



Clarion
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Especially on the day of rest,

Lord's Day

You all know the expression taken from Lord's Day 38 of the Heidelberg Catechism, in answer to the question "What does God require in the fourth commandment?": "First . . . that, especially on the day of rest, I diligently attend the church of God to hear God's Word, to use the sacraments, to call publicly upon the LORD, and to give Christian offerings for the poor."

There are four elements mentioned in this answer concerning public worship. I am of the opinion that there is a special order in it: Word — sacraments — prayer — collection. I think it is wrong to throw these elements around, as if the order is arbitrary. But we will let that matter rest for now. Let us pay attention to the expression "that, especially on the day of rest, I diligently attend the church of God." That means that I have to attend the church of God, in the first place, on Sunday. Especially the day of rest is the day of public worship. But, apparently, there are more worship services than only on that day.

The question is now: Are there many other days of worship? If so, how many? Is it desirable to observe a number of those days? What about the Christian festivals? It is remarkable that about 30% of the "Hymns and Paraphrases" of the *Book of Praise* are connected with Christian Feastdays. That is quite a lot! But it is also remarkable that Article 52 of the Church Order says: "The consistory shall call the congregation together for worship twice on the Lord's Day. The consistory shall ensure that, as a rule, once every Sunday the doctrine of God's Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism is proclaimed."

Other days?

There is, therefore, an obligation for public worship on Sunday, even twice. But what about the other days of public worship? In Article 53 of the Church Order we read about "Days of Commemoration," and there it says: "Each year the Churches shall, in the manner decided upon by the consistory, commemorate the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as

His outpouring of the Holy Spirit." But we do not read there that these facts of salvation must be celebrated on special days besides the Lord's Day. No, there must be a commemoration of these facts, but "in the manner decided upon by the consistory." We see the same in Article 54 about "Days of Prayer": "In time of war, general calamities, and other great afflictions the presence of which is felt throughout the churches, a day of prayer may be proclaimed by the churches appointed for that purpose by general synod." (It is of interest to know that the Church of Burlington-West is one of these churches, appointed for this purpose, the other the Providence Church of Edmonton). Again, one cannot read in this article that a special day must be chosen for this purpose besides the Lord's Day.

In Article 65 we read that funerals are not ecclesiastical but family affairs, and should be conducted accordingly. That means, without a special public worship service on a workday. And what about marriages? According to Article 63, there may be a choice: "The solemnization of a marriage may take place either in a private ceremony or in a public worship service." The conclusion is that neither confession (e.g. Heidelberg Catechism) nor Church Order point to many services on workdays, but that on the contrary, both of them stress the celebration of the Lord's Day as the day of rest, the day of public worship.

Scriptures about festivals

But I can imagine that one says: It may be true that confession and Church Order do not point to many services on workdays, but ultimately they are based on *Scriptures*. So the question really is: what does Scripture say about this?

The Bible does not tell us very much concerning special days and special services. There were in the Old Dispensation special days and times. But that is not decisive for our days, because we confess in Article 25 of the Belgic Confession that Christ is the fulfillment of the law: "All shadows have been fulfilled, so that the use of them ought to be abolished among Christians."

In the New Testament, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, we read about

Passover (Acts 12:4) not in the context of the celebration of that day as a special day for the Christian church, but only as a reference to the time mentioned ("intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people").

We read also about the day of *Pentecost* (Acts 20:16, I Cor. 16:8), "Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost." I agree with *Calvin* in his commentary on this text: "There is no doubt that Paul had strong and important reasons for hurrying to Jerusalem, not because the sacredness of the day meant so much to him, but because strangers were in the habit of flocking to Jerusalem from all directions for the feastdays." So it concerned *Jewish* feastdays!

And as for the second text: "But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries" — it is remarkable that Paul only mentions *Pentecost* in connection with a time-schedule, but that he writes in the same chapter about the *first day* of the week as a special day concerning worship. He points to one of the elements of public worship, namely, the *collection* (verse 2): "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up."

Indeed the first day of the week was a special day. We read in the last book of the Bible that this day even received a special name. John writes (Rev. 1:10): "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." *The Lord's Day*, that means without any doubt the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. What about other special days?

We only read in the New Testament a reproach of Paul to the Galatians (4:10): "You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years!" Paul lists there what is involved in living by the Mosaic law: *days* (sabbaths, fast days, feast days, new moons), *months* (particularly observed during the Babylonian exile, Isa. 66:23), *times or seasons* (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacle feast, Dedication days), and finally, *years* (the sabbatical year every seventh year and the year of Jub-

ilee). Calvin asks in his commentary on this text: "What sort of observance did Paul reprove?" And he answers: "It was that which would bind the conscience by religion, as something that was necessary to the worship of God, and which, as he says in Romans 14:5ff., "would make a distinction between one day and another." So also should we understand the admonition of Paul to the Colossians: "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ." So, for instance, festivals had been prescribed in the Old Testament, but now, in the New Testament, after Christ's coming in the flesh one cannot be obliged to observe them.

I quote Calvin again: "Those who make a distinction of days, separate, as it were, one from another. Such a partition was suitable for the Jews, that they might celebrate religiously the days appointed, by separating them from others. Among Christians such a division has ceased. But someone will say, 'We still keep some observance of days.' " "I answer," Calvin says, "that we do not by any means observe days, as though there were any sacredness in holy days, or as though it were not lawful to work on them, but this is done for government and order,

not for the days." Calvin respected the decisions of the government, and I shall come back to that point. It is quite understandable, therefore, that the early church celebrated only one Christian feastday, namely, the Lord's Day.

Abolishment of festivals

In the beginning of the Christian church there were no special public worship services besides the services on the Lord's Day. The congregation held her meetings, often early in the morning and in the evening. There was a festal celebration of the Lord's Supper as well. But there were no other festivals.

When later on the reformers of the 16th century fell back on the early church, they would have liked to abolish the many festivals beyond the Lord's Day. In 1520 Luther sighs that the Lord's Day might be the only feastday. When Calvin arrived in Geneva in 1536 he stressed from the very beginning of the Reformation the Lord's Day as the only feastday. Farel and Vinet were not inclined to acknowledge any human institution, but to respect only the Lord's Day.

Even the matter of the celebration of festivals was one of the reasons for Calvin's and Farel's banishment. After their return the council of Geneva instituted four feastdays: Christmas Day, Circumcision Day, Mary-Annunciation Day and

Ascension Day. To work on these days was forbidden.

As for the Reformation in the Netherlands, Synod of Dort 1574 decided that one had to be satisfied with only the Lord's Day. Synod approved of preaching on the Lord's Day before Christmas concerning Christ's birth, of giving attention in the sermon on Easter to Christ's resurrection and on Pentecost to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. But these days must not be considered as festivals above the Lord's Day.

This synodical decision was not appreciated by the civil government, who wanted to maintain some festivals, although not the same in all the provinces. So the next Synod of Dort 1578 decided that preaching should take place on those feastdays which had been maintained by the government "in order that people should not loaf." This included both Christmas days, which had been established again (although reluctantly), the days of Easter and Pentecost, in some regions New Year's Day and Ascension Day, and sometimes some other festivals, not mentioned. But it is very clear that there was much ecclesiastical resistance against special Christian festivals besides the Lord's Day.

— *To be continued*
K. DEDDENS

Dealing with grief²

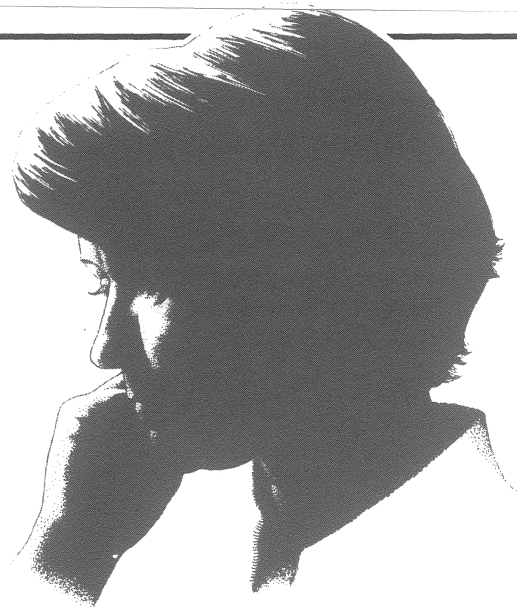
4. To show the victory of God's grace

The history, narrated in the book of Job is a very special one, and a clear example of how there can be something going on, of which we as human beings do not have the slightest inkling. In Job 1:8-12 we read: "And the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?' Then Satan answered the LORD, 'Does Job fear God for nought? Hast Thou not put a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Thy hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.' And The LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your power; only upon himself do not put forth your hand.' So Satan went

forth from the presence of the LORD."

There are different exegeses about the meaning of the conversation in heaven between the LORD and Satan. For our purpose they are not relevant. One thing is perfectly clear. Job was put to the test. The Lord wanted to show the perseverance of his faith and the victory of the

Lord's grace in his life, in spite of all the attacks of Satan. The Lord kept Job in His hand, no matter how hard the devil tried, the break him away from the Lord. Even his wife was used and set up against him. She who was given to him as a partner, fit for him, to help him in all circumstances of life, was used by Satan to tempt him. In



Job 2:9 we read that his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips." Even the friends of Job, with their profound and impressive sounding philosophies, tried to lead him astray, but the Lord took care of him. Of course, Job did not understand why all this was happening. It was a unique situation. But in the end the Lord's victory became clear, and the Lord explained to Job the purpose of His work. Job was restored in his previous position and even received double of what he had before. Again, this was a very unique situation. It does not happen very often in such a way, but it shows us that sometimes the purpose of human suffering and grief can be the glorification of the Name of the Lord. Sometimes the Lord let the devil go very far in his attempt to lead people astray, but He never forsakes the works of His hand or let believers suffer more than they can carry. We might not always understand why it has to go a certain way, but we can definitely trust on His help in time of need. We know what was at stake in Job's case, and we can find comfort in it, although for Job it was at that time still a mystery. It gives us strength and encouragement in situations which we do not understand, and in which we need help. The devil might try and it can seem to be almost unbearable, but the Lord is at hand.

Job's friends were wrong in the assessment of the situation, but that should not come as a surprise. It was completely in the line of their, and even of Job's own, philosophy. What do you expect in such a situation? The Lord has revealed to us the real background of the story. That has to teach us a lesson. We have to be careful in drawing conclusions about others, and even about our own misery and the cause of it. Self-examination is always necessary. We have to consider whether the Lord has a special message for us. But at the same time we may find comfort in the Word of God. If we turn to the Lord in true faith, we can always count on His help and protection to persevere in the struggle. The story of Job closes with a happy ending. He got back everything he lost, even double of what he had before. That does not always happen. Therefore let us not make the history of Job a standard case, but just let it be an example of how the Lord can deal with His people, and above all things, a proof that the Lord has His purpose, even when we don't begin to understand His doings. That might be a comfort to all of us in difficult circumstances, in a time of sorrow and grief which might become almost too much for us.

5. A thorn in the flesh

The Apostle Paul had to cope with a problem in his life. He says: "A thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'" Again, we do not know exactly what this "thorn in the flesh" was and we are not going to speculate either. One thing is clear: it caused him a lot of suffer-

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

ing and he besought the Lord three times to have it taken away. However, the Lord considered it better for him not to take it away. It made him feel "weak," but the Lord said to him, "My power is made perfect in weakness." It shows us that there can be suffering in human life, brought upon us by the Lord to teach us, and to keep us humble. It was to keep the Apostle Paul down. "To keep him from being too elated" (II Cor. 12:7). That means, to prevent that he would become too proud and might boast in his own work. Although he thought that without this "thorn" he could function even better in the kingdom of Christ, the Lord said: "No, my grace is sufficient for you."

How often does it happen that dedicated workers in the kingdom of the Lord become over-confident? That is a danger. If you have everything going for you, even in the service of the Lord, you have to be strong to resist the temptation of the devil. Many have fallen in this way. We do not judge concerning their relationship with the Lord and their salvation, but many overly zealous servants could not carry the luxury of being "successful." To remain humble is always difficult. Not just to say it. That might be a matter of humble-haughtiness. You have to be humble. Apparently Saul, later called Paul, was a zealous man, and had always been that way. In Acts 22:3 we read that he was a Jew, educated according to the strict manner of the law of the fathers, being very zealous for God. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the most famous Jewish teachers. In II Cor. 11:21ff he says that he, humanly speaking, had every

reason to boast: A Hebrew, an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, an apostle who had suffered for the sake of the gospel more than others. In Philippians 3:4,5 he says: "If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless." Humanly speaking he had an excellent record, better than anyone else. Why did God give him such a "thorn in the flesh," whatever it might have been? It was to keep him from boasting and trusting in his own achievements. When he prayed the Lord to have the "thorn" removed, the answer was: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." This example shows us that the Lord can bring into our lives something which causes suffering and grief, but the Lord knows what He is doing. Seeing His Fatherly Hand in all these things can give us a rich comfort and will keep us humble before the Lord.

6. That the works of God might be made manifest

In John 9 we find another example, in which the Bible shows us something about the background of human suffering and grief. A man had been blind from his birth. According to the Jewish casuistics, sickness was always directly related to sin. With this man they had a problem. He had been blind from his birth. If it was because of his own sin, how could he have committed these sins before he was born? If it was because of the sins of his parents, it caused some problems with what is said in Ezekiel 18:20, "The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father." Therefore they asked Jesus: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus rejects their casuistics. He shows that the Father often has a purpose which is not revealed to us. We have to trust in the Lord that He takes care of us, and makes everything subservient to our salvation, also when we cannot understand the meaning or purpose of it. The answer of Jesus is very simple. "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him." That is, although in a New Testament setting, almost the same purpose as with Job. The Lord shows the victory of His grace in a person's life. In this case it was that the Lord would show His mercy and life-restoring power in the life of the man who was born blind. From what we read in the rest of the chapter, especially John 9:35-41, we learn that this man followed Jesus and confessed His name among men, even when others spoke evil of him and accused him be-

cause of his trust in Jesus the Lord and Saviour. His own father and mother forsook him. According to John 9:21-23 his parents feared the Jews, apparently more than the Lord. They were afraid that they would be thrown out of the synagogue. In John 9:22 we read that "the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess Him to be the Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue." In this man's life the works of God really became manifest. He chose to follow Jesus rather than to obey men in denying his Saviour. In his life came true what was written in Psalm 27:10, "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me up."

Also in this case we have to be careful that we do not give it a general application, and try to use it in all kinds of specific situations. The cases mentioned in the Bible are all unique. Still we can learn from it, and each and everyone should make the application in his or her own life, but let us not be too eager to make applications for others. That there can be a relationship between suffering and sin becomes clear from the next example.

7. That nothing worse befall you


In John 5 we read about the healing of a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years. Also this man was healed by Jesus. However, his reaction was quite different from that of the man who had been born blind. In the first place it is remarkable that we, in his situation, do not read a word about thankfulness. We do not read that he believed in Jesus as the Christ, or that he confessed His Name. On the contrary. Asked about his healing, and the fact that this healing had taken place on the Sabbath, he had to admit that he did not even know who it was, that had healed him. Apparently he had not done much to show his thankfulness, and he certainly had not accepted it as a work of the Son of God. Another remarkable thing is what we read in John 5:14. Jesus met him in the temple and made Himself known to him in a very special way. Jesus said, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you." That gives us the impression, that there might have been a relationship between his sickness and his sin. In the midst of the crowd Jesus had not talked to this man about his sins, but now, in a private, pastoral conversation, our Lord warns him, to live a life pleasing to the Lord. The reaction of the man is even more surprising. The man who was born blind confessed the Name of the Lord as his Saviour, even if it cost him the good relationship with his parents and even while he knew that he would be thrown out of the synagogue. However, this man, without being further questioned by the Jews, went, on his own initiative, to the

leaders, to justify himself for having transgressed the rules of the Sabbath, and to blame Jesus for letting him carry his bed on the Sabbath. John 5:16 says clearly: "And this was why the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did this on the Sabbath."

Certainly a completely different picture than with the blind man who was cured. It strengthens the impression that in this case there might have been a relationship between his suffering and his walk of life. We do not speculate, as some do, about the question whether this man was later punished with a more severe illness. What we should take to heart from this story is, that there certainly can be a relationship between suffering and sin. However, that is not a public matter. Jesus did not discuss this matter in the midst of the crowd. He talked with the man later on privately, and gave him a warning, leaving the responsibility for his reaction up to him. Also here we do not find a case which should be generally applied, especially not to others. Although each one might for himself consider whether there is a message in it for him or her personally, we have to be careful in applying it to others and judging an other. Then we would make the same mistake that the three friends of Job made in judging their friend and applying the rules of their own home-made casuistics. David shows us a better way in Psalm 139:23, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead in the way everlasting!"

Also in Psalm 51 David teaches us a lesson. It is a prayer to be purged and cleansed by the Lord. David examines himself, and he asks the Lord to create in him a clean heart and a right spirit. Suffering and grief might lead and should lead to self-examination. But in this way the Lord also gives rich comfort. He does not forsake those who call on His Holy Name. Paul complains in Romans 7 about his struggle, his weakness, and his continually falling in sin. But in Romans 8 he comes to a different level. He sings the praise and glory of the Lord after he has gone through much pain in his heart. He knows and confesses, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death." That is the wonderful work of the Lord and the rich comfort we receive in Him. Suffering and grief can bring us closer to the Lord. For a while it can make people upset, and make them loose almost every ground in their life. However, those who trust in the Lord and continually pray to Him will experience the truth of what we read in Hebrews 4:14-16. We have a great High Priest in heaven, who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, because in every respect He has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Therefore we can with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, and we can be assured that we will receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Exactly in time, and never too late.

— To be continued
W. POUWELSE



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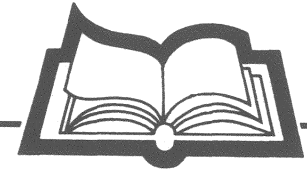
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“And all who believed were together and had all things in common”

Acts 2:44

Commune or Communion?

There is in our time a renewed interest for the first Christian Church in Jerusalem. Especially the charismatic movements of our time like to present the Church at Jerusalem as a blueprint or model for today. We are told that we must go back to the original lifestyle of the first church. The complaint is that we have through the centuries strayed too far from our early beginnings and denied our roots.

These charismatic groups usually explain the Word of God in a Biblicistic manner, that is, without looking closely at the context of a verse or passage. Everything is literally applied in a strict fashion. This means that everything which was found in the early Christian Church must still be in practice today. Such groups have little eye for the *further development* of the church, as the Bible itself gives it, but remain standing at the perimeters of Acts 2. Sometimes the effects of such a stand are limited; often the results are a disaster.

Take the above-mentioned text, “They had all things in common.” The radical wing of the “Jesus Movement” in the seventies (the so-called “Children of God”) made this a basic demand of the Spirit for all times. Therefore they demanded an alternative way of life from the believers, the life of the *commune*, where indeed literally all things are “held in common” and it is a sin to have (own) property or possessions! Everything (even a person’s own clothes) was issued by the commune and belonged to the commune. There are no personal possessions; one sleeps, eats and lives in the communal house. If someone earns any money, this is immediately destined for the treasurer (leader) of the commune.

This same text has, by the way, also been used to give a Biblical defense of communism. Everyone, it is said, is called to serve the community (in this case, the state) with all his abilities and possessions. The community has the right to claim private possessions if the need of the state requires this. In this explanation, Christ and Marx seem to have found each other.

Aside from the fact that a commune-type lifestyle has proven to be rather unhealthy and a breeding ground for all sorts of tension, it is nowhere proven from the Scriptures that such a lifestyle is a *demand* of the Lord. No one is obligated to sell all his personal possessions and to give the money to the church. Peter later tells Ananias, “While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal?” (Acts 5:4). Ananias could keep it or sell it, give part or all; it was his own free choice. The sin of Ananias was that he *pretended* to give all while in fact he gave only a part.

The communion of the church does not do away with the individual life of the members. Whoever makes a law out of this exemplary way of life in the Church of Jerusalem, goes farther than the apostles. And we should have a keen eye for the situation here.

The situation of the first Christian Church in Jerusalem necessitated the extreme measures mentioned in our text. There was, generally speaking, not such wealth then as there is today. Many who repented of their sins and joined the congregation, also lost their jobs and income (think of harlots and publicans). On the day of Pentecost a great multitude flocked to the church, and among them were many needy people. Think in this respect of the time and effort involved in caring for the widows (Acts 6). In order to meet this great and immediate need, various members of the congregation decided to sell (some of) their possessions and to donate the proceeds to the church for the support of these needy. The extraordinary situation demanded special measures.

This is quite something else than organizing a commune and making the communal way of life mandatory. This is a matter of true communion, of maintaining the ministry and supporting the needy.

The exact course of events in Jerusalem, as described in Acts 2, is not a model for today, even if we can learn from it. We do not have to sell our possessions today to support the needy. It is in our time and place possible to maintain the ministry and the schools, and to support the needy, while still having our own properties. In this respect we have been greatly blessed by the Lord! But indeed, we do learn here that we must be prepared to go the limit and do our utmost to help those in need. This remains a lasting requirement in the Church of Christ! In this respect, we, too, have all things in common. We must seek the well-being of the communion of saints with all that we have been given.

It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, poured out on Pentecost, that we are not so tied to our earthly goods that we hang on to them at the cost of the upbuilding of the church and the benefit of our neighbour. The Christian Church no longer lives in the atmosphere of worldly materialism. Certainly, we know the value of our possessions, and we do not fall into the “spiritualism” of the commune, but we will also not cling to our earthly goods at the cost of the needs of the brotherhood. We do not make the communion into a commune, where all individual rights are lost, but we do have a keen eye for the communion which prevails over our private interests. For our communal interests are those of the communion of saints which has one Head, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The communion of saints is not a communistic system, or a commune, where we may not have anything of “our own.” But the communion of saints is born out of the love of Christ by whose Spirit the members are made willing to replenish the need of fellow members according to their ability.

Time and circumstances change. The principle is still the same: we care for each other in the love of Christ.

CL. STAM

Anniversary Prof. and Mrs. L. Selles

This time we mention in our Corner three important facts in the life of our Theological College community.

The first is the anniversaries of our professor of New Testament, the Rev. L. Selles. On April 20, 1986 it was forty-five years ago that our colleague entered the ministry of God's Word in Waardhuizen (Noord-Brabant), the Netherlands. Four days earlier he had married Geraldine Akkerman. Every one who ever visited the cozy study of Prof. Selles will remember the painting picturing the old-fashioned dignified interior of the old church building in Waardhuizen. It was one of the congregations that came forth from the Secession in 1834 and Lubbertus Selles, son of Kampen in more than one respect, must have felt kinship with his simple rural congregation.

Shortly after he moved to Steenwijk in May 1944. When the Second World War drew to a dramatic close, also the climax came in the church struggle within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Dr. K. Schilder had already been suspended. In his own modest but determined manner Rev. Selles was involved in the proceedings within the classis which had to decide about the legitimacy of the (liberated) Church at Kampen.

After Steenwijk followed the charge in Voorburg, 1949-1952 and then the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean in order to become one of the first Reformed immigrant ministers. Do I have to sketch the important place that our brother fulfilled in Canadian Reformed church life? A superficial study of the Acts of General Synods from the first in Homewood-Carman 1954 to the Synod of Orangeville 1968 makes it clear. This time I will also remain silent about the work of our colleague in the Theological College in the period 1969-1986. We only mention now that he served the churches as convener of the deputies for Bible Translation, for the text of Creeds, confessions, liturgical forms and prayers. The revised edition of *Book of Praise* (1984) is also fruit of his organizational skills and consistent leadership. And let us not forget his work in the World Relief Fund, but today we thank the Lord our God publicly for what He has granted to us especially in the Biblical, and therefore truly evangelical, warm and warning preaching of the Word by His servant Lubbertus Selles. His wife faithfully and cheerfully supported him both in the manse and in



the College. Our Women's Savings Action and therefore our library is a well established token of her activities. The Women's Societies in Ontario remember vividly her presidency over their fledgling League.

The forty-five years have also brought tension because of serious illness of Mrs. Selles and later deep sorrow for the loss of their oldest son Bert. But the God of all

comfort has comforted them so that they were even able to comfort others who were in any affliction.

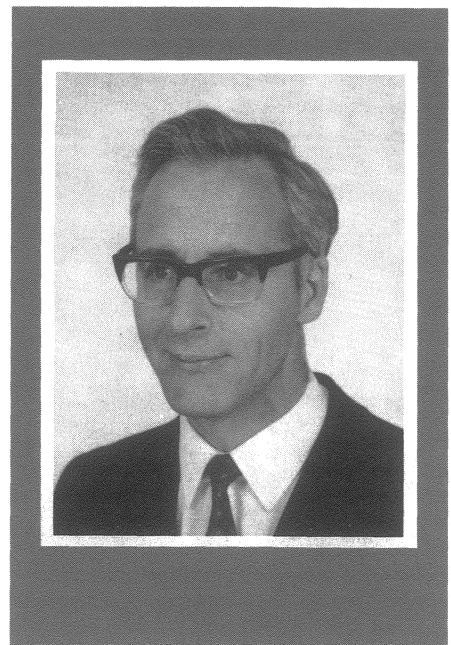
Now we congratulate our brother and sister Selles. The LORD our God may be good to you, your children and grandchildren also in the future. The steadfast promise of His Covenant stands for a thousand generations, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Appointment Prof. J. Geertsema

On Tuesday, April 15, 1986, General Synod of Burlington-West appointed the Rev. J. Geertsema of Surrey, BC to succeed Prof. L. Selles as professor of New Testament.

May I introduce him, if that is still necessary?

The Rev. Jaap Geertsema was born June 24, 1935 in a minister's family in the Netherlands. After his gymnasium matriculation he studied at the Theologische Hogeschool at Kampen, was minister in Kantens (1963), Opende — Surhuisterveen (1967), Carman (1971), Chatham (1976) and is minister at Surrey since 1981. He published a New Testament study, entitled "The Sermon on the Mount and the Covenant" in *Koinonia*, Vol. I, No. 2, Fall 1978. He is well-known in the Canadian Reformed Churches as editor of *Clarion* and of the *Yearbook*. He was governor of our Theological College, vice-chairman of General Synod Cloverdale (1983) and is



delegate to the present Synod of Burlington-West.

Prof. Geertsema received a thorough European pre-Seminary training with an emphasis on classical languages and obtained the degree of *candidatus theologiae*. His involvement in the Fraser Valley Study Center showed his interest in continued studies. His exegetical endeavours in preparing sermons for more than twenty years may help him to instruct young men in the Scriptures so that they are able to teach others also. In the meantime we hope that younger ministers may undertake or finalize graduate theological studies also in the New Testament field. The Lord willing, in September 1986, 75% of our teaching staff are doctors of theology and we would not like to see this percentage decrease in the future. By his contribution in the past Prof. Geertsema obtained the trust and confidence of the Canadian Reformed Churches. According to our human expectation, he will occupy the chair of New Testament in a respectable manner. But knowing our complete

dependence upon God's grace, we implore Him for the guidance of His Holy Spirit for our new professor in the years to come. Welcome!

More change to come

Our Administrative Assistant, Mrs. T. Jongsma, will leave the Theological College at the end of May. We hope that soon one of the birth announcements in *Clarion* may make public what the good and blessed reason is of her departure. We are thankful for her dedication shown during almost five years in her multifaceted occupation.

In the advertisement for a successor we placed the emphasis on the duties of the library technician. The computerization of the library will also bring the change over to the Library of Congress system. Moreover, the acquisition of the Dr. C. VanderWaal library means special activity in the cataloguing process. Miss Catharine Mechelse of Beamsville has been appointed. She has a library technician diploma of Niagara College of Applied Arts and

Technology. We hope for a good work relationship in the coming years.

Gifts

The Women's Savings Action officially notified us that they donated \$22,500 for the hardware and software necessary for the computerization of the library. Is it not wonderful?

The Free Reformed Church at Albany (Australia) sent us a cheque of \$448.67. We really appreciate this Southern connection.

A brother in British Columbia made the burden of our debt somewhat lighter: he sent us \$1,000, simply because our Administrative Assistant was so friendly around tax filing time to provide him with the date of a similar previous gift. We gladly perform this kind of duty.

Did you know that the College still owes a \$60,000 loan?

Knowledgeable love can perform miracles.

J. FABER

The visions of Daniel

We are going to keep ourselves busy for a while by investigating the visions of Daniel. I'm sure that anyone who did some reading up on the subject will realize that we are dealing with a very broad topic, something we can't fully discuss in one article. So we must be a bit selective to what we will pay our attention. However, in order to do justice to the scope of our topic I would like to look with you at four areas. First, what are visions? Second, what were the visions Daniel saw? Third, what is the relationship between these visions and, finally, what is the interpretation of some of these visions.

I. If we're going to speak about visions, we must first of all know what visions are. What is their purpose? Are they to be distinguished from dreams, and if so, what is the difference between dream and vision?

Let us begin with that last question because we read in the prophecy of Daniel several times about visions and dreams. Sometimes they are even mentioned together. I will mention some texts to make things clear. In Dan. 1:17 we read that Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Visions and dreams are mentioned side by side so there seems to be a difference between the two. But when Daniel comes to Nebuchadnezzar to explain the king's dream he says in

chapter 2:28, "Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these" This seems to equate the dream and vision as one and the same. Similar words we read in Dan. 7:1. Daniel had a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. He wrote down the dream which he called a vision by night.

Up to this point this much is clear, that when a vision is called a vision of the night, it is the same as a dream. It came to the person while he was asleep. But that does not mean that all visions were dreams. Some visions came by day. Therefore Dan. 1:17 makes the distinction that Daniel was given understanding in all visions and dreams.

We have an example of such a vision by day in Dan. 8. The prophet was awake when he saw the vision. But then we read in 8:18 the remarkable fact that *during* the vision Daniel fell into a deep sleep with his face to the ground. Likewise in chapter 10:9 he saw a vision by day. Others were even with him when the vision came to him but he alone saw it. Again during this vision he fell on his face in a deep sleep with his face to the ground. We can say that he was in a trance, a subconscious state. The vision completely overwhelmed him.

This brings us to the purpose of the vision. In a vision God reveals something

to the recipient. And God does that in such a way that the visionary will never forget what he saw. It does not leave him cold. The things he sees make such an impression on him that he remembers every detail of it. The person becomes completely involved and it even affects him physically? When Nebuchadnezzar had his dream he was troubled. And with each vision that Daniel saw we read either that he was alarmed at what he saw (7:15), or that he lay sick for some days (8:27), or that all strength left him (10:8,16). In other words, the dreams and visions do not leave the recipient at ease. They make an impact. What God reveals in a vision stays with that person for the rest of his life. And they must also make an impact on those who are permitted to hear about the vision. All too often the visions of Daniel are approached from the sidelines where we are mere observers who take note of an accomplished fact. These visions are quickly interpreted as either Messianic, and thus fulfilled in Christ, or as fulfillment of secular history (such is especially the case with Dan. 11), without paying attention to the fearful things that are described in the vision and the consequences for us today. If you skim over these frightening events, then you will also miss the purpose of the prophecies of Daniel, namely, that they

are given as a means to comfort the church. The visions are not given to make us comfortable but to give us comfort.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

When Daniel saw the visions he was alarmed. That is because of the nature of the visions. What he saw was something out of the ordinary, something out of this world. In the visions God gave a symbolical representation of what was to take place. He used symbols of beasts to represent men or powers. And because it was symbolical the visionary did not immediately understand what he saw. It needed to be explained to him. Daniel explained Nebuchadnezzar's dream as Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream. But this same Daniel who had understanding in all dreams and visions did not understand what God revealed to him. With every vision Daniel saw he had to ask for the interpretation. And even then he did not always understand, as he writes at the end of chapter 8 and also in chapter 12:8.

By way of summary we can say that God used visions in order to unfold for the church the mystery of what was to take place. In the visions God gave a bird's eye view of the world scene till its consummation.

II. With this in mind let us now turn to the visions Daniel saw. In all he saw four visions.

The first vision, as recorded in Dan. 7, came to Daniel in the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon. It is the vision of the four great beasts which came up out of the sea. Three of the beasts bear some resemblance to known animals. The first beast was like a lion with eagles' wings. So it gave the impression of both strength and swiftness. But the wings were plucked off, and the beast was set on two feet like a man; and the mind of a man was given to it. The second beast was like a bear with a voracious appetite. Three ribs of his prey were still between his teeth and the beast was told to devour much flesh. The third beast was like a leopard, one of the fastest predators known to man. This beast also had four wings that could carry it quickly in any direction. It also had four heads so that it could look in all directions at once for prey. And dominion was given to this beast.

The fourth beast was grotesque. It did not resemble any known animal. It was dreadful in appearance and exceedingly strong. It trampled anything in its path. Remarkably, this beast had ten horns, five times the natural two. And since horns are symbols of power, extraordinary strength is implied. But as if ten horns were not enough, an eleventh horn sprouted which uprooted three others. And this little horn had eyes and a mouth like that of a man.

A more ominous picture one can

hardly imagine. But then Daniel perceived the throne room in heaven. Thrones are placed for judgment. He saw the awe-inspiring splendour of "the Ancient of Days," seated to execute judgment on the beasts. The fourth beast was killed and destroyed and the kingdoms of the beasts were given to "one like the son of man."

We will come to the interpretation later, but at this point we can make the observation that this vision makes absolutely clear that the Most High God is the reigning king in heaven and on earth. For we read that what these beasts have was GIVEN to them. There is much opposition to their rule, but God is in control, even when his opponents seem most successful (7:26). Therefore, the comfort shines through this dreadful picture that those who are allied with God, triumph also.

The second vision, recorded in Dan. 8, came two years later. He writes, "In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first." With these words the prophet lets his readers know that the content of this vision is dependent on that of the four beasts. Again he saw animals, but this time not so grotesque and not as many. He only saw a ram with two uneven horns who came charging from the east. Nothing could stand before it. But then the ram from the east met more than its match when it encountered a he-goat from the west. This he-goat had only one horn between its eyes by which it destroyed the two horns of the ram. As the vision continues we learn that the great horn of the he-goat was also broken off and four conspicuous horns came in its place. Out of one of these four horns a little horn grew. And again a little horn became the most prominent one of all.

The angel Gabriel came to interpret this vision for Daniel. Twice he mentioned that this vision is for the time of the end (vv. 17, 19). Daniel is instructed to seal up the vision, for it pertains to many days hence. Daniel did not understand.

The third vision, and undoubtedly the most difficult one to interpret, came as a result of Daniel's fervent prayer to God. He had read in the prophecy of Jeremiah that the exile would last for seventy years.

He realized that the seventy years were almost over and so implored God for the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple. It is the vision of the seventy weeks, or, as it literally says: "seventy sevens."

The last vision spans the chapters 10-12. It is called a "great vision" (10:8). Yet it covers only two empires, those of Persia and of Greece. Most of chapter 11 deals with the infamous greek despot Antiochus Epiphanes who is called a "contemptible person" (v. 21). The vision ends with a warning of unprecedented suffering, which is offset by the promise of deliverance and the resurrection. It is a call for endurance and faith.

III. This brief overview of the four visions brings us to our third point, namely, the relationship between these visions.

We have not looked at the well-known dream of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. 2. There we read of the image made of four metals: gold, silver, bronze and iron mixed with clay. But if we keep this dream in mind for a moment, then we see right away the connection between it and the vision of the four beasts in Dan. 7. Nebuchadnezzar's dream ends with the spectacular destruction of the image by the stone that is cut out by no human hand. We hardly need to ask what this huge stone represents. The book of Daniel tells us clearly that it symbolizes the kingship of God, which abides forever and does not yield to any government or empire (2:44). Daniel 2 prophecies about Christ, the Stone who smashes all His enemies, who is also the Rock and Foundation of the church. Likewise, chapter 7 also ends with a kingdom set up by the God of heaven, but this vision is concerned rather with the people who receive it.

Thus we can say that Daniel was permitted to see in his first vision what Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, and which Daniel interpreted for him. But there is a difference. That difference is, that King Nebuchadnezzar saw what would happen to his and the subsequent kingdoms, while it was revealed to Daniel that Nebuchadnezzar was one of the beasts that oppressed the people of God.

To some extent all the visions in chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, and 11 are parallel. They all review a period of history by means of different symbols. In chapters 2 and 7 this period is identical. Both span the time from the Babylonian kingdom to the establishment of God's kingdom. In chapters 8, 9, and 11 the starting point is later and the visions become more detailed. In these visions there is also a concentration on the fearful destruction which will lay waste the city and the sanctuary (9:26) and destroy God's cause before the appointed end comes.

— To be continued
G. NEDERVEEN

OUR COVER

Canoeing
Quetico Provincial Park, Ontario

Photo courtesy:
Government of Canada

The exercise of interchurch relations.

A paper delivered at the first meeting of the International Conferences of Reformed Churches meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, September 3-10, 1985.

Introduction

The last held General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches (1983) requested that a number of topics be introduced and discussed at this first meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland. These topics included: "The Doctrine of the Covenant in the Reformed Confessions," and "The Exercise of Inter-Church Relations." It was the opinion of synod that a thorough exchange of opinions on these matters would aid the conference as it seeks to promote greater understanding and unity among the member churches.

In order to make a contribution to that end I have been "approached" to deliver a paper on the third subject. Perhaps a better word would be "conscripted" seeing that efforts to have others deal with it failed and the ball was tossed back into the lap of the Synod's Committee for Correspondence with Churches Abroad, of which I am the covener.

In any case, I am sure that all of you will agree with me that this topic is a rather complex, even sensitive one. So much so that any hopes for a quick and easy consensus are sure to be dashed. Nevertheless, consensus should remain our aim, and to that end I would crave your attention as I make a number of comments and put a number of questions to you about interchurch relations, comments and questions that hopefully will stimulate a fruitful discussion.

To begin with I would like to give you some background information that hopefully will enlighten you as to why the Canadian Reformed Churches have placed this matter on your agenda. At bottom there are three reasons that stand out. The first is that this issue was recommended to the general synod by its Committee for Correspondence with Churches Abroad. The second is that the synod felt a need to address this subject because of recent developments among the sister churches. Thirdly, it realized that membership in the ICRC would also have certain implications for interchurch relations.

With regard to the first reason, it



should be stated that the Committee for Correspondence made its recommendation to the synod because of what had transpired at the Constituent Assembly of the ICRC in Groningen, the Netherlands, three years ago. At that gathering the Rev. P. van Gorp of the Netherlands delivered an address entitled, "The Unity of Faith and Mandate and Its Significance for the Reflections on Contacts and Rules with Other Churches." In the discussion that followed it soon became clear that this was a topic that would require further attention. While there was a considerable amount of agreement in certain areas, there were others that generated disagreement. A consensus could not be reached and it was suggested that this matter be dealt with again at a future meeting of the ICRC. Our delegates took note of this suggestion and passed it on to the committee for recommendation to synod.

The next reason why synod decided to place this topic on the agenda of the ICRC has to do with the fact that over the past number of years a certain perception seems to have developed that our Rules for Correspondence are somehow inade-

quate as contacts and relationships are considered with the Presbyterian world. This has led to calls to either revise our rules or else to augment them with an additional set of rules. Needless to say, it would be beneficial if a tendency to fragmentation could be avoided and a measure of uniformity retained.

Finally, it was recognized by synod that in joining the ICRC we would be confronted with churches, other than our immediate sister churches, who have a different view on interchurch relations and a different set of rules to govern these relations. This has the potential to make the situation even more confusing. Will it be so that in the future each church will go its own way in this matter? Will we end up in a situation where all kinds of relationships and rules begin to proliferate? In order to avoid such a scenario and to promote greater unity on this point, it was felt that the ICRC might be the ideal forum in which to discuss our differences, to learn from each other and, perhaps, I say this cautiously, we might even begin to hammer out some form of common understanding on this topic.

Different types of relationships

In order to move in that direction I would propose that we now look for a moment at the different types of relationships which are currently in existence. When we do so we eventually come to the conclusion that while there are all kinds of names for these relationships, they seem to fit into one of two basic frameworks or categories.

a. *The fraternal category*

The one category might best be called the "fraternal category." It describes that group of relationships which is marked by a few basic rules which give tacit recognition to the fact that the Church of our Lord is truly catholic in nature. On the whole, this category does not demand a great deal of involvement by the participants in each other's affairs. The rules which govern this kind of relationship bear this out, for they usually include the following components:

- i. the exchange of fraternal delegates at each other's major assemblies;
- ii. an exchange of official Acts or Minutes;
- iii. an exchange of information on matters of mutual concern interest.

In some instances rules relating to access to each other's pulpits and communion celebrations are also included.

Now when we examine this "fraternal" framework closely, there are a number of positive remarks that should be made. For one it does give formal recognition to the catholicity of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ in that it proceeds on the assumption that one's local church federation is not the sum total of Christ's Church gathering work in this world at that particular time. Another plus that has to be mentioned is that this category presents a set of basic rules that all churches can work with and live up to. They are neither unmanageable nor onerous. Another advantage is that this form of relationship places a fair amount of value on personal representation at each other's broadest assemblies. It thus recognizes that written communications are often less than satisfactory when it comes to developing closer ties.

On the other hand, there are also negative sides to this category. While it is true that personal representation can be conducive to strengthening the contacts between churches, it must be admitted that at times the persons sent are designated not so much because of their understanding of the particular church to which they are sent, but because of their geographical proximity. Ecclesiastical contact is thus given a personal flavour, but whether that flavour is always as profitable as it could be remains debatable.

In addition, there is another deficiency

here and that relates to the fact that while these rules may be manageable, they may not be all that helpful. Of course they give some recognition to the fact that the church is universal, but does this recognition really go beyond tokenism? At times one gains the impression that this framework does little more than let us live with our ecumenical consciences. The amount of commitment demanded of each other is kept to a minimum. The amount of responsibility that we assume for each other's well-being is also kept to a minimum. There is little sense of being a hand and a foot to each other. On paper we may call ourselves "sister churches," but in reality, the "sisters" do little more than recognize each other's legal existence by exchanging the odd letter and greeting.

b. *The correspondence category*

Besides the "fraternal category" there is also another one which we might call, for want of a better name, the "correspondence category." Like the previous relationship, it too has its variants. Basically, it describes a situation in which two churches enter into discussions together and come to a mutual recognition as being true Churches of Christ. Once this recognition is given correspondence is entered into under more or less the following rules:

- i. to take mutual heed that the corresponding churches do not deviate from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government and discipline;
- ii. to forward to each other the agenda and decisions of the broader assemblies and to admit each other's delegates to these assemblies as advisors;
- iii. to inform each other concerning changes of, or additions to, the Church Order and Liturgical Forms, while the corresponding churches pledge to express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable. Regarding proposals for changes in the Three Forms of Unity, the sister churches abroad shall receive ample opportunity (at least three years) to forward their judgment before binding decisions will be made;
- iv. to accept each other's attestations and to permit each other's ministers to preach the Word and to administer the sacraments;
- v. to give account to each other regarding correspondence with third parties.

These five rules are taken from the Acts of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Other churches of Dutch origin here present have the same rules, with minor modifications.

Again, when we examine this category we see that here, too, there are certain positive aspects. There is the same implicit recognition of the catholicity of the church as we saw in the "fraternal cate-

gory." There is an awareness that third party relationships can have a bearing on first party relationships. And most fundamental of all, this category proceeds from the assumption that the only meaningful relationship between churches is a comprehensive and intensive relationship.

The "correspondence category" stresses that profitable and helpful inter-church relations demands that "mutual heed" be taken in the areas of doctrine, liturgy, polity and discipline. It places a great premium on consultation and advice from the sister churches when it comes to changes in the confessional, church-political and liturgical areas. It recognizes a need for consistency and consultation when it comes to relations which sister churches may have with third parties. In short, this framework allows churches to make a serious attempt to become a real hand and foot to each other.

Still, as committed as the churches are that I serve to this kind of relationship, it has to be admitted that there are negative aspects here as well. Probably the chief criticism against the "correspondence category" is aimed precisely at its strongest asset. A comprehensive relationship may be a laudable aim, but is it possible? Does it not rest on too many common denominators? And when they are removed does it then not become impossible to work with? These rules may work relatively well when applied to members of the same theological, cultural and linguistic family, but are they able to cross family ties? We must admit that these rules are basically Dutch in origin and implementation, but can those who are of a different origin and historical background identify with them and use them profitably?

There is also the question as to whether they can be implemented in a world that has so many linguistic barriers. The Australians, Canadians, Irish and Scottish publish their Acts or Minutes in English. The Dutch, the Koreans, the Taiwanese, the South Africans publish theirs in their own particular languages. How will Babel be overcome?

Another point that is open to criticism has to do with the whole matter of prior consultation on changes in confession, polity or liturgy. It sounds very interesting but is it all that practical? Does it really work and is it really taken into account when decisions are being made in these areas?

Finally, it may be asked whether the matter of giving account regarding relationships with third parties does not imply interference in each other's internal affairs? If the Canadians decide to recognize the Pakistanis, what business is that of the Dutch?

— *To be continued*
J. VISSCHER

The Doctrine of the Covenants and the Reformed Confessions⁶

The Second Helvetic Confession is to the same effect: "Why, then, should not the sign of the Covenant of God be given to them? Why should they not be consecrated by holy baptism, who are God's peculiar people and are in the church of God."⁵⁴ None of the other confessional documents, except the Canons of Dort, treat the baptism of infants with the same fullness. In what sense then do they belong to the Covenant? That is the crucial question. There is an observable difference between the unqualified statement of the Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Larger Catechism at this point. Heidelberg Catechism: "Are infants also to be baptized?" Answer: "Yes, for since they, as well as their parents, belong to the covenant and people of God, and both redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost, who works faith, are through the blood of Christ promised to them no less than to their parents."⁵⁵ The Westminster Larger Catechism: "Infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in that respect within the Covenant and to be baptized."⁵⁶ When placed side by side the element of qualification in the Westminster document is apparent. What is reflected there is what Vos points out that in the time of the second reformation, a less forthright confession was made that the essence of the Covenant belongs to the child of a believing parent, than was made at the time of the first reformation.

There has been a consensus even down to recent times that the infants of believers dying in infancy were saved in virtue of their inclusion in the Covenant by the promise of God. This is put very forcefully in the Canons of Dort: "Since we are to judge of the will of God from his word which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they together with their parents are comprehended, godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children whom it pleaseth the Lord to call out of this life in their infancy."⁵⁷ The statement of the Westminster Confession, Chapter X, para. III, "Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and

saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh, when and where, and how he pleaseth." This statement has come under attack and was subject to the Declaratory legislation in relation to the Confession in the 1890's Free Church: A dispassionate consideration of the statement does not allow it to be used as a weapon against the consensus opinion of federal theology that the infant children of believing parents dying in infancy are saved although it has been construed as not supporting this. It does raise a merited caution against the assertion that all children dying in infancy are saved regardless of whether they are children of godly parents or not. It does not even contradict that statement though it does state a needful caution in respect of it. But the crucial point of the statement is that at that juncture it draws the Covenant back into the decree of election in a way that was not done in Chapter VII of the Confession, and contrary to Dort, and this casts light upon the caution that we have cited from the Larger Catechism above; that infants are in the Covenant IN THAT RESPECT.

To claim, without qualification, that infants are in the Covenant so that they have the Covenant realized in their lives at birth or at baptism or shall have it certainly realized in their experience later on in life has its difficulties. First of all it encounters the problem that some of those who come to maturer years clearly prove that this is not the case that all children of believing parents belong to the true family of God. Secondly it has led to many unhelpful theories being put forward as to the sense in which the Covenant has been realized in their experience; which indeed we still find being put forward; such as presumptive regeneration; still strongly argued for in many parts. But on the other hand the danger of reducing to absurdity the baptism of infants is ever present, where covenant participation is thought of exclusively in terms of a fully realized covenant as in the case of the adult true believer. Principal Cunningham did this when he concluded that there is no difference between the baptized child and the unbaptized child. If that is so it ought not to be practiced at all. We will

conclude this part of the subject with one or two practical observations and two quotations from Calvin. First should not the baptism of an infant be given the same significance as that of an adult? Which is the acceptance of them as belonging to the Covenant people so long as they do not controvert this with their disobedience. Granted that an adult may have given evidence of his covenant participation in a way that an infant has not but in the latter case the hope is grounded wholly on the covenant promise. And in the case of the adult his acceptance as a covenant child is contingent upon his obedience to the gospel just the same as in the case of the baptized child growing into a fully informed faith. This does not rule out decisive experiences in the life of a baptized youth. The predominant nature of religious experience with Covenant children is that all through their lives they have been gradually taught of the Lord though frequently the person arrives at a religious crisis. But the crisis experience is not the commencement of the work of God in the soul. This is one of the reasons why effectual calling is treated of as a drawn out process, rather than an instantaneous act, in the Westminster Standards. We must not lose sight of the fact that all are born children of wrath and unless we are born again that we cannot enter into God's kingdom. There is no suggestion that to be born a child of the Covenant dispenses with the need for justification, regeneration and adoption. Is it not to the Covenant people that these very blessings are promised? God does not take to Himself a people to enter into Covenant with them because they have been already regenerated but He takes them into Covenant with Him in Christ in order to regenerate them. Regeneration does not precede God's making a Covenant with sinners but it follows it as the fruit that grows on the plant of federal union. Therefore the believing parent trusting to the promises of God expects the regeneration of his child and prays for it. Abraham against all hope believed he would have a son because God promised him that it would be so, in the same faith he circumcised his son, and in the same faith he yielded his son to God upon the

altar, believing in God's power to raise from the dead, from which indeed he received him in a figure from God.

At this point it may be in order to remind ourselves of Calvin's position on the matter. In a Confession of Faith, in Name of the Reformed Churches of France, which Calvin drew up, he says, "Moreover we believe that since baptism is a treasure which God has placed in his church all the members ought to partake of it. Now we doubt not that little children born of Christians are of this number, since God has adopted them, as he declares. Indeed we should defraud them of their right were we to exclude them from the sign which only ratifies the thing contained in the promise: considering, moreover, that children ought no more in the present day to be deprived of the sacrament of their salvation than the children of the Jews were in ancient times, seeing that now the manifestation must be larger and clearer than it was under the law. Wherefore we reprobate all fanatics who will not allow little children to be baptized."⁵⁸ In what is a still more interesting statement, Calvin says, "We are not now speaking of secret election, but of an adoption manifested by the word, which sanctifies infants not yet born. But as baptism is a solemn recognition by which God introduces his children into the possession of life, a true and effectual sealing of the promise, a pledge of sacred union with Christ, it is justly said to be the entrance and reception into the church. And as the instruments of the Holy Spirit are not dead, God truly performs and effects by baptism what he figures."⁵⁹ Two brief comments on this quotation. First, the distinction between "an adoption manifested by the Word, which sanctifies infants not yet born" and "Election" is exceedingly interesting. Second, there is evidence that the heat of controversy has led him to use very strong language in regard to the efficacy of the sacrament virtually making it a grace-conferring ordinance when he says that "God truly performs and effects 'by baptism' what he figures." We have but touched the problematic questions related to this issue. The history of our churches on the continent of Europe, in the United States and in Great Britain furnishes chapter after chapter of painful controversy that has centred round this issue. In the United States over a prolonged period of debate some of the ablest Reformed theologians that graced the church of God on earth wrestled with it over decades of Committee study and Synod Debate and unanimity could not be achieved. Surely it is not perversity that makes our churches persevere in the practice of an ordinance fraught with such possibility for controversy. It is nothing other than the

unshakeable persuasion that the Covenant God has given to us a promise that Covenant blessing belongs to our children with ourselves and that consequently he has not only granted the privilege of the Seal to them but has commanded us in faith to submit them to the initiatory sign of the Covenant of Grace. The manner in which God effects in the lives of our children the favour and grace of the covenant promise is, in some respects, beyond our comprehension but it is in another respect tied in with our faithfulness as parents and their obedience to the Covenant precepts, the sign of which they bear upon their bodies. God says of Abraham, "For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Genesis 18:19 Tied in with the question of infant baptism is the question of Christian nurture and education. Where ever infant baptism is taken seriously the instruction of the young must be of paramount importance. Catechetics should have as important a place in our churches as Homiletics. Sadly with many of us this is not the case. The Revivalist mentality dominates the American and United Kingdom scene. We envy our brethren in Holland in this respect; with their schools and the way church life is organized to maximize the effort put into the inculcation of the youth of the church in the doctrines of grace; with responsibility for its oversight placed where it should be in the hands of the local Consistory or Kirk Session. This was the way it once was in Scotland too.

Any consideration of the doctrine of the Covenant would be altogether incomplete if no reference was made to, what used to be called its "Fixity." All our Confessions assert the doctrine of the Saints' perseverance. If other Reformed doctrines draw strength from the Covenant this one does, even more so. The love of God nowhere shines more brilliantly in Scripture than in His Covenant faithfulness. It is the theme of Hosea's prophecy throughout as it is of many other parts of Scripture. The Canons of Dort states that believers would undoubtedly perish in their backslidings so far as their own power is concerned, "But with respect to God, it is utterly impossible, since his counsel cannot be changed, nor his promise fail, neither can the call according to his purpose be revoked, nor the merit, intercession and preservation of Christ be rendered ineffectual, nor the sealing of the Holy Spirit be frustrated or obliterated."⁶⁰ In the Westminster Confession it is said the perseverance of the saints depends not on their own free will, but on the unchangeableness of the decree of

election and the love of God the Father, the efficacy and merit of Christ intercession, the abiding of the Spirit and the seed of God within them, "and the nature of the Covenant of Grace from all which ariseth the certainty and infallibility thereof."⁶¹ What countless millions of God's tried people have pillowed themselves on God's blessed promise by Isaiah! "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness (the Covenant — CHESD) shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee," Isaiah 54:10.

Finally we conclude by reiterating that each confessional document is a product of its age and perhaps this is nowhere so apparent as in respect of the doctrine of the Covenant. The sixteenth century Confessions clearly show that, as an organizing principle in Dogmatics, the Covenant had not as yet taken fast hold on the mind of the church as it had done by the time that the Westminster Confession and the Formula Consensus Helvetica were produced. Yet on the other hand there is clear evidence that the organic principle involved in God's way of continuing the church; namely, the Covenant as embracing within its promises not only believers but their families; that this was confessed with greater energy in the earlier Confessions than in the later ones. In an age when the individualism and subjectivism that is inhospitable to so much that the early reformers stood for, and when it has all but undermined completely the Reformed doctrine of the sacraments of Baptism, the time is surely ripe for the church to return to the great Biblical theme of the Covenant. The emphasis in Biblical Studies in our day makes it also a prepositional moment for a reevaluation and reaffirmation of the doctrine of the Covenant and we can engage in this not only comfortable in the knowledge that we are keeping faith with our confessional history but knowing that it would be to our great spiritual advantage to return with resolve to our deepest spiritual roots.

JOHN N. MACLEOD

⁵⁴The Second Helvetic Confession Chapter XX

⁵⁵The Heidelberg Catechism Question 74

⁵⁶The Westminster Larger Catechism

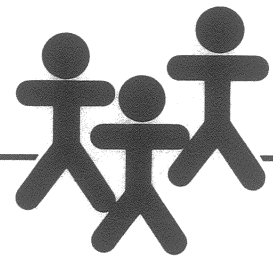
⁵⁷The Canons of Dort First Head of Doctrine Art. XVII

⁵⁸John Calvin. Tracts: Treatises of the Sacraments (Calvin translation Society)

⁵⁹John Calvin. Second Defence of the Sacraments in Answer to the Calumnies of Joachim Westphal. Tracts Vol II (Calvin translation Society)

⁶⁰The Canons of Dort Fifth Head Art. VIII

⁶¹The Westminster Confession Chapter XVII para. III



The Shapiro report — bane or boon?

In June of 1984, some eight months before he relinquished the premiership of Ontario, the Honourable William G. Davis made an historic decision with regard to the educational system in that province. He announced the government's intention to introduce full funding for the provinces' Roman Catholic separate school system, until then funded only up to grade ten. The very existence of a separate Roman Catholic system, of course, goes back to the necessary compromises needed to achieve the unification of the British North American Colonies into the Dominion of Canada, through the instrument of the British North America Act of 1867.

That this decision was an act of political courage was made quite clear by the response of some sectors of society, especially of course the vested interests, such as the various public school boards and teachers' federations. The issue's potential for arousing emotion was demonstrated in the election campaign of 1985 when the Anglican Archbishop of Toronto accused Davis of "Hitler-like" tactics in conducting "government by decree" for supposedly having failed to consult on this issue.

Most pertinent for us as a community was the development which grew out of this decision is the government's awareness which was no doubt influenced by several years of active lobbying. To quote from the Premier's statement to the legislature:

"Mr. Speaker, while my hope today is to resolve an historic issue in our traditional public education structure, what we have decided to do legitimately raises questions about the place of independent schools in our province. While rights are not at issue, the diversity and quality of our society is affected and served by these schools. The Government believes it is timely and useful to review the role of these schools in educating our children."

A subsequent Order in Council established *The Commission on Private Schools in Ontario*, consisting of one man, Dr. Bernard J. Shapiro, director of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto.

In keeping with his mandate, Shapiro asked for submissions from the public, both corporately and individually. The response was such, that the Commissioner had to ask for an extension of his man-

date from the original May, to October. The Report was subsequently released in October and the government set April 30, 1986 as a deadline for responses to the work and recommendations of the Commission. Our schools were also well represented in their submissions, both through the League of School Societies as well as by several individual schools and, not to forget individual persons as well. Hopefully similar interest will be shown in responding to the Report.

The Commission's work resulted in a volume of 267 pages. To try to summarize such a document in the space of a few paragraphs would be a fool's errand. Therefore we will out of the total of 61, try to highlight some of the main recommendations.

The first recommendation deals with the requirement for satisfactory instruction. This, of course, we can all agree with. When that satisfactory instruction is somewhat further defined in recommendation 2, however, it looks a little different. To quote:

- "... the term satisfactory instruction be defined in law as programmes which:
- i. use English or French as the first language of instruction;
 - ii. include learning experiences in the arts, Canadian and world studies, language, mathematics, physical education and science;
 - iii. do not promote or foster racial or ethnic superiority, religious intolerance or other values inconsistent with a democratic society;
 - iv. contain specific plans to provide students with the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills in both the intellectual and moral spheres;
 - v. provide students with ready access to alternative points of view about their areas of study.

A cursory reading of these requirements might lead us to nod in agreement, for they seem reasonable enough at first glance. A second look will hopefully convince you that especially points iii. and v. are wide open to interpretation and could easily leave us open to charges of failure to comply, should such a recommendation become law. The response of the League of School Societies in Ontario has recognized this danger, and called for the inclusion in these two articles of the following

words: *without contravening the integral philosophy of the institution.* In iii. these are inserted after "ethnic superiority," and in v. it is the lead-off phrase.

There are also a number of recommendations dealing with teacher qualifications, which would have an impact upon our schools since these employ a significant number of teachers who do not hold the standard Ontario requirement of an Ontario Teacher's Certificate (OTC). The Commission does recognize that this may not be the only legitimate qualification and therefore proposes a number of avenues toward certification, several of which could involve a number of years of additional study.

In addition, some recommendations are made which would tighten up, and add to, certain regulations already in place. For instance, the Notice of Intent to Operate requirements would be greatly expanded in terms of information on objectives, programme and staffing. A requirement to participate in a province-wide testing programme (not presently practised in the public schools), and on a seven-year cycle, to participate with the Ministry of Education in a cooperative evaluation of the school's programme to determine whether satisfactory instruction is being offered.

You will have noticed that thus far no mention has been made of funding. The recommendations touched upon so far could, and may, be imposed without so much as one penny of public money being forthcoming. The Commission's concern is with the continued existence and viability of the Province's public schools, in the first place, and rightly so. The Commission states that the support of that system entirely fulfills the government's obligation for elementary and secondary education. It goes on to state (p. 51): "Nevertheless, the Commission has also acknowledged that the Province's independent schools both contribute to the richness and diversity of Ontario education and serve some important public purpose by providing schooling for a small but not insubstantial proportion of the Province's elementary and secondary children. The programmes of limited support . . . are designed to acknowledge this contribution." This is followed by a number of recommendations that:

- a. would add private schools to the

priority list for the consideration of sale of surplus school board facilities (this policy, if currently in place, would have been of benefit to the Burlington society);

b. provide for arrangements to share bus routes and costs;

c. provide for assistance in the purchase of learning materials.

These provisions, although potentially helpful, still fall under the category of "small potatoes" since by far the largest expense item on any school budget is the category of staff salaries.

When it comes to really substantial funding, we have to look at recommendation 21. And some recommendation that is! Let me first quote it:

"That an associated school be defined in law as an independent school that has come to an agreement with a local school board to operate in association with that board and in addition to offering satisfactory instruction (see recommendation 2):

i. employs only Ontario certified teachers (except where letters of permission are appropriate);

ii. charges no tuition;

iii. is, within enrolment and academic constraints, open without distinction as to race, ethnic background or religion to all persons of compulsory school age who, subject to the appropriate constitutional protections, agree to participate fully in the programme of the associated school;

iv. is a non-profit organization;

v. is not designed primarily to offer special education programmes and services;

vi. reports annually to the school board with which it is associated on its financial and instructional operation;

vii. is operated by a board of governors, at least half the membership of which shall be composed of parents of students attending the school.

This recommendation is followed by a substantial number of further ones to enable the associated school model to be realized. It is a clever device.

Somewhat earlier in his Report, the Commissioner, Dr. Shapiro, deals with three arguments most frequently advanced in favour of public support for private schools: one is the issue of "double taxation," another the prior right of parents to choose the kind of education their children shall have, and thirdly, the injustice of one religious community (Roman Catholic) being selected for preferential treatment. In his discussion of these arguments, Shapiro rejects the first, partly supports the second, and fully supports the third, calling it "morally wrong." But very significantly, elsewhere in the Report, these words can be read (p. 59): "The Commission believes that *religiously defined alternative schools are not appropriate* but that otherwise the alternative school option should be encouraged." Thus, with rec-

ommendation 21, the Commission encourages greater parental choice in choosing the form of schooling for their children, knowing at the same time that parents who define that choice in religious terms cannot accept the vehicle for realizing that choice. Clever indeed, . . . one is tempted to say, diabolically so.

Whereas before the Report was issued there was quite some optimism that a favourable recommendation might be made, now that the maze and direction of the conditions has been revealed, that optimism has all but dissipated. In its place there is more a sense of foreboding, almost as if addressing the problem has opened the dreaded Pandora's Box. Time will tell; so far it is only a Report, and not government policy. Whether it, or any part of it, ever becomes public policy remains to be seen. At the moment, the time is definitely not ripe.

In the meantime, the League Committee which was charged with the responsibility of drafting a brief to the Commission, has been further charged to reply to the government's invitation to respond to the Report. They have done so in a 39-page submission plus appendices. It is a thorough job in which all the major issues, from our perspective, have been addressed, and which witnesses eloquently to our God-ordained rights and responsibilities with respect to the education of His children. It also does not hesitate to point out to the government its responsibilities before God. It is forceful, yet respectful. The committee members are to be commended for a job well done.

Though the dashing of hopeful expectations is always a disappointment, we should not let it discourage us unduly. The Lord has blessed us richly over the years in that we could establish viable, Reformed educational institutions, not only in Ontario, but also in the Western provinces. There have been disappointments and roadblocks before, all of which have been overcome in His strength, by prayerful and continued obedience to our mandate. Let us do so also in this instance, and regard it as a further opportunity to witness.

F.C. LUDWIG
81 Seaborn Road
Brampton, ON L6V 2C2

P.S. A late news bulletin informs us that Dr. Shapiro has just been appointed as Deputy Minister of Education in Ontario, effective July 1. To what degree this will influence the chances of implementation of his recommendations is just one more question mark in the series surrounding this issue. An interesting development, for sure.

PRESS RELEASES

Executive Committee of the Teachers' College, April 7, 1986

The chairman expressed his sadness with the tragic loss of the son of our secretary Br. K. Brouwer and Sr. Brouwer. A letter of condolence will be sent on behalf of all of us.

The Ontario school societies have been requested to attend a meeting where the organizational structure of our College is to be discussed. At this time some societies have replied by letter that they will attend. One reply was negative. The matter will be pursued further. A meeting will be called for the 2nd of May.

The Building Committee sent us two letters. Their proposals and requests are discussed as well as their mandate. A provisional floorplan, drawn up in 1983 is discussed and will be returned to the Committee. They will be asked to continue their search for either an existing building or other suitable property on which we can erect our own building.

After thorough discussion of the pros and cons regarding the purchase of a building or to build a building, the executive decides to commit itself to the establishing of a *Building Fund*. All governors will be asked about their local participation to collect money for this fund. WE HEREBY INVITE EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE. Your donation will be gratefully accepted by our treasurer, Br. J. Gelderman, 491 Karen Drive, Burlington, ON L7R 3J2. We will report to you how this building fund grows.

Applications for new students are discussed. Again this year there are students who have enrolled in the 3-year program as well as in the 1-year course.

The *graduation of seven students* is set for the 30th of May. We invite everyone who can to attend this joyful and thankful occasion. Mark this date on your calendar now.

For the executive committee,
COR. HOFF

Classis Pacific, Cloverdale, BC April 9, 1986

1. *Opening*. On behalf of the convening church, the Church at Houston, Rev. E. Kampen calls the meeting to order. He requests the delegates to sing Psalm 46:1, 5, reads Psalm 46 and leads in prayer.

He welcomes the delegates. He expresses a word of sympathy to Rev. W.

Pouwelse in connection with the passing away of his wife last January. He extends a special welcome to Rev. A. VanDelden, who was ordained and installed as minister of the American Reformed Church at Lynden, Washington, U.S.A., on November 24, 1985. This church is congratulated on receiving their first minister.

He informs the delegates that Rev. P.K. Meijer is on furlough from the Mission field in Brazil and can be expected to visit the churches in the near future.

And he also draws attention to Rev. C. Bouwman's call to the Church at Byford, Australia, and that he has declined this call.

2. *Credentials.* The credentials are examined and are found to be in good order. It appears that the Churches at Houston and Surrey have given special instructions along with their delegates.

3. *Constitution of classis.* Classis is constituted. Officers at this classis are: Rev. E. Kampen, chairman; Rev. M. VanderWel, clerk; Rev. B.J. Berends, vice-chairman. The provisional agenda is adopted after some items have been added.

4. *Requests.* The Church at Chilliwack asks advice on how to proceed with regard to obtaining a minister for the House Congregation in the Okanagan Valley.

In view of the fact that all the churches are principally in favour of supporting the calling of a minister for Vernon, and that half of the churches are in favour of financial support in the work as well, the classis advises the Church at Chilliwack re Vernon,

a. To ask the other churches, which have not pledged financial support, wheth-

er they would be able to do so as of Jan. 1, 1987.

b. To re-submit this request to the Fall classis.

In response to a request of the Church at Chilliwack, increased pulpit supply is arranged for the House Congregation in the Okanagan Valley.

The Church at Surrey requests classis no longer to hold classical meetings in either Houston or Smithers due to the increased financial cost involved. Classis decides to grant this request. It also decides that loss of wage claims by delegates from the churches in the Bulkley Valley may be submitted to the classical treasurer, and to have the classical meetings from now on at the Church at Langley, because of its central location.

5. *Reports.* The treasurer's report on the year 1985 is presented and discussed.

The Church at Houston reports on its inspection of the archives and informs classis that everything was in order except for the absence of the Acts of Regional Synods held over the last ten years. The Church at Smithers reports that copies have been made of these Acts and that they will be added to the Archives of Classis Pacific.

Classis receives reports from the church visitors. Visits have been paid to the eight churches in this classical resort. It is noted with gratitude to the Lord that there is continuous growth in these churches.

The Committee for Needy Churches presents its report and informs classis that it presently supports one brother. Classis renews its mandate to continue this support.

6. *Question period ad. Article 44.* Two churches ask and receive advice on disciplinary matters.

A question regarding the frequency of visits by the "church visitors" is dealt with.

7. After a good meal, during which the chairman took the opportunity to thank the ladies for their good care, the meeting is reopened with the singing of Psalm 98:1.

8. *Appointments.* The convening church for the next classis is the Church at Langley. The date is set for June 25, 1986. If there is nothing for the agenda, the next classical meeting will be held, D.V., on Oct. 8, 1986.

The suggested officers for the next meeting are: Rev. B.J. Berends, chairman; Rev. M. VanderWel, vice-chairman; Rev. A. VanDelden, clerk.

The Church at Chilliwack is appointed to audit the books of the Committee Financial Aid to Needy Students.

9. *Closing.* Question period: Rev. Pouwelse expresses his appreciation for the words spoken by the chairman at the beginning of the meeting.

Censure ad Article 44 Church Order is not needed.

The press release is read and approved.

The chairman requests the singing of Psalm 99:1. 2. After Rev. Berends leads in a word of thanksgiving, the chairman closes the meeting.

B.J. BERENDS,
vice-chairman

BOOK REVIEW

Harry Antonides. *Stones for Bread. The Social Gospel and its Contemporary Legacy.* Paideia Press: Jordon Station, Ontario, 1985. 263 pp. Price: \$11.95. Reviewed by L. Selles.

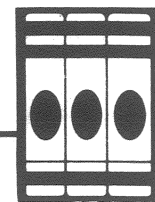
It is a striking title which Harry Antonides, director of research and education for the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), gave his book. The title is, of course, based on the well-known word of the Lord Jesus, recorded in Matt. 7:9 "Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?" To

ask the question is to give the answer. No father will do a thing like that! But what no true father will do, is done, the title suggests, by the proponents of the social gospel movement and by their successors, the social and political activists of the present. Instead of giving their followers the living bread of the gospel to eat, they feed them with stones.

That is, of course, not what these people, who were all professing Christians, wanted to do. Their intention was to make the gospel relevant, to apply the gospel to the social sphere of life, namely, to

labour relations, business, and commerce. There was every reason to do so. While the Western world might call itself Christian, the practice in the field of labour and human relationships was in many instances anything but Christian by the last quarter of the 19th and the first quarter of the 20th century. It was the time of increasing industrialization, which moved the work from shop to factory and people from towns and rural areas to the cities. At the same time, millions were emigrating from Europe to North America.

These changes caused problems aug-



mented by the appalling working and living conditions, child labour underpayment for over exertion, and labour unrest, culminating in the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919.

It is not surprising that various ministers, who were confronted daily with the miseries of many of their parishioners, were in the forefront of the social gospel movement and that this movement started with them. To mention a few, W. Gladstone and W. Rauschenbusch in the U.S.A. and J.S. Woodworth, G.M. Grant and J. Watson in Canada. Their zeal remains undisputed and their sincere intentions are widely acknowledged. This appreciation was recently attested to when "Tommy" Douglas, another social gospel proponent, pastor and parliamentarian, passed away and high tribute was paid to him.

The word "stone," however, is used in connection with the social gospel movement because something, or rather quite a lot, was wrong with the kind of "gospel" that was applied to the social sphere. While deriving its vocabulary from Scripture, the content of this social gospel was not Scriptural. It was what Paul would have called "another gospel;" one which had not one master, namely, God, but which accepted, beside Him, other masters: the philosophers of the age of rationalism which made man's reason judge of all, and of romanticism which made man's feeling the ultimate guide. The result? Let us listen to Antonides:

This attempt to synthesize Christianity and modernity gave rise to higher criticism, which subjected Scriptural revelation to the test of human reason and experience. As a result, all the teachings of the Scriptures underwent radical reinterpretation. While Biblical terminology and symbolism were retained, understanding of the content of Scripture was drastically altered. All of the basic Christian doctrines, including Christ's divinity, the incarnation, the atonement, revelation, redemption, the nature of man, and even the nature of God, were emptied of their Biblical meaning (pp. 191-192).

"Immanentism," which encloses God within the confines of human existence, took over, humanizing God and deifying man. And in its trail, "historicism" followed, which does not recognize any norm but the fleeting one of the historical circumstances and events.

It is not hard to imagine what this religious outlook did to the social gospel movement. It cut the heart out of any real social renewal by the Spirit of Christ and replaced it by an ethicized gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Moreover, the movement was complimented by a Christianized socialism wherein sin is identical to selfishness and salvation is the equivalent of submission

to the law of service. The Kingdom of God, as Rauschenbusch sees it, is "the commonwealth of cooperative service" (p. 36). "The social gospel," he writes in his *Theology for the Social Gospel*, is concerned about a progressive social incarnation of God" (see p. 37). And since God is on the side of the poor, whether believer or unbeliever, the necessity of the class struggle, of the eradication of capitalism and of a transfiguration of the whole social order was preached and wherever possible practised. Antonides comments:

The social gospel and liberalism must be seen for what they are: a tragic surrender to the spirit of secularism, which contributed significantly to the further spiritual impoverishment of the people. And this is the worst evil that can befall a nation (p. 42).

In the following chapters, extensive attention is given to the developments of the social gospel movement in Canada, which followed, as in many other instances, in the footsteps of the U.S.A. The highlight of this development was the Social Service Congress of 1914 held in Ottawa. It made me think of the first Christian Social Congress of 1892 held in the Netherlands under the leadership of Dr. A. Kuyper. What a difference! Whereas the Christian Social Congress sought to come to grips with the implications of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the field of labour and economics, the Ottawa Congress prophesied the dawning of a new day of social welfare, of social Christianity, of a new vision of the old gospel, and God's intention, to use industrial life to bring in His Kingdom on earth, was proclaimed (p. 67). For example, *The Gospel of Labor* was written in 1912 by Charles Stelzle, who was known as the "Apostle of the American Labourer" (p. 67). Moreover, "the Labour church," as channel for the religion of Labour, was planted by William Ivens in 1920. There were no less than eight congregations in Winnipeg and at least one in Edmonton, where believers-in-God and atheists were soon at odds with each other. As might be expected, the Labour church folded within seven years (pp. 71ff.).

Another "fruit" of the social gospel movement in Canada was the organizing of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, of which J.S. Woodworth and W. Irvine were the founders, in 1932. It adopted in 1933 the "Regina Manifesto" which was "aimed at eradicating capitalism and replacing it with a new social order based on planning and socialization" (p. 92). It was succeeded in 1961 by the New Democratic Party which, according to Douglas' words, is based on the belief in, "the essential moral nature of the human person — the radical and still revolutionary concept of human equality," and "a continuing faith in the power of human

reason and common sense" (quoted from p. 92, R. Allan's *The Social Passion*).

A chapter on "Church Union and Ongoing Secularization" deals with the merger of the greater part of the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church and the Congregational Church in 1925 as "a logical result of the social gospel movement . . . [which] had helped to create an image of the church as a channel for social reform" (p. 89). Another chapter entitled, "From Social Gospel to Political Theology," shows how religion is becoming more and more politicized and socialized. A third chapter on "The Shift to the Left in the Roman Catholic Church" discusses the release of *Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis* in 1983 by the Social Affairs Commission of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Thus, the transition is made to the chapter dealing with, "Liberation Theology: A Secular Program for Revolutionary Change." In Latin America where rich and poor not only meet, but the poor are, on a massive scale, exploited by the rich, the "exodus" motif became the rallying point for a number of Roman Catholic priests and laymen to unite as a group of Christians for Socialism, committed to work of liberation from "oppressive" capitalist structures. At a convention in Santiago, Chile in 1972, expression was given to "a growing awareness that revolutionary Christians must form a strategical alliance with Marxism within the liberation process . . ." (quoted on p. 127 from J. Eagleson's *Christians and Socialism. The Christians for Socialism Movement in Latin America*). This liberation theology has influenced our Western society as well. Basically, it stands for a radical and fully secular religion, i.e., as the Germans say, "diesseitig" completely focussed upon this world. In other words, a social gospel to the extreme, wherein Marxist ideas have taken over from socialist views. In a non-religious world, Christianity has to live and to celebrate its faith in the creation of a new society, a classless one: the true brotherhood of man. In this new and truly just society the Kingdom is realized, allowing the utopian perspective of the full communion of all men with God (pp. 165-167). The Bible, however, opens up a perspective, not of a world which evolves into a man-made utopia, but of a world into which the new Jerusalem comes down, out of heaven from God, whose dwelling is with men and who will wipe away every tear from their eyes (Rev. 21:1-4).

In the last two chapters an outline is given of a social gospel based on Scripture or, as Antonides defines it, on the recovery and strengthening of a Christian mind or world view (pp. 91ff.). The author takes his point of departure in the Scriptural given of man's creation in God's im-

age. The restoration of this image, ruined by man's fall, by the redeeming work of Christ and the sanctification by His Spirit is the precondition for the communion with God and for the service of the Lord and of our neighbour in agreement with the commandment of love.

In regard to the cultural mandate, the key to this fulfillment and the way to historical progress is seen in what, with a "Dooyeweerdian" term, is called cultural "differentiation." Antonides explains this concept as, "the disclosure or 'opening up' of society through the movement from an undifferentiated stage to one in which a great variety of societal relationships [e.g., the political, the juridical, the aesthetic] exist" (p. 202). Tracing the creation ordinances set for these various spheres and respecting the limited sovereignty given to each of them, the spirit of the time can be discerned. In the process, a Christian world view, which includes the social field, is found and strengthened.

How wide and all encompassing the mandate is, appears from the Scriptural teaching concerning the Kingdom of God, that is of "Christ's sovereign rule over all creation." To reduce this rule, therefore, "to a horizontal program of social and political reform" as was done in the old social gospel movement and is done in the social activism of mainline churches and by liberation theology, is not only a misrepresentation of the all inclusive character of sin but also of the all inclusive character of salvation and of the Kingdom of God. This kingdom has come, calling us to the grateful response of obedience to Christ's universal reign. This kingdom is also com-

ing, assuring us that in the Lord our labour is not in vain (cf. pp. 210-11).

The task of the church is to preach the Word and to equip the saints for the work of ministry in the various sectors of life. It is not to take over this ministry from them. The believers are to discharge this ministry and whatever can be helpful to them in this respect should be gratefully used. Antonides is convinced that such help can be given effectively by organizations wherein Christians of different denominations cooperate, "on the basis of a shared commitment to the Christian faith." (p. 223).

In my opinion, the trouble is that, in the course of a couple of decades, more and more is lacking in this shared commitment. It is, therefore, no "narrow kind of churchism (or denominationalism)" (p. XIII) nor a lack of "true ecumenicity" (p. 223), which draws brothers and sisters of the same ecclesiastical house increasingly together in separate Christian organizations and associations, but the sincere desire to continue in the true ecumenical line. Indeed, this desire consists in the submission to all of Scripture and to the creeds based on it, and to remain faithful to that shared commitment of faith of which profession of faith was and is made with mouth and heart.

This review has gone beyond the usual length. The reason is that I wanted to give the readers an impression of what the book is all about. Moreover, I think that in many respects *Stones for Bread* is a good, up-to-date book. Antonides shows convincingly that Christianity and liberalism do not mix in either the socio-

political field or in other fields, such as theology. I like to see the book read. In order to fully appreciate the work, I like to see it studied in a, to borrow a phrase from K. Schilder, "sympathetical critical" way by young and older people. Knowledgeable leadership in such study is recommended for the material is not always easy. Not all parts are crystal clear either. I had some trouble with Chapter One, which discusses "A New View on Man and History," with Chapter Eight on liberation theology and with Chapter Nine, "A Defence of a Christian Mind," particularly with the paragraph on "History as Cultural Mandate." The author mentions in his acknowledgements on page XIII that the book, at least in part, is the product of his research and education work for the CLAC. That may be the reason why the book, to use a Biblical comparison, though one robe, is not without a seam, woven in one piece from top to bottom. The seam is there in overlapping of parts, which makes for repetition. I also think that too much material is used and, therefore, the robe has become too long, which leads to tripping over it in its use. These critical remarks do not intend to diminish my sincere appreciation for the book and my recommendation to read it.

A few corrections with a view to a possible second printing:

p. 18: 6th line: "material" should be "materialism."

p. 104: last line of 2nd paragraph: "in the mount" should be "on the mount."

p. 121: last line of 2nd paragraph: "eternal" should be "eternally."

pp. 194-5: "Solzhenitzyn" should be "Solzhenitsyn."

p. 196: 4th line 2nd para.: "are held" should be "is held."

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

Dear Busy Beavers,

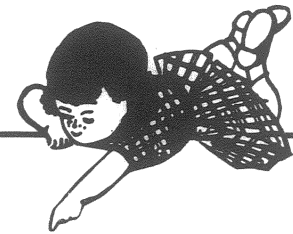
I was very happy to get so many letters from you! It's really great to hear how you are doing! And thank you very much for sharing your pictures and puzzles with the other Busy Beavers. Keep up the good work!

And now I have something else I would like you to write to me about. It's this "Why I like (or love) my friend." Let's hear about you and your friend! I will send you a reward for your letter. Is it a deal?

Here is a picture by Busy Beaver *Esther Hordyk*. It's called "A Girl Carrying a Pot of Flowers and a Shovel."

Busy Beaver *Marjorie Barendregt* has a story for you.

"I've had some fun spring holidays. On Monday night we drove to Terrace and slept in a motel. We slept in, and then on Tuesday morning we went to a restaurant and had some breakfast (I had waffles). Then we traveled to Kitimat and looked inside a big shopping mall. Then we went swimming in the Kitimat pool. There was a diving board 10 feet off the water and the water was 12 feet deep. There was also a rope you could swing off into the water, and also a diving board 3 feet off the water. We had lots of fun. There was also a hot tub that was hot-warm, I mean not that hot. Then we traveled back to Terrace and . . . home to bed. The next few days I went to my friend's house and read and crocheted and stuff like that . . ."



JUNE

Now it's time for birthday wishes for the Busy Beavers who celebrate a June birthday. Here's hoping you all have a very happy and thankful day celebrating with your family and friends.
May the Lord bless and keep you all in the coming year.

Sheri Oussoren	1	Melanie Krabbendam	11
Leona Dehaas	2	Frederick Dewit	12
Nadine Woudenberg	2	Dennis Flokstra	12
Gerrilynn Huizinga	3	Amy Hofsink	14
Harold Dykstra	4	Jeannette Jansen	16
Valerie Gelderman	4	Hanneke Nap	16
Tanya Hansma	5	Pearl Vandeburgt	18
Lisa Dehaas	6	Jamie Harsevoort	21
Esther Hordyk	7	Gwenda Penninga	21
Michelle Roodzant	7	Gary Penninga	25
Paula Grit	10	Debbie DeBoer	28
Esther Bergsma	11		



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Karrie Eelhart*. We are happy to have you join us. You are a good printer, I see Karrie. And thank you very much for the puzzle and the picture.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Esther Hordyk*. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver activities. Yes, I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy your picture and puzzle, Esther! Write again soon.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Marguerite Kleefman*. We are happy to have you join us, Marguerite and we hope you'll keep very busy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. I guess by now you've told Jeremy that the Bible tells us the Lord never lets His children down, right Marguerite?

Welcome to the Club, *Amanda Bartels*. I see you are a good spring detective as well as a good letter writer! Keep up the good work. Bye for now.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Wendy Hovius*. Congratulations on your new baby sister. Is she smiling at you already? I'm looking forward to getting that game or puzzle from you, Wendy!

Hello, *Sheila Wierenga*. Have you heard from your penpal? Thanks for the riddle, Sheila. Write again soon!

Thank you very much for the poem, *Edie Alkema*. I really liked it. And I can see you're getting to be a good writer. Keep up the good work!

Sounds to me as if you really enjoyed your holidays, *Marjorie Barendregt*! Did you finish already what you were crocheting? How about telling us about the book you read?

Congratulations on a good report card, *Leona Dehaas*. I can see you'll be looking forward to your holidays this year. And it's not too long from now, is it?! Thanks for the puzzle, Leona.

Did you make something for your grandparents' anniversary, *Jeannette Jansen*? It sounds as if you've been very busy! What did you embroider, Jeannette? Thank you for the puzzle!

Your new home sounds very pretty, *Teresa Oosterhoff*. And you've been busy looking around too. Thanks for the pretty picture with your letter. Write again soon, Teresa.

I'm glad you like joining in our activities, *Shanna Bartels*. Keep up the good work! Are you sorry to see Spring change into Summer, Shanna? I thought you said you'd be happy for the holidays!

Are you good at using your new glove, *Corrinne Schulenberg*? Do you practise with your brothers and sisters? And I see you're a good Spring detective, too! Bye for now.

Thank you for a very colourful letter, *Adrian Bartels*! Also for the puzzle. It was nice to hear from you again. Keep up the good work!

Quiz Time!

WHICH WAS BORN LATER?

Miriam was older than Moses. Peter was born much later than Noah. In the numbers below, circle the one born later.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Seth or Shem | 7. the Queen of Sheba or Queen Candace |
| 2. Elizabeth or Lydia | 8. Hezekiah or Jonathan |
| 3. Obed or Jesse | 9. Daniel or Jonah |
| 4. Methuselah or Noah | 10. Eunice or Lois |
| 5. Jethro or Gershom | 11. Esther or Priscilla |
| 6. Lot or Isaac | 12. Hagar or Dorcas |

Here are 3 Wordsearch Puzzles for you from 3 different Busy Beavers. They really mean to keep you busy, don't they?

ANIMALS

by Busy Beaver
Jeannette Jansen

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T A L A O K A G
B U O T T E R C
E Z R S N A K E
A E F T O E P G
V S O W L B E O
E O G W D E E R
R O R I Z A M F
E M U S K R A T
    
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- | | | |
|---------|-------|-------|
| turtle | moose | frog |
| beaver | bear | koala |
| otter | snake | deer |
| muskrat | owl | |

BODY PARTS

by Busy Beaver
Corrine Schulenberg

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A R M S O P Q R Z T O
F E Y E S A B F O S E
I M O U T H C E D Z O
N F P O J K S E S A E
G Z E Y S N T T O E F
E M L A P O D O N Z N
R E E N N S F E F Y F
E A G O T E A S I X J
A R S E F D O P N K O
    
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- | | |
|-------|---------|
| legs | nose |
| ear | fingers |
| eyes | feet |
| mouth | toes |
| arms | |

NOTE: Corrine sa
make sure you ha
the "s" on toes!

MORE ANIMALS

by Busy Beaver *Adrian Bartels*

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I Q R I Z H H T Z J Y T
N F A U P I O L I O N I
S G C X H P I K S G N O
E H C W Q P A N T H E R
C S O R G O R F E C W R
T N N P N P M R G L Q Y
S A Z R D O G M N L L O
W K E P N T C T S J R L
I E X K N A B B Y O S C
D S E O T M H O X N J I
X Y P X Z U O K D F V T
O O R U R S F W X U E Z
    
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- | |
|--------------|
| lion |
| tiger |
| deer |
| cat |
| hippopotamus |
| panther |
| dog |
| frog |
| raccoon |
| monkey |
| snakes |
| insects |

Answers:

Which Was Born Later? 7. Dorcas 12. Priscilla 11. Eunice 10. Lois 9. Daniel 8. Hezekiah 6. Isaac 5. Gershom 4. Jesse 3. Lydia 2. Shem 1. Peter

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.
I'm looking forward to lots of letters!

With love from your
Aunt Betty