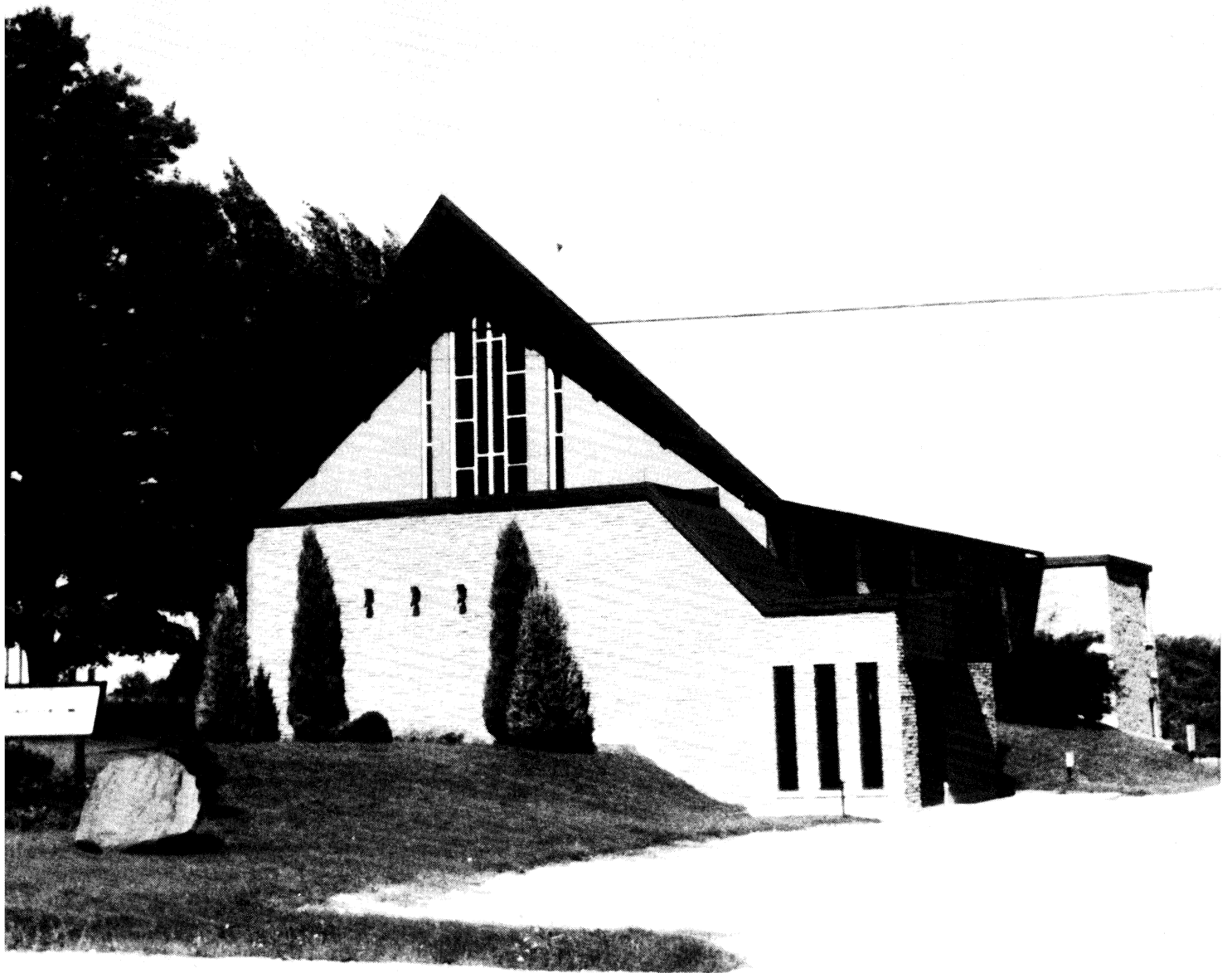
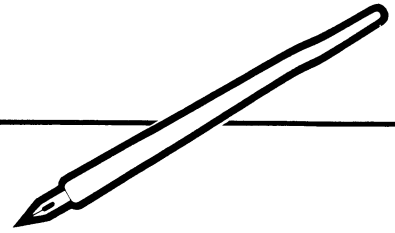


Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
Volume 36, No. 5 March 6, 1987





Dr. K. Schilder December 19, 1890 — March 23, 1952

This month, to be precise, on the 23rd, it is 35 years ago that Dr. K. Schilder passed away. One of the readers of our magazine mentioned it. We owe much to this leader in the Reformed churches, who was an instrument in the hands of the King of the Church to be a guide on the way of the obedience of faith in the matter of the gathering and preservation of the church of Christ.

When he was released from his earthly task, his friend, the Rev. J. de Waard, wrote in *De Reformatie* of March 29/April 5, 1952, "He did not want anything but to be faithful to his God, to His Word, to the confession and the Church Order adopted by mutual accord."

In the same issue, professor B. Holwerda, who would soon, a month and a week later, on April 30, follow his colleague to the heavenly rest, wrote the words that follow here. They are part of an article which he gave the title "Professor Schilder, the PEACEMAKER":

... Upon this life shines the splendour of God's providence: God knows those who are His own! But we are here also confronted with the mystery of God's providence.

It took a long time before this man with such a scholarly mind could go the way that resulted in his promotion. After this he almost immediately became professor. About six years later, when he had just started with the writing of his Explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism, it was war, and through imprisonment and going into hiding his work practically came to a standstill. When the time to work again arrived, the struggle in the church came to an explosion, and again his energy and time and attention were occupied by other things than he himself had placed on his program. When, finally, he found time again for his standard work on the Catechism, church life was in such an uproar that he had to make the most of his time in order to be able to continue writing. But in the middle of that work God took him away. God broke off his theological work, in the same incomprehensible style with which He who rules the world had already earlier interrupted that work.

And especially because his work had so many sides, and his talents were far above average, and his place so central, therefore this sudden end seemed to make Schilder's whole work a torso. For there is no one among us with the same talents, no one who is so many-sided, no one who can replace him. At Greijdanus' departure we could say: his work was finished. But at Schilder's grave we realize: his work was, according to our measurement, unfinished. And now we must all believe the providence of God, which is the guarantee that the Lord does not call any of His children and servants to Himself before their work is finished. This "Unfinished Symphony" is finished nevertheless!

God apparently had not chosen Schilder to endow us with a complete Dogmatics, and to write an Ethics. The Lord had planned a different task for him.

Moreover, that has occupied my mind more often these last years, also when there was no worry yet concerning an approaching end. With his sharp mind and broad knowledge and deeply probing criticism, Schilder made us think about a lot of points in dogmatics, as about the church and the plurality of the church. But more important than all his dogmatic remarks and *Ansätze* has been, in my awareness, the style in which he believed and confessed the church. With respect to ethics, he showed new light on many points; but more important than this all has been his practising of ethics. Not his speaking about the will of the Father, but his doing of that will is in this life the great thing. He was not the theorist who thought and systematized, but he was the scholar who believed, and therefore also stood for what he wrote. He knew the background of national-socialism probably better than anyone else. But his fight against it was not an academic debate: he went into prison for it, and he went into hiding for it when that became necessary. He had thought much about the church, her unity, her plurality; he had attacked many distinctions. But it was not a theoretical game: when things became bitterly serious, he gave himself with his whole person for the unity of the church and for her true plurality. His whole scientific-theological work was a matter of a living faith. In the world of the scholars he was always the prophet who, as all prophets, was maltreated, and would rather die for his message than deny it. . . . He was in all his work, also in his scholarly theology, the prophet who knew himself called to speak, and who was willing to die for his mission if that was pleasing to God.

Others pointed out that his death came on the very same day on which, eight years earlier, his suspension occurred. And we shall never forget the verdict: schismatic.

If there has ever been a foolish verdict, then it is this one. For eventually he was deposed because of the works of peace which he had done and which he refused to deny. Indeed, Schilder was a polemicist, restless, moved, sharp. Nevertheless, our generation has not known any man who was as much a peacemaker as he; not a peacemaker according to the world or a decadent church; but a peacemaker in the Biblical sense in which it is said of God Himself; in the sense in which Christ used it when blessing the peacemakers.

For when Paul, in Ephesians 3, spoke of Christ, who makes peace, then he was thinking of His church-gathering work. He spoke of Him who had broken down the walls of

separation through the cross. This peace which He had made, He then also proclaimed in order that the strangers would become fellow-members of the family of God, and in order that there would arise the holy temple in the Lord.

This always again struck me in Schilder's speaking, in his writing, also in his praying: he lived out of that peace of Christ that meant church and communion of saints. And as servant of Christ he fought, suffered, and prayed, for the acknowledgment and preservation of that peace. That is why he fought against every binding that was not out of Christ and would become a dividing wall of hostility. But therefore he also acknowledged every binding which Christ's church had received from Him, and he fought for the maintenance of those bindings which never feel tight.

This is what typified him in all his polemics before the war, and in his struggle against the synod. But this peace of Christ had filled his heart and mind to such an extent that he, during the last years, also in his own circles urged that peace be sought, and asked us to pray for those churches that were in danger of forgetting the peace of Christ.

If I look at him, there is in that life one straight line and an elevated style: to live out of the peace of Christ, and to preserve that peace to the end. Seen in this way, his work is not a torso; it is completely finished.

This man proved himself in his labours a living member of the church, taking everything out of Christ. And therefore now has been fulfilled for him the beatitude: Blessed are the peacemakers, because they shall be called sons of God (Matthew 5).

More than his dogmatics concerning the church is his practical confessing of the church. That is why we should not ask who has to take his place; Schilder cannot be replaced, but, fortunately, he does not need to be replaced either; he served in his time the counsel of God, and that is completely finished. But we all have to ask whether we are not called, now more than ever, to follow his example. For the times are evil, and church life is in motion. But we have the peace of Christ, which has been proclaimed to us; and to us comes the command to preserve that peace in this that it fills also our heart and mind. Fortunately, that does not depend on talents, or enormous energy, or multi-sidedness. For that peace is being proclaimed to everyone who calls himself a member of the church, even when he has only a little place and possesses just common gifts.

Let us do much praying for one another for grace; this grace, that we, now that Schilder has been buried, may keep his memory pure by loving the church in the manner that dominated his life.

Thus far professor Holwerda.

Against zealots and independentism

What follows here has been pointed out before, so I say nothing new. Nevertheless, it is good not to forget it. The struggle for the peace of Christ in the church and in the communion of saints was fought on two fronts. The speech with which Schilder addressed the brotherhood at the "School Dag" (the yearly day of the Theological School in Kampen in September, at the beginning of the study year) that was to be his last, had the title "Zelus and Zealots." Here he placed over against each other two different forms of zeal: a zeal that is from the Lord, holy, and obedient, in love, and a zeal that is not from the Lord. It is a "Zeal that is not enlightened," (Romans 10:2), a zeal without the wisdom of the Scriptural truth.

In this connection Schilder mentioned the matter of the continued reformation ("voortgaande reformatie"). That was in those days quite a debated issue. The question was: must we have only a Liberated Reformed school, political party, social organization, and so on? Or is it still possible to co-

operate with others? As I understand *De Reformatie* in those days, there was a clear direction in these matters: a positive direction. Just as deformation in the church brings along deformation in educational, political, and social organizations, so will reformation in the church bring along reformation in Christian organizational life. Cooperation with those who had first cast others out of the church was not considered possible by



Dr. K. Schilder —
lived out of the
peace of Christ

most. What I say here one can find also in many a sermon of professor Holwerda.

On the other hand, Schilder and Holwerda also warned against a condemning of those who were not that far yet, and did not see the need for such a continued reformation for all organizations. In his speech about "Zelus and Zealots," a summary of which can be found in *De Reformatie* of October 6, 1951, Schilder made the following remarks:

Let us watch for it that we do not chase the people out of the church by our zealotism. The speaker is afraid of such an attitude. God wants to gather us by His Spirit and Word, and He does not want a LITTLE church that we gather ourselves, a gathering of people who consent together (die "elkaar liggen"), who agree with one another and can comfortably talk with each other. The Church is truly ecumenical, as broad as the world is broad, in which we must honour the gathering work of Christ and with joy and self-denial must accept it. The speaker sees it in this way: when we push away the brother or sister, because they do not agree with us in everything, then we can say: go to a nice little church where you feel better at home, but in reality we push them away from the Church into hell. We must dare say to one another: man, through the grace of God we both have a place in His Church, and therefore remain here for the sake of the LORD; never run away, for outside is the hell. We must never take a difficult brother's name from our membership lists and let him go to some "other church," when we confess that there is no other church. When we do not acknowledge "church pluriformity," we must not, when dealing with people who are not our type, or with whom we cannot speak eye to eye, seek to profit from what we do not acknowledge for the sake of the confession. The speaker pointed out that he did not want to point the finger at any one in particular, no person, no paper, no group. But

there are misunderstandings. And all together we first have to see the church in her broadness, according to our confession, so broad that we dare say: here or to hell. This is where the road to restored soundness starts.

This was the one side. The other side with which Schilder struggled for true peace was the struggle against:

Independentism

In 1951, a general synod had made a decision in an appeal case, pointing at a solution in a difficult situation. The reaction of the consistory regarding that synodical decision was negative. This hurt the peacemaking Schilder, and his conclusion was that now all the churches were hurting and needy churches, in need of help. His suggestion was: a special synod might be needed to supply that help. In that connection Schilder wrote an article in *De Reformatie* of February 9, 1952, with the title "Needy Churches." He stressed the blessing of, and the

need for, the federation of the churches. Even up to three times Schilder wrote that Christ gave His life also for the church federation.

Reactions followed. They were negative. One minister wrote that if such a synod was called together he simply would not come, and that work in the congregation came before synodical work. The Press Reviews of the last issues of *De Reformatie*, namely, of March 1, 8, 15, and 22, gave Schilder's reaction against this spirit of individualism and independentism, a spirit that eventually would result in the struggle "Binnen Verband, Buiten Verband" of 1966 and following years. It was, indeed, the struggle of Schilder for peace. Not an independentistic peace, but the peace that accepts the binding to Scripture, to the adopted confession and to the adopted Church Order of the churches. Faithfulness here, that was the basis for peace. That is how Schilder fought, and was pictured by Holwerda. May that peace rule our churches.

J. GEERTSEMA

The origin of our Psalm melodies.

John Calvin

During a long time in the middle ages, the people of the Church did not sing in the public worship services. It was John Calvin who rediscovered the book of Psalms for the people of the Church and who transferred the singing in the Church from the clergy to the Church as a whole. The reformer of Geneva taught the Church again to sing her Psalms.

In the year 1537, still during Calvin's first stay in Geneva, the reformer proposed to the Council of the city the introduction of the singing of Psalms by the whole congregation, "in order to lift up our hearts unto God and to exalt His Name by songs of praise." But the Council of Geneva rejected Calvin's proposal. They did not consider the time to be ripe for such a radical change.

But in Strasbourg the victory began! In 1538 Calvin was banished from Geneva to this city, and already in the following year he had a small book of Psalms printed; it contained 19 Psalms in a rhymed version, together with the Song of Simeon, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed. The rhymed versions of 13 of these 19 Psalms were made by Clement Marot, servant and court poet of King Francis I of France, a man who had great talents. The other six rhymed versions were made by Calvin himself. The melodies to which these 19 Psalms and

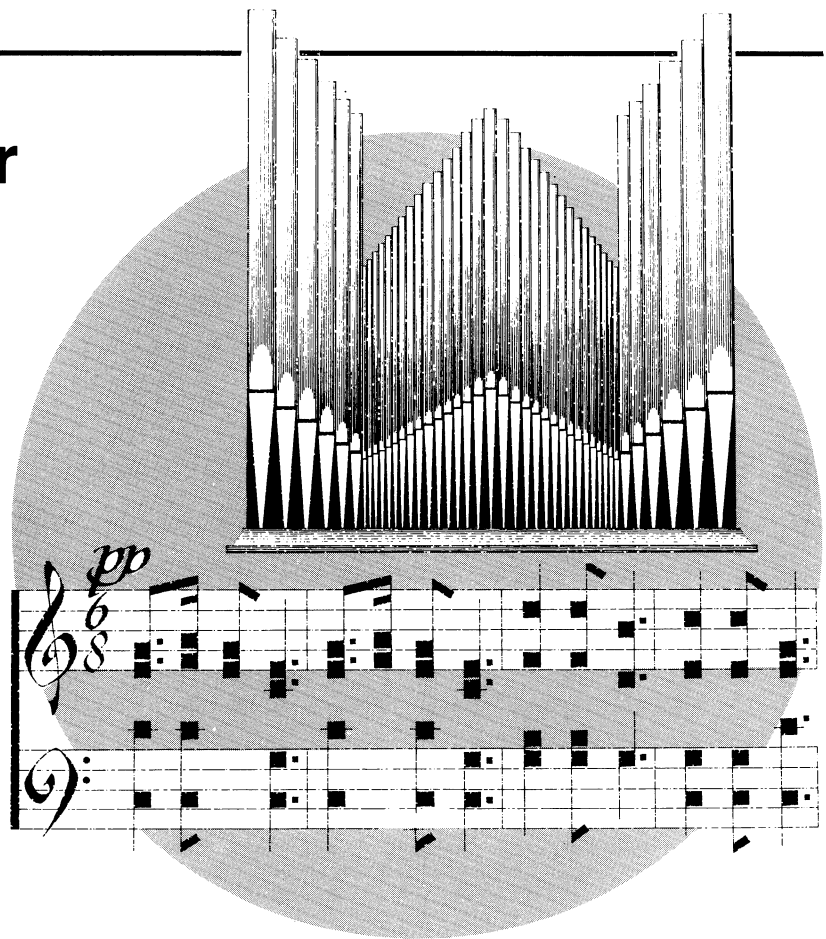
3 Hymns were sung originated mostly from Matthias Greiter at Strasbourg. These melodies disappeared later on from the *Book of Praise*; the well-known melody of Psalm 68 (the same as of Psalm 36) is the only melody from Greiter's hand, which is maintained in the *Book of Praise*. He was also the composer of the melody of the Apostles' Creed, the unrhymed version of the Twelve Articles. In the Dutch *Book of Praise* it is now Hymn 4.

In Strasbourg the basis of our singing of Psalms was actually laid.

From Strasbourg to Geneva

In 1542 Marot published another 30 Psalms. The rhymed versions of John Calvin were revised. When Calvin was back in Geneva, 49 Psalms could soon be published. Unfortunately, the cooperation between Calvin and Marot did not last very long. In the same year Clement Marot left Geneva, and he died in Turin in the year 1544. He did not feel at ease with Calvinism.

At that time only a third part of the



book of Psalms was finished in a rhymed version. In Geneva many were strongly convinced that this work had to be continued, but the difficulty was: who was willing and able to finish this work? Calvin did not consider his own poetical talents to be very great. In later editions, Calvin's own rhymings are missing. The reformer started this work and promoted and stimulated it, but he was too modest to promote his own work in this respect.

In 1548 he once visited Theodorus Beza. This young man (29) had been converted to the reformation in that same year and had come to Geneva. Calvin did not find Beza at home, but on his desk he discovered a draft of a rhymed version of Psalm 16. It appeared that Beza had started on his own to rhyme Psalms. Historians mention the fact that Beza, after he for the first time attended the public worship service in Geneva, was so impressed with the singing of Psalms that very soon he started to rhyme Psalms himself.

Calvin took the paper with him and showed it to the other ministers, who immediately became enthusiastic. Therefore Beza received the request to finish the work of Marot. That did indeed happen: in 1551 "Thirty-four Psalms of David by Theodorus Beza" were published, and in the following year they were published together with the 49 Psalms mentioned earlier.

Behind the edition of 1551 there was not only the pressure of the congregation of Geneva to finish the reformed Psalter. In Lausanne, where Beza had become a professor, lived Guillaume Franc, who was very much interested in the rhymed Psalter and who had urged Beza more than once to give priority to the work of rhyming the Psalms. But after 1551 the work stopped more or less. In the following four years only six Psalms were done, while in the years which then followed only one Psalm was added.

When in 1559 in Geneva the academy was established and Beza had moved in because he received an appointment as professor there, 60 Psalms were still to be rhymed. He was urged from all sides to finish the work, and he did indeed complete it in a short time. He did not do it as a kind of hobby or by poetic impulse. He considered the work that Marot had started to be a *duty*. He felt himself compelled to do it and accepted responsibility for the task that was given to him. In 1561 he finished the whole project. The day after Christmas 1561 permission to print the complete Psalter was received from Paris. On the same day the Paris priests rang the bells of the Church of Saint Merardus in order to disturb the public worship of the reformed people who were gathered together in the neighbourhood.

That caused a struggle. The parliament seized the occasion to hang three reformed men. Even the guard officer who had protected the reformed men against the attackers were sentenced to death.

It was a difficult time, filled with enmity against the reformed people. But



John Calvin

Beza nevertheless received the printer's privilege or permission to publish the complete Psalter. He was not dependent on the Paris parliament. With the support of the French court, the young king, his mother, and many others, he was able, in the spring of 1562, to introduce the complete Psalter also among the people of France.

The development and the growth of

the Psalter took altogether a period of more than twenty years. The many editions of fragmentary Psalters point to the fact that the singing of Psalms started already very early in the reformed public worship services. It was not delayed until the Psalter was completed.

Melodies

Already the first edition of Strasbourg, 1539, was supplied with melodies. We have already mentioned the name of Matthias Greiter, who composed several melodies, e.g. the melody of Psalm 119, which was used by Calvin for his rhymed version of Psalm 36, while Beza later on used this melody also for his rhymed version of Psalm 68.

Almost all other melodies originated in France. The composer of most of them was Louis Bourgeois, a cantor at the Church of Saint Pierre in Geneva; he had been attracted by John Calvin himself to work on the Psalms. Louis Bourgeois composed melodies on the so-called church modes.

The melodies are of an extremely high quality. As for the church modes, already in that time they had a very long history. Thus it is absolutely not true that the Psalm melodies were based on street songs of that time or on airs and tunes which were popular then. For many decades this theory has been repeated, but it is totally wrong. In a next article we hope to work this out.

K. DEDDENS

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Published bi-weekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, MB

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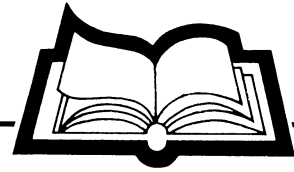
MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):
CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
1249 Plessis Road
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2C 3L9
Phone: (204) 222-5218

SUBSCRIPTION RATES	Regular		Air	
	FOR 1987		Mail	Mail
Canada		\$24.00	\$42.00	
U.S.A. U.S. Funds		\$25.75	\$40.00	
International		\$34.50	\$57.50	

Advertisements: \$5.00 per column inch
Second class mail registration number 1025
ISSN 0383-0438

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“. . . but He sent him away, saying ‘Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.’ And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.” Luke 8:38b-39

Mutual Praise

The Lord Jesus often told those whom He had healed not to tell anyone what had happened to them, but this time He chooses a different course of action. Sent from Galilee, He leaves a witness of His work behind Him. He commands the man who had been healed from the many demons to tell others how much God had done for him. And, as Luke has it, the man obeys the command given to him, except for one point of detail. Instead of telling others how much God had done for him, he tells them how much *Jesus* had done for him.

Now if, being conscious of the doctrines concerning the divine Sonship of Jesus as revealed in Scripture, we think that this is only a matter of minor significance, we may overlook what to Luke is a very significant point. To be sure, Luke does not pass any judgment on the man and his message, but very deliberately notes the change of subject in his preaching. Instead of speaking about God, the man speaks only about Jesus!

There was no doubt that the miracle involved had divine proportions. The man was a victim of many demons, and these had come back to him many times, cf. vs. 29, 30. He was a man who lived among the tombs, thus one who in every way signified the triumphant and ever-present power of death. Human chains and fetters could not bind him. But Jesus heals him in such a way that the demons descend to the pit, never to return again. Yet the Lord Jesus attracts no attention to Himself. He speaks as one sent, an Ambassador of God. Indeed, He speaks as an angel who says, “Give God the glory!”

Here we see reflected what the evangelist John also repeatedly reports concerning the words and wonders of the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 5, Jesus says that He did not come to bear witness to Himself, but to the fact that the Father had sent Him into the world, cf. vs. 30ff. So He did not come to honour Himself, but to honour the Father. As the Ambassador sent by God, He gives all honour and glory to the God who sent Him into the world. Indeed, at the climax of all His works, when He prays, “Father glorify Thy name,” the Father answers, “I have glorified it and will glorify it again,” John 12:28. The works of the Son resound to the glory of the Father.

Yet the Father also honours the Son in the works that He gives Him to do! Jesus says that “the Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father,” John 5:22, 23. As the Son honours the Father, so the Father honours the Son! In the unfolding course of all the signs and wonders during His sojourn on the earth, the Lord Jesus is steadily and increasingly honoured by the Father, just as He increasingly honours and glorifies the One who sent Him. And how does the Father glorify the Son? By showing Israel and the world

that He is the one sent to save His people from their sins!

So it may seem to be a point of minor significance to us when Luke changes the subject of the healed man’s preaching. Indeed, it represents a minor change. But what a story it tells! The man could not keep silent for he was as one delivered from the power of death. He was commanded to speak of God. But he cannot stop speaking about Jesus. It is as if the hand of providence is upon him so that he can only speak of Jesus. And indeed, the Father’s hand leads all things in this proclamation so that the Son may be glorified!

So the Father ordains glory for the Son in His way and on His time. As the Son directs all honour and praise to the Father, the Father returns with greater honour and praise to the Son, because He continues daily as a faithful office-bearer in the kingdom, and as One who daily obeys the special office and commission to Him.

Not only is this reflected in the change of subject, it is also reflected in the change of verb. Whereas Jesus instructed the man to tell others of what God had done for him, Luke notes that this man *preached* about Jesus to his countrymen. His message is a public one, the message of a herald! He preached Jesus as the one who delivers from the power of death! This was the message that the Father wanted all Galilee to hear. Here we see Pentecost proclamation anticipated! The good news of the cross is being prepared and given to the regions of the lands beyond Israel.

Yet the full message could only come when the work was completed, and the full deliverance effected. The power and authority over the demons called “Legion” was really effected in the death on the cross, when the evil one was disarmed and made a public example for all the world. Then Christ received the royal designation of divine Sonship, and was preached as the Son of God, who brought life and immortality to light through His work on the cross.

Today we know so much more than this man who was healed. The message is richer and fuller. We know of the eternal divine love of the Father for the Son, and the Son for the Father. Indeed, we know how all the Persons of the One Triune God serve each other in all their works, each adding glory and honour to the other, and each filling the other with honour and praise. We know of the full divine counsel for our salvation, and of the full victory over death and the powers of hell.

Should then not our voices here be filled with a fuller and deeper song, and a richer and more urgent message? Here was a man who had to speak, and could not but speak of Jesus! So we are sent, not to be with Jesus, but to speak and live the wonders of the glorious salvation work of the One Triune God all our days. For in all His works through and in us on earth, He ordains greater glory and praise to His holy Name!

J. DE JONG

IN MEMORIAM

Garnet John Peet, B.A., M.Div.



For the first time in the history of our Theological College the Lord took unto Himself an alumnus of our school: Garnet John Peet, who was born on Reformation day 1960 and died on February 15, 1987. He had just graduated in the fall of 1986 and was minister elect of the Canadian Reformed Church at Ottawa. He had hoped as yet to be able to enter into the ministry and had already chosen Hebrews 2:14 and 15 as the text for his inaugural sermon. Now Prof. L. Selles officiating at Garnet's funeral spoke of Christ who has freed us from devil and death.

After Guido de Brès High School had been established, Garnet Peet came as a young enthusiastic lad from his hometown Chatham to Hamilton. He had a burning desire to become a bringer of the good tidings and dreamt of being a missionary or evangelist. Now he wanted to receive Reformed education and he directed his studies of English, History, Latin, German and even Greek already in High School towards his ultimate goal. At the end of his life he would be the first alumnus of this High School to be invited as commencement speaker. He related Calvin's correspondence with the five young men imprisoned in France who had finished their studies and had been eager to spread the gospel but whose lives were ended at the moment when it pleased the sovereign and wise God to take them to Himself. Garnet did not mention his own situation; it made his message even more powerful and unforgettable.

After matriculation from High School he had entered upon studies in classical civilization and obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree at McMaster University. When in 1982 he was admitted to the Theological College, he showed himself to be an intelligent and original student. He enjoyed the studies tremendously and was especially interested in the relation between art and theology. Garnet drank the God-given cup of life to the brim: he worked during summers in Germany and spent his holidays travelling all over Europe, visiting cathedrals and museums, marvelling at the beautiful specimens of Christian art. Back in Hamilton he wrote fine papers about the meaning of the second commandment, the iconoclast

controversy in church history and — another field of intense interest — about the struggle of the confessing church in Germany against national socialism. In the meantime his zeal for spreading the gospel manifested itself in his regular visits to an old age home. Old people loved him for his joy and cheerfulness and Garnet enlisted the students of the College to speak a simple word from the Scriptures to those men and women who were sitting in the shadow of death. In congregational meetings he showed slides about the World Relief Fund and he organized help for persecuted Christians.

It must have been three years ago that the first symptoms of cancer appeared. Garnet had just happily married Konnie van Weerden, and especially for her but also for all of us in our small College community the discovery came as a shock. The Lord, however, gave Garnet the grace of remaining steadfast and even joyful. He played with his newborn son Neil and at the same time he could frankly speak about his illness and the future. He became deeply aware of the fact that not the *quantity* of the number of our years is important but the graciously granted *quality* of redeemed life.

In the beginning of his studies, his chapel talks dealt with the relation of the gospel to the ancient world. He once spoke about the figurehead of the Twin Brothers; it was on the ship of Alexandria that brought the Apostle Paul, and in him the gospel, to Rome. But at the end of his studies, when his deadly illness had become manifest, he turned to texts as Amos 3:6, Isaiah 45:7 and Lamentations 3:31-33. The LORD makes weal and creates woe, but, though He causes grief, He will have compassion. He does not willingly afflict or grieve the sons of men. Also the congregations in Ontario listened attentively to his edifying words, e.g. from Psalm 121, and felt the power of the living words coming from the lips of a dying young man.

In July 1986 Garnet wrote his last and because of his illness belated paper. The course Dogmatics had ended with the doctrine of salvation and the doctrine of the last things. Our student had become interested in what Calvin in his correspondence had written about the com-

munion of the believers with the Lord Jesus Christ. He studied a German publication of W. Kolffhaus and elaborated on a comparison between the mystical ideas of Eckhart and Calvin's Scriptural approach.

Let me quote the last page, where Garnet in the line of Kolffhaus draws "some beautiful, comforting conclusions from the *Unio cum Christo*":

Believers no longer need fear death, since they are "in Christ," who is the source of all life, forever. Since we are united to Him eternally, indissolubly, all our fears and troubles are His also. Our life is in Him, so we never need to fear losing Christ or His losing us. Perseverance of the saints is found in the *Unio cum Christo*. Our hope is not based on the future, on how far we can come along in our sanctification, but our hope is based on our union with Him. He is our hope for the future. Our anchor is in heaven and thus is sure and firm. "Bis zum Tod und über den Tod hinaus erstreckt sich die Kraft der Christus-Gemeinschaft." This also applies to our bodies, since we, body and soul, are united to Christ, the man-God. Thus the resurrection of the body is sure since He is united to *all* of us, every part of us. Every sickness of the brethren is sickness in Christ, every healing of brethren, healing in/of Christ. Even the "kleine Glaube" has Christ, all of Him, as Saviour. In the fight against sickness, against sin, against all troubles and terrors, we are united to Him, our Lord and Saviour. Praise be to God.

FINIS

One may imagine the deep emotion when Garnet wrote the last page (page 26) of his last paper. His work at the Theological College was finished; a few months later his task on earth came to an end at age 26. But *finis* is at the same time *continuatio*. Christ says: I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die (John 11:25).

Laus Deo.

J. FABER

Reflections on synodical practices₃

More letters

Article 92 of the *Acts* of 1986 tells us that a letter was received from a brother requesting "that the last paragraph of Article 63 of the Church Order be revised as follows: 'The solemnization of a marriage shall take place in a worship service.' He recommends hereby the elimination of the option to solemnize marriage in a private ceremony."

Synod duly mentions the brother's grounds for his request, lists its own considerations and decides "to deny the request."

"No harm done," someone might remark.

Not insofar as no change was made in the Church Order as a result of this request. Fortunately so.

The damage, however, is in the fact that Synod dealt with the request at all.

Since when do Synods have the right to deal with a proposal to change the Church Order submitted by a *member* of one of the Churches and not from any Church?

It is something to be thankful for that the Church Order was *not* changed as requested.

When it comes to the point, however, it is totally irrelevant whether the proposal was rejected or adopted.

The harm was done when it was being dealt with as a legitimate request to Synod.

The same has to be said regarding what is mentioned in Article 93.

Our readers know that I appreciate it when mistakes or wrong constructions are pointed out in my use of the language. I'll be thankful to anyone who gives me correct advice.

It also goes without saying that I am happy with any effort to make the language of our official documents as perfect as possible.

I am wondering, of course, why such remarks were not passed on before.

The consistories received reports in the matter of revision of the Church Order for several years. Some consistories even made copies of these reports available to the membership. Our final draft was submitted to a language expert, and the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*

had the last word before printing was done.

There still may be quite a few flaws and errors in punctuation, etc., although we are to bear in mind that our Church Order is not a legal document, a law which should be so worded that any loophole is plugged. We should strive for perfection, but should at the same time keep in mind the specific and peculiar character of our Church Order.

We can be happy that Synod decided to pass the remarks and proposals on to the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*. Here less harm is done than in the previous case.

A question remains: "What are the changes? The Churches do not know about them, but should they not know about them? Should they not have the opportunity, if so desired, to make their judgment known and approach the next general synod about the changes?" Nobody but the members of Synod 1986 knows what the proposed changes are. Here a serious danger has to be pointed out.

Synod should have answered, "Dear brother, if you have any proposals regarding the Church Order, submit them to your Consistory, with the request to take them over and to submit them to the next general synod."

When synods deal with proposals submitted by Church members, they are on the wrong track.

We turn to Article 120.

A brother objected "to the manner in which the General Synod of Cloverdale 1983 has disposed of the matter" of women's voting rights.

We are afraid that our remarks become sort of monotonous, but they have to be made, and it is my fervent wish that they may be heeded.

Synod dealt seriously with the brother's objections; yet not seriously enough. Mind you, synods are to deal seriously with matters submitted.

When saying, "not seriously enough," we refer to the fact that Synod should have refused to deal with it at all.

The Church at Smithers reacted wrongly to the above mentioned communication by asking "synod not to reopen the discussion on this matter." It

should have told Synod: "None of the Churches asked for it, so, don't deal with the personal letter."

Once again: it is totally irrelevant that Synod decided not to accede to the request made to rescind the decisions of Synod 1983 in the matter.

It is "no harm done by default."

In Article 159 we are told that a brother requests Synod to "restore the words 'only-begotten' and 'Christian' to their rightful place in both creeds and confessions."

The request was partly granted, partly denied.

What Synod should have done is refer the brother to his consistory in order to have it go with proposals to general synod.

Our reasons for this will be clear from what was written above.

The next article contains the request "to appoint a committee on revision of the Church Order."

As with the other cases quoted above, we do not go into the material contained in request and decision. It is the manner in which General Synod dealt with personal submissions that is the reason for our deep concern.

Synod denied the request.

What Synod should have done — sorry if things become more monotonous all the time — is: advise the brother to convince his consistory so that his proposals might reach a general synod in the proper way.

If he should fail to convince his own consistory, he could try to enlist the help of other consistories.

If no consistory can be found willing to take over a personal proposal, self-examination is badly needed. Then the question should be asked: "Are, then, all these consistories wrong and am I alone right, or is it the other way around?"

These are the cases which I chose to point out what the correct way is of dealing with matters submitted by church members.

The only legitimate way in which a church member can bring a matter to a general synod or to any broader assembly,

for that matter, is by way of an appeal. That is the point to which we turn now.

Maintaining Article 31 C.O.

The subheading above this part is well-known. Was it not so that our Netherlands sister Churches for a long time were known as the "Article 31 Churches"?

It was meant as a sort of derogatory way of denoting them. Yet there was a spiteful recognition of the true situation in this nickname.

For the sake of our readers we shall quote here the Article 31 of the Church Order as it can be found on page 662 of our *Book of Praise*.

Article 31. Appeals

If anyone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to the major ecclesiastical assembly; and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order.

Would you please read this article again before we continue?

Thank you.

Now, don't you think with me that we are bound to abide by this article as is the case with all the articles of our mutually agreed upon Church Order?

Yes.

Thank you.

Don't you think that it is high time that we return to the faithful observance of Article 31?

Return?

Yes, dear reader, exactly that, indeed: return.

There is in the first place the fact that only very few church members abide by the agreement that "what has been agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding."

Most times an appellant does *not* accept the decision made regarding his appeal. If a classis rejects his appeal, you can be almost sure that he will go to the next regional synod; if this regional synod rejects his appeal, you can expect him to have a lengthy document on the next general synod's docket.

Sometimes, if a general synod decides in the line of the minor assemblies and rejects his appeal, you see him start all over again and you'll find a voluminous submission at the next general synod.

No consideration for the previous decisions, no consideration for the precious time which brothers already had to spend on his appeal: he must have things his way and will work until he succeeds, never mind the time and costs to the Churches.

Article 31 not only gives the right to appeal; it also states that one shall abide by the decision made.

One appeal should be the rule.

We should not follow this world's pattern: try it all the way to the "Supreme Court," and if you lose, find another point on which you can start the whole procedure all over again.

In this respect Article 31 C.O. oftentimes is not maintained among us.

Return is necessary.

I could defend a major assembly (i.e. regional or general synod) which would refuse to deal with an appeal that had been denied already by a classis or a regional synod respectively.

Discretion is needed, of course, but it certainly is not the obligation of the major assemblies to deal with each and every appeal submitted to them.

A second point

There is a second, and even more serious point at which return to what we have agreed upon in Article 31 C.O. is badly needed.

Would you please read again the first half of Article 31?

Thank you.

Who has the right to appeal?

Right: anyone who complains that he has been wronged.

That HE has been wronged.

Several years ago I wrote about this same point, and it appears necessary to emphasize it again.

We have not agreed that someone may appeal if he thinks that something was wrong.

Nor did we agree upon it that someone may appeal if he thinks that someone else has been wronged.

For centuries Article 31 has stated that the person who is convinced that he himself has been wronged has the right to appeal.

It does not say that he *must* appeal; only that he has the right to do so.

When he heeds the warning of the Scriptures, "Why do you not rather suffer wrong?" no appeal will be made to the broader assembly.

If he thinks it to be so serious that he may not just leave and bear it, he may appeal to a classis.

What have we seen in our ecclesiastical life?

That members who were not wronged at all nor complained that they themselves

had been wronged came with documents which they presented as an appeal.

Major assemblies frequently did not ask, "Does the brother complain that he has been wronged?" but accepted at face value a submission which was presented as an appeal. Then they dealt with it, made decisions on it, and sometimes laid a burden on the Churches upon a private request made by one who neither could nor did complain that he had been wronged.

Let us, for our mutual instruction, scan the Acts of Synod 1986 in this respect, too.

In Article 44 we read of an "appeal" against certain decisions of Regional Synod of Ontario of March 27, 1985.

The nature of the case is such that we do not elaborate on the matter itself. From the Acts we must conclude that what was brought to the fore was the truth, nothing but the truth, but not the whole truth. I have many more particulars in various documents which would have shed a different light on several aspects.

What is the point here is that an "appeal" was sent by a brother who did not in any way complain that he had been wronged, and that, in spite of this, Synod dealt extensively with it. This is what we have to object to.

Without going into all of General Synod's observations and considerations, I have to make a remark about Consideration 5: "The church-orderly principle at stake is that a man who receives and retains the office of a minister should receive the honour and support worthy of the office." This is — at best — a half-truth.

What is a complete un-truth is that according to Article 11 C.O. "support ceases only when and if a minister is released from his ministerial status." Article 11 C.O. does not say this at all.

Then you can speak very impressively about a "church-orderly principle," but to use an expensive term and to be accurate and correct are still two different things. This is the more serious as so much is at stake.

We continue.

Another alleged appeal is mentioned in Article 104.

Synod observes that a brother "appeals the decision of 1983 Synod Cloverdale . . . to change the last sentence of Article 35, Church Order, 'Furthermore his office (as president) shall cease when the assembly has ended,' and to adopt a new version, which reads, 'In major assemblies the office of the president shall cease when the assembly has ended.'"

Is that now really an appeal?

Here is a brother who *disagrees* with

OUR COVER

Maranatha Canadian
Reformed Church at Fergus, ON
Photo courtesy: Cor Lodder

a decision of Synod 1983. He thinks that this was wrong.

What would have been the proper way?

Although we run the risk that some readers will say, "We heard it all before," we have to repeat it: the proper way would have been to try to convince the consistory of the validity of the objections, so that the consistory could try to have it changed in the proper way.

Synod, on its part, should have said, "Dear brother, you present your request as an appeal, but it is not an appeal. We are not allowed to deal with it."

Proceeding to Article 136, we see there an "appeal" of a brother re Contact OPC.

Judging by what Synod mentions regarding this submission, we conclude that what is presented as an appeal is no appeal at all, but simply a request to "break all contact with the OPC."

Nowhere do I find any indication that the sender complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly.

Such documents should not be dealt with.

Apart from the fact that the same objections apply in the case of Article 141

which applied above, there is the astonishing blunder that a motion to declare an "appeal" against a classical decision inadmissible at a general synod, is defeated.

Of all things!

Let us assume — for the sake of argument — that it was a genuine appeal in the sense of Article 31 C.O.

What did we agree upon in Article 31?

That someone who complains that he has been wronged may appeal to "the major ecclesiastical assembly."

We do not say "to A major assembly," but to "THE" major ecclesiastical assembly.

We knew what we did when putting it that way.

Not to any major assembly, whether regional synod or classis or general synod is one allowed to appeal but only to THE major ecclesiastical assembly, i.e. the one which is major compared to the one against whose decision one submits an appeal.

Here General Synod 1986 violated Article 31 C.O. by dealing with an (alleged) appeal against a classical decision.

More things could be mentioned.

For instance, when Synod decides "To reappoint the committee [the Stand-

ing Committee for the *Book of Praise*, VO] with the following mandate . . ." we are reminded of the very careful formulation of the early years, when we said, "This Synod did not appoint, so it cannot re-appoint either."

The proper term would have been here: "To continue the Committee."

However, we must come to a close.

What has been tried in the above is: warn against wrong trends and show the way in which we can avoid mistakes which, once they have become regular phenomena, will lead the Churches into a direction which is disastrous.

At the end I wish to repeat that there are many things in the *Acts* 1986 which meet with gratitude on our part.

Our appreciation for the work which the brothers did in Burlington West is not undone by the critical remarks we had to make.

We do not doubt that of previous general synods similar mistakes could be quoted.

Undoubtedly, I was personally involved in some of them.

However, wrong trends should be pointed out.

After all, the Churches' cause is not our personal hobby.

It is for their sakes that I wrote the above.

VO

Again: Our brotherhood behind the Iron Curtain

Letters

In recent months, I received several reactions to my article "Our Brotherhood Behind the Iron Curtain," in the November 14th issue of *Clarion*.

Most of these reactions were favourable, and I thank the brothers and sisters and also the consistories who gave money (or promised to do so) for the organization "*Stichting Steun Broederschap*." There were also some reactions in which my article was criticized, and in two cases a "*Letter to the Editor*" was written. Since these two letters together are too extensive to be published in *Clarion* in their entirety, I decided, after consultation with the editor, my colleague Prof. J. Geertsema, to summarize the criticism.

I will do so in ten points.

For the convenience of the readers,

I shall give the questions or the remarks quoted from the letters and offer my response.

Beforehand I should like to inform you that the reason why I submitted the article concerned were the requests from several sides to write something about this topic because of existing confusion. Many were not aware that we have to deal here with different organizations: the SSB (*Stichting Steun Broederschap*), the EECS (*The Eastern Europe Contact Society*) and the CFACC (*The Christian Foundation for Aid to Conscience Convicts*).

Tone

1. "We could have expected more brotherly treatment. The tone is very disappointing."

Answer: It is remarkable that also in more

than one reaction was said, "Your tone was quite mild and courteous." So I leave this matters to the readers. Anyhow, I did not mean to hurt or to offend anybody.

Preference

2. "We do not deny you your preferences, but it seems you need to criticize organizations such as the EECS and CFACC in order to convince your readers to support the organization you personally prefer."

Answer: This is not a matter of (personal) preference, but a matter of precedence. The whole intention of my article was: where lies our primary task as Reformed people? Especially the *ministers* behind the iron curtain have a very hard time. The Reformed ministers complain that there is such secularization in the church.

They fear more and more deformation and they point to the lack of good training, especially for the preaching of God's Word. Therefore, to offer help in this respect was for many years already the first aim of "Stichting Steun Broederschap." Good Reformed preaching according to the Word of God is a first requisite with a view to the future of the church.

Foundation

3. "You speak of the foundational articles of the EECS as being '(only) six'. Could you not have considered that these articles were sufficient for the aims of the EECS?"

Answer: The six articles of the foundation of the EECS are very selective. I am of the opinion that we are bound to our *whole* confession in our *whole* life and that it is wrong to select parts of the confessions, either for school life or for a political party, or for another organization. Cf. in this respect the instructive article of my colleague Dr. J. Faber in *Reformed Perspective*, 1, 2 (Febr. 1982).

Confessionalism

4. "From your own words we can only deduce that you are suffering from confessionalism, for you seem to interpret God's Word with your own peculiar view of the confessions."

Answer: The word "confessionalism" is often used today, especially by those who do not esteem the confession very highly. When I say that I am bound to the confession in my whole life, that has nothing to do with confessionalism, but is confessional faithfulness, which means faithfulness to the Scriptures.

Divisions

5. "The EECS recognizes that the Lord's church-gathering work is not limited or restricted by the divisions created by His people. He sees His Body as one and calls all His people to practice this unity."

Answer: As such, this is true, but the question is: what are the *divisions* created by God's people? Anybody who creates divisions against the Word of God is very wrong. But a division can also be the demand of God's Word, and result of *reformation*. Then it comes about through the grace of God Himself and stands over against *deformation* in the church. Besides, over against the holy catholic church, which is bulwark and pillar of the truth, are the sects. We do not deny that there can be believers, Christians, within these sects, but we and everyone else have the calling to abide by the truth and form or join a true church. We have to strive for the unity of the church of Jesus

Christ, unity with all those who believe with a true faith, but, according to Christ's Highpriestly petition in John 17, that must be a unity based on the truth of God's Word itself!

Different customs

6. "Do you think for one moment that the Christians in Macedonia were

“. . . we are bound to our whole confession in our whole life”

worried about whether it was right to aid the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem because they had customs quite different from the Christians of Gentile origin? Cf. II Corinthians 8:1 ff."

Answer: No, I do not think so at all. The difference between the Macedonian churches and those in and around Jerusalem was indeed a matter of certain *customs*. But the churches of Macedonia and the church of Jerusalem did not have differences in *doctrine*. Together they are to be recognized as true churches of Christ. They were one in *the* true faith. That unity in the true faith is not there between Reformed churches on the one side and e.g. Pentecostal groups on the other side.

Members of the household

7. "Am I right in concluding that you say that Christians who are not Reformed must be treated as belonging only to the category of 'all men' and that they are not 'fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God'?"

Answer: I did not say in my article that Christians behind the iron curtain who are not Reformed cannot be *believers*. But the whole intention of my article was to stress our primary task: to help, to encourage, to visit and to teach those who have the same contents of faith. In Galatians 6:10 Paul points also to an *order*, a *priority* in helping others. He is addressing himself to concrete churches, congregations in Galatia (1:2), and in 6:10 he says, let us do good in the first place to those who are of the *household of faith*. Here *faith* does not mean a certain attitude, but points to its *contents*. Therefore, I quoted in this respect Jude 3 where it is said that we have to contend "for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Regardless of their errors?

8. "Can you not agree that every person who truly confesses the Apostles' Creed is among those grafted into Christ's body by the sovereign power of the Word and Spirit? Yes, regardless of their errors in building on the one foundation Jesus Christ? Cf. I Corinthians 3:10-15."

Answer: If anybody says that he or she believes what is said in the Apostles' Creed, I do not want to say that he or she is an unbeliever. However, I do not have to come with a judgment on this point. I do not have to judge persons. It is a fact that Pentecostal mystic charismatics, Arminians, avowed Roman Catholics, and so on, will all say that they believe what is confessed in the Twelve Articles. But history did not come to a halt at the moment that these Articles became the official Creed of the church. Over against errors and deviations, other Creeds were made and adopted, including the Three Forms of Unity. And also these Reformed Standards express and confess the Scriptural and therewith catholic faith in a more elaborate, more specified and detailed way. Now I see it as our task to provide aid, first of all, to those who are of that same faith. But in many cases I have to discuss all kinds of *errors*. It is wrong to quote in this respect I Corinthians 3:10-15. That passage does not mean that people can have and even maintain all kinds of errors, and still build on the one foundation Jesus Christ. It means that secondary aims and purposes can come into play, whereby, however, the one foundation Jesus Christ is not rejected or undermined. What Paul speaks about is a continued building on the foundation that remains *intact*.

Visible-invisible church

9. "Many today want to limit the congregation to the local congregation, but Zacharius Ursinus does not use this limitation when he says, 'The visible universal church is the assembly of all, who at any time, and in all places, confess the teaching of Christ . . . The invisible church is first universal, because all the elect — in whatever time and whatever place they have ever lived — have the same faith and the same communion with Christ.'"

Answer: It is here not the place to discuss the whole matter of the visible-invisible church. K. Schilder always said, "Of course there is a lot invisible in the church, but be very careful to call the church as such invisible!" Ursinus stressed in his explanation of the word church (ecclesia) the *gathering* of the church and he quoted

many texts, especially from the New Testament, which point to the *local* churches. I agree with my colleague Prof. J. Geertsema in the Year End Issue, 1986, of *Clarion* in his response to the Rev. S. DeBruin that "ecclesia" with only a few possible exceptions always indicates the visible local churches. So I do not want to limit the congregation to the local congregation, but I must say, the local congregation plays a very important role.

Interdenominational

10. The secretary of EECS writes, "You seem to have a great dislike for the fact that we are 'interdenominational.'" He mentions that the EECS

(SOEK in the Netherlands) is officially supported by four "conservative" denominations (our sister churches in the Netherlands are not mentioned). In the end of the letter he writes that the "*Stichting Steun Broederschap*" has a very limited program compared to the EECS, which is working on a much broader scale.

Answer: I have not said that it is wrong to help other Christians, or even non-Christians. To show Christian compassion is always our calling. However, indeed, I do not favour "*interdenominational*" cooperation in all kinds of organizations. I also dislike the term "*denominations*," because that is not the way in which the

Bible or the confession speaks. Once again, I want to stress what I see as our first task: to help our Reformed ministers behind the iron curtain, to give them commentaries in order to be able to deliver good Reformed sermons, and to help the people of these churches also in other respects. For many years those who were involved have worked hard. They deserve our support! Helping them, we help also our oppressed brotherhood behind the iron curtain.

I will end by again giving the readers the address of "*Stichting Steun Broederschap*": Postbus 701, 9200 AS, Drachten, the Netherlands, giro 39.75.627.

K. DEDDENS

NEWS MEDLEY



When I received the previous issue of *Clarion* I was amazed at the number of vacancies there are or will be at our schools. Those brothers and sisters among us who choose the teaching profession will not have to be afraid that they won't have a place where to work and to apply their acquired skills.

It is not only so that there are quite a few vacancies at present but the number will rather increase than diminish in the future. There will be a new school in the Flamborough area in Ontario, although this is not completely new in the sense that the children who will go there did not attend one of our schools before; they come from the John Calvin School in Burlington which cannot provide adequate room for all the students that have to be accommodated.

As for the number of children that will ask to be instructed in the fear of the Lord, there is no decrease in their numbers either. In Langley it was reported that the 200th baby was baptized recently, the 200th since the institution of the Church there some ten years ago. No different report comes from Burlington West, in whose bulletin we read that the past year no fewer than 27 children received the sacrament of holy baptism. There are several Churches where the praises of the covenant God are sung at the baptismal font if not every Sunday then most certainly a few times per month on the average.

The size of our congregations has something to do with this as well.

We mentioned Burlington West.

The situation there is pictured quite well in the following sentences. "We have also reason to start thinking what should be done in the future. A congregation of 665 members with many children and catechism students does not need to grow much anymore or it becomes too much for one minister With the Flamborough school opening in September 1987, the Lord willing, I think we may expect further growth in membership. Our church building is large enough! That is no problem — I think that this is part of the problem, VO — but we might lose sight of each other as brothers and sisters."

Similar sounds come from Burlington East.

"Recently we discussed at consistory and council meetings, how to improve the pastoral care, seeing, e.g. the large

number of older people in our congregation. The Rev. Van-Dooren was asked, and he was found willing and prepared to assist your present pastor and teacher, for which I am thankful."

The Ebenezer Church has 65 members who are 65 years or older; the total number of widowers and widows is 22.

The Fergus Church — as mentioned before — struggles with the problem of an auditorium that becomes too small, so to speak, since the membership is growing. People attending the services have already to sit in the lobby, since it is too dangerous to put chairs in the aisles: if anything happens, chairs in the aisles will cause people to stumble and panic should they have to leave the auditorium in a hurry.

"The consistory . . . discussed the matter of 'overcrowding' in the church building . . . There is no easy solution. It is either an 'institution' elsewhere or a 'division' of the congregation into separate wards with four services. Of course, the way of 'institution' is to be preferred. The consistory would appreciate suggestions from the congregation in this matter."

Not only did suggestions come from the congregation, there is also some action in this respect. We read that the "consistory is grateful for the initiative at Grand Valley and hopes this will be blessed."

What is this initiative?

One bulletin contained the following invitation.

"Invitation."

"There will be a meeting, the Lord willing, Wednesday January 21, 1987 at the Grand Valley Presbyterian Church on Main Street, Grand Valley. All brothers and sisters in Grand Valley, Belwood, Waldemar and surrounding areas are invited to attend this meeting to discuss starting a new congregation in Grand Valley."

For those of our readers who may be unfamiliar with the names of the places mentioned, we insert the information that Grand Valley is west of Orangeville and that Belwood is north of Fergus. Waldemar is somewhere close to these, if I am not mistaken. Anyway, it will be clear that members from both the Fergus and the Orangeville congregations were invited to this meeting.

The result was that "A committee has been set up to in-

investigate the level of interest in this proposal.”

“Is there a possibility of having another sister Church somewhere in China or Japan?” I thought, when reading in the bulletin of the Smithers Church that “Br.A. left for the far East.” But no, it became clear that the brother had left for the Church at Smithville. Thus I was left with another illusion shattered.

Let us stay with the “growth-problem” for a little longer.

This time we are not speaking of Canada but of Australia. The interest in the life of our sister Churches on that continent is growing among us and this is not caused by the fact that the poor Aussies lost the America Cup. It is caused by an intensifying of the bond between our two federations not in the last place by the Canadian ministers that went there or perhaps are going there.

On the south coast we find Albany. Their consistory report contains the information that they received a letter “from the Church at Launceston regarding the forming of a second church at Launceston.” As our readers may know, Launceston is on the island of Tasmania, all the way in the south-east of Australia.

Albany itself, too, has questions what to do seeing the growth of the congregation. They have passed the 500- mark, and the consistory discussed the “Workload of the minister: It is decided to continue the same arrangement as 1986, the minister will have one free Sunday per month, at least for the first six months.”

The same consistory accepted “a proposal to have decisions recorded in a special book.” I am wondering how many consistories took the same decision and what has come of it. Would be interesting to investigate this more thoroughly.

A little to the north we find the three — after a while four or even more — Churches in the Armadale area. No harm meant when I call it the “Armadale area.” After all, this is the Church that lies between Byford and Kelmscott, isn't it?

The following information does not concern the congregations as such but the schools. There they accepted “*in principle* the expansion of the John Calvin High School into Grade 11 in 1988 and Grade 12 in 1989.” This, we are warned, is “critically dependant on the availability of staff.”

Back in our own country, we quote from what Rev. Moesker writes in the London bulletin in connection with the presence of the Rev. Hofford and an elder at the Classis Ontario South of December 10, 1986.

“The Lord willing and circumstances permitting, this small congregation hopes to apply to the March Classis for admission into the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches. I should add here that Grand Rapids has done much of the work in guiding the Tri-County Church towards affiliation, and that at present they have contact with and have visited another group in the State of Virginia.”

Our *Clarion* contained the Press Release of this Classis. Unfortunately, there was something in what this Classis did that seems to be completely out of line.

It says in the report, “Chatham draws attention of Classis to an inaccuracy in the Acts of Synod Burlington West 1986, p. 131 . . . Classis adopts Chatham's suggested correction and decides to include it in the Acts and the Press Release.”

It is possible, of course, that I misunderstand the Press Release and that this Classis corrected something which a previous Classis had done or stated wrong; but if it means what it says, this is another trend against which a warning has to be sounded. How in the world can a Classis include in its acts a correction made in acts of a General Synod??? Is it not a simple truth that inaccuracies in the acts of a General Synod can be corrected only by a following General Synod? No consistory even can make a correction in the acts of a Classis; all it can do is point out that a certain Classis received the wrong information or misunderstood the information it was provided with.

In order to prevent misunderstanding: strictly speaking, a following General Synod cannot correct the acts of a previous one; it can only include in its own acts the statement that a certain part of the acts of its predecessor contained wrong or incomplete information.

Back to London.

Rev. Moesker also mentions a ministers' workshop which was held in the College building and where the brothers spoke, among other things, about the Psalms in the worship services.

“One of the concerns expressed was a suspected lack of interest for the Psalms among some of the younger generation, and it was felt that this was due to lack of attention for the Psalms in the home. Do we still sing or listen to the Psalms in our homes, or do we let other music and media and activity take over so that the Psalms are pushed back to Sundays only?”

It is a blessing that our children learn the Psalms at school as well and that they have to memorize a stanza every week, at least in the lower grades. Let the teachers not discontinue this too soon. It will not harm even the Grade fivers or sixers in any way if they still have to memorize Psalms.

Why is it that many of our elderly brothers and sisters can quote line upon line from the rhymed Psalms they learned in their youth, also when their memory fails them in many other respects? This is because their parents as well as their teachers insisted on it that they memorized the songs faithfully. They reap the benefits in their old age and not only then!

The same is to be said about memorizing the Catechism. Our ministers will have the experience that several of the students want to say the Catechism “in their own words.” It oftentimes amounts to this, that they did not memorize it but just looked it over superficially and then thought they knew it. When they write it down they frequently say exactly the opposite of what the Church confesses in reality.

In many families there is the good custom that after the evening meal some Psalms are sung. It is a custom which should be encouraged and continued. Especially when the stanzas are sung that the children have to learn for school, their interest grows. Besides, this is one of the means by which the bond and unity between family and school as well as Church can be strengthened and demonstrated without much ado.

The Toronto Home Mission Committee “discussed the possibility of getting more people from outside our congregation to the worship services. A suggestion was made to have a special ‘guest Sunday.’ However, it was felt that such a special Sunday is not necessary since guests are welcome in every worship service. The committee hopes that we will all use every opportunity to bring friends and neighbours into the services so that they, too, may hear the true Gospel preached.”

Certainly, the committee was right when rejecting that suggestion and we should keep in mind what they write about it. As soon as we start with special Sundays, we are on the wrong track and lose sight of “the extraordinary weight and importance of the ordinary things,” to use someone else's expression.

In Fergus the Home Mission Committee reports about “*Perspective*: “we placed a subscription for area doctors' offices, libraries, Government offices and hospital. That is 10 in total.” Something to remember when our home mission committees ponder the question what to do with all the money that is put at their disposal. Or is it a pittance?

The beginning of the year is the time when the budgets are being discussed with the congregations and when the financial statements are distributed in order that every one can see how the congregation has been faring financially, at least as far as the voluntary contributions and expenses are concerned.

Although it comes as “mustard after the meal,” as they say in the old country's language, I still want to pass on that in Burlington South “After some discussion the consistory will in-

— continued on page 111

The Bible in the curriculum

Perspectives on teaching and learning²

“The earth is the LORD’s and the fulness thereof.” Psalm 24:1

Certainly, the Bible in the school, you will agree. No opening devotions can take place properly with a closed, let alone an absent Bible; no family worship can be called truly *worship* if the Bible would remain closed. Daily Bible reading will form our minds and fill us with God’s wisdom.

But do we not run the risk that our schools and our families become places of piety, out of touch with reality. Should we not make sure that our schools do not become places of sweet religiosity at the cost of the quality of education?

Rest assured: proper use of the Bible does not allow such things to happen. The Bible does not place man nor the child in the center of things. The Biblical Hallelujahs are totally different from those of the world around us; neither does the Bible speak glowing words about souls saved. The Bible is not a handbook for the study of the human soul. The Bible contains the books of the Old and the New Testament, i.e. of the Old and the New COVENANT.

The Bible speaks to us of God’s covenant with His people, and that included the whole life of the Israelite. The LORD concerned Himself with stubborn oxen as well as with burnt offerings; with cleanliness and holiness of clothing as well as with liturgy; with the division of the land as well as with the building of the temple. Nothing, nothing at all was outside the authority and the concern of Jaweh. When we speak of the covenant we must include all of life, both secular and sacred, both work and prayer, both politics and liturgy.

The New Testament does not change this message. Christ did not gain salvation for our souls only; Christ has redeemed the whole of life in all its aspects.

We are not called merely to sing constantly from the early morning to the late evening; nor to meditate, or perhaps doubt it all. The LORD demands that we walk with Him in all of life, also in those “secular,” those non-religious things such as addition and division. And when we live all of our lives under the wings of

God’s covenant, then the voices of praise will burst forth every now and then: unsuspected, often emotionally charged psalms, resulting from a daily working with and in God’s great creation.

Consider Psalm 104. The poet looks around in the world; he studies subjects such as science, nature study, social studies, economics. And in this way he discovers God’s great works of creation. He is amazed about the beauty and the intricacy of things — and he shouts his hallelujahs in praise of the Creator. He speaks with awe of the phenomenon of light — how have other poets sung of the beauty of the setting sun. . . . How interested are the children when we show them experiments with light and its spectrum. There are the heavens, reaching like a tent across the clouds — there are the winds and the storms — there are our studies of climate and weather. The psalmist has noticed the woods, the birds; he knows of vineyards and wine to gladden the heart — of bread and God’s great miracle in providing for it all. . . . Yes, indeed, we are still reading Psalm 104.

And then there is the beauty of life, there is the oil which makes a face attractive. There are the plants in their infinite variety and colour shadings, maintained by the Lord Himself: He waters them abundantly.

Biology: wild goats, badgers, lions, rabbits and squirrels. Geography — how difficult many of these concepts and ideas — how interesting (and awesome!) to study the movements of the planets and the stars. Yet “Thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. . . .” And do not forget man himself: his work to cultivate the earth, his ships, his technology, his inventions. “O LORD, how manifold are Thy works!”

It is, indeed, a privilege to be allowed and enabled to show these things to the children, be it at home or at school. And the older we become the more we realize that there is no end to the study of God’s wonderful creation.

At school the children will hear about

all this, they will write about it, they will read about it. They will try to draw the things they see and hear about. They will sing of these things. They will work with the numbers which God has set as number and measure of His creation — they will have to solve those challenging (and at times frustrating) arithmetic problems according to rules determined by God otherwise you will have a wrong answer. Mathematics is not a neutral subject. Even though during a math lesson there might not be any mention of it, nevertheless the children are working with one of God’s created realities, the world of number.

Number is not derived from nature, nor from man. Yet much of modern secular thought might well speak admiringly about God’s creation, but it does not acknowledge and honour the Creator. The great danger of the 20th century is that we come to believe that there are aspects of life, aspects of reality, aspects of learning which we can know independent from God, and which have nothing to do with God. Many have been captured by the lie of objectivity and factuality, as if objects and facts could exist outside God’s attention.

The Bible in the curriculum. Yes, indeed, without the Bible there cannot be a true curriculum. Parents and teachers must show the children the great deeds of their Father in all of creation, in all of life. Only then can they also join in the Scriptural hallelujah chorus of the poet of Psalm 104.

Therefore the works of God must be examined and studied most carefully. The children need to be introduced properly and thoroughly into that fascinating world of knowledge. The Bible in the curriculum means hard and intensive work and study, and a true and genuine love for the various subjects — amazement and admiration for the great works of God.

T.M.P. VANDERVEN

Based on A. Jansse: *Het Eigen Karakter der Christelijke School*. Hoofdstuk II: De Bijbel op School, pp.35-40. J.H. Kok, Kampen, 1935.

NEWS MEDLEY — continued

investigate the possibility of extending a dental plan to the minister and his family as part of the salary package for this coming year." Especially when the minister's family is a growing family, such assistance will be most welcome.

The consistories also dutifully informed the congregation about the amount that is to be contributed towards the superannuation fund. Concerning this fund there is still a persistent misunderstanding, as if the ministers receive a retirement income from this fund. Such a wrong understanding is fostered when we read in a consistory report: "Super Annuation: A schedule of payments to retiring ministers."

No, brothers, the payments are not a payment to retiring (or retired) ministers. They are payments to the Church that has to provide for its retired minister. The ministers themselves have nothing to do with this fund or its finances. The fund is a piggy-bank from which the Churches draw, not the ministers. It is a matter of principle.

Speaking of ministers, we pass on that for the A. Van-Delden family the application for immigrant status has been "completed, and the 'green cards' should be in our possession by the time you read this." Another worry gone. Our colleague can cross the border again without having to be afraid that he won't see his family or congregation again unless they join him on Canadian territory.

If anyone speaks longingly of "the good old days," he should read a book they are preparing in Carman about the history of Church and of School. Once in a while we get a little sample of what we may expect. One of these samples been given here for your serious meditation, be it not a transcendental one.

"Do you still remember . . . that the consistory decided after lengthy discussion to purchase a vacuum cleaner and that the congregation was requested to raise the monthly pledges accordingly? . . ."

VO

The Church of Armadale receives a new minister

The Rev. W. Huizinga and his family arrived in Armadale, Western Australia, on Friday, December 5, 1986. After having been introduced to the congregation on the following Sunday, they were officially welcomed on a special festive congregational meeting held on Friday, December 12.

Br. W. Geurts, Chairman of the Consistory, opened the meeting with prayer and Bible reading after which he expressed words of gratitude to the Lord for bringing the Huizinga family safely in our midst. He again welcomed them to Armadale.

Many words of welcome and good wishes were extended to our new minister and his wife in a variety of ways.

There were a number of speakers: Rev. K. Bruning our emeritus minister, Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur of the Church at Kelm-scott, br. J. DeVos of the Church at Byford, and br. J. Diek of the Church at Albany.

A letter of welcome and congratulations was received from the Church of Launceston, Tasmania. Even a letter from Rev. and Mrs. W.W.J. VanOene, of whom we still have fond memories, was read out. It was good to hear how sister churches and individuals share in such an event, showing the bond of faith which binds us all together.

Mention must also be made of the telephone call from br. A. Witten on behalf of the Church at Hamilton, Canada, expressing their congratulations. This was truly appreciated by the family and the Armadale congregation.

Rev. Huizinga with his wife and children in front of the Armadale Church pulpit



During the evening, the Lord was praised in music and song for His goodness. This was done with much enjoyment by the school children, Youth and Adult choirs, and even the youth clubs together.

The congregation could meet and talk with the new minister and his family during the extended coffee break.

Near the end of the evening our Canadian minister was provided with a change of clothes so that he could look like a typical Australian, from thongs, shorts, T-shirt to sunhat and glasses.

At the conclusion of this festive eve-

ning Rev. Huizinga replied with words of thankfulness to the Lord and expressed his appreciation for the warm welcome extended to him and his family. After the singing of a Hymn of praise Rev. Huizinga closed with prayer to our heavenly Father.

On the following Lord's Day, December 14, 1986, in the morning service, Rev. K. Bruning installed Rev. W. Huizinga as minister of the Word in the Free Reformed Church of Armadale, WA. The text chosen for this service was taken from John 12:36A, "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be sons



A welcome song from the ladies!



The youth sing a welcome song

of light." The theme of the sermon was: "The light that shines in this dark world." In this festive church service the congregation was privileged to witness the public profession of faith of a large number of young people, the administration of Holy Baptism, as well as the installation of our new minister.

In the afternoon service Rev. Huizinga conducted his inaugural service as pastor and teacher and had selected as text for the preaching I Peter 2:9, 10, "But you

are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy." The sermon was under the theme: "Your identity and purpose as Church of the Cornerstone." This was expounded under the following points:

1. You are entrusted with rich titles

2. You are enlisted as messengers

3. You are encouraged to stay humble.

So, on this beautiful Sunday, minister and congregation were united and instructed. We were reminded of our own identity in the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessings of our Lord are overwhelming. May the light of His grace shine into our lives and the fruits of thankful obedience be manifested to the praise of His holy Name.

A CHURCH MEMBER

PRESS RELEASES



"Anchor" Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, January 9, 1987

The chairman br. J. Witten opened the first meeting of the new year with Scripture reading and prayer.

The chairman then welcomed all the members, especially the new member from Burlington South, br. Jack Vanderhorst, who is replacing br. Wiebe Siphema as local representative and as board treasurer. The chairman thanked br. Siphema for the many years of dedicated service that he devoted to managing the finances of the association, and of the group home.

The secretary read the minutes of the last meeting and after some points were discussed, the minutes were adopted.

The "Anchor" Home director br. Daryl Kooiman presented his report. The Home

has received a new resident, Grace Homan; and another handicapped person will be staying at the Home temporarily. A ramp has been built to facilitate wheelchair access into the Home.

From the Church at London we received a gift for the support of the Anchor Home. We are grateful that as our obligations expand our Canadian Reformed community is responding to help meet our increasing financial needs.

Now that we have our own house for the Anchor Group Home the Building Committee has been kept very busy with building a ramp, making needed repairs, and establishing a program to pursue the necessary zoning change and planned renovations.

The Summer Camp Committee reported that the coming summer camp will be held from July 6th to 18th. The

board decided to purchase a new large tarp shelter for the camp because the existing one is no longer functional or large enough.

The Advisory Committee presented its report, which included several suggestions for the Building Committee. The committee especially stressed the need to start the planned renovations as soon as possible because the group home is now full. A large portion of the funds for the renovation will be coming from the profit from the upcoming mass choir concert which is being donated to the Anchor Association.

After question period the meeting was closed with the singing of a psalm and prayer.

K.J. SPITHOFF,
Correspondence Secretary

Canadian Reformed Teachers' Association. National meeting of governors held on February 6, 1987, Hamilton, ON.

1. The chairman, A.J. Hordyk, opens the meeting and reads Psalm 135.

2. In his introductory remarks, he welcomes all the governors. R. Klaver of Smithers, BC is absent with notification. R. Lenting of Watford, ON, will be attending on Saturday.

3. The agenda for the meeting is adopted. Adjournment for Friday evening is scheduled at 10:00 p.m. Reconvening is set for 9:00 a.m. Saturday.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting of the executive committee, as sent to all governors, are adopted.

5. Incoming correspondence is dealt with.

6. The secretarial report of the past year is read by C. Hoff and adopted as read.

7. Principal's report. The principal, T.M.P. VanderVen, presents his Progress Report. The work in the College continues steadily and with good results. At 10:00 p.m. the meeting is adjourned.

8. The national meeting reconvenes at 9:15 a.m. after the reading of Psalm 127 and prayer. The principal continues with his report and also presents the 1987/1988 Calendar. He is thanked for his meticulously prepared submissions.

9. The treasurer, J. Gelderman, receives the floor and presents the Financial Report as well as a preliminary Budget



Board of Governors meeting of the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College Association, February 6, 7, A.D. 1987. Front row (l-r): J. Tillema, Chatham; W.F. Horsman, faculty member, Burlington; C. Hoff, secretary, London; J. Gelderman, treasurer; A.J. Hordyk, president, Burlington; A. Viersen, Barrhead-Neerlandia; J. Tenhage, Brampton-Toronto; T.M.P. VanderVen, faculty member (principal), Hamilton. Back row (l-r): A. Witten, faculty member, Hamilton; H. Moes, Fraser Valley, William of Orange Christian School; W. VanAssen, Carman; E. Helder, Niagara Peninsula, John Calvin School; H. Kottelenberg, Orangeville; W. Gortemaker, Winnipeg; W. Bartels, Ancaster-Hamilton; R. Lenting, Watford; C. Lodder, Fergus-Guelph; J.F. de Leeuw, Fraser Valley John Calvin School; absent R. Klaver, Smithers.

for 1987/1988. Even though there was no financial short fall in the past year, we should not continue to rely on substantial donations. The membership base must be increased in order for the Association to remain viable.

Nevertheless it is with gratitude to the Lord that we may continue from year to year. It is decided, after a lengthy discussion, to leave the membership fee at \$185.00 per year.

10. Lunch Break. A copious meal was prepared by a few ladies of the Hamilton congregation, including some students at the Teachers' College. Thank you, ladies! It provided a good opportunity to meet on an informal basis the teaching staff of the College and their spouses.

11. The meeting continues with a presentation by J.P. Kuntz of the Building Committee as established by the Association. He explains the options available to the Association with regard to new facilities for the College. Negotiations for possible land purchase will continue. The governors will be consulted before any commitments are made. J.P. Kuntz and Building Committee members are thanked for the work done to date.

12. In his report, C. Hoff of the Public Relations Committee urges all governors to continue promoting the Teachers' College among the churches. Areas where there is no support as yet will be approached.

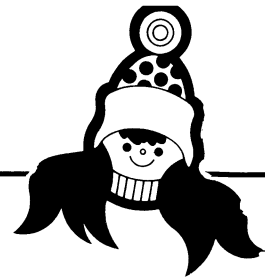
13. A discussion takes place regarding the definition of membership. Where possible, societal membership is desirable.

14. W. VanAssen closes the meeting with prayer.

W. (BILL) GORTEMAKER



Brother J.J. Kuntz giving some information to the Board of Governors, about the proposed site of the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College building.



Hello Busy Beavers,

Today we have 5 new members joining our Club. Isn't that super?

Do you think you could guess how many members we have now?

I'll tell you. I got out my calculator and found we have 289 Busy Beavers! Don't you think that's just great!

We live all across Canada, and a few of us in far away countries like Australia, Brazil and Indonesia.

But we can all share the Bible quizzes, and poems, and letters, and riddle fun, and puzzles, and contests, you name it!

Lots to keep us busy and happy, don't you think?

And I'm sure proud to be Aunt to so many nieces and nephews!

Here is what Busy Beaver *Edie Alkema* wrote:

*Dear Aunt Betty
Do you like rainy days? I sure don't.
Here is a poem about one*

Rain

*One Rainy day,
One day without play.
But here comes the sun,
It's time for fun!*



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Josh Rosa*. We are happy to have you join us. And I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy your picture. Write again soon, Josh.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Jessica Beintema*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already sending us a puzzle. Keep up the good work! Bye for now, Jessica.

Welcome to the Club, *Evelyn Vanderpol*! Of course you may join us. And thank you for an interesting puzzle. Do you like to work at the computer, Evelyn? Do you have other hobbies too? Write again soon!

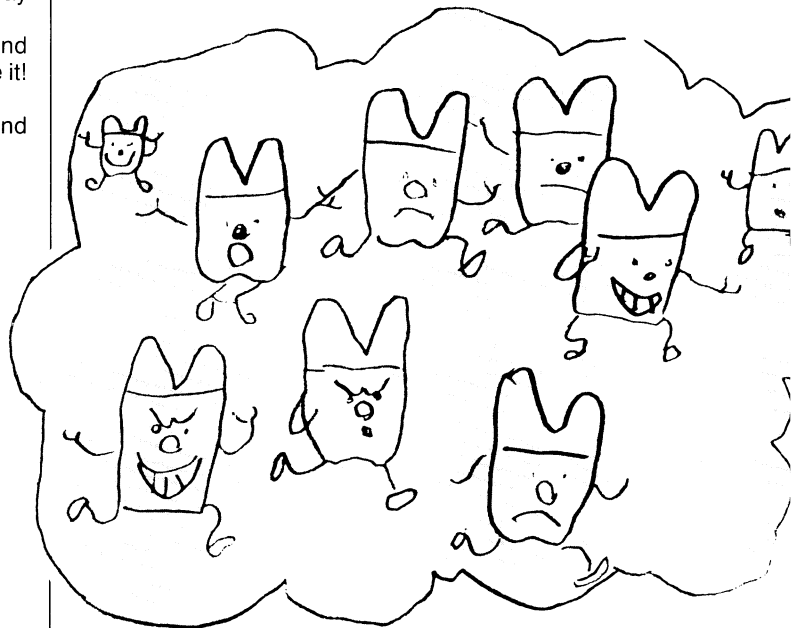
And welcome to you, too, *Darlene Vanderpol*. Thank you for the wordsearch and your nice neat letter! What do you plan to do in the March break, Darlene? Bye for now.

Welcome to the Club, *Alisha Stroop*. We are happy to have you join us and we hope you'll have fun joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Did you read about the reward for pictures in last time's "Our Little Magazine," Alisha?

Hello, *Edie Alkema*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for the poem, Edie. Did you like winter, Edie, or are you looking forward to spring-things-to-do?

Did you dream last night, any of you?
Look at the picture by Busy Beaver *Josh Rosa*.

I dreamed about teeth men



Quiz Time!

BIBLE CODE QUIZ

by Busy Beaver *Evelyn Vanderpol*

KEY

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
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