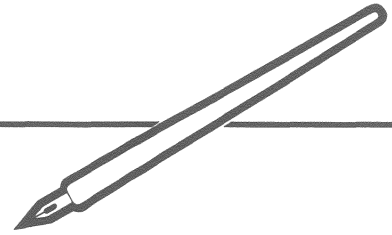




Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 35, No. 3

February 7, 1986



Death and life

The Form for Baptism says that this life is a constant death. Mortal man is constantly confronted with death. In refugee camps, in drought regions, in disaster areas, and in hospitals, the frequent and last word is death. Sometimes it hits suddenly, unexpectedly. At other times a long period of illness and suffering leads finally to death. No one can escape death. Every one's life sooner or later ends in death.

Death is the last enemy, says the Apostle Paul. Death causes grief. It leaves empty places on earth. Death is the cause of loneliness. Death cuts off life. Death breaks off marriages. It takes away fathers, mothers, children. Death can sometimes be a relief, bringing intense suffering to an end. Nevertheless, death appears to be the final word on earth. Death itself is so terribly final.

These lines are written in connection with the fact that colleague Pouwelse lost his wife. He is not the only one. The year-end issue of our magazine contained an "In Memoriam" for Sr. Riemersma, who, for many years, took care of our column "A Ray of Sunshine." Besides, many an issue contains one or more advertisements announcing the passing away of a beloved one, mostly older, sometimes young.

However, death does not have the last word. Christ Jesus has paid for sin with His death on the cross. His resurrection on the third day showed His victory over death. Christ is the living One. His life is the guarantee of eternal life for those who believe in Him. No, death does not have the last word. Christ Jesus has. And therefore life has.

This means for those who are terminally ill and know they are going to die that they have a great comfort. For those who are in Christ Jesus death is the transition to life. Death is the gate to the heavenly home.

In Romans 14:7-9 the Apostle Paul writes: "None of us lives to himself and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord of the dead and of the living." Paul writes that Christ is Lord also of the dead. This means that Christ rules also those who have died, which makes only sense when it means that Christ owns and rules them in heaven.

Those who have lived and then die in the Lord are with the Lord after their death. That is why the apostle can write to the Philippian believers that to him "to live is Christ, and to die is gain." And "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better" (Philippians 1:21, 23). Dying means for those who are in Christ, going home, going to the feast of being with their Lord and Saviour.

Psalms 84:7 says it in such a beautiful way. I quote it in my own translation. "They go on from strength to strength; they are seen at God's [place], in Zion." This, of course, speaks first of all of the Israelite pilgrims who went through hard ter-

rains on their way to Jerusalem. But they went on from strength to strength. And in the end they appeared in God's house in Jerusalem, in Zion.

However, this word is not less true for the New Testament pilgrims who are on their way not to an earthly, but to the heavenly Jerusalem. The journey can be hard. The earthly tent can be broken down. But they go on from strength to strength. They do not lose courage. For they believe and know that they will be seen, will appear at God's place, in the heavenly Zion. We read in Hebrews 12:23 that, besides God on the heavenly throne and Christ, and the innumerable angels, also "the spirits of just men made perfect" are in the heavenly Zion.

Although it remains hard to say farewell to loved ones and leave them behind, when the time comes near, believing children of God find departing not difficult for themselves. On the contrary, they depart to be at the Lord's place, in Zion. That is gain. That is far better. "For the LORD God is a sun and shield; He bestows favour and honour" (Psalm 84:11).

In the beginning of Psalm 84 the author says, "How lovely is Thy dwelling place, O LORD of Hosts. My soul longs, yea, faints (is consumed) for the courts of the LORD. My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God." If it was such a great and wonderful thing for the Old Testament believer to be with the LORD in His earthly temple, how much more glorious and wonderful must it be to be with the LORD in the heavenly Zion! How much more marvelously glorious must it be to be with the LORD on the new earth in eternal glory, when we shall be again complete, soul and body, in everlasting, perfect glory! How great must it be to be with Him and praise and glorify Him in perfectness. We may and should all look forward to, and long intensely for, that future. Do we do that?

God's Word teaches us that we, as God's children, are pilgrims. We are strangers and sojourners with God. We are people on the way as heirs with Christ of the new world that is to come. Also the pilgrims, who are on their way to God's place, are blessed. That is what Psalm 84 teaches as well. "Blessed are the men whose strength is in Thee, in whose heart are the highways to Zion." Pilgrims, who long to be with the LORD, have the road to Zion in their heart. And with the thought in their mind, all the time, that they are on their way to Zion, even the most difficult road, even a rough road through the dry and arid valley of Baca, becomes like a highway through a valley with many springs, a valley that is clothed with a bounteous, colourful carpet of a great variety of beautiful flowers. Going through it becomes a feast, because it is going to the LORD. In the strength of the LORD they go on, till also they appear at God's place, in Zion.

It is in the strength of the LORD that those who are left behind can go on, from strength to strength, from the one moment to the next, from the one day to the next, from week to week and from year to year, they receive the strength of the LORD,

who does not withhold His good gifts from those who walk uprightly.

This strength, and all the goodness of the LORD, we wish brother Pouwelse and all the other, often so lonely, brothers and sisters, who have to go on. To say it with the words of the late queen of The Netherlands, Queen Wilhelmina, "Lonely, but not alone."

The author of Psalm 84 prayed for the king in Jerusalem, calling him "our shield," and God's "anointed." He had a good reason to pray for Israel's king. That king was himself a sinful,

weak, person. We do not have to pray for our king anymore. Our King is our God and Saviour in heaven, at the right hand of His Father. Our King is also our High Priest. He prays and pleads for us, while we are on our pilgrims' road. This King and Priest "is able to sympathize with our weaknesses." "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15, 16).

J. GEERTSEMA

Adoption₂

4. Careful consideration on both sides

A decision to give up for adoption, or to adopt a child, should never be made without careful consideration. In the previous article we already paid some attention to the motives on the part of the adoptive parents. Also on the part of the natural parents or parent careful consideration is required. A child should not easily be given up for adoption. We quoted already the report of the advisory committee at General Synod Amersfoort-West 1966/67 as saying: "If there is no longer any prospect of a proper functioning of the relationship between parent and child" That has to be ascertained first. Adoption is a very profound interference in the life and the family relationship of the child. The child is removed from his natural parents. The original relationship is legally terminated and replaced by a completely new and lasting relationship. The child is taken out of its original environment and placed in a new situation. That should only be done if there is no prospect of restoring or improving the natural situation.

A mother should not be pressed to give up her child as long as she is willing and able to take care of the child. The responsibility rests, in the first place, with the natural parent. We might think that a child will be better off, and better cared for, if he is adopted, but let us not forget that the child should be left in his natural situation if at all possible. That is, for him, the best place to be. A child might feel more happy there than in a completely different atmosphere, where he can have more luxury and better care, but where he still does not feel at home. Many cases of disappointment are known, especially with children from a different part of the world, from a different race, or a different culture. This disappointment can be noticed on both



sides: with the adoptive parents as well as with the adopted child.

We have called adoption an "emergency measure in a sinful world" and it should always be considered that way. If there is no prospect of a proper functioning of the relationship between parent and child, we have no choice. There can be a situation in which the natural parent is not able to take care of the child. There are also situations in which the parent is not willing to take the responsibility. In such a case we cannot say that the natural relationship between parent and child is disrupted or terminated through adoption. There simply is not such a relationship, or the relationship has been broken and has been destroyed by the parent. In such an emergency situation a compassionate measure has to be taken, in the unmistakable interest of the child, to avoid further damage and suffering on the part of this child.

5. A compassionate emergency measure

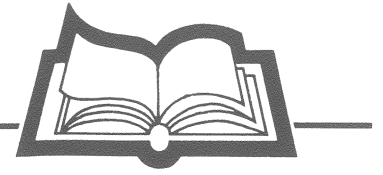
We have called adoption a "com-

passionate emergency measure in a sinful world." There are three aspects to this definition which are equally important and should be taken into consideration in all cases.

- a. It has to be a matter of compassion and not selfishness.
- b. It has to be an emergency measure and not a standard procedure.
- c. We have to realize that we are living in a sinful world.

In previous sections we have already emphasized the fact that adoption never should take place to satisfy the adoptive parents but only to show mercy to the child. We have also stressed the fact that a child should not lightly be given up for adoption. This should happen only if there is an emergency situation. The third aspect is equally important. We have to realize that we are living in a sinful world. Adoption should never be seen as an ideal situation and it should never be promoted as an aim in itself. However, in this life we are confronted quite often by the devastating consequences of sin.

— continued on page 53



“. . . look, the whole world has gone after Him.” (John 12:19b)

Superstar or Mediator?

The Bible is the bestselling book of all times. Our lord Jesus Christ should not have to complain today that He lacks popularity. There are many churches and various sects which proudly carry the name “Christian.” There is a lot of money to be made in religious tracts and artifacts. Many references are made to Christ in literature, music and cinema. Christ has received the stature of a “superstar,” and were He living on earth today, He would be a much invited speaker on the celebrity circuit. Perhaps Christ need not have worried so much when He wondered if there would still be faith on earth at His return. There seems to be faith in abundance.

Yet we are somewhat concerned and worried ourselves when we see and read that Christ meets with such general interest and even massive enthusiasm. According to the Word of God, that is rather *unusual*. Certainly, Christ has been hailed before by enthusiastic crowds and been given a hero’s welcome. In His own time, our Lord knew moments of great popularity. Christ’s bitter enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, were angry witnesses to this mass-appreciation and adulation. And they complained with great envy and deep resentment, “Look, the world has gone after Him.”

Our Lord was indeed in those days very popular for a time. His popularity was at a peak just before and during the entry into Jerusalem. People were still buzzing with wonderment about the resurrection of Lazarus. Many times the Pharisees had voiced their objections to Jesus and made public their criticism, but the multitudes did not seem to share the objections of their leaders. Jesus, the great healer, who could multiply bread at will, had stolen their hearts and captivated their attention. And the Pharisees saw it happening: the Jewish people in their fierce hatred for the despised Romans would joyfully receive Jesus in Jerusalem as leader and king to lead them to freedom. Jerusalem was ready to take in its king who would drive out both oppressors and traitors.

So we can understand, there is an atmosphere of joyous anticipation in the city. People are milling about; crowds are gathering. And Jesus apparently plays along, too, for seated on an ass, He makes a triumphant entry into Jerusalem, while the crowds shout their approval, “Hosanna, the King!” The Pharisees were outrightly disgusted with this whole display. Jesus and the people, it seemed like an unbeatable combination.

But the Pharisees knew better. They knew the power of Rome. They also knew how weak the Jewish nation really was. They were certain that any popular uprising would be quelled in blood by the Roman troops. Previous rebellions had met with a terrible fate. This Jesus had to be stopped at all costs. Yet all their attempts had been quite fruitless, and the Pharisees are extremely frustrated, “You see that you can do nothing; look, all the world has gone after Him.” To arrest Jesus now, would lead to instant rebellion and widespread pandemonium. The Pharisees could only bide their time, hoping nothing serious would come of it; hoping especially that the Roman authorities would not intervene by declaring martial law and ending the relative authority of the Sanhedrin.

However, the Pharisees need not worry overmuch. For this popularity of Jesus is temporary. As soon as the crowds realize that this Jesus does not meet their standards and demands, they drop Him. They prefer the criminal, Barabbas, above the Mediator Jesus. For the one whom they first acclaimed as the King of Israel soon appeared to them as just another imposter. He did not measure up to their expectations, and they turned against Him.

The *whole world* goes after Him? Later Jesus told His disciples not to be surprised if the *world* hated them, “Know that it has hated Me before it has hated you” (John 15:18). The Pharisees were right at that moment, the world has gone after Him, but there is a difference between *going after* Christ and *following* Him.

“Going after Christ” is a going along with the crowds, and it’s a short-lived infatuation. But *following* Christ is a life of obedience to God’s will out of gratitude for the salvation given in Him. Going after someone is a matter of sensationalism; following someone is a matter of *faith*.

In fact, our Lord has never been “in” in this world, and He never will be. Often people have made a wrong image of Christ and worshipped that image. But that is not Christianity; it is self-willed worship, contrary to God’s revealed law. It means making a Messiah after your own design. And any religion based on this deception cannot last before God or among men. Christ did not come to shine among men in a worldly way and to conquer as Superstar in a worldly manner. But He came as Mediator of the covenant to show the humble form of a servant, to fulfill the Word of God, and only in this way to receive the Kingship and the glory. A glory based on divine approval and not on popular support. It is decisive how we acclaim Him: as Superstar of the world, or as Mediator of God!

When the world goes after Christ, the church should be careful. For the world is not impressed with the Truth of God’s Word but is always obsessed with the grandeur of its own imagination. The world constantly creates its own Superstars and goes after them. That is also the style of the false church. When people tire of the one, they find another. We see a succession of Superstars in every area of life. But the church always follows the one Mediator and remains faithful to Him in every sector of life.

Many mass-movements, impressive though they be, lead a short and turbulent life. The fervour of the crowds cools quickly. The church is not a movement chasing an illusion, but is the body of Christ inseparably bound to Him.

Following Christ is not a temporary fling, but a life-long commitment. It is not a passing fad, in which we indulge, but a way of life which requires perseverance and self-denial. Following Christ is never the “in-thing” in this world, for it means ridicule and persecution from the side of the world. Our Lord Himself put it very plainly when he said, “If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24).

CL. STAM

Adoption — continued

Jesus Christ came into this world to make full satisfaction for all our sins. Still, in this life, the consequences of sin are felt. Christ, in His care and mercy, uses human beings to alleviate suffering and misery in this life. He has shown, during His life on earth, that He cares for those who suffer. He has paid special attention to children. He has taken them into His arms and He has said, "Let the children come to Me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). And He has also said, "Whoever receives such a child in My name receives Me" (Matt. 18:5). He will use human beings to help children who need help. He wants us to show mercy and to give relief to children who suffer because of the devastating consequences of the sins of their parents.

Giving up a child for adoption is not always a matter of unwillingness on the part of the parent. It is often also a matter of inability to take care of the child. In 95% of the cases the child comes from an unwed mother. Especially in such a situation we are confronted by the brokenness of life and the devastating consequences of sin. The mother herself is often still a child and not able to take care of the baby. It happens quite often that the grandparents of the baby do not want to have the child in their house. Either the baby has to leave or both mother and baby are kicked out of the house. They make it impossible for the mother to take care of her baby. This can create an unbearable situation. It also happens that the young mother is forced into a situation in which she has only two options, namely, to give up the child for adoption or to accept abortion. A young girl is not necessarily forced into such a dilemma, she often sees it herself as the only way out.

Because we reject abortion as murder, we have to consider whether adoption can be an acceptable alternative in a situation in which the normal relationship between parent and child is destroyed by sinful human actions. An emergency measure can be necessary in a sinful world, to avoid hurting the victim even more. That does not condone or play down the sins of the parents and the shortcomings of the grandparents in such a case. They have their own responsibility. However, compassion, with respect to the child, can make such a measure necessary, to avoid more damage and harm to the child that has become the victim of the wrongdoings of others.

6. Does adoption cut off natural ties?

One of the main objections against adoption is often the fact that it cuts off

natural ties. The parent-child relationship is terminated by a judicial decision. Do we have the right to terminate or cut off such a relationship or has a judge the right to do so for that matter? Those who are against adoption argue that in such a situation a foster home would be an equally effective measure. We doubt whether this argument holds water. If adoption takes place along the lines set out in the previous sections, we cannot really say that a natural relationship is terminated or cut off through adoption. We simply accept the reality that there is not such a relationship of love and care between the parent and the child. Such a relationship has never developed, or has been destroyed. Legal adoption registers this sad reality.

However, there is more to consider in this respect. If a child is placed in a foster home, there is always the possibility to call the child back. There are cases in which a mother, who has given up the child for adoption, after the child has grown up, calls him back because she sees a possibility to "exploit" the child. In such a situation legal adoption does not only protect the adoptive parents, but first and foremost the child, from being exploited. Also here it is true that adoption should be a measure in the unmistakable interest of the child.

There is another aspect that has to be considered. A child is supposed to obey his parents. After adoption the adoptive parents have become the legal parents and the child knows what he is supposed to do. However, if a child is placed in a


foster home, it will usually still have contact with the parents on a more or less regular basis. Such a child is supposed to obey the foster parents while it lives in their house and is under their supervision. However, because the natural parents are still the legal parents, the child also has to obey them. That can, and often does, bring the child in the very difficult position of being caught in the middle.

A similar situation arises when parents are involved in a divorce. The child often does not want to make a choice or take sides with the one against the other. Still the child is in a dilemma, because it cannot obey both at the same time. This conflict is even more complicated if one "party" is the real parent and the other "only" a foster parent.

The proper solution in such a situation is to make clear to the child that it has been placed in a new situation. If contacts with the natural parents cause a conflict, in most cases these contacts have to be terminated in the interest of the child. However, that means that actually the same situation exists as with a legal adoption.

Our conclusion must be that legal adoption is not much different in its effects than a foster home, except that the factual situation is legally registered and more security is provided for the child to prevent that his unmistakable interest will be ignored to the advantage of those who want to exploit him.

— To be continued
W. POWELSE

 <p>Published bi-weekly by Premier Printing Ltd. Winnipeg, MB</p> <p>EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Editors: J. Geertsema and W. Pouwelse Co-Editors: J. DeJong, Cl. Stam and W.W.J. VanOene</p> <p>ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS: CLARION 9210 - 132A Street Surrey, BC, Canada V3V 7E1</p> <p>ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.): CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd. 1249 Plessis Road Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2C 3L9 Phone: (204) 222-5218</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>SUBSCRIPTION RATES</td> <td><i>Regular</i></td> <td><i>Air</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><i>Mail</i></td> <td><i>Mail</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>FOR 1986</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Canada</td> <td>\$24.00</td> <td>\$42.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>U.S.A. U.S. Funds</td> <td>\$25.75</td> <td>\$40.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>International</td> <td>\$34.50</td> <td>\$57.50</td> </tr> </table> <p>Advertisements: \$5.00 per column inch Second class mail registration number 1025 ISSN 0383-0438</p>	SUBSCRIPTION RATES	<i>Regular</i>	<i>Air</i>		<i>Mail</i>	<i>Mail</i>	FOR 1986			Canada	\$24.00	\$42.00	U.S.A. U.S. Funds	\$25.75	\$40.00	International	\$34.50	\$57.50	<p style="text-align: center;">IN THIS ISSUE</p> <p>Editorial — Death and life — J. Geertsema 50</p> <p>Adoption₂ — W. Pouwelse 51</p> <p>From the Scriptures — Superstar or Mediator? — Cl. Stam 52</p> <p>Are elders and deacons really office-bearers? — K. Deddens . . 54</p> <p>The doctrine of the church in Reformed confessions₂ — J. Faber 55</p> <p>College corner — Library automation — J. Marren 59</p> <p>Ordination and installation of Rev. A. van Delden at Lynden, WA, U.S.A. — W.D. Meester . . . 61</p> <p>Boodschap aan Nederlanders in het buitenland 64</p> <p>Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty 65</p>
SUBSCRIPTION RATES	<i>Regular</i>	<i>Air</i>																	
	<i>Mail</i>	<i>Mail</i>																	
FOR 1986																			
Canada	\$24.00	\$42.00																	
U.S.A. U.S. Funds	\$25.75	\$40.00																	
International	\$34.50	\$57.50																	

Are elders and deacons really office-bearers?

Importance

When we discuss the office of elders and deacons, we deal with a very *important topic*. Paul writes to his spiritual son, Timothy, about elders and deacons and he gives instructions which are apparently so important that they could not be *delayed*, not even for a short time. The apostle says, “I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (I Timothy 3:14, 15). Especially by pointing to the LORD of the house, the Apostle Paul emphasizes his command.

Therefore, the topic of elders and deacons is not a *temporary* matter, and also today we have to execute the rules of the household of God’s Church, faithfully and precisely, being obedient to the assignment given by the LORD Himself. “For if we want to maintain the church,” Calvin once said, “we must have that regiment which the LORD has established as an inviolant regiment” (compare I Timothy).

Confession and Church Order

In Article 31 of our *Belgic Confession* we profess this Scriptural importance of the offices of elders and deacons in the church. “We believe that . . . elders and deacons ought to be chosen to their offices by lawful elections of the church, with prayer and in good order as stipulated by the Word of God.” In accordance with this confession, the *Church Order* starts, after the introductory Article 1, in the second Article as follows: “The offices are those of the Minister of the Word, of the Elder and of the Deacon.” Do we indeed profess and accept that?

Time and again we hear that these offices are not prescribed in the New Testament, and that it belongs to the freedom of every congregation, to extend or to minimize these offices. Are these offices indeed instituted? Were some of these offices only temporary, or were they all permanent? In other words are elders and deacons indeed officer-bearers, or not? Are they all at the same level or is there a kind

of gradation between them? And what about women in the congregation? May they serve in a special office? We will try to answer these questions, especially in connection with contemporary publications in this respect.

Presbyters

It is a remarkable fact that the origin of the office of the elders is not mentioned in the Bible. The elders of the Church at Jerusalem suddenly appear on the scene. We read in Acts 11:29 and 30, “The disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea; and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.” Dr. J. van Bruggen is of the opinion that these elders are not the elders in our sense of consistory members. He says it is remarkable that their election is not mentioned by Luke. And it is also remarkable that they appear in the picture so late. His conclusion is that these elders only had a temporary task and they were the same as the “disciples” from the gospel (*Ambten in de Apostolische Kerk*, Kampen, 1984, p. 78ff.).

But is it so strange that their election is not mentioned? Just three chapters after this story in Acts 11 we read, “When they [Paul and Barnabas, K.D.] had appointed elders for them *in every church*, with prayer and fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they believed” (Acts 14:23). Dr. van Bruggen argues that these elders were at another level than the elders of Chapter 11. But I do not believe that. We must not conclude too much from the fact that no election is mentioned for the first elders in Chapter 11. And besides that, already before Pentecost there were hundreds and hundreds of believers. Paul writes to the Corinthians that “Christ appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep” (I Corinthians 15:6). They were disciples, all of them. But it is quite impossible that all these disciples were involved with the relief mentioned in Acts 11. It is more reasonable that the office of the elders mentioned in Acts 11 and the office of the

elders mentioned in Acts 14 are the same. And it is also very likely that there were elders in the New Testament church just as there were leaders in the synagogue. There were many house congregations, and probably elders played a role in them from the very beginning.

In any case, in the rest of the book of Acts we hear about elders time and again. They were involved in the decision of the meeting with the apostles according to Acts 15. They were present at the visit of Paul to James according to Acts 21. These elders are called by two names: presbyters and overseers.

Overseers

Is there any difference between presbyters and overseers? When we translate the Greek words literally, we get the words presbyters and bishops, or, priests and bishops. All of you know that these words have been claimed by the Roman Catholics, and also that these words do not have exactly the same meaning. But I am of the opinion that these words point to the same office-bearers. I ask you to compare, for instance, Acts 20:17 with 20:28. Paul called the elders of Ephesus, and he said to these same elders, “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.” Compare also the first letter of Peter, Chapter 5:1 with verse 2. Peter calls himself a fellow elder, and he exhorts the elders, “Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly.” Compare also Titus 1:5 with verse 7. Paul writes to Titus, “This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you.” And then, in verse 7, writing about the same office-bearers, he says, “For a bishop, as God’s steward must be blameless”

Why, then, are two words used, pointing to the same persons? The name presbyter has been copied from the Jews, and usually this word was used by the Jewish Christian congregations. Also the synagogues had their “elders,” their presbyters — as I mentioned already — and these presbyters made decisions in all kinds of matters, also concerning church discipline.

But the name overseers is especially used by the Christian churches of Gentile origin. Probably under the influence of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, where this word is used for instance in II Kings 11:19, II Chronicles 34:12, Isaiah 60:17 and Nehemiah 11:9.

We can conclude that many names are used to designate the special office-bearers of the New Testament, whom we call elders or overseers.

Disappearance

In the beginning of the apostolic church, the elders played an important role. But in the course of time, the episkopoi (also called "bishops") became increasingly dominant, and slowly but surely the elders disappeared. There were still "priests" as a general name, but they did not form a board or consistory. The bishop was the regional ruler and the other priests had to listen to him and to obey him. So we may say that the rank of elder sank away below that of the bishops, who ruled the church.

It took a long time before the office of elder was rediscovered. It was during the Reformation and it was especially Calvin who put the elder on the stage again. It has once been said, "Calvin checkmated the Pope of Rome with the pawn of the Reformed elder." Everywhere in the Reformed churches the elders were recog-

nized and honoured again. Unfortunately, after the Reformation the elder disappeared again in several regions.

In September 1979, Prof. D. Deddens presented his inaugural address on the topic: "*The disappearing elder*" about the omission of the office of elders in the congregational churches in Massachusetts. This omission occurred already in the seventeenth century! How did that come about? The main reason was that especially the ministers of the church let the elders disappear. Dominocracy went hand in hand with independentism, and the result was that there was no work anymore for the Reformed elder.

Rehabilitation

It is very important to keep the elders in honour. For also today there is a danger that we underestimate the elders over against the ministers of the church. If the position of ministers were to become central, and if one would consider the elders only as the assistants of the minister, then there would be something wrong. It happened in the past, and it happens today, especially in the U.S.A., that one sees the elder as the ruler, but the minister as ruler and counsellor. If there are problems and difficulties, people pass by the elders and go directly to the pastor.

Maybe the old "*Form for the ordina-*

tion of elders and deacons" gave some rise to that. In that old form the government of the elders is stressed, while in the "Form for the ordination (or installation) of Ministers of God's Word" the task of the shepherd is extensively mentioned. But let us bear in mind that the elders are also pastors. Paul said to the elders of Ephesus, "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which He obtained with the blood."

I think the new Forms are better. Both of them point to the important pastoral task of the elders and ministers. I remind you for instance of these two passages concerning the elders: "Together they tend the flock of God which is in their charge" (in the margin reference is made to I Peter 5:1-4) and also: "To do their work well as shepherds of God's flock, the overseers should train themselves in godliness" (with reference to II Timothy 3:14-17).

So let us not underestimate the important office of the elders. Let us bear in mind what the letter to the Hebrews prescribes: "Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you."

K. DEDDENS

The doctrine of the church in Reformed confessions₂

Note from the editor: Here follows the second part of Professor Dr. J. Faber's speech delivered at the first International Conference of Reformed Churches, held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in September 1985. Dr. Faber stated in the first part that the doctrinal struggle of our days concerns the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and His work, which includes the doctrine of the church. In this struggle the Reformed confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth century are of the greatest importance. Dr. Faber now continues with mentioning the characteristics of the Reformed confessions in speaking about the church.

IV. Characteristics

A. Scriptural

The Scripturality of the doctrine of the church in Reformed confessions can be demonstrated in a twofold manner. First, as far as the relationship of Holy Scripture and church is concerned and, second, in the description of the nature of the church itself.

Zwingli's first thesis in 1523 read: "All who say that the gospel is nothing without the approbation of the church err and slander God." And the first thesis, that led

to the Reformation of the city of Berne in 1528, proclaimed:

The holy, Christian Church, whose only Head is Christ, is born of the Word of God, abides in the same, and does not listen to the voice of a stranger.

In this wonderful, typically Reformed thesis, we hear the confession that the church is *creatura verbi*, a creature of the Word of God, born out of it and living from it. The Word of God stands above the church, and the expression "Word of God" is identical to "gospel" or "Holy Scripture." The gospel is not dependent upon the ap-

probation of the church, but in an allusion to the gospel of John chapter 10, the church is characterized as the flock of sheep that listens to the voice of the Good Shepherd and does not listen to the voice of a stranger.

Zwingli's theses 13 and 14 of 1523 are illustrative in this respect:

13. When we listen to the Head, we require a pure and clear knowledge of the will of God, and we are drawn to Him by His Spirit and are conformed to Him.

14. Hence all Christians should do

their utmost that everywhere only the gospel of Christ be preached.

In later Reformed confessions the marks of the true church will be enumerated and the first mark will be the pure preaching of the gospel. One could state that this mark is indicated in a nutshell already in the first Reformed confessions. Negatively, it means that the church is not based on human ordinances, and positively that it is founded in the sovereign work of God, who unites the believers with Christ through the *gospel*.

It would be an easy task to illustrate from later confessions this Scriptural character of the Reformed doctrine of the church as the subordination of the church to the Word of God, but I would like to move on to another point.

We could also state that this Scriptural shows itself in the definition or description of the church. One of the most important questions to be answered was: What *is* the church?

If one is to answer this question Scripturally — according to the contents of Holy Scripture — one has to begin with the Old Testament terms for “congregation” or “assembly:” the church in the Old Testament is the assembly or congregation of the people of God. In continuity with the Greek translation of the Old Testament, there is in the New Testament the noun *ekklesia*, “church” or “congregation,” and this church is depicted in a trinitarian manner, as the assembly of the people of God (the Father), the body of the Lord Jesus Christ (the Son), and the temple of the Holy Spirit.

There was the temptation for the Reformed confessors to fall into an anti-hierarchical *over-reaction* and to approach the church *individualistically*. Now it is remarkable that already in the confessions of Strasbourg and Basel (the Tetrapolitan Confession 1530, the First Confession of Basel 1534, and the First Helvetic Confession of 1536), we find a stress on the church as communion or community, or fellowship of believers. The concept of the *gathering* comes to the fore, and the church is described as being gathered by the triune God and as coming together in the unity of true faith. This element of *gathering* is of uppermost importance in the doctrine of the church in Reformed confessions. The First Confession of Basel (1534) states in Article 10:

We believe one holy, Christian Church, the fellowship of the saints, the spiritual assembly of believers which is holy and the one bride of Christ . . .

And we read in The First Helvetic Confession (of 1536) about the holy, universal church as “the fellowship and congregation of all saints which is Christ’s bride and spouse” (Article 14; the Latin text speaks of a “*sancta sanctorum om-*

nium collectio”). This First Helvetic Confession characterizes the church as not only seen and known but “also gathered and built up by visible signs, rites and ordinances, which Christ Himself has instituted and appointed by the Word of God as a universal, public and orderly discipline” (non solum cernitur cognosciturque, sed . . . constituitur). In this imperfect present tense *constituitur* we see the church as an earthly, empirical assembly that is not finished yet, but is in the process of being gathered and built. At the same time the church itself is God’s instrument in this ongoing process; there is a *constitutum* and there is a *constituendum*. The church’s ministers are in these German, Swiss Reformed confessions time and again called God’s co-workers (*cooperarii* — see Gassmann, p. 89) and this striking epithet underscores the dynamic nature of the ongoing work of the gathering of the church.

In the period of Calvin and Bullinger, we find a similar stress on the church as a *company* of the faithful. The Geneva Confession of 1536 even stresses that this description is valid for each and every local congregation:

While there is one only church of Jesus Christ, we always acknowledge that necessity requires companies of the faithful to be distributed in different places. Of these assemblies each one is called church (Article 18).

The Second Helvetic Confession, — that beautiful confession of Bullinger — puts the question, “What is the church?,” and answers as follows:

The Church is an assembly of the faithful called or gathered out of the world; a communion, I say, of all the saints . . . (The Latin text speaks of . . . “Ecclesiam id est, e munde evocatum vel collectum coetum fidelium”).

The headings in Bullinger’s confession are evidence of the Scriptural character of his doctrine of the church. The church is called the assembly of citizens of one commonwealth, the temple of the living God and there are special paragraphs about the church as bride and virgin, as a

flock of sheep, and as the body of Christ.

When we come to the confessions of what I called the “churches under the cross,” we think of the French Confession of 1559 upon the formation of which Calvin exercised much influence. The true church is “the company of the faithful who agree to follow God’s Word and the pure religion which it teaches.” In this historic city of Edinburgh, I cannot but quote the Scottish Confession of 1560 with its trinitarian foundation:

As we believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so we firmly believe that from the beginning there has been, now is, and to the end of the world shall be, one Kirk, that is to say, one company and multitude of men chosen by God, who rightly worship and embrace Him by true faith in Christ Jesus, who is the only Head of the Kirk, even as it is the body and spouse of Christ Jesus.


When the Scottish Confession stresses that there is one church from the beginning of the world, it reminds this Reformed believer of his beloved Heidelberg Catechism and the familiar sentence “that the Son of God, out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself, by His Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith, a church chosen to everlasting life . . .” (Lord’s Day 21). Again the incomplete, unfinished character of the church is expressed, or rather, the ongoing, dynamic act of Christ’s gathering His Church: “gathers, defends and preserves” are verbs in the imperfect present tense.

Let me end my list of quotations with the description of the church in the Belgic Confession of 1561:

We believe and profess one catholic or universal Church, which is a holy congregation and assembly of true Christian believers, expecting all their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by His blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

The original French text has two nouns “*congrégation et assemblée*,” which fact in most English translations is neglected. Festus Hommius rendered in his Latin translation “*congregatio seu coetus*.” Dr. Klaas Schilder saw in *congregatio* — related to the noun *grex*, flock — the divine act, and in *coetus* — from *co-ire*, to come together — the human act. God in Christ *brings* us together and we in faith *come* together. This explanation may be deficient in historical or symbolical respects, for “congregation” and “assembly” are used interchangeably in the French original of the Belgic Confession. Nevertheless, it is a Scriptural and dogmatically sound reasoning, in the line of the Reformed confessions.

But the main point in my characterization of the contents of Reformed confessions in their description of the nature

CHURCH NEWS 

On February 24, 1986, Deo Volente, the Church of Abbotsford, BC, will commemorate its 25th Anniversary.

of the church was this: in the line of the Scriptural terms for the church as congregation or assembly, Reformed confessions have emphasized the fact that the church is a gathering, and that this gathering is an ongoing, dynamic work of the triune God, which divine action should evoke our human response so that, by the grace of God, we become *cooperarii Dei*, co-workers of God.

I will not now make an application of what this means for this International Conference of Reformed Churches and its members, but I only express the conviction that this Scriptural confession is and remains a timely one.

B. Catholic

In our second characteristic, we called the Reformed confessions concerning the church *catholic*. Everyone who is acquainted with Reformed confessions and the history of their doctrines, knows that in this second characteristic we enter upon a field that is almost as wide as the previous topic, the Scripturality. Even if we limit the concept of catholicity now to its temporal aspect, we have to restrict ourselves in our exposition of the continuity of the church. Not only do the Reformed confessions repeatedly speak of the continuity of the church throughout the ages, but this continuity is evident in the very *language* of the confessions, even in their specific phrases. By way of example, I mention the saying: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* — outside the church there is no salvation — well-known since the days of Origen and Cyprian. Reformed confessions also stress that God grants salvation *in* the church and *through* the church. In the catechism of the Church of Geneva, the question is asked, “Why do you insert the article concerning forgiveness after the church?” The answer reads: *Because no man obtains pardon for his sins without being previously incorporated into the people of God, persevering in unity and communion with the Body of Christ in such a way as to be a true member of the church.*

The following question asks:

And so outside the church there is nothing but damnation and death?

Answer: Certainly, for all those who separate themselves from the community of the faithful to form a sect on its own, have no hope of salvation so long as they are in schism.

Calvin’s very forceful words remind us of the beginning of Book IV of his *Institutes*. They find an echo in Bullinger’s Confession. We esteem fellowship with the true Church of Christ so highly, Bullinger says,

. . . that we deny that those can live before God who do not stand in fellowship with the true Church of God, but separate

themselves from it. For as there was no salvation outside Noah’s ark when the world perished in the flood; so we believe that there is no certain salvation outside Christ, who offers Himself to be enjoyed by the elect in the church; and hence we teach that those who wish to live ought not to be separated from the Church of Christ.

Similar reasoning is followed in Article 28 of the Belgic Confession: Everyone is bound to join himself to the true church, “since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved, and outside of it there is no salvation.”

This confession is catholic, but not Romanist; it does not elevate the church in a positivist or triumphant manner. It should not escape our attention that the Second Helvetic Confession, in this context, spoke of “no salvation outside Christ.” And in the Belgic Confession the phrase “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*” is taken up in a normative sense. The Reformed believer does not attempt to occupy the place of God in the last judgment but ends this

twenty-eighth article by stating simply: *Therefore all those who separate themselves from the same — the congregation — or do not join themselves to it act contrary to the ordinance of God.* (Cf. Scottish Confession, Article 16.)

Augustine, especially, is the one in the Ancient era to whom the Reformed confessions owe much in usage of terms and phrases. The distinction “*in* the church but not *of* the church,” applied to hypocrites, is Augustinian. But even more important than this reference to so-called “church fathers” is the fact that the Reformed confessions are often structured according to the ecumenical creeds. The First Confession of Basel (1534) and the First Helvetic Confession (1536) followed, in the main lines, the Apostles’ Creed. It goes without saying that especially the Catechisms, e.g. the Geneva Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism, deal with the church in their explanation of the Apostolicum.

It is appropriate in this context to men-



Ulrich Zwingli

tion a discrepancy with respect to the translation of the received text of the Apostles' Creed. In German (Reformed) confessions — e.g., the Heidelberg Catechism — a medieval custom is sometimes adopted by replacing the word "catholic" by the word "Christians," or adding the word "Christian" to the word "universal." The first thesis of Berne (1528) spoke of "the holy Christian Church" instead of the "holy Catholic Church." The Dutch-speaking churches that are members of this conference, the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Vrijgemaakt), still have a text of the Apostles' Creed that slightly differs from the received text. The Canadian Reformed Churches even try to transfer this text to the English-speaking world by using

sacraments as appointed by Christ in His Word, but adds to and takes from them, as it thinks proper; it relies more upon men than upon Christ; and persecutes those who live holily according to the Word of God and rebuke it for its errors, covetousness, and idolatry, (Belgic Confession, Art. 29).

One could write an entire treatise on the government of the church and its offices to show the anti-Romanist character of Reformed confessions. Right from the beginning not the *magisterium* but the *ministerium* is emphasized, not the lordship over, but the service to, the gospel and the congregation. In 1523, Zwingli declared:

61. The divine Scriptures know nothing of

beloved Westminster Confession. It is clear that the Westminster Confession is a good Reformed document and anti-Romanist: Chapter 25.6, "There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof."

But Chapter 31 speaks of synods and councils and it states that their "decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in His Word." The question is this, "Does this juxtaposition 'not only — but also' not give to synods and councils a power that is reminiscent of hierarchism?"

D. Anti-spiritualist

Our last characteristic of Reformed confessions also concerning this doctrine of the church was: they are anti-spiritualist. Spiritualism in the sixteenth century was cognate to Donatism in the fourth century and the Reformed confessions have recognized this fact, not only in the doctrine of baptism, but also in the doctrine of the church and its ministry. When the French confession strongly condemns the papal assemblies, it acknowledges:

Nevertheless, as some trace of the church is left in the papacy, and the virtue and substance of baptism remain, and as the efficacy of baptism does not depend upon the person who administers it, we confess that those baptized in it do not need a second baptism.

Calvin's concept of "some trace of the church in the papacy" — *vestigium ecclesiae* — is anti-Donatist and anti-spiritualist. Also the Belgic Confession is anti-spiritualist in its acknowledgement that no perfect church in this dispensation is to be found: there are "hypocrites, who are mixed in the church with the good, yet are not of the church, though externally in it." Those who are members of the church may be known by the marks of Christians. "But this is not to be understood as if there did not remain in them great infirmities." Reformed confessions do not promote a schismatic search for a perfect community. The anti-spiritualist tendency is also recognizable in the manner in which the ministers of the Word are acknowledged as God's co-workers (First Helvetic Confession, Article 15). Because we touched on this topic before, let it suffice to state that the anti-spiritualist scope of the Reformed confessions is of timely significance also in this twentieth century with its holiness movements and neo-pentecostal revivalism.

"Especially in the beginning of the Reformation, Roman Catholic doctrine and abuses are attacked"

the words "I believe a holy catholic, Christian church." I regret this development as slightly infringing upon the true catholicity of Church of God and its ecumenical creeds. May I, in this connection, suggest that this International Conference, or a subsequent one, appoint a committee to study this topic (the International Consultation Texts of the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed) in order to come to a common text of the ecumenical creeds that can be recommended to all members? But let me hastily return to the confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They showed their catholic character also in expounding the unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of the church as confessed in the ecumenical creeds.

C. Anti-Romanist

Right from the beginning in 1523, Reformed confessions were anti-Romanist. Zwingli's Sixty-Seven Articles attack the so-called clerical traditions with their pomp, hierarchy, titles, and laws. They are "a cause of all nonsense, because they are not in agreement with Christ, the Head." Especially in the beginning of the Reformation, Roman Catholic doctrine and abuses are attacked. Dispensations concerning fasting are called a "Roman fraud" for no Christian is bound to perform work which God has not commanded. In the description of the false church in the Scottish and Belgic Confessions we see a picture of the Roman Catholic Church of the sixteenth century, "the horrible harlot" (CS, Ch. 18): *It ascribes more power and authority to itself and its ordinances than to the Word of God, and will not submit itself to the yoke of Christ. Neither does it administer the*

an indelible imprint by consecration which the priests have invented in recent times. 62. Furthermore the Scriptures do not recognize any priests except those who proclaim God's Word.

There is no power in the church except for edification, the Tetrapolitan Confession says. "They who teach what conflicts with Christ's commands cannot represent the Church of Christ" (Chapter 15).

The First Helvetic Confession acknowledges Christ Himself as the only true and proper Head and Shepherd of His Church, "We do not acknowledge or accept the head at Rome and those who are bishops in name only." The French confession is strongly anti-hierarchical:

We believe that all true pastors, wherever they may be, have the same authority and equal power under one head, one only sovereign and universal bishop, Jesus Christ, and that consequently no church shall claim any authority or dominion over any other.

This equality of ministers and churches, also stated in, e.g., Article 32 of the Belgic Confession, is fundamental for Reformed church polity. It should be powerfully maintained in this twentieth century over against Roman Catholicism and false ecumenicity. We think of Chapter III of the dogmatic constitution on the church of Vatican II and its strong hierarchism. We also think of the Lima document of the World Council (*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*) which consistently neglects the office of *elder* (presbyter) and entrenches the diocesan bishopry as an indispensable instrument for the unity of the church.

In this context, I modestly ask our Presbyterian brothers whether they are willing to entertain a question concerning their

— To be continued
J. FABER

Library automation

The automation of our College's library functions has been the objective of College personnel for the past few years. In choosing a system that is best suited to our library, we must consider what we would like automation to do for us. Of course, we wish to be able to do away with many time-consuming and repetitive tasks which are a part of bibliographic control. Such tasks as producing catalogue cards, pocket and spine labels, acquisitions lists, and all the record keeping associated with book ordering and payment can be greatly facilitated by many basic library software packages currently on the market. These "in-house" systems are relatively inexpensive, but there are also other options which may be considered that can provide further advantages. One of these is participation in a library network.

Libraries have been forming networks for several years. Together, member libraries use a large central computer to create a huge database which includes records of all the books held by member libraries. Besides this "union catalogue" of participating libraries, such networks also make available the records of the holdings of the massive Library of Congress (LC) in the United States. An important advantage of participation is the opportunity to share cataloguing data between member libraries. Since a large number of the books acquired by any library are likely to have been already catalogued either by LC or another member library, it is much more efficient to utilize the existing cataloguing record rather than to duplicate the time and effort spent in cataloguing the book. The record is merely "copied" into one's own file and adjusted, if necessary, to reflect local needs.

Besides sharing cataloguing data, member libraries find networks conducive to "resource sharing." Interlibrary loan services are greatly enhanced as information about the holdings of other libraries is made available by accessing the database. In order to communicate the bibliographic information necessary for both cataloguing and resource sharing, libraries must all use a standard cataloguing format. The format developed for this purpose is known as MARC (MACHINE READABLE CATALOGUING).

Two bibliographic networks were investigated by our College in order to deter-

mine the feasibility of participation. These were UTLAS (The University of Toronto Library Automation System) and OCLC (Online Computer Library Center, Inc.) in Ohio. OCLC was of more interest due to the fact that a large number of theological libraries in the U.S. participate in it, including Calvin Theological Seminary and Westminster Theological Seminary. However, it was determined that the size of our collection and our rate of growth makes it difficult to justify the ongoing expense of joining such a system at this particular time.

Nevertheless, in our choice of an internal system, it is wise to develop in such a manner that participation in some type of network in the future will not be impossible. The system of our choice, then, should allow us the capability of creating full MARC records, compatible with other bibliographic systems. One such system has been developed by Small Library Computing Inc., a company established by Mr. R.J. Kepple, the former librarian at Westminster Theological Seminary. His Bibliographical Database System is designed to run on an IBM or compatible microcomputer and allows the creation of MARC records. It includes an acquisitions module for producing purchase orders and keeping track of all book orders and fund allocation, and a cataloguing module which produces catalogue cards and labels, besides maintaining records in machine readable form for some on-line access and future use in some other MARC based system.

A useful development for smaller libraries has been the recent availability of LC MARC data (that is, a large proportion of the cataloguing records generated by the Library of Congress) on discs useable with the microcomputer. The new laser disc makes it possible for this storage of vast amounts of information (for example, the LC MARC data includes over 1½ million records stored on 2 discs). This gives a library using a microcomputer the opportunity to borrow cataloguing data from LC in somewhat the same manner as is made possible by large networks. Small Library Computing Inc. is presently incorporating this development into its Bibliographical Database System.

The capability of accessing cataloguing records not only simplifies our catalogu-

ing of new books, but also gives us the opportunity to update our card catalogue. Much of the existing cataloguing is incomplete as many entries lack subject headings and complete description. Borrowing cataloguing records via a computer facility brings a re-cataloguing project within the feasible range.

Once computer facilities are in place to handle our "house-keeping" needs, other services are possible to implement. Computerized searching of periodical indexes is one such service. For example, *The Religion Index* published by the American Theological Library Association indexes both theological journals and books containing theological essays by author and subject. A searcher can manually sift through each annual edition of the indexes in pursuit of articles on a specific subject. However, since these indexes are also maintained in a database, it is possible to "search" them via one's computer terminal with far less time and effort involved. The user is billed for the communication costs and the time spent accessing the database, but an experienced operator can complete a search in minutes. Costs, then, are usually between \$10.00 and \$20.00 for a search. A similar manual search could take hours.

The cost of a library system such as we are investigating falls between the basic "in-house" systems and the participation costs of a large network. The hardware required may range from \$7500. to \$11,500. The software may cost approximately \$4,000. A RECON project (the RETrospective CONversion and updating of all our previous records to machine readable form), if undertaken, may have to be handled on a contract basis which could cost a further \$6,000. - \$7,000. Costs should be more definite after our investigation of the Database System in question is completed.

Although we cannot say that our choice is finalized at this time, perhaps this information gives some idea of the options that we have been considering and a very rough estimate of what funds may be involved. Although an automation project seems expensive to "start-up," very real cost reduction (in terms of staff time spent on library work) and service enhancement can be realized within a short time.

J. MARREN

The ICRC: reactions and reflections₁

The first meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches is now history. Was it a success, a failure, or a combination of both? For the most part the jury is still out pondering the evidence. Nevertheless, over the last couple of months some reactions have come in. Prof. D. Macleod of Scotland and Prof. J. Kamphuis of The Netherlands have both given their evaluations in the October issue(s) of *The Monthly Record* and *De Reformatie* respectively. What did they have to say? Well, let us first listen to the positive.

Words of praise

Prof. Macleod is of the opinion that the Conference has "its undoubted value, especially on the informal, personal level." According to him the churches represented "had in common a sincere desire to help and a grasp of the Reformed faith which made nonsense of the idea that Calvinism appeals only to the Western European mind. It was also obvious that these new churches feel exceedingly isolated and greatly appreciated this opportunity for wider fellowship." In spite of its shortcomings, he is of the opinion that "the Conference must survive."

Prof. Kamphuis is of a similar mind. He is impressed by the fact that the Conference could stick to its timetable and deal efficiently with the matters on its agenda. He also applauds the fact that not just official delegates were present but that a goodly number of observers from various churches were also in attendance. He sees this as a good sign because it augurs well for future growth. It also shows that there is a real interest in this world for something other and better than the WCCC, the ICCC and the RES.

As far as Kamphuis is concerned there is also no doubt about the reformational-confessional course of the ICRC. There is reason for deep thankfulness because of what took place at Edinburgh, all the more because the desire to walk in the ways of the Scriptures was so evident, as was the desire to go on in the way of the confession of the churches.

Thus far some of the favourable press. Now comes some of the other variety.

Words of critique

We turn to Prof. Macleod first, in part

because his critique is of the more devastating sort. He comments, "Yet we would be less than honest if we pretended to be happy with the whole affair. There were moments when we were bewildered, others when we were angry and yet others when we blushed with embarrassment." What caused him to be in such a snit? For openers he remarks, "the main problem was that the Conference quickly managed to strangle itself. On Tuesday morning we sat down with a document which said, *Provisional Agenda* and another which said, 'The Office of the Free Church of Scotland will prepare a *tentative* programme for each day of the Conference' On Thursday we learned that nothing could be discussed unless it had been submitted to the Provisional Committee two years ago. By Thursday, however, we had no *Provisional Committee*. We had an *Interim* one: and the only way to get anything discussed was to ask the *Executive Committee* whether this was possible within the constitution. They were asked to consider this. By Monday they had not considered it. When reminded, they did consider it: and after two minutes consideration decided, No, it was not possible."

Macleod continues, "The upshot was that we could not discuss social issues; we could not discuss the practical implications of membership of the I.C.R.C.; we could not hear the impressions of visiting observers In the meantime, however, there were riots in Cape Town and Birmingham and the Pope's visit to Lichtenstein was the only religious news in Scotland. Catholic Press? or Reformed incompetence?"

Public relations

Agenda strangulation is not the only object of Prof. Macleod's displeasure. He also takes aim at the Conference's attitude to public relations. "The evening sessions were not in any sense popular No advantage was taken of potential media interest. And no attempt was made to have any kind of public rally (even though one of the stated aims of the Conference is 'to present a Reformed testimony to the world'). We seem to be suffering from a bad dose of antipopulism, as if theology and ecumenism had nothing to do with ordinary people. Such an attitude is fun-

damentally un-Christian and un-Protestant. Paul related his faith to the marketplace and Luther expressed his in pamphlets. Why should we be ashamed of a full house and media interest?"

Interchurch relations

In addition to these words of critique, Prof. Macleod also goes on to bring to the fore two issues which he feels the Conference must address. The first had to do with interchurch relations. "A way must be found, too," he says, "to force member churches to face up to the practical realities of interdenominational relations. If we are not careful, the Conference will actually hinder true ecumenism by obscuring the guilt of sectarianism. All the delegates would have been welcome to Free Church pulpits and at the Free Church communion table. But in many instances that welcome could not have been reciprocated. We would not be allowed into their pulpits or admitted to their communion. On a personal level, that gives no offense. But it does highlight a problem. If we cannot sit together at the Lord's Table, how can we be one in Christ? And if we are one in Christ, why can we not sit together at the Table? The next Conference should be asked to declare that there must be free exchange of pulpits and open communion between all member churches." In the last paragraph of his article, Prof. Macleod comes back to this point when he states, "It's worth another try, so long as we remember that there is more to ecumenism than the ability to engage in civilized academic discussion. I.C.R.C. 1989 should end with a Communion Service."

Apartheid

The second issue which he believes cannot be ignored has to do with apartheid. "It is the greatest single human rights issue of our day. Nor is it merely a political issue. It affects hundred of thousands of our black brothers and sisters in Christ. It affects the daily existence of one of the member churches of the I.C.R.C. (the Free Church in Southern Africa). It makes one of the delegates to the Conference, the Rev. Nelson Mpayipeli, a second-class citizen in the land of his birth. Furthermore, apartheid would not survive for a day if it were disowned and repudiated

by the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, which represents thirty-eight per cent of the white population of South Africa: and which sent two Visiting Observers to the Conference. The I.C.R.C. has no right to condemn the N.G.K. out of hand. It must listen to the whites as well as to the blacks. But it must *listen*: and it must speak, with its hand on its heart, with its eyes uplifted to heaven and with the faithfulness it finds so commendable in the prophets of the past. If it will not so speak, it is useless."

No doubt it is evident by now why we called Prof. Macleod's critique "devastating." He is a man with passionate convictions and a pointed pen.

An illegal committee?

As to the approach of Prof. Kamphuis,

it reveals a different style, but he too has a number of critical questions and comments. For one, he zeros in on the fact that the Conference did not really respond to the suggestion of Prof. P.S. Oh of Korea to issue a statement against the reemergence of Shintoism, but on the other hand, it did take up the suggestion of Dr. J. Faber will regard to a Committee to study the texts of the Ecumenical Creeds. He finds this inconsistent. Furthermore, he wonders how this matter could have been dealt with seeing that no member church ever made a request for such a committee. Because it was mentioned in a paper it all of a sudden became a matter of the ICRC. The Canadian Reformed Churches themselves did not even overture the Conference on this point.

As for the issue raised by Prof. Oh, why did the Conference not advise the brothers to come to the next meeting with a worked out proposal? That would have been the better and more helpful procedure.

On a different issue, Prof. Kamphuis also calls into question the rather weighty theological character of the speeches, which presupposed a fair bit of theological acumen. At the same time, he remarks that questions which confront the member churches did not really get a serious airing.

Thus far the critique, next the evaluation.

— To be continued
J. VISSCHER

Happy days for Lynden

Ordination and installation of Rev. A. van Delden

Sunday, November 24, 1985 was a very special day for both the new congregation at Lynden, as well as for its new minister Rev. A. van Delden. The Lord granted the Church at Lynden, its first minister and He gave Rev. A. van Delden his first charge in the ministry. In a church filled to the brim, the Rev. C. Bouwman of the Canadian Reformed Church at Chilliwack had the honour of ordaining and installing Candidate A. van Delden at Lynden as a minister of the Word.

Rev. Bouwman preached on II Corinthians 5:14a "For the love of Christ controls us." In his introduction Rev. Bouwman asked: "Why is it so wonderful to receive a pastor and teacher; why the joy on our part, and why is there reason for gratitude for being ordained into the ministry?" Answer: "Because it is Jesus Christ who gives pastors and teachers to bring to completion the work He began so long ago. It is Christ's love for us."

The theme of the sermon was: "The love of Christ controls the ministers of the Word." Two points: first, the reason why there are ministers of God's Word, and second, the motivation driving the ministers of God's Word.

Paul said that the love of Christ controls the apostles. What is said about the office of apostles applies today to the office-bearers. Paul defends his apostleship.



Lynden, Washington

The love of Christ is the ground why Paul should be recognized as an apostle. Paul was an office-bearer because of Christ's great love for him. Christ died in our place. Paul said that we have died with Christ and we live also with Him (that love is the same for all of us). This love now says Paul is the ground for all office-bearers. Why? Because that's the only thing apos-

ties can proclaim; His sacrifice on the cross stands central on the pulpit. The ground for office-bearers is none other than Calvary itself. In his second point: "the motivation . . .," Rev. Bouwman stated that the love of Christ *controls* us. We're in the grip of the love of Christ. Christ loves His Church. That's why He gives office-bearers today. He captivates

men and propels them into office. Christ grips a man; takes control of him, so that His people may be built up in faith. (Christ's love for the congregation.)

The minister of the Word is unique; central in his life is the Giver of the office. Christ holds the office-bearer in His

to the community wishing her God's strength in her new task as a minister's wife. To the Brothers and Sisters of the congregation he said it was a privilege to serve them as pastor and counselor in his capacity as minister of the neighbouring "mother Church" at Abbotsford, and he

family, most of which were present at the worship service.

In the afternoon service Rev. A. van Delden held his inaugural sermon on Hebrews 13:7-9a "Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings."

The theme of the sermon was: The Hebrews are exhorted to maintain their faith in Christ. First, this faith is exemplified in their leaders. Second, this faith is based on the unchanging Christ. Third, it is to be maintained against heresy by us today.

Rev. van Delden pointed out that the leaders in the text were those who maintained the true apostolic faith; those who brought the gospel of Jesus Christ; those who were trained to carry on the teachings of the apostles and those who followed after them to speak the Word of God. These men not only spoke the Word of God but they also lived in accordance with it. The Hebrews were exhorted to mimic the faith of their leaders; and likewise we are to be mirror images of the faith of our leaders. Faith in the unchangeable Truth, the unchanging Christ. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever. He is still the same High Priest today; Truth is that which is unchangeable. Christ said: "I am the Truth." He gave victory to the Hebrews and their leaders; also to us through that same unchangeable faith. The faith which God preserves through the generations. This faith must be maintained against heresy, also today. We must remember and main-



Rev. and Mrs. A. van Delden and one of their three sons during the coffee hour after the afternoon service on November 24, 1985

hands. The office is risen out of the gospel of salvation. Paul was gripped by Christ. So is an office-bearer today; to preach Christ crucified. He is an ambassador of Christ; an instrument in His hands. In this capacity Rev. Bouwman urged Brother van Delden to "be controlled by the love of Christ," and the congregation to "accept this ambassador of Christ." He told the congregation that God is appealing to them through this new minister "to be reconciled to God through Christ and to rejoice in His Name."

Following the sermon the Form for the Ordination of Ministers of the Word was read, to which Brother van Delden responded in the affirmative. The visiting minister, Rev. M. Vanderwel participated in the laying on of hands with Rev. Bouwman and elders R. Faber, C. Petter and M. Vreugdenhill.

After the service the chairman of the consistory, Brother C. Petter, read messages of congratulations from the consistories of the Canadian Reformed Church at Smithville, the Providence Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton, the Canadian Reformed Church at Smithers and the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church at Ripon, California.

Rev. M. Vanderwel spoke a few words on behalf of Classis Pacific. With thanks to the Lord, he congratulated Rev. van Delden wishing him much fruit upon his labours. He welcomed Mrs. van Delden

rejoices with them in that the Lord has now provided the Church at Lynden with its own pastor and teacher. He expressed the wish that the love of Christ be spread about to the edification of Christ's Church in America. After this Brother J. van Delden of the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton spoke a few words of congratulations on behalf of the



"President Reagan's" presentation of the American flag and a jar of jelly beans to Rev. and Mrs. van Delden during the welcome evening

tain the faith of our fathers. Both doctrine and conduct must go hand in hand. Rev. van Delden closed his sermon by saying that now that the congregation has a new minister who has received his first congregation, they must not expect to hear anything new. Christ is the same. Faith is the same and the preaching is the same. Through the preaching of the Truth Christ will preserve the faith from generation to generation.

After the service refreshments were served and everyone had an opportunity to meet our new minister and his family.

On Monday evening, November 25, 1985, a welcome evening was held for Rev. van Delden and his family. Brother C. Petter, now the consistory's retired chairman, opened the evening with the reading of Psalm 150 and prayer. He welcomed all in attendance, but especially the Van Delden family and some of their relatives who were able to stay for this evening. After we sang a specially composed welcome song, the chairman gave an opportunity to delegates and guests to speak words of welcome to our new minister and his family. Brother Onderwater, delegate of the Canadian Reformed Church at Abbotsford, Rev. C. Bouwman of the Canadian Reformed Church at Chilliwack, Rev. J. Visscher of the Canadian Reformed Church at Gloverdale, Brother J. Vandenburcht of the Canadian Reformed Church at Langley, Brother Onderwater of the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey, and Mr. VanderWall of



Members and guests of the American Reformed Church at Lynden examining the scrapbook presented to Rev. and Mrs. van Delden during the welcome evening on November 25, 1985

the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church at Burlington, Mount Vernon, WA, all spoke words of welcome and congratulations to both the new minister, Rev. van Delden and the congregation at Lynden. After this Brother Petter read several let-

ters and greetings received from the Canadian Reformed Churches of Edmonton, Smithers and Smithville, and the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church at Ripon, California. After this a program of skits, music and songs followed in which there was participation of most of the members of the congregation. Rev. and Mrs. van Delden received several presents among which was a flag of the United States and a jar of jelly beans presented to them by "President Reagan" himself (see accompanying picture). In addition they received a "horn of plenty" filled with groceries, and a scrapbook with pictures and stories of all the members of the congregation. It was a very enjoyable evening, flavoured with plenty of Americanism and good food. At the end of the program we sang Hymn 63:1 and 2, after which Rev. van Delden spoke a word of thanks, and closed the evening with a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord.

W.D. MEESTER



Boys and girls of the American Reformed Church at Lynden singing a song at the welcome evening for the Van Delden family on November 25, 1985

OUR COVER

Mountain stream from Angel
Glacier, Jasper National Park,
Alberta, Canada

Photo courtesy:
Government of Alberta

Boodschap aan Nederlanders in het buitenland

Als gevolg van wijzigingen in de Grondwet en de Kieswet kunnen alle Nederlanders, ook als zij in het buitenland wonen, deelnemen aan de verkiezingen van de Tweede Kamer.

De eerste verkiezingen, welke onder de nieuwe wet vallen, zullen op 21 mei 1986 plaatshebben. De procedure voor de verkiezingen is als volgt: elke Nederlander dient zich voor 1 april 1986 via een kies-registratieformulier te registreren als kiesgerechtigde in het kiesregister van zijn laatste woonplaats (in Nederland, Red.) of als die er niet is, in Den Haag.

De formulieren en een toelichtende brochure zullen door het Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken worden samengesteld en zullen vanaf NOVEMBER 1985 via het Consulaat-Generaal beschikbaar zijn.

De Nederlanders die willen deelnemen aan de verkiezingen, moeten zelf het kiesregistratieformulier invullen en naar Nederland sturen.

De stembiljetten worden rechtstreeks door de kiesbureaus verzonden.

Will men aan de verkiezingen deelnemen, dan dient aan de volgende eisen te worden voldaan;

1. Men moet Nederlander zijn; desgevraagd moet u kunnen aantonen dat u geen andere nationaliteit hebt aangenomen en dat u hierdoor het Nederlanderschap hebt verloren.
2. U moet 18 jaar of ouder zijn;
3. U dient op het Consulaat-Generaal geregistreerd te zijn en het Consulaat-Generaal dient te beschikken over uw laatste adres, zodat de nodige papieren naar u kunnen worden toegezonden.

Het verdient aanbeveling om het Consulaat-Generaal reeds in een vroeg stadium van uw belangstelling voor deelname in de Kamerverkiezingen in kennis te stellen.

Hieronder volgen de vestigingen van de Consulaten-Generaal in Canada en de Verenigde Staten, gevolgd door het adres van de ambassades in deze landen.

Canada

Ottawa, ON — Consulaat, 3rd floor, 275 Slater Street te Ottawa, ON K1P 5H9

Ambtsgebied: de counties Renfrew, Lanark, Carleton, Russell, Prescott, Glengarry, Stormont, Dundas, Grenville en Leeds van de provincie Ontario en de counties Gatineau en Hull van de provincie Quebec.

Montreal, PQ — Consulaat-Generaal

Suite 1500, Edifice Standard Life, 1245 Quest rue Sherbrooke, Montreal H3G 1G2

Ambtsgebied: de provincies Quebec — met uitzondering van de counties Gatineau en Hull — New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island en Newfoundland.

Toronto, ON — Consulaat-Generaal

1 Dundas St. West, suite 2106, Box Nr. 2, Toronto, ON M5G 1Z3

Ambtsgebied: de provincies Ontario — met uitzondering van de counties Renfrew, Lanark, Carleton, Russell, Prescott, Glengarry, Stormont, Dundas, Grenville en Leeds — en Manitoba, alsmede de Noordwestelijke territoria.

Vancouver, BC — Consulaat-Generaal

475 Howe Street, Vancouver, BC V6C 2B3

Ambtsgebied: de provincies Brits Columbia, Alberta en Saskatchewan, alsmede het Yukon territorium.

De verenigde Staten van Amerika

Washington, DC — Consulaat-Generaal, 4200 Linnean Avenue N.W., Washington, DC 20008-3896

Ambtsgebied: het district van Columbia en de Staten Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware en North Carolina.

Chicago, IL — Consulaat-Generaal

303 East Wacker Drive, Suite 410, Chicago, IL 60601

Ambtsgebied: de Staten Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee en Wisconsin.

Houston, TX — Consulaat-Generaal

Post Oak Bank Building Ste. 610, 2200 Post Oak Boulevard, Houston, TX 77056

Ambtsgebied: de Staten Texas, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma en South-Carolina.

Los Angeles, CA — Consulaat-Generaal

'Central Plaza', 3460 Wiltshire Boulevard, #509, Los Angeles, CA 90010-2270

Ambtsgebied: het zuidelijk gedeelte van de Staat California, omvattende de counties: Los Angeles, Imperial, San Diego, San Bernardino, Orange, Riverside, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo en Kern, alsmede de Staten Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming.

New York, NY — Consulaat-Generaal

1 Rockefeller Plaza, 11th floor, New York, NY 10020-2094

Ambtsgebied: de Staten New York, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island en Vermont, alsmede Puerto Rico, St. John, St. Thomas en St. Croix.

San Francisco, CA — Consulaat-Generaal

1102 International Building, 601 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94108

Ambtsgebied: de Staat California — met uitzondering van de counties Imperial Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara en Ventura, alsmede de Staten Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, en Washington.

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



Hello Busy Beavers,

We have lots of "goodies" to share today!
Let's start with the poem Busy Beaver *Margaret Admiraal* has sent in for you.

JANUARY

January opens
The box of the year
And brings out days
That are bright and clear.
And bring our days
That are cold and gray
And shouts "Come see
What I brought today!"

Here is a sample of Busy Beaver *Esther Bergsma's* calligraphy.

Dear Aunt Betty,
How are you? I am fine.
My name is Esther.

Don't you think Busy Beaver
Krista Ellen's puppy is a cutie?



March is just around the corner!
Guess who's having a birthday then!
To all the following Busy Beavers we wish a very happy
day celebrating with family and friends.
And of course we wish you, too, the blessing and guidance
of our Heavenly Father in the years ahead.

MARCH

Corinne Versteeg	3	Nancy Lodder	14
Lyan Van Ellenberg	4	Mirjam Bikker	15
Yolanda Van Spronsen	4	Katrina DeHaas	17
Heather Vandenberg	6	Melanie Werkman	23
Sheila Wierenga	9	Helena Beijes	24
Gwendolyn Werkman	11	Marjorie Helder	27
Betty Bergsma	12		

RIDDLE FUN

1. What is the wettest animal in the world?
2. What should you do when you feel run down?
3. Why did the man run around his bed?
4. What disease do rodeo horses get?
5. Where does a caterpillar go in the cornfield?
6. Why was Cinderella dropped from the basketball team?
(Answers next page)

sent in by Busy Beaver *Elaine*



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Elaine*. We are happy to have you join us. Thank you for the riddles! I see you're a real Busy Beaver already, *Elaine*. Will you write and tell us something about your family and your hobbies?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Esther Bergsma*. We hope you'll really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. What a nice letter you wrote, *Esther*! Do you practise your calligraphy for a little while every day? Thank you for your picture!

And thank you for a very neat letter, *Emily Barendregt*. And congratulations on a very good report card. How did you enjoy your holidays, *Emily*? And yes, I do like your picture, *Emily*!

Hello, *Krista Ellens*. Thank you for your word search, and the pictures, too. It was nice to hear from you again. Bye for now. Write again soon.

You've been very busy, I see, *Marjorie Barendregt*! Thanks for sharing with the other Busy Beavers. I'm sure they will enjoy your picture and puzzles.

And thank you, too, for a nice fat letter, *Joyce Wieggers*. It's not hard to tell you like horses! Do you like other animals just as much, *Joyce*?

Hello, *Jessica Byker*. It was nice to hear from you again. You did a very nice job of your quiz on the computer! Will you write sometime and tell us what else you do on your computer?

Thanks very much for a nice chatty letter, *Karin Boot*, also for your puzzle. Do you have to wait till you move to a farm to call your place your "Bootel," *Karin*?

You've been very busy, I see, *Margaret Admiraal*! Thank you very much for your pretty letter with the poem, and picture, too. You're right, *Margaret*. Holidays go fast. But there's another coming up soon, right?

Quiz Time!

TWO CODE QUIZZES!

1-A	6-R								
2-C	7-S	2	3	6	4	7	8	4	7
3-H	8-T								
4-I	9-U								
5-O	10-V	5	9	6	7	1	10	4	5
									9
									6

from Busy Beaver *Anne VanLaar*

The next one is from Busy Beaver *Shelly Vanderhorst*. You must find the numbers for the letters first! Did you see that? Tricky Shelly!

A	B	C	E	L	R	S	U	V	Y
24	15	44	17	90	36	7	9	30	14
-8	+12	-5	+16	-15	-14	+36	+28	-7	-9

27 37 43 5 27 33 16 23 33 22 39 75 37 27