, but one day will be gathered in, are, quite simply, outside of the Church until they come into the visible Church.

The notion of the invisible Church gives rise to the idea that there are two more or less independent Churches, and that the invisible Church is somehow the ‘real’ Church. There is no support for this idea anywhere in Scripture. It comes, rather, from a Platonic (or perhaps, in our day, a Kantian) idealism in which the visible Church is the manifestation of the

Church which cannot be visible (the copy of the form?). To project into the realm of the invisible, the true holy apostolic Church which fully bears the marks of the Church, while this visible Church is mere beggarly copy, is to denude the Church of meaning. It is to open the doors to denominationalism. The true Church is not some sort of ontological thing which forms the deep background for the visible Church. No, the true Church exists here and now. And it is this Church with which Scripture is interested.

The invisible Church is devoid of preaching, office-bearers, and, of course, discipline. It [that is, the idea of the invisible Church, J.G.] also weakens Christ’s call to all believers to join themselves to the true Church. That true Church which is visible, is the Church which preaches the pure doctrine, properly administers the sacraments, and exercises discipline according to the Word of God.”

The autonomy of the local church

While the doctrine concerning the church was very much discussed in the Blue Bell congregation, it did not form a part of the complaints against the Presbytery of Philadelphia to which the Blue Bell Church belonged. This was different with regard to the point of “the autonomy of the local church.” The brothers complained that the presbytery should not have appointed an interim session (comparable to a consistory) consisting of members of the presbytery (comparable to a classis) without the approval of the Blue Bell congregation. I do not elaborate further on this point. At a meeting of the Presbytery of Philadelphia it was admitted that there should have been the approval of the Blue Bell congregation. The brothers clearly show that it is Reformed, Scriptural thinking to see the local church as autonomous, which is not the same as independent as the independentists or congregationalists see it. The brothers point out that the autonomy of the local congregation is not only maintained in our Church Order of Dort, but also in the Westminster Standards and the Form of Government of the OPC.

Our relation with the OPC

The decision of Classis Ontario-South also says, “The Reformation Church at Blue Bell does not demand that the Canadian and American [Reformed] Churches for their sake break the ‘temporary form of ecclesiastical relationship’ . . . with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.”

However, it was decided “to appoint a committee to draft a submission to general synod concerning these recent developments within the, then, Blue Bell OPC as they have implications and consequences for our ecclesiastical contact with the OPC.” The classis gave as ground for this decision “that several churches have made it known to classis, either by written or oral instruction, that they consider the matter of Blue Bell and the OPC inseparable.”

This is logical. I also hope that the Committee on Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, appointed by the General Synod of Cloverdale, 1983, will not be bypassed, and will deal with this matter in its report to the General Synod of Burlington, to be held next year.

I have a few comments in this regard. I understand that the complaints of the Blue Bell brotherhood were only dealt with at the Presbytery of Philadelphia, or rather, by a committee appointed by the Presbytery, and not at the General Assembly. I read in the report that someone made the remark that “Blue Bell did not exhaust the church courts, but the church courts had exhausted Blue Bell.” The brothers write that “the decision made on October 7, 1984, was not schismatic, but an act of self-preservation.” They feared that a continuation within the Philadelphia Presbytery, under its committee(s), would destroy the congregation.

As an outsider, I cannot judge this judgment. However,

Classis Ontario-South would have had a stronger ground for its decision to address the coming General Synod if the decision of the Blue Bell congregation to withdraw from the OPC would not have been made in connection with dealings and actions of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, or rather, its committees, only, but on the basis of decisions and actions of all the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches together meeting in a General Assembly. As I see it, now also the coming General Synod of Burlington can only deal with actions and decisions of a presbytery and its committees, while the possibility is there that a general assembly would have judged that at least some of the complaints of the Blue Bell brothers were justified.

Conclusion

Learning from the report of the Blue Bell brothers what they stand for, and seeing that after much study they adopted the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dort in order to become part of the federation of our churches, in which they found the same convictions, we can rejoice.

Furthermore, the struggle in Blue Bell makes even clearer what we already knew, namely, that in the OPC there are differences of opinion and views. That difference is there with regard to the invitation to join the Presbyterian Church of America. Some are in favour, others are not. That same division showed

itself, as I see it, in the Blue Bell controversy.

I think that the brothers in Blue Bell characterize the situation quite correctly in the beginning of their report when they state that at issue is the question as to "what sort of church the Orthodox Presbyterian denomination wishes to be." They distinguish between two paths: "The one sees the Reformed faith as a subset of the more general category of Evangelical. The other sees the Reformed faith as nothing more and nothing less than the gospel. That what is not Reformed is *essentially* deficient." This is not a judgment about the eternal salvation of other believers. It is a judgment with regard to different views concerning the relation between the Reformed confessions and the truth of God's Word.

Yes, we welcome the brothers in Blue Bell. We agree with them that it is a joy to be Reformed and to have, and know, and adhere to, the Reformed confessions. Their doctrine is so fully Scriptural. What we, as Reformed Churches, confess in these creeds is so very much a true and faithful summary of the promises of the triune God for His Church — a summary of the rich manner in which this God gives Himself to us, His people, as our God, as our God and Creator, as our God and Redeemer, as our God who sanctifies us.

J. GEERTSEMA

Loving discipline₂

He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.

. . . the Lord disciplines him whom He loves . . . (Hebrews 12:6)

(Proverbs 13:24)

4. Growing to maturity

The statements that children do not like to be disciplined, that they should not be disciplined and that they prefer freedom without any imposed rules are simply not true. In the previous section we have seen that the Bible teaches us clearly: "he who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him." Experience shows that we cannot ignore this divine rule without doing great harm to the children and to society at large. It might be true that children, at the spur of the moment, enjoy the absence of authority and enforcement of rules. They like to get off the track once in a while. But in the long run they feel fair and consistent discipline as something that gives security. They know that they do not always do the right thing and that sometimes they cannot gauge the consequences of their deeds. It gives them a sense of security to know that somehow, somewhere, someone takes care of them, keeps them away from going too far off the track, and is ready to help if they really get into trouble. It gives a feeling of security to know that, if worse comes to worst, someone would step in and help them.

Many examples can be mentioned. If in a classroom a teacher cannot maintain order, the children like it for a while, but finally they get fed up with it and do not appreciate it at all. They feel that no one is at the helm and that their time is wasted. They become bored and the situation gets out of control. On the other hand, if a teacher maintains order in a strict, fair, and consistent way, the children may say at first that they do not like it too much and that the teacher is "tough," but in the long run they love the teacher, respect him, and enjoy his discipline.

The same counts for parents. It is not true that children are better off and happier, when the parents do not impose certain guidelines and definite rules. On the contrary, they become dissatisfied and bored, and finally rebellious. Because they have never learned to obey rules, they will not even be able to cooperate and work together with others according to certain rules. They have missed in their life a very important thing, that is learning self-restraint and respect for others.

A young and tender plant cannot grow to maturity without being guided in the right direction. Neither can a child mature properly without this guidance and direction of loving discipline. Guid-

ance in growing to maturity is not less necessary than food. The greatest source of unhappiness among teenagers is that they have been denied one of the most elementary things in growing to maturity, namely, loving discipline.

As we mentioned already, such discipline should be fair and consistent. These are the next points on which we will focus our attention.

5. Discipline should be fair

Every form of authority and discipline should be fair and consistent. That applies to parents and to teachers, to the civil governments in their law-enforcement and in their judicial systems, and to discipline exercised by the church.

Children, in general and in the long run, do not mind strict discipline, as long as it is fair and consistent. They have a strong sense of fairness and are very sensitive to inconsistencies. When children feel that punishment or the disciplinary measures are not fair, the authority — either parent, teacher, or whoever — should try to explain the reason behind it, but parents or teachers should not open a debate about the correctness of their decision. Many decisions will not be appreciated or agreed upon at the time of

discipline. Children always like a little more room to maneuver, trying to see how far they can go. The final decision should be up to the one in authority.

However, to want a little more freedom or to disagree with a decision is something quite different than to feel that it is unfair. If children are punished for some wrongdoing, they do not immediately appreciate the punishment. In Hebrews 12:11 we read: "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." However, if children are wrongfully accused of something or are punished for something they have not done, they feel it as unfair. It may also happen that they are punished much more severely than they had expected. The reason may be that they do not understand the impact and the seriousness of their wrongdoing. It is also possible that the parent or the teacher just happens to be in a bad mood caused by completely unrelated matters. The children receive the recompense for the unvented frustration of the one in authority. In both cases the children feel treated in an unfair way, and rightly so.

In the first case the parents or teachers should try to explain to the children why they are treated and punished so severely. It should be made clear to them that what they have done is for one reason or another exceptionally serious. That makes the discipline much more effective and avoids unnecessary feelings of unfairness.

It is also possible that the punishment was too severe, or even unjustified, because the parent or the teacher made a wrong presumption about the guiltiness or a wrong assessment of the situation. It is even possible that the authority later feels that the decision had been made in a fit of anger. In such a situation the authority should not hesitate to correct the measure as best as possible, and to admit that a misjudgment has been made.

Some are afraid they will lose their authority by admitting that they have been wrong. However, the opposite is true. Children do not lose respect if a parent or teacher admits that he has made a mistake. They only learn that also those in authority are just human beings, who make mistakes. They will appreciate the fact that they are fair after all, and that they have the courage to admit their mistakes. The result is that the parent or teacher stays on the helm and is even more respected by the child.

That is a completely different situation than, when a child tries to challenge the authority. It is part of the game that children try to test authority. It becomes a matter of challenge. If that is the case,

they should be answered in a proper manner, and no child will be shocked if he finds out the hard way that he cannot challenge the authority. To test authority is also a matter of seeing how "real" it is. If children find out that they can challenge the authority and that the parent or the teacher gives in and does not "stand the test," they may seem to enjoy it for a while and see it as a victory, but basically they are disappointed. Their trust and confidence is gone. They do not feel secure anymore. One of the most important aspects of authority and discipline is that the children feel that they are protected from going too far off the track, and that parents will use their moral authority to help them when they really get into trouble. However, if the authority cannot stand the "test" of being challenged by the children, they will not have much confidence in such authority when it really comes to the point that they need help.


6. Discipline should be consistent

Another important aspect of discipline is consistency. Also in this respect children are very sensitive. Inconsistency makes them feel insecure. They do not know what to expect and what to obey. If parents one time let it go when children clearly violate the rules or ignore authority and another time severely punish them for the same thing, children lose their feeling of justice. They do not know what to expect, and feel at the mercy of the authority. That is devastating for their development. They have to learn what it means to obey the rules and what the

consequences are of ignoring the rules. They will readily learn their lesson if they know what is coming and what they can expect. It is confusing to be always in limbo about what is going to happen. It will not give them the correct view of what justice is all about.

Once, years ago, I heard a story which struck me and showed me the importance of consistency in discipline. A widow, whose youngest child was about four years old, tried to teach the boy good behaviour. Once he had done something he knew that was wrong and would result in a spanking. However, his mother was so concerned and occupied with other things, that she paid little attention to what the boy had done. She cleaned up the mess he had made and left it at that without any disciplinary measure. The result was that the boy became confused. He expected punishment but it did not come and he did not understand why. He even drew a completely wrong conclusion. After a while he approached his mother and said, "Do you not love me any longer?" His mother was surprised and asked, "Why do you say that?" His reaction struck the mother and shook her. He said, "I deserved a spanking but you did not care about me." This reaction, how strange it may seem, shows clearly that an inconsistency in discipline made the boy feel insecure. He did not mind getting spanked when he deserved it, but he got upset and confused when his mother failed to exercise loving discipline in a consistent way.

— *To be continued*
W. POWELSE



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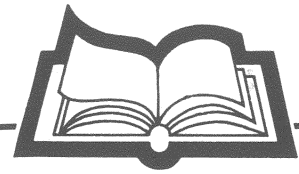
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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial — Welcome to the Blue Bell Reformation Church — J. Geertsema	502
Loving discipline — W. Pouwelse	504
From the Scriptures — Strange bedfellows — Herodians and Pharisees — Cl. Stam	506
Press Review — Anti-intellectualism — J. Geertsema	507
A report of the first meeting of the I.C.R.C. — J. Visscher	509
"Anchor" — Summer Camp 1985 — W.H. DeVries	512
Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the C.R.C. at London, ON — T. Heyink	514
Ordination and installation at Lincoln of candidate G. Wieske — E. Helder	515
Credo Christian High School — Graduation	516
Press Releases	517-519, 521
ABC Bible collection — Mrs. J. Roza	520
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty	521



“And they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to entrap Him in His talk” Mark 12:13-17

Strange bedfellows Herodians and Pharisees₂

Last time we saw how already at the very beginning of Christ's ministry in Galilee these two totally different parties, the Herodians and the Pharisees, joined forces with a common purpose: to destroy Jesus of Nazareth. In the meantime, we have come a lot further. Christ is now in Jerusalem, teaching in the temple. Christ has become *known* in Israel because of His many signs and miracles. His authoritative preaching has made a great impression on the multitudes. What the Jewish leaders feared in Galilee, has become reality: Jesus has become a great danger for their position as leaders of the people. Their resolve has grown that Jesus must be destroyed. The Jewish leaders have also come to the conclusion that Jesus can only be caught by means of entrapment, not by outright arrest, “for they feared the multitude” (Mark 12:12).

While Christ is teaching in the temple, the rulers conspire all kinds of evil against Him. They send the one group after the other to Him, to see if they can trap Him and make Him incriminate Himself. Remarkably, the first to be sent to Him is a coalition of Pharisees and Herodians, two rival parties, with an equally remarkable question, “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” (v. 14).

We should know that with this tax is meant the per capita tax which the Roman governor had forced upon the people. Every Jew was required to pay this tax to the Roman authorities. And the Jews were very sensitive on this point; they resented this tax, because it was for them symbolic of their complete submission to Rome. Some time before a certain Galilean, called Judas, had revolted because of this very same tax. Would Jesus deny His Galilean background by perhaps suggesting that the tax ought to be paid?

The question is why these two parties were sent to Jesus specifically with this point of the tax. Well, this can only be part of the evil tactics which are being followed. For these two parties took a totally different viewpoint on this tax. They come together because they deeply differ in this matter; it is, again, a negative coalition.

The Pharisees wanted to get rid of this tax as soon as possible. They wanted nothing less than the restoration of the free kingdom of Israel under the coming Messiah-King. So they were not prepared to accept any taxation from the side of the oppressors. The Pharisees on this point shared the opinion of the *multitudes*, although they were unable to change the situation. Everyone knew: the Pharisees reject this tax!

The Herodians took a somewhat different view. They were prepared to recognize the right of Rome in the hope that through the house of Herod there might still be some self-government. Any revolt against the Roman taxation system might mean a bloody end to the reign of Herod. Their advice was to pay the tax and so avoid tensions with Rome. It should be noted that many of the ruling class and the Jewish nobility shared this viewpoint.

Do you see how the “entrapment” is intended? If Christ says that it is not allowed to pay the tax, the Herodians have reason

to report Him to the governor as a rebel who is inciting the people to riot. If Christ says that the tax should be paid, the Pharisees can triumphantly expose Him to the people as a traitor to the Jewish cause! The question was asked publicly in the temple, and either way, Christ indeed seems trapped. In his campaign against Christ, Satan manages to bring rival parties together. And Christ is maneuvered into a very difficult position.

Our Lord understands the seriousness of His position. But He reacts with calm composure, “Bring me a coin” On this coin the image of the emperor was imprinted. And He asks, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They have to answer, “Caesar’s.” Then comes the magnificent answer, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s” The Jews (also the Pharisees) had in fact accepted the rule of Caesar and of Rome. The economy was directed towards Rome; Roman coins were the common method of payment also in Israel. The Jews shared in the wealth of Rome. They enjoyed the peace, prosperity and safety of the imperial realm. Well then, they should also share in the *cost* of this wealth. Give unto Caesar what belongs to him! He printed the money; he may demand a part of it back!

But Christ immediately adds, “. . . render . . . to God the things that are God’s.” In these words there is an appeal: recognize Me as the Messiah sent by God! The Jews have in fact accepted the government of Caesar whose influence touches their whole (economic) life. But they reject the Christ who comes in love to His people.

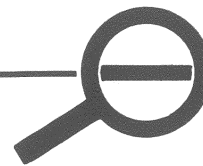
Render unto God. The ultimate question is not whether one is for or against the emperor, but whether one is for or against *the Christ*. Israel does not stand or fall with Tiberius or Herod, but with God and His Anointed. The emperor has put his inscription on those coins; he can have them back. But God has put *HIS STAMP* on Israel as His chosen covenant people. And God wishes to receive His people as a living sacrifice of gratitude.

The Herodians and Pharisees wish to entrap the Lord Jesus. But they hear the preaching of the Kingdom of Heaven. They want to force Him to make a choice in their evil dilemma, but He forces them to choose. Mark adds these words, “And they were amazed at Him.”

Israel is sorely divided. They cannot agree about issues such as paying the taxes. All kinds of short-lived, strange alliances come and go. But Israel's great King shows the way of true and lasting unity: render to God the things that are God's. In one communal service, accepting the one Mediator of God, lies the unity and future of Israel.

There should be no false dilemma between state and church. It is not a matter of preferring Herod above Augustus. It is for or against Christ. That is even more true today. We must meet our civil obligations. But above all we must give ourselves fully to the Lord in His service. Give God His worth.

CL. STAM



Anti-intellectualism

This is the title of an editorial in *The Monthly Record* of September 1985, written by professor D. Macleod. Most of it is reprinted here. I can only say, "Read it." Take it to heart, it is important. If you *feel* it is *too intellectual*, control your feelings, use your intellect, and read it once more, or even another time. Insight as given here builds the church of Christ. Here it is:

The new birth, like depravity, is total. It affects the whole of our personalities: our intellects, our emotions, our decisions and our relationships. At least, that is the theory and to some extent it is confirmed by experience. Modern religion certainly caters for the emotions. People are happy and they know it and they clap their hands (in Free Church circles they sigh, but the underlying signal is the same). Their life-style, too, conforms to Christian norms. At least, we do not have to lament with Charles Finney that our converts are a disgrace to religion. We might even claim that in some respects (Christian giving, commitment to evangelism and attitudes to family life) there has been a marked improvement during the last 20 years.

Disparaging the intellect. But one thing has not improved: our tendency to disparage the intellect and its role in religion. There are many symptoms of this.

One is the failure of many gifted and highly successful men to apply their intellects either to their personal religion or to the affairs of the church. They have gone to the top in their own professions by making the maximum use of their common sense and of their intellectual training. They think problems through rationally. They apply modern technology. They take a long-term view. They apply their gifts of leadership and management. They take risks. They make courageous and unpopular decisions.

The church is full of such men. But how often do they leave all these qualities behind when addressing religious questions! *Brilliant and innovative in the secular world they are staid and reactionary in the ecclesiastical.* Of course this is not always true. But it is true too often: and whether it is due to deference to ministers, mistaken sentimentalism or an unconscious desire to wreak vengeance on the 20th century for its day-to-day pressures it is calamitous for the church.

Another symptom is the plea for simplicity which preachers and speakers meet almost wherever they go. It is not confined to evangelistic meetings or to gatherings of

young converts. One meets it, too, in Free Church congregations, where the unforgivable sin appears to be preaching over people's heads. More curiously, one meets it frequently in University Christian Unions. These are attended by the best young brains in the country, who, as a matter of course, apply their intellects vigorously to their secular studies. But not to their religion. Admittedly, some have only recently become Christians. But that is hardly a total explanation. At one level there is a reluctance to try to integrate intellect and religion (probably rooted in fear that the attempt will fail). At another, *impatience with doctrine has itself virtually become a principle, reflected in a series of clichéd epithets: Dogma is harsh, orthodoxy is dead, theology is dry, arid or academic. People are in such a rush to enjoy the "experience" that they cannot wait for the teaching.*

Once we adopt this outlook other problems follow. "Fellowship," instead of being concerned with the patient discussion of practical Biblical issues degenerates into mere socializing. The emphasis falls on "enjoyment," not on learning. Indeed, if we are not careful we end up with mere musical evenings: and those give not to the great psalms or even the great hymns of the church but to inane choruses devoid of intellectual or doctrinal content.

*Yah! Yah! Yah! Hallelujah!
Yah! Yah! Yah! Hallelujah!
Gotta hug the world!
Gotta hug my neighbour!
Yah! Yah! Yah! Hallelujah!*

The anti-intellectual bias will also show itself in attitudes to reading. Thankfully, there are, up and down the country, churches with well-stocked and well-used bookstalls. But these are exceptions. *Most Christians do not read: and those who do seldom venture beyond the shallow and the ephemeral.* Even ministers, set aside specifically to the Word of God and prayer, complain that they have no time to read. One wonders what Spurgeon would have thought, making time, amid endless distractions, to read six books a week. It is a question of priorities. If we allow the urgent to crowd out the important, we shall never read. By the time we have opened the mail, read the *Scotsman*, enjoyed morning coffee and toured the garden, the precious forenoon will have gone.

In an anti-intellectual setting even preaching itself comes to be at a discount. There are signs already of a growing demand that authoritative exposition by trained teachers make way for open discussion. The thoroughly Biblical idea of "body-ministry" is be-

ing misinterpreted to mean the erosion of the distinctive role of the preacher.

And scholarship? Woe betide the preacher if he has that! You cannot, apparently, get a message from the Holy Spirit *and* from books. It must be one or the other. "In my young days," wrote one lady correspondent recently, "there were fewer scholars in our pulpits but more power with the gospel." The lady is still young (our vintage) and she should be thankful. Otherwise she might have had to listen to Calvin or Owen, Edwards or Chalmers (we hope God has forgiven *them* their books).

The crucial issue. Which brings us to the crucial issue. Those who engage in this disparagement of doctrine, intellect and scholarship think they are reflecting the authentic mood of historic Protestant theology. Nothing could be further from the truth. What they are in fact reflecting is the very essence of Modernism. According to F.D. Schleiermacher, often called "the father of modern theology," "piety in its divers forms remains essentially a state of Feeling:" specifically, the feeling of Absolute Dependence (*The Christian Faith*, pp. 11, 13). Doctrinal statements have no value in themselves. Neither have they any fixity. We should not worry if they vary from age to age or from place to place, so long as they accurately reflect and encourage religious emotion.

Later developments abandoned many details of Schleiermacher's system but remained totally faithful to his anti-intellectualism. The classic Liberalism of Ritschl and Harnack saw the great dogmas of the church as mere value-judgments. When a Christian says, "Jesus is God!" he is not expressing a fact about Jesus but about himself: "Jesus has the value of God for me!" What we believe does not matter provided we follow His example.

With Rudolf Bultmann we move from a religion of feeling to a religion of the will (as becomes an existentialist). But the anti-intellectualism remains. We must serve Christ knowing nothing about Him. The gospels are hopelessly mythological and the truth which lies behind the myths is inaccessible to the historian.

F.D. Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Harnack were very influential liberal theologians in the previous century. Bultmann was the same but was from this century.

The opinions of Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Harnack and Bultmann are in themselves of little interest to the ordinary Christian. But what if, all unawares, today's evangelicals are expressing the very sentiments of men they would regard as heresiarchs? That

seems to us to be precisely the case and it is a situation fraught with peril. It would not be difficult, even already, to point to so-called Reformed churches which are not essentially different from what Schleiermacher had in mind: Enclaves of mystical piety of whose theology the best that can be said is that it is not heretical. They have spared themselves that opprobrium by refusing to think and ending up with no theology at all.

But the anti-intellectual Christian is not only reflecting the basic outlook of Modernism. He is also reflecting the over-all mood of the age. Francis Schaeffer called it "the escape from reason" and G. K. Chesterton dubbed it "the suicide of thought." "The whole modern world," he wrote, "is at war with reason; and the tower already reels."

Pure feeling. J.G. Machen put his finger very precisely on the problem involved here: "Pure feeling, if such a thing exists, is non-moral." So far as the feeling goes, there is no difference between what is felt by Wordsworth [a poet writing about feelings, J.G.] contemplating Nature, a teenager at a discotheque, a Catholic at Mass and a Presbyterian enjoying a sermon. How can we tell which, if any, is right? The Bible certainly does not endorse feeling as such. It asks *why* we are cast down (Psalm 42:5) and pronounces a woe upon much of our laughter (Luke 6:25). Neither all our sorrow nor all our joy is Christian: Whether they are depends entirely on what calls them forth. The same is true of assurance. The Pharisee, the Universalist and the Christian all feel certain that they are the sons of God. But two of them are deluded, and the question, which two? cannot be settled by appeal to the feeling itself. In fact the Pharisee and the Universalist may feel far more certain and ecstatic than the Christian. Yet both are wrong because their feeling cannot be justified intellectually or theologically. In the same way Schleiermacher cannot tell from his feelings whether it is really God he is conscious of; nor can Wordsworth tell from his whether it is a good thing to be at Cambridge. Each must check his feelings against matters of fact.

The retort may come again, Who cares what Bultmann or Schleiermacher thinks? In all probability, however, many ordinary Christians are going down exactly the same road: "I don't care what scholars think. I know what I feel." But the only way we can place Christianity beyond the reach of scholars is by changing the nature of Christianity itself (which is exactly what Bultmann and Schleiermacher have done). Christianity is based on facts, not on feelings; "If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain." Just as the eternal Word, by dwelling among us, became vulnerable to contradiction and crucifixion, so Christian belief must survive in the intellectual market-place, subject to the scrutiny of scholars and the researches of historians. We cannot move our religion to a place where men cannot attack it. By becoming incarnate God put both Himself and our faith under the microscope.

Robustly intellectual. By contrast with Romanticism and Modernism the Reformed tradition has been robustly intellectual. This appears very clearly in the work of J.G. Machen, heir of the Princeton theology and probably the greatest defender of Biblical Christianity this century. Machen shared Chesterton's assessment of contemporary civilization: "The depreciation of the intellect, with the exaltation in the place of it of the feelings and of the will, is, we think, a basic fact in modern life, which is rapidly leading to a condition in which men neither know anything nor care anything about the doctrinal content of the Christian religion, and in which there is in general and lamentable intellectual decline" (*What Is Faith*, p. 23). He went on to say: "As over against this anti-intellectual tendency in the modern world it will be one chief purpose of the present little book to defend the primacy of the intellect and in particular to try to break down the false and disastrous opposition which has been set up between knowledge and faith."

Some of Machen's comments would raise more than a few eyebrows today: "If there is one thing more than another which we believers in historic Christianity ought to encourage in the youth of our day it is independence of mind." But the reason for such language is simple: "Christianity flourishes not in the darkness but in the light." For the same reason he believed firmly in the value of apologetics: "Never was there a stronger call of God than there is today for a vigorous and scholarly defence of the faith." Even revival, when it came, would have this dimension: "Such a revival will be not the work of man, but the work of the Spirit of God. But one of the means which the Spirit will use, we believe, is an awakening of the intellect. The retrograde, anti-intellectual movement called Modernism, a movement which really degrades the intellect by excluding it from the sphere of religion, will be overcome, and thinking will again come to its rights. The new Reformation, in other words, will be accompanied by a new Renaissance."

Gird up the loins of your mind. But Christians who adopt an anti-intellectual pose are not only being unfaithful to the

Reformed tradition of men like Machen and Rowland (and, one might add, of Calvin and Rutherford, Edwards and Hodge). They are also going against the fundamental thrust of the New Testament itself. The Great Commission is cast in unashamedly intellectual terms. We are to make *disciples* (pupils) of all nations and teach them to observe all the Lord's commandments. Conversion means giving heed to the things spoken by the apostles (Acts 16:14): conversely, unbelief is a refusal to be persuaded (Acts 14:2, I Peter 2:8). Evangelism is a battle for the mind, involving information, disputation and conviction.

Nor does this intellectual emphasis end with conversion. The very first ethical direction which Peter gives to his readers is, "Gird up the loins of your minds" (I Peter 1:13). Paul directs us to give *reasonable* (logical) service (Romans 12:1) and to be transformed by the renewing of our *minds*. Later, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, he tells us that the whole problem with the Gentiles was that their *minds* were empty (Ephesians 4:17); and when he directs us to put on the whole armour of God the very first thing he insists on is that we must have our loins girded with the *truth* (Ephesians 6:14).

These are details bearing upon our daily conduct. But beneath them there lies something massive and fundamental, involving the very nature of Christianity: Christ Himself is defined in terms which have inescapably intellectual overtones. He is the Word of God, the Wisdom of God, the Light of the world, and even the Truth itself. There is no way that the followers of such a Saviour can be little intellect.

This is not to say that intellect is everything. Schleiermacher was quite right to protest against the idea that a man's knowledge is the measure of his piety. Rationalism and dead orthodoxy are real perils and any religion which lacks feeling and godliness is ugly and useless. Our argument is not that belief is more important than piety but that piety is impossible without it. It is the truth that sanctifies (John 17:17).

This was the gravamen of Machen's charge against Liberalism: "The 'doctrinal' preaching of a former generation was far more practical than the 'practical' preaching of the present day."

It is so true, "A religion which lacks feeling and godliness is ugly and useless." Then letters are written and words spoken that are ugly because of their un-Christian tone. But if feelings alone have the overtone, and doctrine becomes unimportant, the church will lose the truth. And when the church is no longer pillar and bulwark of the truth, (I Timothy 3:15), then she has lost the ground and reason for her existence. She has become like salt that has lost its taste and will be thrown away. Let us struggle to remain a church that knows and lives by the doctrine of the Scriptures as confessed in the Reformed standards.

J. GEERTSEMA

CHURCH NEWS 

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As of October 27, the morning worship services in the
CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH
at NEERLANDIA
will start at 10:00 a.m.

A report of the first meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches₂

Wednesday evening — Piety in the Psalms

On Wednesday afternoon, the conference met again after lunch and had a preliminary discussion on financial matters. That evening Rev. D. John introduced the Free Church of India and the Rev. Lau C. Kwee did the same for the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore. Thereafter Prof. H.M. Ohmann, professor of Old Testament at the Theological College at Kampen, The Netherlands, received the opportunity to deliver his paper entitled "Piety in the Book of Psalms."

Prof. Ohmann began his address with a word study on the various words for piety in different languages: Dutch, Latin, Hebrew. He concluded that piety denotes integrity, trustworthiness, incorruptibility, soundness. In relating it to the Book of Psalms he considered that the best approach would be to begin with Psalm 1. It is the Psalm of the two ways. In it we find the key word "blessed." In it there is mention of another key word "law." The speaker elaborated on both.

Still, he warned against hanging the whole book on just one Psalm, with the consequence that he proceeded to explain Psalm 2. There we see that things are placed in a worldwide context and, there as well, we meet "the Lord's anointed" which in the first instance is a reference to David and thereafter finds its fulfillment in Christ. In Him we see true piety personified.

From there Prof. Ohmann went on to delve into some details. The first was that all piety in the Psalms is theocentric. He cited Psalm 62, Psalm 85, Psalm 73, Psalm 116 as proof of this. He stressed as well that the psalmists stress the display of God's power in creation (cf. Psalm 8, 19, 29, 104). Then too they place emphasis on the works of God in history (cf. Psalm 136, 105, 106, 78).

Next, he addressed himself to David, the context in which he wrote, and the position from which he wrote. In Psalm 7, 17, 26 we meet David as he protests his innocence. We see the enemies that he has to fight against, the enemies within and without. In this connection, too, at-



Left to right: Rev. O.J. Douma, Rev. J.N. Macleod, Dr. J. Faber, Rev. D. John (kneeling), Prof. H.M. Ohmann, Rev. G. Van Rongen, Dr. F.K. Elder, Rev. S. Morinaga

attention was paid to the workers of iniquity. As well, Prof. Ohmann showed that in so many respects these Psalms mirror the future sufferings of Christ.

He then went on to question whether it was right for the authors of the Psalms to be so busy protesting their innocence. Was that proper? Was it right for them, and is it right for us, to speak this way? Should we not avoid such statements and such Psalms seeing our sins? It all depends whether there has been true confession of sin, whether there is sincerity of heart. To such a person forgiveness is extended. Piety presupposes confession, as well as integrity and finally a taking refuge in the sanctuary. There true reconciliation is to be found.

Thursday morning — discussion

The discussion on Prof. Ohmann's paper began in earnest the next morning, Thursday, September 5. One delegate asked about how piety relates to the fear of the Lord. In response, the speaker gave

an excursus on Psalm 112. Another delegate wondered whether sufficient attention had been paid to the matter of prayer in relation to piety. Prof. Ohmann remarked that it was not at all his intention to minimize this matter, adding that we need "to knuckle down on our needs." Another person expressed his dissatisfaction with the word "piety" and wondered whether it did not leave all kinds of openings to subjective thinking. He would have preferred to see the Psalms treated as songs of God's covenant people. In reply, Prof. Ohmann said, "Brother, I am not a subjectivist"; and at the same time he had no regrets on having gone on a "piety tour," as he called it. There is an element of pietism in the Psalms. As for not approaching the matter from the covenant, he said that this matter could be found in his paper, albeit not so explicitly. The reason for that being that it might have given the wrong impression. In his words, "here come those Dutch covenant talkers again."

Thereafter, the discussion turned into a whole debate about the matter of how to understand the “cursing” or imprecatory Psalms. It was especially Psalm 137 that became the focal point of this discussion. Prof. Ohmann insisted that we must not eliminate the element of vengeance or revenge in these Psalms. Another speaker dissented and said that vengeance is now a matter for the Lord alone to exact. And so it went on and on. All sorts of factors relating to this matter were bounced around. In short, a very interesting exchange of ideas but without a real resolution of this thorny problem.

Voices of discontent

Some time later that same Thursday afternoon, once a number of business items had been dealt with, the conference experienced a kind of mini-fireworks display. Prof. D. Macleod requested the floor and proceeded to put some pointed questions to the conference. Why was the conference needed anyway? What made it distinctive from other organizations like the WCC and the RES? What about pressing social issues in today's world like apartheid and world famine; why were they not on the agenda? What about issues relating to inter-communion between churches? Furthermore, he went on to suggest that the conference set aside an afternoon to speak about some of these concerns.

No sooner was he finished and the Rev. J. Klamer asked for the floor and wondered out loud about the heavy theological character of the speeches. Is this really what we want? What do we expect from the conference? Are we receiving it? If not, why not? He concurred with Prof. Macleod's suggestion for a kind of open forum.

Needless to say, these remarks provoked a very lively discussion. Some felt that these matters could be added to the agenda. Most were of the opinion, however, that they could not be dealt with formally by the conference seeing that they had not been properly placed on the agenda, either via a member church placing them on it, or as a result of a paper delivered to the conference. In the end it was decided that the Executive Committee would discuss the matter and come up with a recommendation. This recommendation, when it later came, was that if those attending the conference wanted to have an informal discussion on these issues that would be fine, but there was no way that these matters could, as yet, be properly added to the agenda and formally discussed.

Thursday evening — Sacraments and New Life in the Spirit

That evening the Rev. S. Morinaga



John Knox monument — Dr. J. Faber (left), Mr. H. Moes (right)

introduced the Reformed Church in Japan and the Rev. A. Young introduced the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Christchurch, New Zealand (not affiliated with the OPC in America).

Thereafter, Prof. D. Macleod, professor of Systematic Theology at the Free Church College in Edinburgh, spoke on the topic “The Relation of the Sacraments to New Life in the Spirit.” In his introductory words, he stated that over the centuries there has been a tendency in Christendom to exaggerate the importance of the sacraments and to see them as dispensing special grace. At the same time, there has been a tendency too, to construct theologies using as basis non-Biblical words for the sacraments like “sacramentum” and “mysterion.” Next, he showed how the sacraments have frequently been discussed in a very polemical framework, as seen for example in the whole debate between Roman Catholics and Reformers and among the Reformers themselves. In this connection he was of the opinion that Calvin had gone out of his way to conciliate Luther, something he should have avoided. At the same time he championed Zwingli who according to him had received a lot of bad press over the years. Such a dismissal of Zwingli was in-

defensible seeing that his views on the sacraments were fully Biblical. Finally, he stressed that the authority of the sacraments does not depend on any theory of their efficacy.

Having made these points for openers, Prof. Macleod then went on to assert that the sacraments presuppose new life in the Spirit. They do not regenerate but they presuppose that those who undergo them are already regenerate. As proof he went on to cite the case of Abraham who was circumcised when he was a believer already. The same applies to baptism and to the Lord's Supper. Paul presupposes that those who partake of that Supper have come to faith and are able to discern the body.

But that in turn raises the question, “What about infant baptism?” Prof. Macleod stated that there was no Biblical warrant whatsoever to assume that a child is regenerate or born under an unconditional promise. He referred in this regard to Jacob and Esau. But that still does not answer the question, so he went on to say that we should rest our case on the fact of divine appointment. God has ordained it. In addition, what is presupposed in this matter of infant baptism is not the faith of the child but the faith of the parents. Because the parents believe, the child should be baptized.

Still, Prof. Macleod went on, the sacraments do more than presuppose new life, they also nourish new life. But how? He acknowledged that on this point there are many questions and problems. Some say that sacraments nourish by means of special sacramental grace or invariable efficacy or the real presence. The speaker criticized each of these ideas as being un-Biblical or coming from a world view alien to that of the New Testament.

Thereafter he showed how the sacraments express new life in the Spirit and touched on the aspects of obedience, confession, communion, hope and eucharist. He also showed how they symbolize new life. They are communal, festal, require a life of sincerity and truth, and are interim or provisional.

Finally, he stressed that the sacraments bind together all who live the new life in the Spirit. It was in his treatment of this point that Prof. Macleod made a number of practical applications in the area of ecumenism, apartheid and diaconal care. If there is real new life in the Spirit it should become evident in the area of ecclesiastical unity. It should mean an end to all discrimination against brothers and sisters of another race. It should lead to increased concern and care for those who are hungry or the victims of Soviet and Muslim oppression. After all, the first order in the post-Pentecost Church is the diaconate.

Friday morning — discussion

The next morning after the previous day's minutes had been adopted, the discussion of Prof. Macleod's paper began. It turned out to be a controversial one. Dr. Faber stood up and expressed the sentiment that Prof. Macleod had touched a raw nerve. For one he was not very pleased with the set-up of the paper. He stressed that when we speak about the sacraments we must do so within the framework of the covenant. He went on to cite the Scottish Confession as support, as well as the Westminster Confession. He was also of the opinion that the speaker had left out the most important words and made a number of poor distinctions. Baptism is not based on the spiritual life of the infant, and neither is it based on the spiritual life of the parents. It is based on an ordinance of God. The administration of baptism presupposes that parents belong to the covenant, and if we put it as Prof. Macleod does then we fall into subjectivism.

At the same time, however, Dr. Faber was pleased with the remarks made on "sacramentum" and other terms. But then again when it came to Prof. Macleod's view of Zwingli, he disagreed and once more quoted from the Scottish Confession. He also disagreed with the assessment given of Calvin. The Reformer spoke on the basis of Scripture and tried to give expression to that intimate relationship between Christ and the believers. In closing, Dr. Faber remarked that he would have liked to hear more about the matter of paedocommunion.

After that lengthy reaction to his paper, Prof. Macleod received the floor. He defended his approach to this particular subject, which had been assigned to him, and explained that he had not used covenant terminology for fear that the covenant child status might lead some to think he was going in the direction of regeneration. He concurred that the real foundation of the sacraments had to do with the ordinance of God, but felt that that in itself did not clear up all the difficulties. As to the charge of subjectivism, he refuted it by saying that it did not fit in and that he was opposed to all mysticism. At the same time, this did not mean that he would ever want to bypass the experience of God's grace. The twin perils, he said, are subjectivism and objectivism.

On the matter of his attempt to rehabilitate Zwingli, Prof. Macleod refused to budge. His opinion remained that in many ways Zwingli's understanding of the sacraments was clearer and more Scriptural than that of Calvin's. He could not help but conclude that a number of Calvin's quotes were full of difficulties. As for paedocommunion, he hesitated to give it his prohibition and acknowledged that



John Knox' house — Edinburgh

a difficult symmetry existed between infant baptism and adult communion.

Thereafter, Prof. Ohmann arose and opened with the comment that "Prof. Faber has mown the grass before my feet." He then went on to assert that God's promise does not depend on those who have new life in the Spirit, rather it stands with the one who issues it. After his comment, questions were asked about whether the sacraments do not strengthen in a specific way, about the necessity of the sacrament, about diaconal care and apartheid.

In response, Prof. Macleod stated that it is true that God and man are not equal parties when it comes to the covenant. He emphasized that we baptize the physical seed of covenant keepers, and not of covenant breakers. Furthermore, he stressed that children are God's heritage and that we must care for them. But at the same time, he refused to concede that sacraments strengthen believers in some specific way, and felt that such a view came too close to attributing special grace to the sacraments.

With regard to the necessity of the sacraments, he stressed that a refusal to come to the Lord's Supper should not be viewed as an expression of humility but as an expression of defiance. He then expressed the opinion that as a conference

we are substantially one, and that our differences do not relate to the relevance of the covenant, but on how to handle it. He admitted to being very committed to covenant theology and reiterated that no serious disagreement was present among the assembled delegates, for no one claims an unconditional promise. He then went on to elaborate on the matter of diaconal aid and said that the Scriptural teaching is to do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith. Believers do not live in isolation. They have a calling to try to sanctify their respective communities. As for apartheid, he was of the opinion that, as believers, we are common members of the body of Christ, and that it is out of such a perspective that critique must be made.

After responding to a few more questions, the discussion came to a close and the conference adjourned early. Upon leaving one could not help but hear delegates remark that they had the impression that Prof. Macleod was a man of controversial disposition. His paper set many tongues wagging and many heads shaking, but then in the end, after all of the dust had settled, most had to concede that quite a few of the flags which he had waved in the paper had been hauled down during the discussion. For my own part

I could agree with such an assessment; however, my impression remains that certain aspects of Prof. Macleod's thinking on covenant theology could use some further reflection and clarification.

The Banner of Truth Trust

Seeing that there was some time to spare yet that Friday afternoon a tour was organized to the offices of the Banner of Truth Trust. For those not acquainted with the work of the Banner, it might be well to add that it is a publishing venture which specializes in the republication of Puritan literature. For many years a great deal of this material was out of print and hard to obtain with the result that few knew very much about the Puritans and their writings. But then about thirty years ago it was decided to reissue the best of these writings. In addition, the Banner has also been responsible for the republication of a number of standard works in Presbyterian theology. At the moment it is busy trying to incorporate more modern works into its list of publications.

From the offices of the Banner, we went to the warehouse where quite a number of bargains could be had. These were mostly books which contained one or two minor flaws. As you might expect the opportunity was well used by some to stock their shelves.

Friday evening — the Doctrine of the Covenants

On the evening of the same day, the conference was once again in session. It began with a word of welcome to the Rev. D. Szabo, a minister of the Reformed Churches in Hungary. Thereafter, Rev. A. Tuesta spoke about the churches which he serves in Peru, the Iglesia Evangelica

Presbyteriana. The Rev. W.P. Gadsby of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia was next but seeing that the time was passing, he relinquished his place on the agenda until a more suitable time could be found.

This in turn gave the Rev. J.N. Macleod the opportunity to deliver his paper on "The Doctrine of the Covenants and the Reformed Confessions." Rev. Macleod, however, began by saying that it was not his intention to give his entire presentation of some 37 odd pages. Seeing that all the delegates had received it ahead of time, he felt that this would not be necessary. Furthermore, his health was not of such a nature that he could present such an elaborate discourse at this time. A few comments would have to suffice.

He began by thanking the Canadian Reformed Churches for the honour of inviting him to present a paper on this topic to the conference. He was of the opinion that it was a matter of great relevance, especially when one sees the way that the English speaking world is dominated by the ideas of individualism and subjectivism. You see this especially in the whole emphasis on revivalism. Think of the influence of the Moody-Sankey movement with its emotionalism and its self-centered emphasis. Only a reconsideration of the doctrine of the covenant is an effective antidote to this particular threat. Connected with this is also the fact that there is a relationship between revivalism and the neo-pentecostal movement. True enough, this may be a reaction to what is called "dead orthodoxy," a term which the speaker did not like because orthodoxy is neither dead nor killing, but why exchange the one evil for the opposite extreme? Let us re-affirm our commitment to covenant theology for then we are in the historic line of the church.

With respect to his paper, he added a number of remarks. He said that he had inserted a section on the covenant of works because he believed it to be in line with Biblical revelation. There is even a linkage between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. But at the same time, any effort to make the covenant appear as an agreement between equals is to be roundly condemned. He then went on to assert that the member churches must explore and seek to discover what each tradition has to contribute on this topic. All elements of tension need to be explored and we should seek to come to the closest possible understanding. It is on the basis of the Reformed Confessions that we can enrich each other in our covenant thinking.

It is not my intention to give a summary of what is said in Rev. Macleod's lengthy paper beyond the fact that it deals with the covenant of works, the covenant of grace, the relationship between them, election and covenant, the free offer of the gospel, participation in the covenant, and the position of the seed of the godly in the covenant. (The editor informs me that this paper will be serialized in subsequent issues of *Clarion*.)

After Rev. Macleod had finished with his introductory remarks, the chairman proposed that the Saturday morning session be suspended, and that the discussion of this paper be delayed until Monday morning. The reason being that a trip had been arranged for the next day to a number of historic places to the north of Edinburgh. The delegates readily agreed and the session was closed.

— To be continued
J. VISSCHER

Summer Camp 1985

The general day program for participants and volunteers was as follows: 7:30 — Get up! (The cooks are busy already and fill the air with the aroma of a fresh pot of coffee.) 8:30 breakfast and cleanup of tables and dishes. 9:30 - 10:15 Bible study and related activities; 10:15 - 10:40 snack; 10:45 - 11:45 other activities; 12:00 lunch and cleanup; 1:00 - 2:00 siesta; 2:00 - 4:00 afternoon program; 5:30 supper and cleanup; 7:00 showers and washups; 7:30 snack and closing exercises; 9:00 participants off to bed; 9:30 . . . staff meeting.

At mealtime the nurse hands out the pills. ("I hate pills," said one of the participants.) When all were seated for breakfast, one of the volunteers opens with morning prayers. All the volunteers take their turn in leading in the group worship. Are all participants seated? Yes, they are, all twenty of them; they are: Marlene, Vernon, Daniel, Bernard, Marinus, Paul, Jerry, Charley, Jack, Connie, Derek, Janine, Clarence, John, Marsha, Cora, Grace, Jim, Philip, and another Jim.

There is a choice of activities in the morning. Twice a couple of ladies from the conservation authority came in to teach Art. It is surprising what nice things they can make from a pine cone or some strips of felt. Bookmarks were made with the help of drinking straws. Sounds like magic, but they did it.

At lunch time, all are hungry again. The cook, ever on schedule, never failed to come up with something interesting and good.

"Siesta time" can be used in differ-



CANADIAN REFORMED ASSOCIATION
FOR THE HANDICAPPED, INC.

ent ways; you can snooze, talk, walk, or whatever. Then, at two, the afternoon program rolls along, or better, we all roll into the afternoon program.

One day, we went to the Lion Safari and had busrides through the Safari, and a boat ride where the big seals live. Twice we went for boat rides at the camp lake, with the whole group. Then, tired and satisfied we all gathered around the supper tables.

We had a fair bit of rain and cool weather, but it did not dampen the spirits in camp, even though we sometimes looked like mud-hogs.

The camp committee had done a good job with the big tarp, it only fell flat one time this year. Just a few pegs came loose and a hard wind did the rest. There were fourteen trailers and three tents which "Anchor" either owns or were donated by church members. Last year we



Book of Praise, for which the participants take turns in naming the song to be sung. The day is then closed with thanksgiving to our heavenly Father who heard our morning prayers for the day, and who kept and guarded us; and we asked Him for a blessed and restful night.

Two of the participants became ill at camp and had to be hospitalized. We all prayed for them and the Lord granted that they could go home soon.

After day closing, the camp fire was lit, and we sat together for awhile, having a snack, and talking, while one of the bigger boys sometimes played his accordion for us. Then, bedtime was upon us.

Much later, after discussing the events of the day and planning for the next day, the volunteers also turned in for the night.

The visits that several parents, rela-

had quite an expense with rented trailers, but not so this year. The firewood was also donated, and many other things such as strawberries, eggs, cherries, pastry, etc.

The tents and campers are placed in a wide ring around the spot for the camp fire; this ring could be called "Anchor Crescent."

After supper was shower time. A new second washroom had been built by the Conservation Authority, so that we could divide over the two. The new wash facilities also have a coin-operated washer and dryer.

Small groups went out fishing a number of times, but the big ones always got away this year. "Anchor" had bought some extra fishing poles.

This year, most of the days closings were done by the teacher-volunteers. After the Bible story we sang from the



tives and friends made to camp, are really appreciated. Therein the communion of saints is being practised.

On Sunday, July 7, we all went early to Church at Lincoln. The participants sat in the front rows. For lunch, everyone went to the families where they had been invited. After the afternoon service, a get ac-

quainted meeting was organized outside the church building, and refreshments were served.

Then a supper was prepared for us in the basement of the church by the ladies of the congregation. At about 8 p.m. we came back to camp.

For July 12, the last day of camp, a

great company of visitors came out.

Everyone had a great time at camp again this year. Thanks to our members, donators, and camp committee; above all our thanks goes to our heavenly Father who made everything well.

For the campers,
W.H. DEVRIES (*Uncle Bill*)

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Canadian Reformed Church at London

On the evening of May 24, 1985, the congregation at London, ON, joyfully celebrated the 25th anniversary of its institution. Brother C. Hoff, an original member, chaired the memorable evening.

Together with all the former ministers, and a great many former members, the congregation came together to thank the Lord for His bounteous blessings over the years and to sing His praises.

In the many speeches various members and former members reminisced on life in the congregation in the past as far back as the very beginning.

The slides showed how members looked in the past, the building of the Covenant Christian School and activities



Choir "Deo Cantamus" directed by Mrs. J. Lindhout



Former and present Ministers of the Word of London's congregation

at the various church picnics and corn roasts over the years.

The highlight of the choir's presentation occurred when former members swelled the ranks for the singing of "For All the Saints," a marvelous experience.

Afterwards a social hour was held, during which everyone greeted one another and generally an enjoyable time was held by all.

It was an evening long to be warmly remembered.

T. HEYINK

There is an attractive memorial booklet available for \$5 from Mr. C. Hoff, 742 Millbank Drive, London, ON N6E 1W2

Ordination and installation at Lincoln of candidate G. Wieske

On Sunday morning, October 6, 1985, the Rev. C. Bosch of Smithville had the honour of ordaining and installing Candidate G. Wieske at Lincoln as a minister of the Word.

Rev. Bosch preached on Colossians 1:28,29 "Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ. For this I toil, striving with all the energy which He mightily inspires within me." Rev. Bosch told how Paul, while a prisoner in Rome, was inspired by the Holy Spirit, to write this letter for this church of our Lord. This church was threatened by false teachers who brought a man centered "do it yourself" religion; a syncretism of the gospel with human reasoning. The theme that Christ alone was the glorious hope of the ministry was developed via the following three points: 1. Christ reveals His comprehensive claim, 2. Christ expects mature results, and 3. Christ provides the necessary energy. Rev. Bosch showed that the ministry is the proclamation of the Word. It admonishes the people to total obedience, and with constant instruction it binds the rich promises of the Lord onto the hearts of the congregation, so that the church may be presented as the Bride of Christ in all maturity and splendour. The congregation must recognize Christ's energy at work, as brother Wieske could not depend on his own strength, but on the Holy Spirit who will equip and sustain him for his calling.

Following the sermon the Form for the Ordination of Ministers of the Word was read, to which brother Wieske responded in the affirmative. The visiting ministers, Professor C. Van Dam and Rev. M. Werkman, participated in the laying on of hands with Rev. Bosch and the elders of the Church at Lincoln.

After the service the chairman of the consistory, brother C. Van Anandel, read messages of congratulations from the consistories of The Free Reformed Church at Kelmscott, the Canadian/American Reformed Churches at Ancaster, Attercliffe, Chatham, Grand Rapids and London. Rev. Bosch spoke a few words on behalf of the last held Classis Ontario South,



Rev. Wieske is presented with a new portion of the sign for the front of the church at the welcome evening

brother G. Schutten on behalf of the consistory of the Church at Smithville, Professor C. Van Dam on behalf of our Theological College and Rev. M. Werkman of Orangeville congratulated us as our former minister.

In the afternoon service Rev. G. Wieske held his inaugural sermon on Psalm 127:1a, the text inscribed on our cornerstone, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain." Rev. Wieske pointed out that this text had been applied to many different endeavors over the years, but that it was especially applicable, being one of the songs of ascent, to the work for the church of the Lord. Rev. Wieske paraphrased the text as, "Unless the Lord builds His Church, His servants labour in vain." He used the points: 1. the Lord's blessing is indispensable, and 2. man's effort is required, to develop this theme. We were again shown that our covenant God is the architect and builder of His Church, with Jesus Christ as the foundation. It was clearly illustrated that this building activity will continue to be blessed as long as we live by faith, out of His covenant promises, and obey His Word until His Church is completed, for Jesus Christ has obtained that guarantee by His death and resurrection. He will

finish the work He has begun, also here in our midst.

On Friday evening, October 11, 1985, almost the entire congregation turned out for Rev. Wieske's welcome evening. Brother C. Van Anandel, now the consistory's retired chairman, opened the evening with the reading of Deuteronomy 30:1-20 and prayer. He welcomed all in attendance, but especially the Wieske family and all their relatives from down under. He stated that in thankfulness to the Lord, who brought Rev. Wieske to us, we looked forward to a blessing on Rev. Wieske's work in our midst. The proceedings were then turned over to brother L. Rozema, the MC for the evening. He led us through a program which included a trumpet and organ duet, some songs by the Lincoln students attending John Calvin School and the Smithville/Lincoln Choir, and some skits, games and presentations by members of the various clubs and societies. After this enjoyable entertainment Rev. Wieske responded with some well chosen words of appreciation and read Psalm 133. He then asked us to sing Hymn 60:1 and 5, and closed the evening with a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord.

E. HELDER

Credo Christian High School Graduation



Graduating class of 1985 . . . absent: Andrew de Leeuw, Helen Sikma (Canadian Reformed Teacher's College) and Marcia Van Woudenberg (Olds College-Alberta)

In the evening of October 18, another group of young people graduated from Credo. Again (for the second year) the ceremonies were held in the fall. This was made necessary by the introduction of provincial Grade 12 examinations.

The students were ushered in by a processional accompanied by Mrs. D. Jansen on the organ. This was soon followed by the singing of Psalm 119:1,5 "How blessed are those upright in their way"

In his opening remarks the Principal Mr. E. Vanderboom dwelt on the Scripture passage I Peter 2:4-10. He stressed that in coming to this point in life we have again reached a milestone. He went on to outline that as "God's chosen people . . . a holy nation" we have a tremendous responsibility. However, in our struggles in the midst of an apostate age God has promised that He will not leave us alone.

In the darkest moments of our life He will carry us. With this assurance our students may proceed into the world beyond the Christian school.

Rev. Vanderwel was invited to speak to the students on behalf of the community. It was a fitting occasion for him to do so in the fact that his youngest son was among the graduates. Rev. Vanderwel's remarks centered around "Credo Credits." While we may have gathered credits to satisfy certain external requirements our most important "credit" is in recognizing that the Bible speaks to all areas of our life. This "credit" is of lasting value.

The diplomas and presentations were distributed by Mr. H. Moes (on behalf of the school) and Mr. J. Huttema (on behalf of the board).

John Louwerse spoke on behalf of the students. He recalled the "gummer days" and pointed out how over the years

their lives had been shaped and transformed by the teaching at Credo.

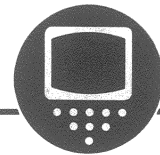
Martin Vanderwel, on behalf of the graduates, presented the "annual gift" to the school. Mr. J. Huttema was asked to come forward and receive an artist rendition of a new sign for the school. Following this the graduating class sang a few well chosen hymns for the audience.

Closing prayer was offered by Rev. Vanderwel, after which everyone was invited to sing Hymn 63:1,2.

Opportunity was provided to congratulate the students (and parents) in a social hour following the ceremonies.

Once again we witnessed the goodness of the Lord as He extends it to the generations.

AN OBSERVER



Classis Contracta, Ontario North, October 1, 1985

On behalf of the convening Church of Toronto, Rev. R.N. Gleason opens the meeting. He reads I Peter 2:11-25 and leads in prayer.

The credentials are examined and found to be in good order. The appointed delegates are: Brampton, G. Nederveen and G. VanMiddelkoop; Guelph, R. Aasman and F. Westrik; Toronto, R.N. Gleason and H. VanDijk.

The Church at Guelph has an instruction.

Classis is constituted. Officers are: chairman, R.N. Gleason; assessor, G. VanMiddelkoop; clerk, G. Nederveen.

The Church at Guelph requests that Rev. Cl. Stam be appointed as counsellor during its vacancy. Classis accedes to this request and Rev. Stam is appointed.

The purpose of this Classis Contracta is the approbation of the call extended to Rev. R. Aasman by the Church at Ancaster. The following documentation is examined and found to be in good order: a) letter of call from the Church at Ancaster, b) statement of remuneration, c) letter of acceptance, d) attestation from the Church at Guelph. Classis gives its approbation to the call.

Classical Certificate of Release, dated October 1, 1985, is read and approved. The necessary copies are given to Rev. Aasman.

Rev. Aasman leads in closing prayer. Classis is adjourned by the chairman.

For the classis,
G. NEDERVEEN, clerk

Classis Pacific, Cloverdale, BC, October 16, 1985

1. *Opening.* On behalf of the convening church, the Church of Cloverdale, Rev. J. Visscher calls the meeting to order. He requests the delegates to sing Psalm 89:1,7, reads II Corinthians 4 and leads in prayer. He then speaks some words of welcome to the delegates and to candidate A. VanDelden, who has been called by the Church of Lynden and is present to be examined. He also welcomes Rev. R.F. Boersema and the ministers M. VanBeveren and D. Wielinga. Rev. VanBeveren and Rev. Wielenga are present as deputies according to Article 48 C.O.

2. *Credentials.* The credentials are

examined. They are found to be in good order. The credential of the Church of Houston still has to be submitted.

3. *Constitution.* Classis is constituted. The suggested officers are appointed and take their seats. The officers are: chairman, Rev. J. Geertsema; clerk, Rev. B.J. Berends; vice-chairman, Rev. VanderWel who is asked to take the place of Rev. Kampen who will arrive somewhat later.

Once classis is constituted, the agenda for the meeting is adopted.

4. *Examination.* The classis proceeds with the examination of candidate A. VanDelden. The required documents for the peremptory examination are found to be in good order. The candidate then delivers his sermon proposal. The discussion of the sermon proposal takes place in closed session. It is decided to continue with the examination. Rev. J. Geertsema examines candidate VanDelden in the exegesis of Hosea 5:8-6:6. Rev. C. Bouwman examines him in the exegesis of John 2 and Colossians 1. After the lunch break the Church of Houston submits its credentials and Rev. Kampen assumes his duties of vice-chairman. The examination is resumed. Rev. E. Kampen examines him on Knowledge of Holy Scriptures, Rev. M. VanderWel on Reformed Doctrine and Creeds, Rev. B.J. Berends on Church History, Rev. J. Geertsema on Church Polity, Rev. W. Pouwelse on Ethics, and Rev. J. Visscher on Diaconology.

The examination is discussed in closed session. There are no objections to admitting brother A. VanDelden to the ministry of the Word. This decision is made with concurring advice of the deputies according to Article 48 of the C.O. Candidate A. VanDelden is informed of the decision of classis and the chairman offers congratulations on behalf of classis. The call extended to brother VanDelden by the Church of Lynden is approved. The chairman reads the form for the subscription of ministers serving in Classis Pacific, and asks brother VanDelden to subscribe to it. Brother VanDelden willingly signs his name to this form. The chairman addresses some words of encouragement to the brother for the task that lies ahead. The delegates are given a chance to congratulate the successful candidate.

5. *Requests.* a) The Church of Chilliwack requests that pulpit supply be arranged for the house congregation in

Vernon. This request is granted.

b) A church requests advice in a matter of discipline. This is dealt with in closed session.

6. *Classical Regulations.* The revised regulations for classis are discussed. A motion to table this report and write to the upcoming General Synod to reinsert into Article 44 C.O. the phrase "unless great distances render this inadvisable" is defeated. After some amendments, the revised regulations are adopted.

7. *Treasurer.* The Church of Smithers reports on the checking of the books of the classical treasurer. The books were found to be in good order.

8. *Needy Churches.* The Committee for needy Churches reports on the situation in Lynden now that they have their own minister. The churches will be notified regarding their assessment.

9. *Assessment.* The classical treasurer requests that he be permitted to levy an amount of \$2.00 per communicant member, in order to cover classical expenses and build up the reserve fund. This request is granted.

10. *Question Period ad Article 44 C.O.* The Church of Lynden requests that a document be drawn up to certify that candidate A. VanDelden has successfully completed his examination. Such a document may help speed the process of getting government approval for him to enter the U.S. The officers of classis are appointed as an ad hoc committee, to provide the Church at Lynden with any needed documents.

11. *Next Classis.* The convening church for the next classis is the Church of Houston. The date for the next classis is set for January 8, 1986. The suggested officers are: chairman, Rev. E. Kampen; vice-chairman, Rev. B.J. Berends; clerk, Rev. M. VanderWel.

12. *Closing.* There are no questions for question period. Censure according to Article 44 C.O. is not necessary. The Acts are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved. The chairman requests the singing of Psalm 118:6,8, after which he concludes with thanksgiving and prayer. The meeting is closed. On behalf of classis, the chairman as yet thanks the ladies for their good care throughout the day in providing the delegates with meals and refreshments.

For the classis,
E. KAMPEN, vice-chairman e.t.

Classis Alberta-Manitoba held in the Providence Canadian Reformed Church building at Edmonton, October 23-24, 1985

The chairman of the convening Church at Winnipeg, Rev. W. Den Hollander, called the meeting of delegates to order. He read I Corinthians 3:10-4:5, requested the singing of Psalm 139:1, 10, and led in prayer.

He welcomed the delegates and spoke a few words of encouragement to the delegates regarding the classis agenda.

The delegates from the convening church examined the credentials. These were found to be in good order. Several churches placed instructions in their credential letters. These were taken note of.

The chairman of the convening church declared classis constituted. The executive officers proposed by the previous classis were invited to take their seats at the head of the tables.

Rev. J.D. Wielenga served as chairman; Rev. S. De Bruin as vice-chairman; Rev. P.K.A. De Boer as clerk. The agenda was established and adopted.

The report from the classis "Committee Financial Aid for Students for the Ministry" was read, and received with gratitude. It was noted that at present there are no students being supported by this classis.

Church visit reports re. Article 46 Church Order were read (in closed session) of visits made to the Church at Neerlandia, the Providence and the Immanuel Churches at Edmonton. These reports were taken note of with gratitude.

Classis continued in open session. A report was read on a visit made on behalf of classis by Rev. P.K.A. De Boer (as observer) to the Presbytery of the Dakotas O.P.C. held in San Antonio, Texas. Classis decided to receive this report for information. Rev. De Boer was thanked for the work done.

In relation to this report, classis decided:

1. that in agreement with the decision of Classis Alberta-Manitoba (Oct. 2-4, 1984) it decides to send a copy of this report to the committee appointed by General Synod for contact with the O.P.C.

2. to express its desire that the Lord may strengthen the committee members appointed by General Synod for contact with the O.P.C. to work at its mandate.

3. to request that if the committee of General Synod for contact with the O.P.C. makes reports touching upon the matters brought out in this report, that the committee send a copy to the Presbytery of the Dakotas for its information.

4. to invite an observer from the Presbytery of the Dakotas O.P.C. to attend the Spring 1986 Classis of Alberta-Manitoba.

The report on the audit of the books of the classis treasurer was not present. The delegates of the Providence Church at Edmonton gave a "solemn promise" to provide the Spring 1986 Classis with the missing report.

A report was received from the Classis Committee for Needy Churches. The Church at Barrhead informed classis that it is no longer in need of financial assistance from the churches in the classis resort. The Barrhead delegates thanked the churches for all the financial assistance received in the past.

A report was received from the Immanuel Church at Edmonton of an inspection of the classical archives. These were found to be in good order. This report was received with gratitude.

A report was read from the Classis Committee on Revision of the Classis Regulations. This committee had been instructed by the previous classis to draft an appeal for the next General Synod re. Article 44 and 46 C.O., with the request to reinstate the old sentence "unless great distances render this inadvisable" to Article 44 and 46 C.O.

Classis decided to approach General Synod 1986 with the following appeal: "Classis Alberta-Manitoba, held October 22, 1985 at Edmonton, proposes to General Synod 1986 to reinstate the following clause from the Old Church Order Article 41 "unless great distances render this inadvisable," to the new Articles 44 and 46 C.O.

Ground 1. Ever since the churches in Classis Alberta-Manitoba have been instituted there have never been held more than 2 classes in one year, exactly for the reasons of the great distances to be travelled by the delegates, which would cause an irresponsible financial burden on the churches in the classical resort.

Ground 2. The provision made in Article 44 C.O. "... unless the convening . . ." does not apply to our situation since this provision deals with lack of material for the agenda, rather than with geographical considerations."

A letter was received from the Church at Carman re. the new Classis Regulations which contravene Article 44 and 46 C.O. with respect to the frequency of meetings and visits mentioned in these articles.

Classis decided: "to delete Article 3 a) of the Classis Regulations pending the classis proposal to General Synod 1986."

Question period Article 44 C.O. was held. The Church at Calgary requested a continued pulpit supply as in the recent past. This was granted. The Church at Calgary expressed its appreciation for the past and present treatment received from classis re. pulpit supply.

During this question period (in closed session) several churches requested advice in matters of local church discipline. Advice was given.

In open session the Immanuel Church at Edmonton requested advice re. its mission support commitments to the Churches at Surrey and Smithers. Classis decided:

"Classis advises that if the Immanuel Church cannot keep its financial commitments for mission work, to ask support from classis via the Classis Committee appointed for that purpose."

In response to a letter received from the Theological College re. the financial arrears of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton, and having heard the church-visit report re. other arrears, classis decided: "to advise the Immanuel Church at Edmonton to approach the Classis Committee for Needy Churches, if it fails to honour its financial commitments within the Confederation of Churches, before January 31, 1986.

The Immanuel Church at Edmonton requested advice on the proper interpretation and use of Article 62 C.O. in the Edmonton situation. This request was concerning attestation requests received from Immanuel members "who do not move to the Providence area."

Classis was presented with eight questions to which the Immanuel Church requested written answers. These are as follows:

1. "Are such requests covered by Article 62 C.O.?" Classis answered: "Article 62 C.O. speaks about members who move from one area to another. This implies that the Churches in Edmonton should set up two defined areas to make the use of this article possible.

2. "If not, are such requests ever legitimate?" Classis answered: "Such requests are not made according to the Church Order."

3. "May we grant such requests when we are convinced that they are for legitimate reasons?" Classis answered: "Normally, no requests for attestations are granted unless a person moves."

4. "Do we owe an explanation to the receiving church for any attestation not covered by Article 62 C.O.?" Classis answered: "It would be wise to inform the receiving church when an attestation is granted under abnormal circumstances."

5. "May we grant such requests when

OUR COVER

Mountain stream from Angel Glacier
Jasper National Park
Alberta, Canada
Photo courtesy
Government of Alberta

the member(s) is/are under church discipline?" Classis answered: "A consistory may not grant an attestation when a person requests it to escape church discipline."

6. "If so, may we pass on our problems to other congregations?" Classis answered: "This is covered by the above #5."

7. "Is the receiving church obliged to accept such attestations?" Classis answered: "A church is only obliged to receive an attestation when a person moves to the area of the receiving church, and when the attestation has been properly issued."

8. "May we grant such attestation in the knowledge that consequently we may become a more needy church?" Classis answered: "The financial need of the church should not be a consideration when granting an attestation."

An invitation was received from the Presbytery of the Dakotas O.P.C. to send a classis observer to the next Presbytery meeting. Classis decided: "to thank the Presbytery of the Dakotas O.P.C. for the invitation received, and to inform it that classis will gladly accept an invitation for the forthcoming meeting of the Presbytery since the invitation to the September 1985 Presbytery meeting was received too late by classis to act upon it."

At 9:45 p.m. the chairman requested the singing of Psalm 146:1,2. He then led in a prayer of thanksgiving, and adjourned the meeting until 9:30 a.m. October 24.

Reopening of classis. The chairman requested the singing of Psalm 100:1,2,4, read I Timothy 1:12-20, and led in prayer. Rollcall was held, and all members were present.

A letter was read from the Church at Calgary explaining the need for its own Pastor and Teacher and the underlying principles for its request. It also requested financial assistance from classis in order to be enabled to call a Minister of the Word.

Having heard the many concerns expressed by the members of classis about the financial situation in the classical resort, classis decided: "having heard the request of Calgary, it decides to advise the Church of Calgary to approach the Spring Classis via the Committee for Needy Churches for its expected needs, by which time there will be a clearer picture of the total financial commitment of classis."

A letter was received from brother and sister H.J. Noot. This was declared inadmissible in accordance with Article 30 C.O.

An appeal was dealt with from brother H.J. Noot. This was declared admissible and dealt with in open session. Brother Noot requests classis "to judge that appeals of doctrinal matters be dealt with by the elders and specifically state that

the Immanuel council is wrong in what it is presently doing."

After having made a number of observations and considerations (sent to brother Noot) classis judged that:

a. The consistory's decision to appeal was not in error as both the council and consistory state. Neither the local rules nor Article 31 C.O. prevents the consistory from making an appeal to any (doctrinal or other) decision.

b. Brother H.J. Noot is wrong by implying that the council may not make an appeal concerning a doctrinal matter. If the council is wronged by any decision (doctrinal or other) it has the right to appeal."

c. An appeal was dealt with from brother T. Bouwsema. This was declared admissible. It was first of all dealt with in closed session upon the request of the Immanuel Church so that its instruction could be read concerning this appeal.

Brother Bouwsema requested classis to judge that the Immanuel Church consistory had been wrong in first granting him an attestation and later refusing it. After having made a number of observations and considerations (sent to brother Bouwsema) classis judged:

"1. That the Immanuel consistory as yet ought to issue the granted attestation.

2. Regarding requests for attestations for members who do not move geographically from the congregation, classis has formulated its judgments in its decisions re. the Immanuel consistory requests for advice in this matter." (See above)

An appeal was received from brother B.J. Van Raalte, who requested classis, "to judge that the Immanuel council did wrong in its decision to take upon itself to appeal Article 165 and 166 of the Acts of General Synod 1983 because:

1. It was a consistory matter from the time the Acts were received.

2. The consistory decided, as published, that it would do the appealing.

3. The consistory has never decided to refer this matter to council.

4. Article 22 C.O. and the forms for ordination show that matters of doctrine are the jurisdiction of the elders.

5. The Classis of March/May, 1984 judged that "Questions and matters regarding doctrinal purity should be dealt with by the elders."

After having made a number of observations and considerations (sent to the brother), classis judged:

"a. Council has the right to make any necessary appeal to a major assembly. b. The local rules of the Immanuel Church do not prove that the consistory could not deal with the April 6, 1985 letter of brother B.J. Van Raalte."

The Church at Coaldale requested a revision to Article 9 a. of the Acts of

Classis March 12, 1985. The requested corrections and revision were adopted.

Appointments. The Church at Barrhead was appointed to be the convening church for the next classis, which is to be held on March 11, 1986 in the Immanuel Church building in Edmonton.

The suggested executive officers for the next classis are the Revs. W. Den Hollander as chairman, J.D. Wielenga as vice-chairman, and S. De Bruin as clerk.

The church visitors; the Revs. De Bruin, Van Beveren, and Wielenga were reappointed.

Rev. W. Den Hollander was appointed to be the classis examiner for the diaconological subjects.

The Providence Church at Edmonton was reappointed to take care of classis archives.

The Immanuel Church at Edmonton was reappointed to check the classis archives.

The members of the committee "Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry," were reappointed.

The members of the Committee for Needy Churches were reappointed.

The deputies for contact with the provincial government were reappointed. i.e. Rev. De Bruin for Alberta and Rev. De Boer for Manitoba.

Rev. M. VanBeveren was appointed to be the classis representative at the 25th anniversary of the Church at Barrhead January 1, 1986, with the celebration to be held on January 18, 1986.

During personal question period the Church at Calgary requested that the churches make time available for their Ministers of the Word to publish sermons. This was taken note of.

Article 44 C.O. (censure) was read. It was taken note of with gratitude that censure was not required.

The Acts were read and adopted, and the Press Release was approved.

The chairman expressed gratitude that classis had functioned in a spirit of true brotherly love and cooperation. He also expressed thankfulness to the fact that Rev. A. De Jager (who had received a call) could decide to stay in Neerlandia and our classis resort, and we wished him the continued blessings of the Lord over all his work.

The host-church was thanked for the use of its facility, and the Providence sisters were thanked for the excellent manner in which they cared for the members of classis.

The chairman requested the singing of Psalm 84:4,6, and Rev. S. De Bruin led in a prayer of thanksgiving.

At 10 p.m. the chairman declared classis closed.

On behalf of classis,
S. DE BRUIN, assessor

ABC BIBLE COLLECTION - by Mrs. John Roza

Qq



Colour
me!

Q-queen

(I Kings 10)

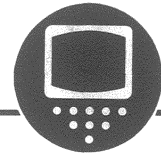
Quiz Questions

The questions below will deal with famous queens of the Bible.

1. This queen went to visit King Solomon. She tested him with hard questions. When she had seen his wisdom, she praised God. Where did she come from? _____(I Kings 10)
2. King Ahasuerus, when feeling merry, commanded his men to bring his queen to him. But this queen refused to go to him. The king in return had punished her. Who is this queen?
_____(Esther 1)
3. King Ahasuerus chose a new queen. She was the niece of Mordecai, the Jew. What was her name?
_____(Esther 1)
4. This queen brought her own idols and priests to Israel. She was thrown out of a window. Who was she? _____(I Kings 21)
5. The daughter of King Saul married David. She laughed when she saw her husband bringing God's ark back to Jerusalem. Who was she? _____(II Samuel 6:12-16)

Answers for the letter "P"

1. Parable 2. Passover 3. Pontius Pilate 4. Pentecost 5. Plagues 6. Paul



Executive committee meeting of the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College Association, Hamilton, ON, November 1, 1985.

The chairman, A.J. Hordyk read from the Scriptures Psalm 46, led us in prayer and welcomed all those present. The minutes of the last held meeting are read and approved.

The treasurer's report is discussed and the secretary is instructed to thank several brothers for their generous dona-

tions which are much needed and very welcome.

The role of our public relations committee is discussed and different aspects of this work were dealt with.

The board then discussed some more confidential material and then a tentative date was set for the Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors. The tentative date is Friday, February 7, 1986 at 8:00 p.m. to be continued on Saturday, February 8, 1986 at 9:00 a.m. with an anticipated close of about 3:00 p.m.

Governors from across Canada will have the opportunity to go over all the business of the College and meet all the other governors.

The next executive board meeting is set for D.V., December 6, 1985.

J. Tillema closed in prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

For the executive,
K. BROUWER

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



Dear Busy Beavers,

Today I opened the last entry in our Big Quiz Contest. It came from very, very far away! But now they are all in.

And you should have seen the nice work those Busy Beavers did! They were busy beavers for sure!

I am really proud of you.

But it made judging a hard job, I tell you!

In the end, though, I knew who those winners had to be.

And here are their names.

The *senior* winner was Busy Beaver *Alida Knol*, who even gave the Bible references for her answers!

Busy Beavers *Jacoba Harlaar* and *Amy Hofsink* are tied as *junior* winners.

Congratulations to you all for a job well done!

And a great big *thank you* to all those Busy Beavers who worked hard and came close. It was a great Contest!

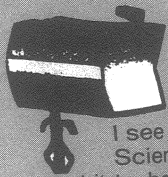
BUSY BEAVERS, we need a pen pal for:

Adalia Dam
14671 46A Avenue
Langley, BC

GOING TO A PARTY!



by Busy Beaver *Jacoba Harlaar*



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Karin Boot*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already! And I'm glad Science is one of your favourite subjects, Karin. You'll need it to be a good nurse!

And welcome to you too, *Adalia Dam*. We hope you will join in all our Busy Beaver activities. Congratulations on your nephew, *Adalia*! His mom used to be a Busy Beaver, too, right? And a big welcome to you, too, *Jeannette Jansen*. We are

happy to have you join us, and you're a real Busy Beaver already. Thanks for the puzzle, *Jeannette*. Bye for now.

Hello, *Emily Vegter*. It's nice to hear from you again. And I see you're a good puzzler! Keep up the good work! How does it feel to be back in school, Emily? I'm glad you have a pen pal.

Thanks for a nice chatty letter and your busy beaver picture, *Wendy Vandergaag*. Congratulations on getting your swimming badges! I'll bet you had lots of fun!

I think you must have lots of fun in that new gym of yours, *Karen Vandergaag*. Be sure to write and tell me about the bazaar and how your Dad's picnic table turned out, *Karen*! Bye for now. Write again soon.