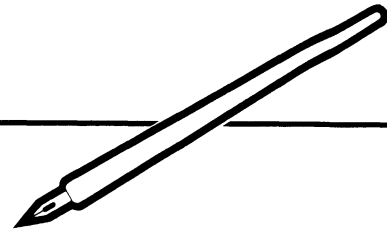




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A Christian political party in Canada

Introduction

In this issue Br. E. Vanwoudenberg answers a few questions about the new Christian Heritage Party. Much preparatory work has been done and official acceptance as a federal political party has been obtained from Ottawa. Others who want to use this name or part of it cannot do so anymore. This is the result of hard work and as such it is worth our congratulations.

It is also clear that membership in this Christian political party is not bound to one particular church and that it also does not bind itself to a particular confession. Every Christian who is in agreement with the Constitution can become a member.

What does the Draft Constitution say? I shall give here the whole draft as I received it.

“Art. 1 The name of the party is *Christian Heritage Party of Canada*.

“Art. 2 The party principles are based on *Judeo-Christian Ethics* and are *unalterable*.

“Art. 3 The *Principles and Objectives* of the party are:

- a. We believe in God as Creator and the Bible as the inspired Word of God.
- b. We believe that the major functions of government are to uphold the law and order and to maintain justice in the land and to ensure for each individual:
 - i) the sanctity of life (from conception to natural death)
 - ii) the privilege to own property
 - iii) freedom of religion, speech and assembly
 - iv) freedom to live his/her lives according to Biblical principles.
- c. We believe that any plebiscite to be held shall not contravene any Biblical principles.

“Art. 4 *The aim of the party* is the establishment of:

- a. Biblical morality to the government
- b. Biblical laws to the country
- c. a free enterprise economy
- d. the family as the most important unit of society.”

When you read the answers of Br. Vanwoudenberg to the question about the aim of the party, you discover that this aim has been reworded and improved. I am sure that more changes will be made in the future, although, I suppose, the basic ideas will remain the same.

Some questions

The name is “Christian Heritage Party.” In the draft as I received it the name of Christ does not come back at all. God the Creator is mentioned, but Christ Jesus, the Redeemer and Lord of what God has created, is missing. I hope I understand correctly that also this has been changed and that the “Lordship of Jesus Christ” is now confessed in the constitution as well. Perhaps, that also means that Art. 2 does not speak anymore of “Judeo-Christian ethics.” Perhaps, it is now stated that the party principles are based on the Bible as God’s infallible, inerrant and authoritative Word. That Word proclaims that Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal Son of God, the Christ, the only

Saviour and Lord of all. This, of course, is not a “Judeo” principle or belief at all.

We deal here with an important matter. When we speak of “Judeo-Christian ethics,” we speak of human ideas and views. Many Jews and many Christians have held and are holding quite a variety of ethical ideas, while the one does not agree with the other. The question, then, comes up: the ethics of which Jews and which Christians are you basing your principles on? This speaking about Judeo-Christian ethics would fit exactly into the frame of thinking of modern liberal theology which sees in the Old Testament Israel’s religious thinking, while the New Testament, according to them, shows us the theology, the religious views, of the early church. The Scriptures are then not anymore in the first place revelation of God; they are basically seen as human theology.

I am sure that this is not what the leaders of the new party intend to say. They also speak about the Bible as God’s inspired Word and about “Biblical morality” and “Biblical laws.” But liberal theology does the same. If the intention is to have the Word of God as basis, then also this must be clearly and unambiguously expressed, while maintaining that the Scriptures proclaim Christ as the wisdom of God, and that true, Scriptural morality can only truly flourish through faith that lives out of Christ Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

Another question is that about free enterprise. The aim of the party is the establishing of free enterprise. The question must be asked: what does the party mean with that? In our modern world thinking free enterprise is strongly identified with capitalism. One can read articles and buy books in which faith in God and success in life, faith in Christ as Redeemer and financial gain, Christianity and capitalism with free enterprise, are connected. It should be made clear that free enterprise as the party means it is not the capitalistic, humanistic free enterprise idea. God’s Word opposes both humanistic socialism and humanistic capitalism. Man, according to the Scriptures, either collectively or individually, is not absolute owner on this earth, but steward before God on God’s earth, called to live in love for God and the neighbour.

The same things can be said regarding the privilege of the individual to own property. This, of course, is stated in opposition to the socialistic view that the people as a collective whole, with other words, that the state is the owner of everything. But again, as an opposition this can be easily understood as a capitalistic principle. And that means a humanistic principle that is based on the classical Roman views that man has absolute ownership with regard to his own possession. He can do with it whatever he wants: guard and keep it, but also destroy it. Scripture teaches that God is the owner of all what He created, of the earth and its fulness. If this is meant, this must come out clearly. People must not get the impression that they have to do with a Christian, reactionary, movement that basically is capitalistic.

Newsletters

In the first Newsletter Br. Vanwoudenberg writes that the Progressive Conservatives brought no real change in our Cana-

dian Government, because also they have humanistic aims and aspirations and, in general, are not "standing up in defence of Biblical absolutes." But such real change is desperately needed. "We need upstanding Christians in Ottawa." Therefore, "we as citizens and voters must become uncompromising and firm in our resolve whom we want to represent us in government. We must seek our God in prayer, begging His forgiveness for our sins and the sins of this nation, 'so that He may heal our land' (II Chronicles 7:14). We must become Christians that have salt in themselves. We must transmit our love for God and our beloved Canada into action. Now is the time, before it is too late. This will demand dedication and sacrifices. We ask you to join us in our objective to return Canada to her Christian heritage. We are *the* party that is uncompromisingly committed to Biblical principles." In line with these words Br. Vanwoudenberg writes in the interview in our magazine, "This is why I call my political involvement *political ministry*."

In the second Newsletter the president, Bill Stilwell, writes, "With God's help, prayer, hard work and unswerving obedience to His Word, we can be like the Maccabees were to the Jewish people and return this country to its Christian heritage The fight of the Maccabees to restore God's laws lasted forty years. Our task will not be an easy one. You can be assured that it will be a fight. Satan and his allies will not take it lying down. We are now at a point in the history of our nation which is similar to the situation the Maccabees faced in about 175 B.C. We can say the same of Canada as the following quote from Maccabees 1: 'Her babies have been slaughtered in her streets Her freedom has become slavery. See how our Holy place, our beauty, our glory is now laid waste, profaned by the pagans What have we left to live for?'"

Is this parallel between the situation of the Maccabees and ours correct? Can we apply Maccabees to our situation like it is done here? I think that we should not. The reason is not that the books of the Maccabees belong to the apocryphal books (Art. 6 of the Belgic Confession). The reader knows that these apocryphal books were added in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) and taken over in the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Scriptures. This Vulgate is still the official Roman Catholic Bible. This background explains the example. Luther and Calvin and other Reformers, going back to the Hebrew original, left the apocrypha out.

No, my reason for disagreeing with this example is that our situation differs completely from that of the Maccabees. It is wrong, for more than one reason, to say that there is a similarity in situation. In the days of the Maccabees pagan enemies under the tyrannical leadership of King Antiochus Epiphanes oppressed and persecuted the Israelite people. With other words, the world, the seed of the serpent, persecuted the church, the seed of the woman. Daniel prophesied about this struggle in the last chapters of his book. The Syrian enemies slaughtered little children of the Israelites, profaned the temple of the LORD and made the people of Israel into slaves.

In our time people make themselves slaves of sin and unbelief, slaves of their own sinful passions. In our time people themselves murder their babies through abortion by the hands of doctors and nurses. And if one wants to speak about a holy place, "our beauty, our glory," one should not point at Canada as a nation as a parallel, but at the most at apostate, deviating, liberal, Christian churches. Although even here we have to be careful.

The point is, Israel was a nation and church at the same time. However, after the first coming of Christ no specific nation can claim to be God's Church, God's people, as nation. Christ calls His Church out of all the nations and peoples and families of the earth. His kingdom is not of this world. The Christians' home-land is not this earth, but the heavenly Jerusalem.

The basic difficulty

Now the reader could say: It is easy for a Reformed theologian to criticize a Roman Catholic layman. (By the way, why do we often see the words "Roman Catholic" written with two capitals, but the word "reformed" with a small letter?) However, that difference is totally unimportant here. At stake is an incorrect interpretation of the Scriptures with serious consequences for the application. Hereby it does not matter whether an example is taken from the books of the Maccabees or from one of the canonical books.

What we have here is an *exemplaric* use of a specific situation in the history of Israel before the coming of God's Son in the flesh. This exemplaric use makes an easy parallel and similarity between the old time and our own time, without reckoning with the totally different situation in the history of redemption. The serious consequence is a Scripturally unwarranted identification between Israel as God's nation and Canada is a (once) Christian nation.

When we distinguish sharply and define our terminology precisely, is it then correct to speak of Canada, or whatever other nation, as a Christian nation, like we speak of a Christian church, a Christian life, meaning a church that is ruled by Christ or a life that is lived under the authority of Christ? Was there ever any nation, that could say as a nation, "We are God's people; we are the Church of Christ Jesus?" Was there, after the first coming of Christ, any nation that was ruled as a theocracy by Christ and that, again, as a nation, humbly submitted to Christ? The answer is a negative one. That should be clear to everyone. One can, at the most, speak of a nation of (at a certain time) predominantly Christian people. But that does not make the nation as such Christian.

Am I now over-critical? Am I looking for a stick to hit the dog with, because I do not like the dog? No, I am not. In this comparison as made between our situation and that of the Maccabees I see a mixing of two separate things: of church and state; of the calling of the church and the task of a government. I see the same mixture in the term "political ministry."

We were accustomed to the use of the word ministry in religious matters for the ministry of the Word of God, while in political vernacular the word has to do with the office of a minister of the crown. In our days the word is used for many different services in church related and religious matters. There is a ministry for this and a ministry for that. This brings about a levelling of the term.

In our situation in which so much emphasis is put on social activities in the church, there is the great danger that the ministry of the Word in and by the church is placed on one and the same level with all kinds of other activities. There is a ministry for this and a ministry for that. And the great significance of the preaching of the Word as the main task of the church is not seen anymore and downgraded. Speaking about a political calling is correct. Speaking about a political ministry lifts that political task up to the level of the preaching of the Word, to a certain extent anyway. This should be avoided.

This brings me back to the "basic difficulty," the mixing of church and state. The Christian Heritage party, like the Moral Majority movement of Rev. Jerry Falwell and others, has to be watchful not to mix the task of the church and the calling of the government. In 1525 the Anabaptists sought to establish the kingdom of God, a theocracy, on earth, in Muenster, Germany. A theocracy is a nation ruled by God and His Word. But God does not promise us anywhere in His Word that on this earth such a theocracy can or will be established.

These are some remarks and questions. More has to be said and asked yet.

J. GEERTSEMA

Through love be servants¹

1. Freedom and love

Freedom is a current issue. People talk about it everywhere. We can hear it in private conversations, in the news media, and in the legislature. Part I of the new *Canadian Constitution* is called the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Article 1 of this Constitution deals with the rights and freedoms in Canada, and Article 2 defines these *Fundamental Freedoms*. This new Charter of Rights and Freedoms has far-reaching consequences, probably more profound than most people are aware of. Many laws and regulations have been challenged already in court and have been declared in conflict with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Some cases have been driven to the extreme and sometimes the conclusions and judgments of the courts are very surprising and sound almost ridiculous. This development might even have consequences for the church and the way church discipline is, and can be, exercised.

Article 2(b) of the Constitution says that everyone has the "freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication." Article 15(1) forbids "discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability." This seems to be an article that guarantees freedom of religion. However, overly zealous antidiscrimination groups try to use this article to prevent churches from exercising discipline with respect to those who refuse to live according to the norms set forth by the Word of God. Such discipline is considered to be against the freedom of belief, opinion and expression. A church can be forced to hire, or not to fire, an organist, a caretaker or other "employees," who openly propagate that they are practising homosexuals. This has happened already in the U.S.A. It is considered to be discrimination, based on sex, and therefore in conflict with the Constitution.

Subsection (2) of Article 15 says that this equality "does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups, including



those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability." This section is used as the basis for affirmative action programs. That means that the government, by law, can force companies or corporations, to give preferential treatment to certain so-called disadvantaged groups. That is called "amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups." Amelioration means: to improve, make better or less bad. It is used to force employers to hire an equal number of male and female workers. It may in the future also be used to "ameliorate" the condition of the "disadvantaged" group of homosexuals. There are already people who want to use this section of the Constitution to force churches to accept women in office and admit people to the Lord's Supper who are living in conflict with the seventh commandment.

We have to be on our guard that we do not get caught up in an application of these rights and freedoms which brings us in conflict with the Word of God. The basic question in this respect is: What do we mean by *freedom*? We first have to give a definition of freedom. For such a definition we have to turn, not to the Canadian Constitution, but to the Word of God. In Galatians 5 we can find such a definition. Above Galatians 5:13-24 we read as a caption: "Freedom defined." In the verses 13-15 we read: "For you were called to freedom,

brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another." That is a clear definition. Freedom means: to serve one another through love. That sounds rather unusual today. To serve seems to be the opposite of freedom. And moreover, what is meant by love? That is also a current issue but here we have to be even more on our guard. The word love can be used in different ways. We can distinguish three different words which can be translated in English by *love*, but still have very distinctive meanings.

The most commonly used meaning of the word love is the relationship between a male and a female person, a boy and a girl or a man and a woman. The meaning of this word is often closely related with sex. Another word, translated by love, is what we also can call charity. It is the love for and to the poor, the providing of unselfish support to those who suffer. This form of love has nothing to do with the first concept.

A third meaning, and the most frequently used one in the Bible, is love as trustworthiness, taking care of the other and being a reliable friend and helper. This relationship finds its most beautiful expression in the way parents love their children. It is also exemplified in Holy

Scripture in the way the Lord takes care of His children.

About this love we read in I Corinthians 13: "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends So faith, hope, love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love (verses 4-8 and 13)."

That is what we have to keep in mind when we read the definition of freedom in Galatians 3:13ff. Real freedom is, to serve one another through love. However, this love has become a rare commodity. People are selfish, each one seeks his own advantage and fight for his own cause. We, as Christians, have to consider our own heart and we have to examine our mutual relationships. There is much room for improvement, at least, when we look at these things in a Biblical way and apply the standards set by the Word of God. That is what we will try to do in what follows.

2. Being servants

We have to be servants of one another. That is the instruction, given to us by the Apostle Paul. To be servants is not easy. By nature we all tend to be selfish. Why should we serve and be less than the other? The main reason is because we are members of the same body. We are one in Christ. In the previous section we have quoted I Corinthians 13, where the Apostle Paul speaks about love. In I Corinthians 12 he speaks about the unity in Christ. We are all one in Him. He is the head and we are the members of the body. The members cannot do without each other.

"For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as He chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honourable we invest with the greater honour, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But


God has so composed the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one members suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."

This is a rather lengthy quote, but it shows us in such an excellent way what it means to serve one another through love. That is what we should keep in mind when we examine our mutual relations. We often like to be served, but Christ Himself has said in Matthew 20:27-28, "Whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." And after Jesus had washed the feet of His disciples He said to them (in John 13:13-17): "You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

Wish that this would be practised more among us. There are so many cases of discord, animosity and struggle among brothers and sisters. We can see it everywhere. Certainly not only among people of the world, but almost in the same way among brothers and sisters in Christ. In

Psalm 133 we read: "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" However, reality is sometimes a far cry from it. We are supposed to forgive each other. In the fifth petition we pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." In Lord's Day 51 of the Heidelberg Catechism we confess that this means that *we find this evidence of Thy grace in us that we are fully determined wholeheartedly to forgive our neighbour.* How much *evidence* do we find in our heart? How eager and *fully determined* are we to wholeheartedly forgive? Many problems and conflicts exist among brothers and sisters in Christ about financial matters. How does that happen? Has prosperity made us more selfish and less considerate? Are we always thoughtful when we have to deal with our brothers and sisters? A little more compassion and self-denial could solve a lot of problems. In Philippians 2:3,4 the apostle admonishes us: "Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interest of others." That seems to be one of the most difficult things to practise. Affluence and success have taken their toll, also among Christians.

When church members run a business together, it sometimes happens that the deal turns sour, and then they keep a grudge against each other. Why? Because they often expect too much from the other and give too little. When brothers make a business deal together it should be put on paper, and worked out in detail, no less



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than in any other case in which a partner is not a member of the church. It should probably be spelled out even better. Why? Because the closer people are, the greater the possibility that their relationship will be damaged. The greatest mistake is to assume that stipulations can be worked out after the problems have begun. Then it is too late. Also a brother or sister can spend a dollar only once. The expression: "I did not expect this from a brother or sister" is sometimes based on wrong expectations and on too vague an agreement. When the pinch is felt, everyone

wants his share in the profits and few want to pick up the losses.

I have been surprised quite often by the attitude of people in this respect and by the way they treat each other. I have seen cases in which an employee feels he does not have to work so hard, can come late or leave early, *because* his employer is a member of the same church; as if his boss does not have to run his business in the same manner as everyone else! I have also seen cases that an employer seems to think that he can ask more from his employee, let him work harder, and let him

make overtime without payment, as if this employee does not need the money as badly as everyone else! Fortunately there are also many cases in which there is an excellent cooperation between church members in business life. We should not blame the good ones for what the bad ones are doing. Still we have to realize that many cases of discord and animosity are caused by too idealistic and sometimes completely wrong expectations, and a lack of common sense in setting up a business agreement.

— *To be continued*
W. POWELSE

The RES and mission₂

In the previous article we had a close look at the first two mission conferences of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES), and some issues of the *International Reformed Bulletin (IRB)*. We saw how the need of this world had brought about an awareness not only of the needs as such but also of their causes. We also saw how the idea of the Kingdom of God played an important role in all the discussions. We will now turn to the subsequent conferences.

Cape Town, 1976

The theme for this third conference was "Training for Mission." In order to understand this theme, some information about what happened in the world of mission since World War II is necessary. The world of mission refers to mission in general, not just of our churches. As we all know, World War II caused many changes in the third world countries. Many of these countries, which for centuries had been under colonial government, were suddenly separated from their "mother-countries" during the war. This resulted in a growing desire to become independent. Following the war nationalism flourished in many countries, and often resulted in permanent independence.

Once independent, the feelings of these young third world countries toward their old "mother-country" and toward western countries as a whole were very negative. This caused the closing of many mission projects, and many missionaries returned home. The negative feelings were not only directed to western supremacy in politics but also in education. Until that time all education had been implemented according to the rules and

standards of the western countries. Now the demand was heard to develop a system of learning and teaching free of western influence. The western model was too much directed to theoretical knowledge, and not enough to every day life. Men, like Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire, demanded that teaching should be directed more to real life. This demand also found its way into the work of mission, especially in the training of ministers.

This criticism was accepted within the World Council of Churches (WCC), and resulted in alternate methods of training in which life experience is more important than factual knowledge and any idea of a restricted clergy is vehemently denied. The most famous and successful of these methods is Theological Education by Extension (TEE). This method replaces college training for in-service training with the help of textbooks. In fact, the textbooks become the teachers. Also, this approach applies methods of teaching used in the various cultures. If for centuries teaching has been done by reciting songs, then our teaching should use the same method. It will have greater impact since the students will be accustomed to these methods.

TEE was introduced during the latter part of the sixties in Guatemala. Its start was not very successful, but in the early seventies it picked up momentum, and was applied in many different countries. Today it is one of the most prominent ways of teaching in different parts of the world, not only in theology but also in other disciplines. The RES Churches became aware of this successful method and consequently dealt with the whole matter of "Training for Mission" at this conference.

H.M. Conn in his paper "Training the Layman for Witness" takes over most of the criticism with regard to western methods of education which we mentioned above. According to him, the stress on theoretical knowledge within western society has resulted in a model of ministry in which the minister is seen as the one who knows it all and who does it all, creating a difference between the trained professional and the layman. He refers to the times of the Middle Ages when the clergy were separated from and placed above the "common people." Even though the Reformation in principle broke with this distinction between clergy and laity, it did not completely eliminate that image of the minister as the indispensable professional. On account of this even the Reformers could not give to the laity the place it deserved. As a result the training for the ministry became isolated from real life. "The clerically-centered model of the church that has emerged in the Reformed and evangelical churches of the world's cultures severely inhibits this contextual understanding of the ministry of God's people (*Training for Missions*¹, 93)." This model was exported to the mission fields with very negative results.

In order to change this we not only have to change our theological training, but also our concept of ministry. Such a change must do away with that professional aspect of ministry and promote the layman from a member of secondary rank into a living member of the People of God. Theology and theologizing must no longer be seen as a professional's job, but as the task of the whole church.

According to Schrotenboer the training of leaders in young churches, enabling them to serve the People of God,

has to proceed along the lines of the Kingdom of God. The three spiritual laws of that Kingdom — repent, be a servant of all, and maturity in service — are also the laws for such training (Ibid., 17). E. Rubingh in his paper also points to these laws, especially the element of service. For too long education on the mission field has been a one-way affair. Today, the churches on the fields have to become more involved, for example, by on-site and in-service training (Ibid., 37).

This conference adopted a "Message to the Churches," which was subtitled "Their Missionary Task and their Equipment for It." In this "Message" the Reformed Churches participating in the RES confess their past negligence in training their whole membership for mission. This negligence is the more serious since in Scripture the whole People of God is called a servant people. The special offices are called upon to train the whole membership for the work of discipleship, proclaiming and serving.

One paper, presented at this conference should be mentioned yet. It is the paper written by Prof. L. Schuurman, "Training the Membership for Service." Schuurman is a member of the "Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland" (synodical). As at the first conference, so also at this conference, the contribution of this federation was much more radical than the other presentations. Schuurman speaks about the service of the membership in the way the Theologies of Liberation speak about service. His terminology has close affinity with these theologies. Sin and service are seen more in a horizontal way, dealing with social injustices, than in a vertical way, in our relation to God.

This third conference shows again that the Reformed Churches cooperating in the RES were very much aware of what was going on in the world of mission at a broader level. The whole discussion concerning training in other cultures did not go by unnoticed, and rightly so, for we are dealing here with important matters. How must we instruct the believers on the mission fields and what kind of training for the ministry is needed are important questions. We should not be afraid to face the questions brought forward by third world countries, for our teaching may never become isolated from real life. Never may our theological training be done without a living bond with the churches, not in Canada, nor in any other country.

We can then agree with some of the warnings which Conn brought forward. However, Conn goes further than we want to go. Is changing our concept of ministry the solution to the criticism we hear from third world countries? Certain-

ly, we will not advocate a separation of clergy and laity as the Church of Rome advocates. But neither do we want to make the Church of our Lord into a democracy, where in fact the people rule. Christ rules His Church through His gifts, the officers, who are neither dictators nor hired hands of the congregation. We are afraid Conn is influenced by modern philosophies of communication in which the scriptural idea of office is abandoned and replaced by man-centered individualism. Conn is then also mistaken when he says that the Reformers did not completely do away with the clergy-laity distinction. Over against the clericalism of the Church of Rome, they listened again to Scripture and how it speaks about the ministry of reconciliation.

Nimes, 1980

"Prophetic Witness in a Bewildered World" was the theme for this fourth conference. The first element of this theme "Prophetic Witness" is possibly a result of the discussion within the RES concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in the church and in the world. The second element, the "Bewildered World," makes this theme a contemporary one. Gone is the optimism of the sixties, the compassionate concerns of the seventies, instead we meet the questions of the eighties. The optimistic programs of the sixties and the compassionate help of the seventies had not resulted in the desired results, rather the opposite, the situation had become worse.

This general bewilderment of the eighties left its imprint on the Reformed Churches in the RES. What was the result of many years of mission? What was the result of that unity in mission? The "Message" accepted at this conference, as well as the papers presented, reflect this feeling of bewilderment; they do not give a coherent impression. The "Message" is more or less a summary of the conclusions of the various papers and does not have the tone of the "Message" adopted in Cape Town '76. It mentions the bewilderment in the world, the certainty of Scripture, and the task of families and young people in this world, a task which might cause sufferings and

persecutions. But neither sufferings nor persecution should diminish our commitment as citizens of the Kingdom of God to work for peace and justice in this world (*Prophetic Witness in a Bewildered World*³, 85).

J.P. Gailbraith, in his key-note address "The World's Need for a Prophetic Church" states that the current bewilderment in the world is a consequence of man's rejection of the God of life. In order to witness prophetically against this bewilderment, the church has to proclaim the verbal message to repent and believe. "There is no reconciliation with God, no redemption from the power of sin, except by hearing and believing the words of sin and grace in Christ (Ibid., 14)."

A. König in his paper "The Prophetic Witness of the Church," deals extensively with the relation between Old and New Testament. His aim is to find out how the church of the New Testament can make use of the political statements of the Old Testament prophets. He points out that in the Old Testament church and state came together in the people of Israel, which makes the Old Testament more like an historical book. He considers the New Testament an eschatological book, which means, it points more to the coming judgment. However, in Christ these two Testaments come together, history has entered the eschatological framework. In Christ we can use the political statements of the Old Testament prophets in our prophetic witness in this world. König concludes his address with an appeal that the Reformed churches seek contact with those groups which claim that the gift of prophecy is functioning in their midst, the so-called Pentecostal groups.

As already said, this conference does not give a coherent impression. In our opinion, one of the reasons is the different manner in which the papers speak about the first word in the theme, "prophetic." For Gailbraith, to be prophetic means to proclaim the promise of the Gospel with the command to repent and believe. We agree with him. But for König the word prophetic must lead us to seek contact with the Pentecostal groups. For König to be prophetic seems to mean to reveal something new. However, then we separate the Holy Spirit, the author of all prophecy, from the inspired Word of God. Then man comes in the center and God's Word loses its authority. We must, therefore, disagree with the appeal of König. To be truly prophetic means to go to, and speak on, the basis of God's Word.

Chicago, 1984

In the 1980 conference we noticed bewilderment. In the years following 1980

OUR COVER

Algonquin Provincial Park

Photo courtesy:
Regional Industrial Expansion
Government of Canada

the questions increased rather than decreased. This explains the theme of the fifth conference "Mission and the Future — Charting New Strategies." What really had the Reformed mission accomplished in the last 20 years? Similar questions were being raised within other church federations and missionary organizations. Within the WCC these questions had led many to advocate a period of standstill in the work of mission, a moratorium, a time to evaluate the work in the light of all the criticism which was being voiced.

Do we as Reformed Churches, also have to stop for awhile? was a question voiced also at this conference. The secretary general of the RES, P.G. Schrotenboer, says the following in his Introduction to the published papers:

It is typical for churches and mission agencies today to search for new strategies and new methods. Sometimes this seems to be the result of a turning away from the Truth in the Eternal Gospel. The RES Missions Conference shared in the search for new strategies, but not because anyone wanted to downgrade or depart from the Truth that abides; the search was rather undertaken in order to find methods and approaches to proclaim the story of the Kingdom of God in more effective ways (*Mission and the Future*⁴, 1).

Besides questions related to the continuation of missionary work, there were in Chicago '84 also questions concerning the continuation of the RES itself, because of doctrinal differences between the members. Would they still be united after this synod, or were the doctrinal differences between the "Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland" (synodical) and the other members of the RES too great to stay together? The cloud of the upcoming discussion concerning the doctrinal differences already cast its shadow over this mission conference.

It is no surprise that H.M. Conn's key-note address carries a pessimistic tone. Twenty years ago, he says, the RES was more assured about mission. It had an easier time in finding a definition for mission, but today things are not so simple anymore. Not only because today we know more about the difficulties of missionary work, but also because we are more frustrated today. The gap between the rich and the poor countries is widening, instead of becoming smaller, in spite of all the money used for developmental help. Two thirds of the world population goes to bed hungry every night, not only in far away areas, but also in big cities. Many of the impoverished countries are ruled by capitalistic totalitarian governments. Added to all these frustra-

tions is the rapid growth of the non-Christian population.

The Reformed churches in the eighties should face these burning issues, but instead they busy themselves with, perhaps important, doctrinal differences, forgetting the task of the church to reach out. When we have a closer look at these doctrinal differences, says Conn, we will find that they are typical western differences. We should leave them behind, and not spend so much time on them, but rather, spend all our time and means on the real task of the church.

We must not go in writing our books about the relation of evangelism to social action or a Reformed understanding of mission. And meanwhile the 2.8 billion people in the world who do not know Christ continue to die with their noses pressed against the windows of our studies in Amsterdam and Philadelphia (*Ibid.*, 12).

The failure to deal with the real issues of our time might be caused by the usage of wrong tools. Conn refers here to the concept of the Kingdom of God. Is that image indeed sufficient to include all of our missionary activity? The danger of the concept of the Kingdom is that the Kingdom becomes separated from its King. What is said within the WCC shows how real this danger is.

We should also realize, according to Conn, that the term Kingdom of God is used only in the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark and Luke. Paul, for example, hardly ever uses it. He probably realized that this term was not enough world-directed, and, therefore, retranslated it into an image which speaks more clearly for people outside the Jewish nation, namely the church. That church is the new humanity, God's demonstration model in today's society of his justice. This approach will again make the church a servant in this world, and not an on-looker, who stands beside the road. Never may the church forget or give up that important task, to be a servant in this world.

This is the ever-present danger of using images like the kingdom of God, and, for that matter, of the others we have mentioned. We tend to abuse and manipulate them into self-centered patterns for our self-contemplation not world-converting calls to reach the unreached (*Ibid.*, 15).

Under the theme "Missions Tomorrow: Interdependence at the Cutting Edge" the question is discussed whether we should stop our work of mission for awhile as the WCC advises to do. A.G. Honig, a retired professor of the Synodical Churches in the Netherlands, defends the opinion

that as much as possible we should leave the work of mission to the various national churches. We should do so not only because these national churches can proclaim the Gospel better in the context of their own culture, but also because the western churches in the past have too often supported regimes which oppress and exploit their peoples. In order to win back the credibility of the Third World, let the western churches go back to their own countries and work there against a growing atheism.

With regard to people who have never yet heard the Gospel, Honig questions whether there is a real hurry to reach them. For, what is the character of mission? Does it proclaim to the people that they can only be saved through faith in Jesus Christ? Or does it inform them that they are already saved in Christ (*Ibid.*, 54)? Honig does not give a clear answer to these questions, but states that if people perish because of our laziness then we should indeed feel guilty. However, if others whom we simply cannot reach die, we should not act too nervously. "They have fallen in the hands of a merciful God (*Ibid.*, 55)." And he adds: "I think our hurry has more to do with western nervousness than with spiritual inspiration (*Ibid.*, 55)."

H. Weerstra, missionary for the Christian Reformed Church, rejects any call for a moratorium in mission. The Reformed churches, according to him, must get involved, as never before, to take the Gospel of the Kingdom to the last frontiers. The fact that the amount of peoples in this world who are still without Christ is increasing every day, must make us more willing yet to go out and do missionary work. This means we have to initiate the process of evangelization by proclaiming the Gospel, then plant the church and fearlessly entrust the new church to the Lord. "We need to believe (and take the risk?) that the Lord by His Spirit will lead and equip His Church (*Ibid.*, 65)."

This debate between Honig and Weerstra is an important debate for our evaluation of the RES mission conferences. It shows the two pulls present today within the RES. On the one side the pull toward the WCC, in this case Honig follows the un-Scriptural ideas of the toward the broad evangelical world, in this case Weerstra. The existence of both pulls makes it difficult for the RES to continue, since both, even though coming from opposite directions, do away with the Reformed character of the RES. Honig follows the unscriptural ideas of the WCC, but Weerstra, though we appreciate his stress on the continuation of mission, approaches mission from an evangelical or even neo-pentecostal point of view. Both, in principle, show disregard

for the Reformed confessions.

Conn tries to overcome these differences in approach by attempting to bring the discussion to a higher level. He urges the RES to focus on the current needs in this world rather than on doctrinal differences. He wants to bypass the difficulties by reminding the church of what he sees to be her most important task, to reach out. He even calls these differences typically western points of discussion which only blur our vision of the task of the church. We should not weary churches in other cultures with these.

Conn wants the Reformed churches to regain their zeal for the needs of this world. He tries to do so without touching the doctrinal differences. That is impossible, because these doctrinal differences within the RES concern the heart of all missionary work, namely God's Word. They are not typically western points of discussion, they reach the heart of our Reformed faith, the authority of God's revelation. Therefore, as long as these differences are not resolved in a Scriptural manner, this medicine, namely renewed zeal for mission, will never last, for the foundation of that zeal is gone. This medicine may take away some of the pain, although we doubt it, but will not remove the cause of the disease, the doctrinal differences.

What about the future?

Chicago '84 had a pessimistic over-tone. Many questions were raised, but not many definite answers were given. Leaving Chicago behind us, questions arise with regard to the future of these mission conferences. Will there still be room for a unified distinct Reformed approach to mission?

It is not easy to answer these questions. It also depends on what will happen with the RES itself after Chicago '84. It would go beyond the limits of our topic, as well as beyond my competence, to deal with that question here. Yet we want to deal with the future of the Reformed mission from a RES point of view, with the help of a paper presented by P.G. Schrotenboer to the Seventh Reformed Missions Consultation. This Consultation was held on March 16-18, 1983 in Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. Though I realize that this paper was not presented at an RES conference or synod, I feel free to use it for the author is secretary general of the RES.

In his paper, "Reformed Churches and the Unreached: Guidelines for Interdependence," Schrotenboer suggests and explains guidelines for the future of Reformed missionary work. We will list some of these guidelines.

1. Confessional commitment and ecumenical obedience. On the one side we are called upon to cooperate with other denominations, that is our ecumenical obedience, on the other side in that cooperation we should use our confessions in a responsible manner. This last part means that we dare to relativize our formulations of the Truth as they have been written down in our confessions. According to Schrotenboer, such commitment and obedience calls for cooperation with the evangelical denominations as well as with the WCC.

For your information we may add that a month after this Seventh Reformed Mission Consultation a joint consultation of

also their content. Schrotenboer gives three examples. Our doctrine of election should be focused more on God's people as a whole. Our Reformed confessions speak too individualistically about election, the elect person is in the center. As a result they fall short in pointing out our societal responsibilities on the basis of this election. Secondly, the idea of total depravity should also be extended to the whole of society. For it does not only cover our personal lives, but also the negative effects of sin upon all of society, including the political and economical systems. "A third example is the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. Good in itself as a doctrine (for God is indeed sover-

"We should not be afraid to face the questions brought forward by third world countries, for our teaching may never become isolated from real life."

RES and WCC took place in Geneva on the topic of human rights⁵. The Report of that consultation speaks about "the most helpful consultation between the two organizations ever." The differences were discussed, and the final conclusion was that perhaps the WCC should think more about the theological basis of human rights, whereas the RES and its churches should become more vigorously and directly involved in opposing the violations of human rights.

2. Cooperation in holistic mission. Holistic mission, as we saw in a previous article, wants to address the whole person in his/her whole situation. In practice it means trying to combine the preaching of the Gospel with social responsibilities, helping the poor in every aspect of their life, and being good stewards of this creation. Such holistic mission can only come about when sending churches and churches on the mission fields work together, with each other and with other churches in their own environment.

3. Reforming the Reformed faith. This means that we are always willing to relativize our formulations of the Truth, since they are only human constructs contextually determined. This may sound somewhat difficult, but it simply means that we should not hold on to our confessions at all costs. They are documents of several centuries ago, colored and conditioned by that time, and therefore somewhat old fashioned and not too applicable anymore today. Not just the wording of the confessions is to be changed, but

eign!), it fails to do justice to the idea that better than any other encapsulates (summarizes) the total message of Scripture, namely, that of the Kingdom of God."

4. One other guideline concerns the offices in the church. The offices belong to the whole people of God, and not to an elite part. Therefore, says Schrotenboer, offices should not be linked with institutional churches, but with the whole body of Christ. We meet here the same matter which we also met in Baarn '68, namely, not to restrict all the official work of mission to the church, but to leave some room for certain interdenominational organizations. Schrotenboer even wants to use the term "office" for such work. "What is needed are communal Christian presences in every life area, normed by the Word of the Kingdom, fitted to the time and place, driven by the zeal to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God."

D.G.J AGEMA

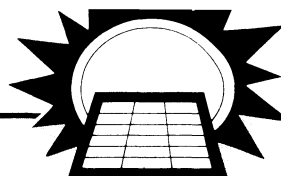
¹ Ed. P.G. Schrotenboer (Grand Rapids: Reformed Ecumenical Synod, 1977).

² C. Trimp. *Communicatie en Ambtelijke Dienst* (Groningen: De Vuurbaak, 1976), 51-2.

³ P. G. Schrotenboer ed. (Grand Rapids: RES, 1981).

⁴ *Missions and the Future — Charting New Strategies*, P. G. Schrotenboer ed. (Grand Rapids: RES, 1985). We object to the word "story" in this context.

⁵ "Report on RES/WCC Consultation on Human Rights," in *Agenda RES Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A., July 30-August 10, 1984*, (Grand Rapids: RES, 1984), 20-6.



"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which you were called in one body. And be thankful"

Colossians 3:15

Dear brothers and sisters,

Peace is something people desire! It's the object of those marches and demonstrations which are attended by a great number of people. And indeed we have the responsibility to strive for peace. "He who would love life and see good things, let him seek peace and pursue it," says Peter in his letter (I Peter 3:10).

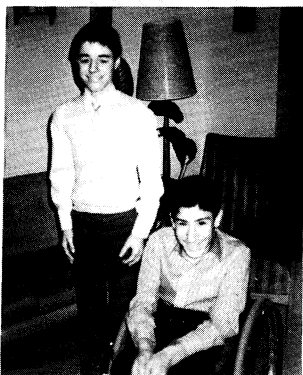
Still, as long as this world does not honour and obey the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all authority has been given in heaven and on earth, no lasting peace will be found. Only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, only when we let Him rule in our hearts and our lives, we will experience rest and peace. This peace is the sure knowledge that our sins are forgiven and that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ. When we so are at peace with the Lord, we will also be able to live in true harmony with each other. As members of the body of Christ we will strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Let the peace of Christ rule. Basically the meaning of the word "rule" is, "let it umpire." That peace calls the game, controls the actions, determines between fair and foul. The result of letting this peace be the umpire in our hearts is thankfulness! Gratitude to the LORD that He in Christ makes our life sound and wholesome. He forgives all our iniquities, then one would almost say, it must follow: He heals all our diseases!

Do you know this thanksgiving prayer?

Thou that hast given so much to me,
Give one thing more — a grateful heart.
Not thankful when it pleases me,
As if Thy blessings has spare days,
But such a heart, whose pulse may be
Thy praise!

From the mailbox:

Mrs. Dieleman from Willowdale sent me a picture of Jack and Paul which I like to include in this column. She Writes: "Paul will be 17 in September. He attends a multiple handicapped class in local High School and does very well, especially in the job training program.



He plays piano and is working on his 3rd year exams. Jack turned 14 on August 23rd and is now going to Grade 8. He will have to undergo another operation to replace two broken rods which are to support his back. He is active in wheelchair-basketball."

Our best wishes to both of you, Paul and Jack! Mrs. P. DeWit from Surrey, BC wrote a letter to thank everybody who sent cards for Arlene's birthday. (One even came from Australia!) She was also happy with the rughooking some sent last year. If there is still someone who has unfinished rughooking, Arlene is willing to finish it for you or she will try to sell it once she has finished it. She can also use some more left over rughooking wool! The address is:

Mrs. P. DeWit
20 Barnston Island
Surrey, BC V3T 5J4

Our birthday calendar:

For September there are two birthdays to remember:

September 11
MARY VANDEBURGT
2789 Lehman Road, RR 1
Abbotsford, BC V2S 1M3

Mary hopes to celebrate her 30th birthday. She keeps herself busy at home and on the farm. Do you still sing in the choir, Mary? Let me know!

September 29
PAUL DIELEMAN
307 Connaught Avenue
Willowdale, ON M2R 2M1

You have read about Paul already in this piece. Enjoy your 17th birthday, Paul!

CONGRATULATIONS TO BOTH OF YOU!

Let me now hear what God the LORD will speak,
For to His saints who in their hearts Him seek
He will proclaim His steadfast words of peace.
From chains of bondage He will grant release.
For surely His salvation is at hand,
Prepared for those who honour His command.
Then in our land may radiant glory dwell,
Which on the earth shall have no parallel.

Psalms 85:3

Till next time, the LORD willing!

MRS J. MULDER
1225 Highway 5, RR 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

The Canadian Reformed Society for a Home for the Aged Inc., Hamilton, ON₃

In our first article we introduced to you the Society and its functions. Thereafter we gave you a quick review of what has been accomplished at Mount Nemo Lodge Nursing Home in Burlington, Ontario which is owned and operated by the Society.

In this issue we want to tell you a little more about our Senior Citizen Home — Ebenezer Villa — at Hamilton, Ontario. We like to do this by listening to our Care Committee. Mrs. J. Faber reported to the membership at the occasion of our annual meeting as follows:

Upon request of the Board and on behalf of the members of the Care Committee, I may present to you a report, concerning the relationship between Ebenezer Villa and the members of the Care Committee (C.C.). But let me first of all introduce the ladies who are involved. Those are: the ladies Dekker, Oosterhoff and Ruggi from the Smithville area, and Mrs. Gritter, Mrs. Vanderhout and myself, from Hamilton. On Sept. 10, 1985, we met together and discussed the program we were planning to set up for the season 1985-'86. In the past year we were able to realize the following outings and entertainment evenings:

May 28, many of the residents made a tour to the Lilac Gardens, by car, voluntarily offered by some of the residents, relatives and members of the C.C. In the meantime a lunch was prepared by a few ladies for the home-comers as well as for those who had to stay home. It was quite late when we heard the cars returning back; the reason? One of the residents was lost in the Garden, but was found again. A real happy ending! In June, a picnic in Hidden Valley was on the program. Volunteers took care of the food and the residents enjoyed this get-together enormously. Even the swings were occupied once in a while.

On the last day of September, a comfortable bus brought most of the residents to Orangeville for a Fall trip, together with the ladies of the C.C. The ladies auxiliary of the school in Orangeville prepared a delicious lunch for all of us and also this day was well spent and appreciated. During the winter months we organized some evenings inside the Villa and with the help of many, we had the following events: Slide presentations about 'Spring' and 'Flowers' by br. Ouwersloot and br. Rein-

ink from Smithville; we rented a film from the Library about the first Dutch emigrants; also a slide presentation by Dr. K. Deddens about the Christians behind the iron curtain, was well received. From Guido de Brès Highschool and "Timothy," we received much cooperation. Altogether they came to the Villa five times this winter, all different grades and different programs with their respective teachers: very much enjoyed by the residents.

On Dec. 10 an excellent Christmas dinner was prepared by Sr. Willy Bartels from Ancaster and served by the ladies of the C.C. On the 16th of the same month the church choir of Hamilton presented a Christmas Concert. The 14th of April, Pete and Geraldine Ijsselstein treated the residents with a "show and tell" event about their work and life in Bangladesh. But let me not forget to mention one outstanding happening in the Villa; that was on Oct. 21. A so-called "talent night" was prepared. This time not by us at C.C., but by the residents themselves. At this unforgettable evening, we were delighted by the results of different skills among the people: beautiful embroidery, knittings, woodcarvings etc. were displayed and poems and stories were recited. Home-made cookies, cake and even raisinbread were real treats and the master of ceremonies was Mr. Kersten. Another resident, Mr. Veenstra organized and catalogued the books of the Library, in an almost professional manner, definitely worth mentioning.

Since May 1985, five Newsletters have been published in both languages.

The custom of a get-together on Wednesday mornings, still stands. A team of about thirty volunteers of which Mrs. VanderHout is coordinator, regularly serve coffee and Mr. P. Spoelstra faithfully accompanies the singing on the organ. For these services, we are very grateful. Once a week, people of the Villa have the opportunity to go shopping with the school bus, driven by Marg Groenwold. Each and every Monday morning, Miss Heijink takes care of the muscles of the elderly, by means of an exercise class. This class is well attended and people like it very much.

The Consistory of the Church of Hamilton made an important decision in organizing a Bible Study group for the

residents as well as for other interested people. Dr. K. Deddens has been found willing to conduct this course on the Book of Revelation this season. In our last membership meeting, we touched upon the point: "New Horizon," on which I elaborated already at that time. Permit me to say something about the spending of the \$8,800 we received so far. A kitchen cabinet, hat-rack, a "sjoelbak" and much more could be produced in the craft room, thanks to the equipment and tools which were bought with the money. Mr. Broere, one of the residents, functions as "foreman"! Also a complete chinaware could be purchased, as well as pans, pots, cutlery etc. for dinners and special occasions. Around \$900 has been set apart for arts and crafts especially for the ladies. This "New Horizon" group appointed a Board of Directors consisting of ten members: seven of them from the Villa; the other three are the ladies of the C.C. in Hamilton. Since last May, we have met seven times. The treasurer gives account of the money spent and his books are audited twice a year. Although the Group is under supervision of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, we are free in making our own plans for spending the money. So far, we received only half of that which we were allotted and we do not know yet what caused the postponement of the second half, but we will have a meeting with one of the representatives of the Ministry in the very near future, as promised.

Concerning the contact with the Ministry of Community and Social Services in which the C.C. is involved, there is no news as yet and I assume that the Board will go into this matter more broadly. A meeting has been planned for June 4, 1986 to further explore ways and means to provide limited care in Ebenezer Villa.

Coming to the end of the story, I will not forget to mention the name of Mrs. Gritter who so faithfully takes care of the food and drinks during each and every event which takes place in Ebenezer Villa.

Although not quite a formal report, this has hopefully given you an impression of the work done by the Care Committee and their volunteers, for the residents of Ebenezer Villa, done, not in our own strength, but by the grace of God.

— *To be continued*
MRS. J. FABER

Interview — the Christian Heritage Party

Question:

Why did you come to establishing the *Christian Heritage Party*?

Answer:

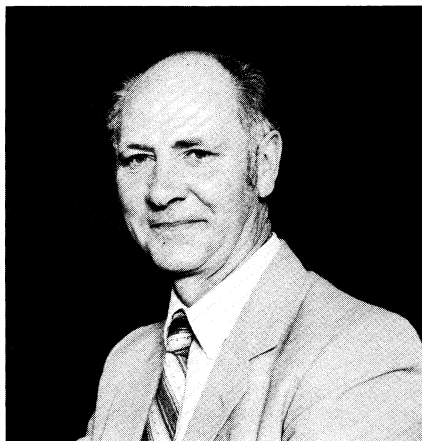
Primarily out of disappointment with the direction that has been taken by the Conservative government. I suppose we were fooled by rhetoric. We believed that we would see a change away from the Trudeau style liberalism. We hoped that we not only would receive a fundamental change in fiscal policies, but even more, a change in moral direction. Neither has happened. It has become obvious that the existing political parties, although differing in degree of socialism are all founded upon humanistic philosophies and, do not take into account the absolutes given to us in God's Word. Individual Members of Parliament may have different personal views, but they are silenced by party discipline. That is why we took the only alternative and started the *Christian Heritage Party of Canada*.

Question:

Tell us something of the history of the party.

Answer:

The party has a very brief history so far. It began with a small group of individuals whom my wife and I came in contact with through community involvement. Also through our work with ARPA (Association for Reformed Political Action) we have come in contact with politically like-minded Christians. We formed a small discussion group and talked about alternative political action. We felt more and more compelled to do something as the policies of the new federal government began to unfold, especially in regards to marriage and divorce, special rights for sexual deviants, abortion, funding for feminists, day care, etc. We began to meet on a regular basis and to draft an interim constitution. We first chose the name "Canadian Christian Party," but changed it later to "*Christian Heritage Party*." We began to solicit for membership, and elected an interim board. Our interim president Mr. B. Stilwell wrote a short article in the national Campaign Life newspaper, called the "*In-*



Mr. E. Vanwoudenberg

terim," about the need for a new political party based on Christian principles. He received a very good response from people all across the country.

The big break came when I was able to devote full time to this work. My delegate status to General Synod, Burlington, enabled me to go to Ottawa and register the party on April 17. Besides soliciting for new members we are very involved in committee work to present a complete draft of the constitution and policy papers to our founding convention to be held, D.V., in the spring of 1987.

Question:

What is your aim as a political party?

Answer:

In answer to this question let me quote from our draft constitution: a. To contend for, and attain the leadership of the Federal Government of Canada through the existing democratic process. b. To establish Biblical morality in government and to establish legislation reflecting Biblical morality and principles in all matters within Federal jurisdiction whether they pertain to domestic, social, economic, military, or political affairs.

The first clause may give the impression of ultimate conceit, but it is not. The *Christian Heritage Party* must present itself not as a movement, but as *the* alternative to the present day government, ready by virtue of its program to govern this land if and when called upon by the voters in a national election.

Question:

Why not work within the existing parties?

Answer:

I touched upon this already in the first question, but I like to elaborate on it a little further.

We must realize what we are up against. The major political parties in Canada all have the same basic philosophies. They are only different in the degree in which they implement them. They are in essence the same in that their fundamental philosophy is *humanistic*. Therefore the *Christian Heritage Party* which believes that: there is one creator God, eternally existent in three persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that further confesses the Lordship of Jesus Christ and holds the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God, and the final authority above all man's laws and government, has no common ground at all with the secular parties of our day. Working from within with the existing parties will inevitably lead to conflict.

Prior to the registration of this party one had to decide as an individual if it was possible to try to get a Christian candidate elected to government by working from within. Now that the *Christian Heritage Party* has been officially accepted on June 17 as a federal political party, one may assume that all will agree that this is where our first political responsibility lies.

Question:

Is there not a danger in cooperating with other Christians who have all kinds of different ideas, for example: a. The liberal ones that adhere to the theology of liberation, b. The Biblical dispensational views of others?

Answer:

It would be naive to ignore the dangers that exist. I agree that the biggest threat this party faces is the threat of infiltration, especially by the liberal elements.

There are, in my opinion, two ways to combat this. 1. Be uncompromising in the adherence to Biblical truth, and enshrine them in unalterable fundamental state-

ments of belief in the constitution. The party has provisions in the constitution for an integrity examination of all candidates and party officers, you could almost call it a subscription form for party executives and candidates aspiring for office. 2. The other way to combat infiltration by liberal elements is to have as many members as possible join at the local level who are committed Christians, and who in turn can serve as local executives and be delegates to the conventions. This way, when the right people are in the majority when policies are presented and voted upon, the party remains true. I see a real political calling for our own people here.

The Dutch concept of GPV is not possible in Canada, due to the differences that exist in the manner in which the candidates are elected. However, the GPV concept is applicable and desirable in the work of ARPA. This study group, although not at all associated with the *Christian Heritage Party*, can draw its strength from the Reformed community, formulate its positions, and articulate them through individual membership in the *Christian Heritage Party*. I see a beautiful opportunity for political Kingdom work here. That is why I belong to both.

Question:

Are you not afraid that a general Christian (Conservative) party will, after a while, go in an un-Biblical direction?

Answer:

First of all it should be avoided that the *Christian Heritage Party* be labeled with a name which would identify it as belonging to a certain political spectrum. Traditionally conservatism is understood to be right wing, and therefore Christian. I see as one of the most difficult tasks that lies ahead the educational process in convincing the general public that a truly Christian political party is unique in its policies, in that it cannot be equated with "ISMS" such as socialism or capitalism, but must be evaluated by the way it im-

plements the Biblical precepts of God's Word as they apply to concrete situations.

Secondly that fear is always present, but it applies to every collective attempt of man to serve God. Look what has happened to many institutes over the years. This is why I call my political involvement, *political ministry*. It must be done humbly and with much prayer to remain faithful.

Question:

Why do you start at the federal level, why not also provincially and locally?

Answer:

We decided to begin at the federal level for several reasons.

1. Legislation affecting every Canadian comes from Ottawa, and every issue will have the attention of every Canadian. As Christians we can fight together for a common cause where it will do the most good.
2. We seem to have a bit more time before the next election is called to get organized.
3. Once you have federal party status, you also have nation-wide exposure which will be of great benefit later on.
4. We believe that anyone who joins the *Christian Heritage Party* will do so out of conviction, and motivated by the desire to serve Christ. As a consequence of such dedication we may assume that these federal members will automatically join the provincial wing and the local group, if and when by the grace of God we can form them.

Question:

How do you intend to be financially viable as a political party?

Answer:

It is an act of faith. We have a membership fee structure of \$20.00 per person for three years. We hope to implement this in the future for the provincial and municipal level. This will cover the day to day operation of the party. In order to con-


test an election, much more will be needed. This we hope to raise by individual and corporate donations, and with fund raising activities. We need a minimum of 50 candidates to be officially recognized on the ballot, and in order to obtain income tax exemption status.

It is a Gideon type challenge. I believe that the hope of faith shall not deceive us. Or to quote another poem: "Make us a blessing

Let *your power* be present
In our endeavors
Redeem the times
and bring us to a *new beginning*."

E. VANWOUDEBERG

CHURCH NEWS



ACCEPTED to Zeist, the Netherlands, for work in "De Wijngaard"

REV. W. POWELSE
of Langley, BC

* * *

DECLINED to Ottawa, CALLED and ACCEPTED to Guelph, ON

CAND. P. FEENSTRA
of Hamilton, ON

* * *

NEW ADDRESS:

REV. J. GEERTSEMA
41 Amberly Boulevard
Ancaster, ON L9G 3R9

With thankfulness to God, our Creator, we are happy to announce the birth of our second child, a son:

JASON ZACHARY

Born June 16, 1986
A brother for *Amy*
Norman and Diane VanderHorst
(nee Doesburg)

5705-211 Street
Langley, BC V3A 2L7

With thankfulness to God, we announce the birth of our son:

DENNIS

Born June 17, 1986
A brother for *Kevin, Suzanne, Bradley and Robert*
Pete and Margaret Aikema
(nee VanderHorst)

18968-57 Avenue
Surrey, BC V3S 4N9

With thankfulness to the Lord the Giver and Preserver of life, we joyfully announce the birth of our child:

LORALEE NICOLE

Born July 3rd, 1986
A sister for *Melissa and Tanya*
Harry and Clara Hofsink
Box 5, Site 49, RR 2
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0