



Clarion

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Questions concerning the Jews₁

Introduction

Once again Israel is in the centre of attention. Various problems have arisen regarding the people of the old covenant people — problems which cannot be easily solved. Millennialists have all kinds of ideas and theories concerning the Jews, giving us an excess of subject material relating to many Scripture passages and providing quite a number of exegetical problems. Moreover, the present state of Israel has given rise to many questions in connection with this. These questions are not so much related to the present status of Israel as to the future of the country and its people. And it is of great importance what the Jews themselves think of the fulfillment of God's promises. In other words, what kind of Messiah expectations are prevalent in Israel? If I am not mistaken, there are essentially three questions demanding an answer:

1. What is the Scriptural information about Israel's future as a nation?
2. How should we regard the present-day development of the state of Israel?
3. Which thoughts do the Jews themselves entertain concerning the Messiah?

We have very briefly formulated the questions, and it will become evident that they will overlap here and there, but at least we will have a guide to assist us in the maze of the numerous problems that have arisen.

Scriptural information

In the first place we shall deal with the information provided by the Scriptures concerning the future of Israel as a nation. Some have expressed as their opinion that with the coming of the Lord Jesus, Israel as nation has completely lost its special position. According to them "Israel" is today the New Testament church, nothing else. All the promises which the LORD gave to Abraham and his seed have been totally deflected to this New Testament church. According to them, there is absolutely no more hope for a national Israel. The late Dr. G.Ch. Aalders in his publication *The Restoration of Israel according to the Old Testament* offers as his opinion that after the coming and death of the Messiah, Israel's national existence as a people was ended completely and forever. He speaks this way absolutely and without any reservations. The Old Testament, according to Dr. Aalders in this pre-war book, knows nothing about an awaited earthly future for Israel: "The earthly future of Israel, which was foretold in the Old Testament *has*

already arrived according to the word of prophecy, and has already been annulled."

Many years have passed since this book by Dr. Aalders made its appearance. There has been a war since then which seemed to have made an end of the Jews. Hitler, Eichmann and their satellites managed to destroy no fewer than six million Jews, a slaughter which has no equal in history. However, a miraculous event took place: not only did a remnant of the Jews survive (even though in Europe, for instance, only 28% of the pre-war population), but a large number of them managed to unite together and settled in the new state of Israel. On May 15, 1948, the State of Israel was established as an independent state in Palestine. And then arose the question: What about the earthly future of Israel, which according to men such as Aalders could no longer be expected? Many people immediately came to the conclusion that this indicated a national rebirth, a complete return, even a total conversion to God. Above all, however, and that is our concern at the moment, many saw in the occurrences of 1948 the confirmation of the prophecy which they interpreted in a millennialistic sense. We cannot circumvent millennialistic theories with regard to the future of the people of Israel when we consider the problem of the Jews.

The thousand years

For that reason we will briefly summarize the essential beliefs of millennialism. Millennialists believe in a first and a second return of Christ, and between these two events lies His thousand-year reign with a restored Jerusalem at the centre. Long before there was any question of the return of the Jews to Palestine, these people already voiced a strong expectation of the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, based on Old Testament prophecies, and also on some information in the New Testament, to which they give their own interpretation. They believe that Israel's national task was temporarily given to the gentiles, and that this task will last only until the times of the gentiles have been fulfilled (Luke 21:24). Israel's spiritual task was temporarily assigned to the New Testament church, from the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to the first return of Christ. Then, according to I Thessalonians 4:17, the church will be taken up into the air, and that moment will signify the marriage of the Lamb, although it is not yet the end of the world. The taking-up of the church designates the final period of time. Then God will return to Israel and this people will again take over its task from the church. God will renew the ties with Israel through the 144,000 of Revelation 7, who will be mis-

Jewish refugees
who settled in Israel
after World War II



sionaries on earth during the great persecution, the final period of the times of the gentiles, which commenced at the lifting up of the church. However, the conversion of Israel will be accompanied by heavy persecution and distress, for Israel will be gathered to the arms of Jesus only through the great persecution of the anti-christ. Jerusalem will prove more and more to be a rock of offense, until all the nations will gather together against her. That signals the great Armageddon, and in her distress Israel will learn to seek the Lord Jesus. Then the moment will have arrived that God will pour out His Spirit over them. Christ shall again place His feet on the Mount of Olives and return with all His holy ones who had been lifted up to Him earlier. By divine intervention all the armies gathered in the valley of Armageddon against Jerusalem shall be defeated. The Beast and the false prophet shall be cast into the pool of fire. God shall again establish the throne of David and the millennium of Christ shall dawn in full glory. At that time Satan will be bound so that he can no longer tempt the nations. People will gather from all the ends of the earth to Jerusalem to worship the King who is seated on the throne of David. The church will share in the glory of Christ and sit as kings and priest with Him on His throne. Also, the temple will be rebuilt and the priestly service will be restored according to the prophecy of Jeremiah 33:18. The new temple at Jerusalem will be the spiritual centre of the whole world. Many people and mighty gentiles will come to worship God in Jerusalem. This will be the great mission dispensation of history. In this present day there are only individuals who come to believe, but then "all the gentiles will come to Him and fall down before His face." At the end of Christ's reign of peace follows a short time when Satan's bonds will be untied, and he will once again cause a rebellion. These are his final movements, however, for this rebellion will seal his own doom. After a cleansing process by fire, whereby the elements will melt, and God Himself will use atomic energy, the last stains — reminders of sin — will be removed. Then will dawn the new heavens and the new earth, where righteousness dwells.

Texts

It is impossible to discuss all the texts which are put forward by the millennialists to promote their ideas. Their main argument is their opinion that everything that is written in the

prophecies must be taken *literally*. Let us take their interpretation of Isaiah 11:15 and 16 as an example: "And the LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt; and will wave His hand over the River with His scorching wind, and smite it into seven channels that men may cross dryshod. And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant which is left of His people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt." Their argument is as follows: the crossing of the Red Sea actually happened, so it must be the same for this prophecy. And since it has not yet taken place, there is only one conclusion, namely, that it must still happen! Moreover, they say, the prophecies speak of Israel's being gathered out of all nations (cf. Jeremiah 32:37 and Ezekiel 36:24), whereas the exile involved only Assyria and Babylon. In addition there is the prophecy that Israel will once again be planted in its country and will never again be plucked out of it (Isaiah 11:11, Isaiah 14:1, Amos 9:15), whereas it certainly was plucked out again after the return from exile. Special references are made to the prophecies of Zechariah, since he prophesied after the exile. A favourite quotation is Zechariah 14, which calls Jerusalem the divine worship centre for the entire world.

As for the New Testament, they find support for their position in Acts 15:14-17, where James points out that "God has first visited the gentiles and after that will return and rebuild the dwelling of David which has fallen so that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the gentiles who are called by My Name." A final proof to them is the parable of the barren fig tree. For three years Christ sought in vain for fruit from the people of Israel (Luke 13:7). His personal presence could not bring a change in that barrenness, and although he found leaves, there was no fruit. Hence His curse: "May no fruit ever come from you again" (Matthew 21:19). This *seems* to be evidence that Israel has totally lost its special importance, but (according to them) these words refer only to this dispensation. And so they say that in this dispensation Israel as a nation has never brought forth fruit and will not do so. However in the next dispensation of Messianic salvation, Israel *will* bring forth fruit. The time of the end will bring the summer near when the fig tree will again bud forth (Matthew 24:32). That budding of the fig tree will occur when Israel returns to Palestine.

— To be continued
K. DEDDENS

The “Volendam” congregation₃

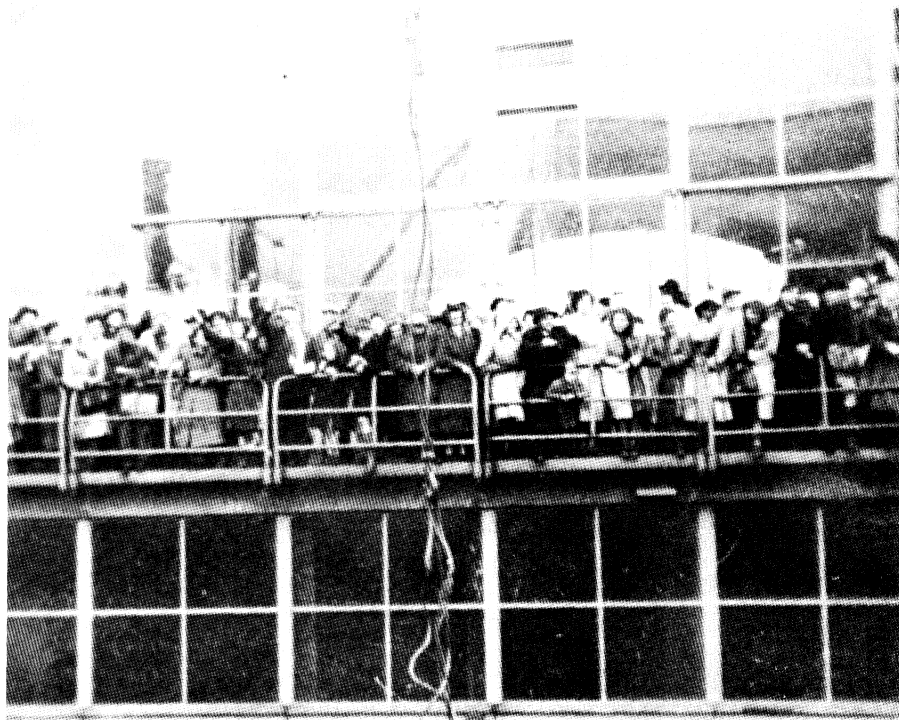
The previous time we saw the difficult situation in which the “Volendam” families of Ontario found themselves in the fall of 1950. Christian Reformed communities did not allow them to remain what they were: families that in the Netherlands during the liberation of the Reformed Churches had shown their desire for an “ordinary Reformed” (gewoon Gereformeerd) church life and also in Canada wanted to maintain the bond with their past. The simple request that now and then sermons by liberated ministers be read was not granted. These immigrants had to be silent about the liberation of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and to assimilate within a Christian Reformed Church that acknowledged an ecclesiastical bond only with the “synodical” churches, that is, those churches that had accepted the doctrinal statements of 1942 and the subsequent church-political decisions.

On the other hand, the Protestant Reformed Church to which the liberated immigrants, especially in Ontario, looked for guidance in the upbuilding of a Reformed church life in Canada, had pronounced a wrong doctrinal Declaration concerning God’s election and covenant. Again a supra-lapsarian construction obscured the truth that God in Christ established His covenant of grace with the believers and all their children.

But what had to be done now?

In the letter of br. Jac. Poortinga we read precisely this question. “But what now? Then we wrote to the Rev. Hettinga of Harlingen (Friesland). He stayed for three months in America with his children and also in Canada with liberated brothers and sisters in the dispersion. The Rev. Hettinga heard our appeal and thus on a certain day he looked us up to our great joy! Rev. Hettinga visited several brothers and sisters and the appointment was made to come together in worship service in Georgetown on the next Sunday. That day the church was instituted there. For the first time we encountered there again the brothers Walinga, Van Leeuwen and Wildeboer!”

This was Sunday, August 13, 1950, and it must have been a happy reunion of these families that had met one another on the “Volendam.”



A familiar view for emigrants leaving the old country: farewell!

We relive something of this joy also in reading the report by br. P.H. Wildeboer. In the same week that the Van Leeuwen and Wildeboer families had the disappointing encounter with the Protestant Reformed minister of Hamilton, a knock on the door announced the coming of the Rev. Hettinga. “First I thought, ‘There you have another minister. What will happen now?’ Yet, he was not inside our door for five minutes and we knew already that on the following Sunday, worship services would be held in Georgetown, about thirty-two miles from here (Orangeville). Then also the possibilities would be considered to come to institution. It would happen, if there would be enough members. On the same evening, at eleven o’clock at night, we drove to Waldemar and we enjoyed waking the Van Leeuwen family from sleep, to talk together for an hour. (De zelfde avond om 11 uur reden we nog

naar Waldemar, waar we br. en zr. van Leeuwen eens heerlijk uit het bed hebben gebeld om daarna nog een uur te praten samen.) On that Sunday we went to Georgetown full of expectation and gratitude to hear the Word of God and to exercise the communion of saints. What a rich day it was! We heard two good sermons and the church was instituted according to the demand of God’s Word. Office-bearers were ordained and now we have our own church. Thanks be to God. We did not play church as some alleged but it was God’s demand. (Dit was geen kerkje spelen zoals ons in de schoenen wordt geschoven maar een eis.)”

So it was that Georgetown (Orangeville) became the first Canadian Reformed Church in Ontario. We saw already that in the year 1950 Lethbridge in Alberta had become the cradle for other congregations. Edmonton was instituted July 9, and Neer-

landia on August 6, just one Lord's Day earlier than Georgetown. New Westminster (now Surrey) would follow on December 17, and Houston on March 4, 1951.

It is interesting to see how "Georgetown" played a similar role in Ontario as Lethbridge did in Alberta. We put the name between quotation marks since already on the third Sunday the use of a meeting room in that place was cancelled. (De derde Zondag werd het lokaal in Georgetown ons opgezegd.) The congregation then went to the hospitable house of br. and sr. Van Leeuwen in Waldemar. "God, however, never forsakes the works of His hands and thus we could get a small church building that was empty. It is a cute little building that seats about one hundred persons and that is placed at our disposal for nothing at all. Here we read every Sunday. In between services we have catechism class the one week and young people's society the next week with ten members." There were seventy-six church members.

In the letter of br. Poortinga of December 1950, he tells that after August 13 his family made the trip from Hamilton to the new congregation "Georgetown" seven more times, but the distance was too great (fifty miles), and the family did not have a car at their disposal. Financially it became impossible; the costs were too high. "Therefore, we together as congregation agreed that we would have worship services in Hamilton in a home (huisgodsdienst oefening). Then every Sunday six families came to our house. The other part of the congregation came together in Orangeville, eighty miles north of Hamilton. There they had a small church building that they were allowed to use without having to pay anything." We notice that this feature amazed the Dutch immigrants!

In November 1950 the Poortinga's moved to Orangeville and we hear that the congregation numbered already more than sixty members, great and small. The free church building was not at their disposal anymore. "We have now made our house available for worship services In Hamilton there are also now ten families of the Protestant Reformed Church liberated again. To us this is a reason for great joy! Praise be to God alone. The LORD may make us all faithful in the work of the church!"

The J.M. Van Sijdenborgh family in the neighbourhood of Goderich had contact with a liberated family in Exeter and together they held house-worship services. "When we heard of the institution of the liberated church in the surroundings of Orangeville, we registered our church membership there (ons daar kerkelijk laten onderbrengen), but till now, alas, we cannot come together with the congregation of the Lord. The distance is too great and we still do not have a car at our disposal."

Although br. Van Sijdenborgh writes that he is rather prosperous — a good farmer, mixed farm, good house — he hopes that in due time a change may come about and that his family may come together with the congregation of the Lord. As the second last correspondent he is thankful to hear that the Lord our God leads His children and builds His Church on this continent. "Let this be the goal and aim of us all: Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown."

Also the last letter in the collection gives evidence of the gathering power of "Georgetown." The K. Sieders family had moved from Alberta to Ontario. I understand that the K. Flokstra family later followed. In a letter of February 11, 1951, br. Sieders forged the last link in the chain. He writes that he had met almost all "Volendam" brothers and sisters, first a part of them in the Church at Lethbridge, and then others in the Church at Georgetown which now comes together in Orangeville. Moreover, he had just attended the Church at Hamilton. We hear him reminisce about the "Volendam" bond which was a bond of the communion of saints. "Now more than seven months have passed, since br. Schutten started this chain of letters Especially our experiences in church life made us see how tremendously much has to be done, but also that we ourselves can perform only, oh, so little. The LORD must enable us, grant us power

of faith and also much wisdom."

The Sieders family had stayed in the Immigration Hall in Winnipeg for ten days. He could have been placed in a bakery, but with a view to the church he chose a place in Coaldale where he worked on a beet farm. At the end of August he could begin working in a bakery, but Sunday labour made it impossible to stay there. For six weeks he had little income. "Nevertheless, we experienced again that we will never be ashamed if we walk in God's ways and keep His commandments obediently, and that God gives His children what they need. In the meantime the brothers Walinga and Van Leeuwen looked for work in their neighbourhood. These attempts were blessed and as a result we now live in Tottenham at Walinga's, since till now we could not find a house. We can now go to church regularly with them in Orangeville on Sundays and there we also meet the families Van Leeuwen, Wildeboer, and Poortinga."

It is a cheerful ending in which we see most of the "Volendam" congregation reunited in Canadian Reformed Churches. One of the letters ends with a "Rehoboth": For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land (Genesis 26:22).

Tell to your children the glorious deeds of the LORD, and His might, and the wonders which He has wrought.

J. FABER

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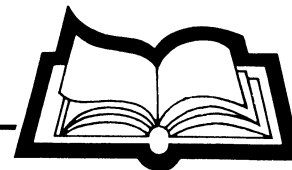
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“Jesus said to her, ‘Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ”

John 20:17

Instruction to Perfection

The appearance of the Lord Jesus to Mary Magdalene is, as far as we can ascertain from the gospel accounts, the first appearance of the Lord Jesus to someone of the circle of the disciples after His resurrection. Mary is also the first messenger of the good tidings to the disciples, a messenger presumably not highly regarded, for, as Mark says, “when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it,” Mark 16:11. Any talk of a resurrection appeared to the disciples to be nothing but an “idle tale.”

Yet Jesus is far ahead of His disciples. In His first appearance to one in the circle of His own, He announces His forthcoming *ascension*. Even while the disciples have not yet understood the *first* step on His road to glory, the Lord begins by announcing the *second* step. And Mary is not only called to announce His resurrection, but also — at the same time — the imminent ascension of the Lord Jesus to His Father and their Father. So she was instructed not to worship the Lord Jesus or seek to hold Him in His present state. He was on His way to higher glory, and also was ascending to take His Church towards perfection!

Remarkably, it is precisely Mary Magdalene to whom the Lord Jesus makes this first announcement concerning His imminent departure. She was the person from whom the Lord Jesus had cast out seven demons, Mark 16:9. In the words of Calvin, she had been delivered “from the lowest hell, that He might raise her above heaven.” And her consciousness of this deliverance partly explains her desire to hold and keep the Lord Jesus in her presence in the state in which she found Him.

Yet precisely to her the Lord Jesus must say, “Do not hold me.” Easter was only the first step in the great restitution of paradise! Had the Lord Jesus stopped here, Mary would have been like the person He once referred to in one of His parables. In Luke 11:24ff., He says, “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest; and finding none he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.” Mary was such a house swept and put in order. Seven evil spirits had been cast out of her, and she was cleansed of all iniquity. But the Lord was not finished with her yet! He could not stop here!

So the Lord Jesus announces His coming ascension to her. He instructs Mary concerning what He must do in order to bring the work of redemption to its completion.

She cannot be left as an empty room. She must be filled with the Spirit from on high! Christ must ascend to heaven in order to claim the right to *heavenly* gifts, which can then be poured out upon His Church. Mary is so prepared for *Pentecost*, the feast of fulfillment and completion.

This is also the feast of the *Church*, the feast where Christ’s gifts are not directed to one or more individually, but distributed severally to *all* the brethren. Mary had to progress from the idea of having a Teacher for herself to participating in a Saviour and Messiah for the new mankind, the people of God the Father! At the same time, she had to see the Lord as the last Adam who would reopen the doors to paradise. In the work of Christ Eve’s sin is undone, and paradise is regained for man.

Having received and experienced the blessings of Pentecost, Mary models the gift of heavenly strength given to the whole Church. The Lord Jesus did not leave her as a room cleansed and put in order. Easter was not the end but only the beginning of greater things for her and the Church! For He ascended, and poured out His Spirit upon the Church. And every Sunday we may be greeted from “Him who is and was and is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne,” Revelation 1:4. The age of completion has come! And we share the firstfruits of the completion of Christ’s work today in the administration of Word and sacrament. That’s how much richer we may be than Mary.

Yet Mary Magdalene illustrates all the gifts given to the Church of Christ. She was taken from the lowest hell (seven demons) and raised to the highest heaven (seven spirits). And heaven for her and us all is not a place of special esoteric gifts, but *paradise* restored. Eve’s sin is fully atoned and overcome in Christ’s work!

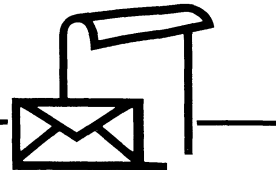
Looking back to Mary, we can see the rich blessings we have received in the ascension and exaltation of Christ Jesus our Lord. He reigns in order to give to us heavenly blessings through which we have overcome the world. We have been richly exalted! So we can also sing with Mary the mother of the Lord, and with Mary Magdalene:

For He did contemplate
His handmaid’s low estate
Behold, all generations
Will call me ever blest,
For at the Lord’s behest,
Great is my exaltation.

(Hymn 13:2)

J. DE JONG

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor,

I read with interest Reverend VanOene's "Reflections on Synodical Practices." They left me with a problem though. And not only me. Therefore this letter, in the hope that it may move Rev. VanOene to reopen the series. My problem is the restricted interpretation of Art. 31 C.O. If I read and read again the text of Art. 31 in the manner "Reflections" urges me to do, I do read indeed what Rev. VanOene wants me to read, but at the same time I no longer read f.i., the binding character of the decisions of the major assemblies other than of those made in response to appeals from church members who complain to have been personally wronged by a decision of the minor assembly. Nor do I read anymore that not only individual church members but also churches have the right to appeal. After all, "anyone" in the text of Art. 31 is not the same as "any church." Indeed, "Reflections" makes no mention of churches and their appeals, only of church members. No doubt, Rev. VanOene will shake his wise head about me: here is a man who reads and reads again and still reads wrongly. Still, reading literally is reading literally. My point is: does not this lead, if consistently done, to absurdities, and therefore is there not more in Art. 31 than meets the eye in the literal text? I am sure that Rev. VanOene will be the first one to tell me that I have to read Art. 31 in historical context. Agreed. But the historical context cannot be read from the literal text of Art. 31. He will tell me that Art. 31 was adopted in its present form by Synod Middelburg 1581 which in this article combined two separate articles of the Church Order of Dordrecht 1578. Dordrecht 1578 recognized the right (Chapter II 4) of appeal in case someone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of the minor assembly. That has become the first half of Art. 31. The same Synod ruled in Chapter II 8 that everyone is in duty bound to consider the lawful decisions of the assemblies settled and binding. And that has become the second half of Art. 31. Not the literal text of Art. 31, but the historical background teaches me that Art. 31 indeed obliges the churches to recognize the binding character of all lawful decisions of the major assemblies, and not only those made in response to appeals from persons who complain to have been wronged, as the literal text of Art. 31 suggests. An interesting question

is the reason why in the world Middelburg 1581 did combine these two separate articles into one Art. 31. According to Prof. J. Kamphuis ("Kerkelijke Besluitvaardigheid" page 51 and 52) the reason was historical necessity, namely, the conflict between the church and the magistrate, in the troubles caused by Coolhaas and his confessional indifferentism in Leiden. Kamphuis makes the brilliant suggestion that the combination of the two separate articles into one was meant to make a powerful statement, the statement that the church has the right to make binding decisions also in matters of appeal in case someone complains to have been wronged. The magistrates denied the churches that right. This by the way. My question is whether the first half of Art. 31 was meant to limit the right of appeal to those only whom it literally mentions. Could it be that also in this respect the historical origin sheds light on the matter to help find an answer? The Articles of Wesel 1568 are the first ones to recognize the right of appeal, in Chapter VIII Art. 11, that is: in the chapter on church discipline. If someone complains to have been wronged by the discipline of the consistory, he shall have the right to appeal to classis and synod. The article originated in the concrete situation in church life and gave a concrete solution to an important problem in a matter regarding nothing less than the ecclesiastical position of a church member, discipline! But could it not be that in this concrete ruling concerning a most important concrete issue like church discipline, a general principle was implied? The general principle that wrong decisions of minor assemblies can be appealed. Something like the commandment: "you shall not kill." From the literal text of the commandment I cannot read that this implies that God forbids "anger, hatred, envy and desire of revenge" and commands me "to love my neighbour as myself." It is implied. A "commentary," the Catechism, must unfold it for me and make it explicit. It does not surprise me then when I find that Synod Emden 1571 took the article out of the chapter on discipline and put it in the chapter on the assemblies, and formulated it in much more general terms (Chapter II 3: right of appeal concerning classis decisions in matters which could not be finished on consistory level). Apparently this formulation did not quite satisfy Dordrecht 1578, maybe because it did not suf-

ficiently cover the element of grievances about wrong decisions and injustices. Dordrecht 1578 reinstated that element in its formulation, but maintained the article in the chapter on the assemblies and did not return it to the chapter on discipline. And maybe Middelburg 1581 maintained this formulation which betrays so clearly its origin in the situation of church discipline (Wesel), because it suited them fine, seeing the matter Middelburg had to deal with and the statement it wanted to make. However, it seems that everybody understood that a general principle was involved with much wider applications than the literal text would suggest. And so we see all and everybody at that time and ever since busily appeal decisions other than those by which one believed personally to have been wronged, regardless the literal text of Art. 31 (Bouwman, "Gereformeerd Kerkrecht II page 41). Certainly, the major assemblies sighed under the burden and complained and admonished, but never said to the complainants that according to Art. 31 their appeals were inadmissible on the ground that they were not personally wronged. If I am not mistaken, it was emphasized among us that the Church Order is different in character from Canon Law, in which everything is precisely regulated and formulated and which must be followed by the letter. If we start reading Art. 31 in that way, as if it were an article of Canon Law, we might come to the absurdities I mentioned in the beginning of this letter. In that case it might be better to revise Art. 31 in the same way (though not in the same sense) as the Synodical Churches in the Netherlands have done in their revised Church Order. They codified exactly the way Art. 31 was interpreted and practiced throughout the centuries, by explicitly regulating who may appeal what and where. Dr. D. Nauta ("Verklaring van de Kerkorde van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland," page 139) is of the opinion that revision of Art. 31 was necessary because it was formulated too narrowly, for going by the letter, only those who are personally wronged have the right of appeal. But, he says, the article was always interpreted much broader, to include any act or decision of an assembly one deems wrong and harmful for the churches, on good grounds. And, he says, rightly so, for we have no use for clericalism. An interesting remark! Not allowing church members to be heard with their objections against the decisions of

the “clericals” tends to clericalism. The sister churches in the Netherlands also revised the Church Order, but not in the direction of the synodical churches. They decided to maintain the original and classic formulation of Art. 31.

Not that there were no voices requesting inclusion of terms which would more precisely regulate and limitate the right of appeal. The remarkable thing is, that they were not answered with a simple reference to the literal wording of Art. 31 and to just read what it literally says, and so what is your problem, it is limited enough! No, but the answer of the deputies was that any further delineation and fine-tuning of the right of appeal would only complicate matters more. Every further specification would raise new questions requiring more answers and definitions. In other words, the brethren in Holland recognize that there is indeed more to Art. 31 than meets the eye in the literal text. They recognize that the article must not be interpreted by the letter. They refrained however from precisely formulating “who, what and when,” out of fear of “over”-complication. It seems to me that Rev. VanOene’s solution is an oversimplification of the matter, by eliminating the historical context and tradition.

I realize though that Rev. VanOene may be somewhere on the right track and may be far ahead of us all. It may well be that the century-old practice was on the wrong track and that we, instead of codifying that practice like the synodicals did, must move in the exact opposite direction, in a kind of church-political reformation. Therefore I found the “Reflections” somewhat harsh in it’s criticisms: we are simply doing what we have been doing for centuries, otherwise we would not have even thought of doing it, for we do know the text of Art. 31, but do what our fathers did. A change of direction in our practice may well be helped along by our revised Art. 30 C.O. (new matters must pass the minor assemblies before they are brought to the major assemblies. I assume that this also goes for “old matters” mentioned in Art. 32 C.O. which one wants changed and revised, although the article does not make that explicit, and neither article stipulates that the churches and not individual church members set the agenda of the major assemblies, except in cases of appeal. Maybe the revised Art. 33 should have retained that part of the original Art. 46 which mentions the instructions, for according to some experts that part implies the principle that churches set the agenda, and not individuals). A new article however needs time to work through in the life of the churches. But even so, I like to maintain as yet my reservations regarding the restriction of the right of appeal to what the literal text of Art. 31 al-

lows. For it is one thing to have the right to make decisions (including the right to decide what shall be put on the agenda of the assemblies), but another thing to have the right to raise objections against decisions of the ground of Scripture and C.O. Nauta’s remark against clericalism keeps haunting me. The rights of the church members must be respected. In spite of all the dissimilarities, and well aware that the example can also be used to argue Rev. VanOene’s case, I tend to compare the matter to the right of the consistory to nominate and appoint office-bearers, and the right of all the church members to raise objections to this decision of the

consistory (approbation). The right of appeal is given with the responsibility of the church in all its members to see to it that the church “governs itself by the pure Word of God” (Art. 29 Belgic Confession), and nothing else. The Word of God must govern, and therefore every voice which claims deficiencies in that respect should have access to the decision-making bodies, ultimately General Synod. Hopefully Rev. VanOene will be found willing to clear up some misunderstandings and to give further instruction.

With brotherly greetings,
J.D. WIELENGA

Renewed reflections

The Rev. Wielenga has done me the honour of paying ample attention to the Reflections on Synodical Practices which appeared in our magazine a few issues back.

He has gone into the trouble of quoting from previous (Dutch) synods and also from various authors. This is appreciated, for if there is one thing we should watch out for it is this: that we work a-historically, that is: without paying attention to the history of various articles of our Church Order.

No one can speak seriously and to the point about what we have provided in our Church Order unless he takes into account both the origin and the further history of the various provisions — if this origin can be traced, that is.

Thus it is appreciated when we are informed about decisions taken in the past which may shed some light on specific formulations or expressions.

We should also be prepared to learn from what our forefathers have provided and to benefit from their wisdom. When the Lord Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would lead the Church in all the truth, this was an unqualified promise: it covers the whole life of the Church.

On the other hand, we are to be aware of it that the historical situation oftentimes determined the manner in which the ecclesiastical assemblies dealt with matters and decided upon them. This sometimes led to decisions which were basically in conflict with what they had agreed upon in the Church Order.

Frequently they also were prevented from doing that which they were convinced they should do, either by reason of government-interference or because the conditions simply were such that they could not (yet) follow the proper course.

Further we are to bear in mind that in the course of the past one hundred years many decisions were made and many influences made themselves be felt which are flatly in conflict with truly Reformed Church Polity.

It is possible to quote decisions and to bring examples to the fore from history for completely opposite views. We can visualize almost no situation in our ecclesiastical life for which no precedent can be quoted.

For this reason I do not often quote from history to substantiate my convictions in the field of Church Polity. Someone who disagrees with me can most likely come with examples of the opposite course.

Our readers may be convinced that I certainly do not wish to work and to think a-historically; on the other hand, I do not wish to let what happened in the past or what was said and decided in the past rule over and determine my understanding and explanation of what we have agreed upon for our living in one federation.

A last remark before we go into the substance of Rev. Wielenga’s submission be that as Canadian Reformed Churches we have *not* accepted all sorts of general-synodical decisions regarding the application of the Church Order which our Netherlands sister Churches have collected in the course of almost one hundred years. Fortunately so.

We are certainly willing to learn from them — either how it should be done or how it certainly should not be done — but they are not our decisions. This is something we should bear in mind all the time.

I am afraid that the brothers Deddens and Van Rongen did not bear this fact sufficiently in mind when writing their brief explanation of our Church Order. In some

instances I find in their booklet statements about what should be done which are not based on decisions by our own general synods but by those of our Netherlands sister Churches. I hope not that in this way provisions are introduced for which I have no use.

Just one example. On page 41 of this booklet I read that the procedure for the retirement of a minister is described in great detail. What I have never heard of in the Canadian Reformed Churches is that "A certificate is issued by the classis and the deputies to both the minister and the consistory." I do not know where this phenomenon comes from. We have never made any such provision and it tends to promote hierarchical development, something which the brothers definitely do not want.

Binding character

The first point we are to pay attention to is the binding character of the decisions by broader assemblies.

When the Christian Reformed Church revised their Church Order in 1965, they inserted the following provision in the new Art. 29: "Decisions of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be reached only upon due consideration. The decisions of the assemblies shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order."

We do not have any such provision, nor do we need any.

That the provision is in Art. 31 with a view to someone who appeals because he is convinced that he has been wronged, is a good thing. It tells him: you have the right to appeal, but remember: when a decision has been made on your appeal, you have to accept that, unless . . . etc.

Article 31 is the *only* article in our whole Church Order which describes the right of a church member!

All the other articles deal with what the consistories shall do or shall not do, the position and task of office-bearers, and so on.

Would we need a provision for our *consistories* stating that decisions by major assemblies shall be considered settled and binding?

One needs such a provision only in an hierarchical system, to stress that the decisions must be accepted, as they come with alleged authority received from Christ, be it that people then speak of "delegated authority."

Our Church Order contains the conditions on which we live together in one federation as Churches.

Perhaps I may refer here to the farewell address which I gave at the Convocation of 1985, an address to which I

sometimes refer as "my last will and testament."

When the consistories, the Churches, have entered into the covenant which we call the federation, *is it then not a matter of course that they accept the decisions which are made in accordance with the conditions of the covenant?*

We have, e.g., agreed that as consistories, as Churches, we shall not take certain steps until the advice of classis has been obtained. To anyone who is able to read this means: favourable advice.

Would we need a provision stating that a consistory must accept the classical advice? By no means! This is something which is implicit in the bond as sister Churches within the one federation.

It is the obligation of all Churches to accept the decisions of the major assemblies, because that's what they took upon themselves when they formed the federation of Churches.

When it is stated that we do not read anything in our Church Order about the binding character of the decisions of the major assemblies, this is correct in more than one respect.

It is correct that we do not read about it; it is also correct that we don't have a provision about it: it would be totally superfluous and even dangerous. Decisions by major assemblies do not become binding via a provision in the Church Order. They are binding by their very having been taken in accordance with the Church Order.

It goes without saying that any decision which the Consistories find to be in conflict with God's Word or with the Church Order has no power of binding. Decisions which have been made in conflict with the conditions of the covenant are for that very reason without effect.

No special provision for that is needed either.

Article 31 safeguards certain rights and stresses certain obligations of *church members*. That's why both provisions are well in place there.

Right of appeal limited?

The question was asked "whether the first half of Art. 31 was meant to limit the right of appeal to those only whom it literally mentions."

OUR COVER

Scenery in Manitoba

Photo courtesy of
Travel Manitoba

Let's bear in mind that this article speaks of church members, not of consistories or Churches.

Then we see that the right of appeal is not *limited* here, but *acknowledged*.

Our Church Order is not a "manual" for church members, but a "collective agreement" between Churches.

In their agreement the Churches have also provided that a church member may call for the help of the federation in case he complains that he has been wronged. This implies that the consistories will also abide by the decision of the major assembly in the case of such an appeal.

Since a consistory is the highest authority in the Church under Christ — it would be better to say that a consistory is the **only** authority in the Church under Christ — a church member would have no possibility of having wrong undone unless the consistory changed its mind.

Knowing and aware of their own sinfulness, of the possibility of making mistakes and of judging wrongly, the Churches agreed that members may appeal to a broader, no, to *the* major assembly.

They fixed this right of church members in their agreement, but added the warning to these members who complain that they were wronged, that what is decided upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding.

Thus we do not have a restriction here in the first part of Art. 31, but an acknowledgment and safeguarding of a right of church members.

No wonder that in 1568 the right of appeal was formulated in connection with church discipline. That's where one may be wronged first of all and in the most serious way. There should be safeguards against unjust or hasty discipline and these safeguards are found in the provision that the help of the federation may be requested to right a wrong.

I would certainly not say that "a general principle was implied," namely, "the general principle that wrong decisions of minor assemblies can be appealed."

Our Church Order does not lay down or contain principles.

Our Church Order shows how the "principles" laid down in the Word of our God and repeated in our Confessions are to be applied in the life of the Churches.

Stating that our Church Order contains "principles" brings in an element which is dangerous and tends to elevating our Church Order to the level of the confessional forms. If this is done, we are on the wrong track.

"Principles" may not be "changed, augmented, or diminished," as we state in the last article, Art. 76.

If our Church Order contained "prin-

principles," we would need a provision such as societies oftentimes had it in their constitution: "The articles 1, 2, etc. may not be changed."

Fortunately we do not have or need any such provision. We may change any article, as long as the teachings of God's Holy Word are obeyed and their summary in our confessions is adhered to.

The danger of assuming that a "principle" is expressed and laid down in Art. 31 C.O. becomes evident in the comparison which is made with e.g. the commandment "You shall not kill." Instead of simply reading and abiding by what we have provided in this article, we get all sorts of tentacles which stretch forth from the alleged principle, and before we know it we have become stranded on the sandbanks of casuistics.

Personally wronged?

Yes, that's what we are to maintain: that only someone who complains that he personally has been wronged by a decision of a minor assembly may appeal to the major assembly.

It is quite clear that many understood this article to mean that whenever you are of the opinion that a wrong decision was taken, you are permitted to send an appeal.

In Canon Law one could argue "on the analogy of." This, I am convinced, is taboo when we speak about our Church Order.

We do not have to specify in which cases one would be permitted to appeal a decision and in which cases such may not be done.

Article 31 of our Church Order is sufficiently clear as is.

I know that this article was interpreted differently on many occasions. I also am aware of it that our ecclesiastical assemblies most times acted as if anyone was permitted to "appeal" any decision of which he thought that it was wrong or with which he disagreed. Scores of examples can be brought to the fore and if one wishes to do so, he could even bury me under a large pile of them.

However, I beg to disagree with that practice, and am convinced that we should return to keeping this article as we have agreed upon it.

Certainly, it is quite possible that I am convinced that things are going wrong in Church life. It is possible, e.g., that I am convinced that a certain classical decision or action is utterly dangerous and, if unchecked, will lead the Churches on the path to deformation and ruin.

What is then the proper course of action?

Is the proper course of action for me as a Church member then that I write an

"appeal" to the next regional synod? That is an extremely easy course of action, besides being improper.

I can relax and go fishing or play pool while the brothers at the regional synod are spending the time and money of the Churches and are accused of not taking things seriously if they send my "appeal" back with the remark that it is inadmissible.

It is the sender of the "appeal" who did not take things seriously. In many instances just one copy is sent, and the multiplication of the document — six pages plus fifteen pages of appendices — has to be paid for by the Churches. I sent my "appeal," let them sweat over it.

Together with another brother I did spend four hours photocopying submissions till three a.m., while we had to be back at regional synod — one hundred kilometers away — that same morning at nine.

It is easy to write a letter, bypassing the first station, which is the consistory. But it proves that the sender himself does not take things seriously.

If I am convinced that certain things are wrong in the life of the Churches, I am to approach my own consistory, and try to convince them that it is mandatory for them to take action.

It may cost quite a struggle to convince the consistory and it is definitely

harder than writing a letter to a regional synod under the cover of an "appeal," but then at least one gives proof that he takes matters seriously.

The result of the discussions with the consistory may be that one becomes convinced that he had the wrong concept. The result may also be that the consistory becomes convinced that action is required. The consistory can then initiate proceedings which may lead — hopefully — to the correction of the evil.

There is another aspect still why someone should approach his consistory if he is convinced that a classical decision is wrong or dangerous.

Brothers from that very Church were at that classis and took part in discussions and decisions.

If they are co-responsible for taking wrong decisions and starting out on a course which will prove detrimental to the Churches, the place where to act is the *consistory level*.

One's objections and fears are then directed against the actions of one's own consistory, and that's where change should start. The consistory can then take it up further.

We certainly do not need a "Bill of Rights" which will lead to all sorts of procedural questions and wranglings.

Article 31 of our Church Order is sufficiently clear.

That this would lead to or promote "clericalism" is a thought which has been expressed — surprisingly by one in whose community this danger has become reality — but the correctness of which still has to be proved.

There is no one among us who would not allow "church members to be heard with their objections against decisions of the 'clericals.'" The question under discussion is *where* these objections have to be lodged.

It is my conviction that this is the consistory, and that, if any further action is needed, this should be undertaken by the consistory.

It would be a totally wrong to use Article 30 to wipe a genuine appeal off the table, an appeal such as Article 31 speaks of.

As for objections to classical and synodical decisions, Article 30 speaks clearly: these can be dealt with and finished in the minor assembly, i.e. the consistory. That's where church members have to be with their submissions.

It should never happen again that a change in the confession — be it "only" a change in translation — is made upon the request of a church member.

When, therefore, a church member addresses his own consistory or, perhaps, other consistories regarding matters which concern him, no consistory

CHURCH NEWS



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

The Interim Committee of the International Conference of Reformed Churches has decided to have the next Conference, the Lord willing, in the third week of June 1989, namely, from Monday, June 19th, with the closing day tentatively scheduled for Friday, June 23, 1989.

The Conference will be held in Cloverdale, BC.

The Corresponding Secretary,
M. VAN BEVEREN

New address:

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(301) 725-0256

should declare this “inadmissible,” on the ground that the member should have addressed himself to a broader assembly. He has no other place to go than his consistory if he wishes to see a trend reversed or a wrong decision undone.

We are not speaking here of genuine appeals as Article 31 allows them. Of these appeals we have to say that they should *not* be sent to consistories, since an appeal is directed to the major assembly. These are indeed inadmissible at the consistory level.

Declaring submissions by church members in which they express their concern about or their objections to certain ecclesiastical decisions inadmissible at the consistory level cuts the way off for concerned members to have their input into the affairs of the Church and of the federation.

This would be detrimental, indeed.

Instructions

Should we again have a provision that includes “instructions”?

Our readers may know that previously Article 46 read, “Instructions concerning matters to be considered in major assemblies shall not be written until the decisions of previous Synods touching these matters have been read, in order that what was once decided be not again proposed, unless a revision be deemed necessary.”

What is left of this article is our present Article 33: “Matters once decided

upon may not be proposed again unless they are substantiated by new grounds.”

The “instructions” have disappeared. Why?

Nowadays we have mail service — be it oftentimes not all that trustworthy —, we have photocopiers, stencil machines, etcetera. In emergency cases there is the telephone.

The Churches have ample opportunity to inform the convening Church of the matters they wish to have put on the agenda, proposals they wish to make, changes they want to be made. Various classical regulations are in force which spell out how far in advance the classis-Churches are to be informed by means of a provisional agenda.

It was different in olden days.

Then the delegates brought with them in writing what their consistories proposed and what their consistories wanted to see on the agenda.

This was indeed to show that the Churches determine the agenda. The brothers who were delegated did not have the right to suggest certain topics or certain matters as these came up in their own minds. No, they had to bring with them the instructions, the points for the agenda, as their consistories had decided upon them. No freewheeling.

Nowadays we still use the term “instructions,” as brothers who were delegated to a classis will know. Then we refer to specific messages or requests which their consistories wish to put before classis, such as the request for appoint-

ment of a counsellor, for pulpit supply, for advice in disciplinary cases, and so on.

With all our present classical regulations we do not need such a provision any longer.

This is not to say that we could also do without its historical background of: the Churches determine the agenda.

By the pure Word of God

It is indeed the right and the obligation of the whole Church, i.e. of all Church members, to see to it that the Church remain in the path of obedience to her Lord and King, and that it continue to live and work in such a manner that the Lord Jesus Christ is recognized and honoured indeed as the only universal Bishop.

No member has the right to say, “Let the powers that be decide about that, I can’t be bothered with it.”

Neither hierarchy nor any other heresy or wrong trend or system will have any chance of developing in and causing grief and harm to the Church if all of the membership are active and attentive, doing their part in preserving the Bride of Christ with the purity of doctrine and the sanctity of life.

The question under discussion, however, is: “What is the proper way of fulfilling our duties as Church members?”

May to the correct answer to that question also this renewed reflection have contributed.

VO

NEWS MEDLEY



Again the ranks of the pioneers have thinned. The Lord took unto Himself our brother Willem Loopstra, the first minister in Ontario.

He did not have an easy time and an easy life especially during those early years. The Acts of Synod 1958 give ample evidence of this, and then we realize that thereby only a very small part is revealed.

We do not doubt that he did not do the right thing in each and every case and that he did not always follow the correct course.

However, it was established without doubt that he remained faithful to the promises made at his ordination and at his installation in the Churches he was going to serve here, and that he sought the real wellbeing of Christ’s Church.

He suffered much from mudslinging and false accusations, and this will not have been alien to the need for early retirement.

It cannot be overestimated what he did for a periodical of our own, and it was largely through his administrative skills and perseverance and the countless hours he spent on it that

The Canadian Reformed Magazine got off the ground and continued to appear until Premier Printing took it over from him and the other brothers who formed the Canadian Reformed Publishing House, so that *The Canadian Reformed Magazine* has appeared under the name of *Clarion* since 1973.

Whenever one met him, one could be certain to hear all sorts of questions regarding congregational life, family life, progress of children, and so on. He had a lively interest in all that was going on in Church and family.

During the last period of his life his mental capacities diminished, although it appears that he himself did not suffer because of that.

Now the Lord took him unto Himself.

We remember with gratitude this faithful servant of the Lord and extend our condolences to our sister who once again has to carry the sorrow of widowhood, and to his children and grandchildren.

Meanwhile we have to continue for as long as the Lord gives us the opportunity to do so.

The various bulletins from Ontario mention with gratitude the admittance into the federation of the Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel MD. We, too, express our thankfulness for the fact that the brotherhood there could see their way clear to ask for admittance and that no obstacles were encountered on the way which rendered granting of the request impossible.

Thus we have now four American Reformed Churches in our federation.

It will take a while, I presume, till there are a sufficient number of Churches in the United States to form their own federation, but we are thankful for the fact that the number is growing. This thankfulness is not there because of numeric growth, since numeric growth is not necessarily proof of faithfulness and of blessing. This gratitude is there because we see the power of the Holy Spirit in turning the hearts of brothers and sisters who are one in faith towards each other so that they wish to proceed together in the unity of the faith.

Welcome.

Welcome also to the Rev. Hofford who was admitted into the ministry of the Word in the Churches.

It is not because of him or because I doubt his purity and capability as a minister of the Word that I write the following. Let no one interpret it in this vein. If one does, he is slandering.

My objections are against the actions of the classis at which the decision was made.

Have the brothers not inquired how things should be done?

Have they not contacted, e.g. the Professor of Church Polity at our College to receive the necessary instruction? Hamilton is not all that far away!

Let me first give a few lines from bulletins.

In the first place from the Chatham bulletin.

"Congratulations are also in order for another congregation. We have a 'little sister.' Classis, with the advice of the deputies of Regional Synod, admitted the Church at Laurel MD. Classis, with concurring advice of the deputies, admitted the Rev. B.R. Hofford into the ministry of the Word in our Churches. This took place after Rev. Hofford had satisfactorily answered questions on doctrine and church polity."

The second bulletin from which I quote is the one of London.

"The Rev. B.R. Hofford was submitted to a colloquium (conversation) in classis and it was decided to accept him as minister of the Word within the federation."

These two witnesses testify that what took place at that classis was a *colloquium*, a conversation.

Were the brothers not aware of it that in this case this was an illegal procedure?

I realize that what was done cannot be undone, and I would not advocate it either. However, similar cases may come up in the future and it is of utmost importance that we abide by what we have decided.

The reports speak of a *colloquium*, but this is something to which only ministers who come from sister Churches abroad have to submit.

Such was not the case here at all!

For ministers who come from a Church with which we have no sister Church relationship an examination is required which is on a level with the classical examinations which our candidates have to undergo.

What did Synod Edmonton 1965 decide?

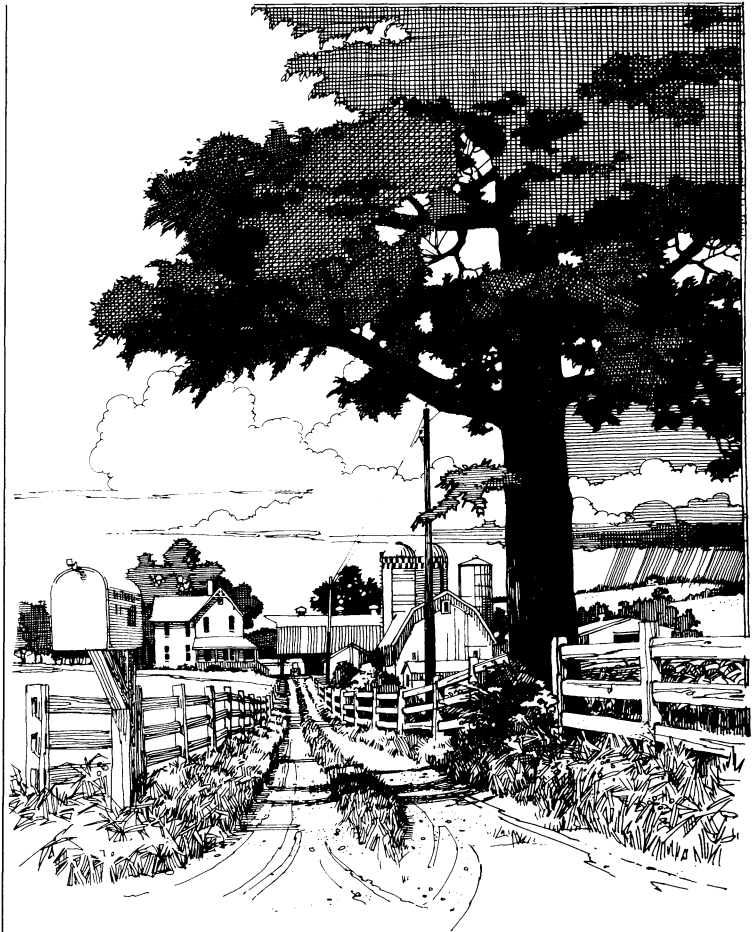
You can find it in Art. 39 of the *Acts*, on page 16.

Let me translate it.

"Regarding those who are serving or did serve in churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches do not maintain correspondence:

"1. They shall not be called before they have been declared eligible for call.

"2. They may be declared eligible for call if they



"a. show proof that they have been called to the ministry;

"b. submit a written exposition of the reasons which led them to the request to be declared eligible;

"c. show good testimonials regarding their daily conduct;

"d. submit to an examination which shall be on the same level as the preparatory and peremptory examination. This examination shall be conducted by the classis in which they live, with the assistance of Deputies ad art. 49 (now 48, VO) of the Regional Synod."

Why was this not followed?

Once again: what has been done cannot be undone, nor should any steps in that direction be taken.

For the future, however, what we have decided should be observed faithfully.

You can find the above-quoted decision also in the booklet by Dr. Deddens and Rev. Van Rongen *Decently and in Good Order*.

There is one more point in this connection to which we should pay attention.

First a few lines from bulletins again.

Chatham: "Objection London to concurring advice of deputies of Regional Synod."

Lincoln: "Two proposals from the Church of London to be added to the classical agenda. (a) London asserts the right of any Classis to admit a church to the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches, without the concurring advice of deputies of Regional Synod. This is contrary to what Synod Burlington west 1986 decided (see art. 85 *Acts* of Synod 1986)."

It is evident from the above lines that the Church at London claims that no deputies from regional synod are needed if a Church has requested to be received into the federation.

— continued on page 227

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

How did the suspended office-bearers react to their suspension, especially as far as the worship services were concerned?

On Friday, January 8, 1886 one of the not suspended ministers was to fill the pulpit instead of one of those who had been suspended. It was a regular weekday service.

What happened when this not suspended minister appeared in the pulpit? As soon as the worshipers saw him, they left the building and only a few remained. That's how the congregation reacted to the suspension of their faithful ministers.

On the Sunday following, the suspended ministers gave "Bible Lectures" in various localities, where everything went smoothly and without any disturbance. The halls where these assemblies were held were packed whereas the Church buildings, denied to the suspended office-bearers, were almost deserted. In the large Nieuwe Kerk only seventy-nine persons attended the service, fifty of whom were children. Twenty-six persons participated in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Whereas during eight services in the Church buildings the collections amounted to not more than Fl. 26.70 in total (Fl. 3.33 per service) the collections in the halls on Sunday, February 14 — a day of fasting and prayer — amounted to more than thirteen hundred guilders.

What were the deposed office-bearers to do when their last appeal was denied? Should they recognize the deposition or continue in office?

On the eighth of December that same year the brothers issued a clear *Declaration* in which they stated that a sentence by an ecclesiastical judge on earth did not necessarily imply that the heavenly Judge confirmed it. They were convinced that in this case the Lord judged differently and that it was their obligation towards the King of the Church to continue in office.

"Still being Ministers of the Word, still having the office of Overseers, and still being charged by Christ to take care of His needy, we therefore ask of our fellow-brethren-in-office who have not been deposed by ecclesiastical procedure, here as well as elsewhere, that for Jesus' sake they recognize our holy Office completely and unconditionally; we ask of the believers of the Church of Amsterdam that by forbearing love they will render this our Ministry continually possible; and we humbly and reverently pray our King Himself — whom we oftentimes taunted by our unfaithfulness, but *whom we were allowed in this case to obey in initial faithfulness* — for the grace that He make our ministry powerful by His Spirit and make it so effective in the hearts of the believers in such a glorious manner that a fruit may flourish to the magnification of His unsearchable mercies."

Some seven thousand members of the Amsterdam Church recognized these office-bearers as the legitimate Consistory of the Church and continued to follow them.

The name of the Church was Netherlands Reformed Church (Nederduitsch Gereformeerde Kerk).

2. Kootwijk

a. Some History

That we paid special attention to what happened in Amsterdam does not mean that the Doleantie began in that place or that what happened there was the most important element in the second reformation in the nineteenth century. Even though some of the brothers of Amsterdam gained a prominent place and may be counted among the "leaders" in the later stages of development, there was no "overall strategy" or plan of action, nor were there any national leaders who went here and there to urge the people to action. It was only later in the development of the whole "movement" that, among others, Dr. A. Kuiper obtained a prominent place and a position as leader.

For the beginning of the Doleantie we have to go to a small and not very prominent village on the Veluwe, named Kootwijk. It was a poor village and not very attractive to ministers. Had there been a large number of candidates for the ministry, things might have been different, but such was not the case. There were hundreds of congregations without a minister, and there was sufficient choice for those who aspired to the ministry within the Netherlands Reformed Church. Who wanted to go to Kootwijk?

The last minister they had had left in 1868, and since that time all the calls extended to ministers and candidates had remained fruitless.

For some years Kootwijk "enjoyed" the services of a so-called "teacher of religion" — which is an official function and position within the Netherlands Reformed Church — but this man was not very interested in the spiritual wellbeing of the Congregation. While he was in Kootwijk a call was extended once in a while, but this was more a formal gesture: it was done to comply with the regulations and to ensure that the government subsidy of Fl. 300 per year was not forfeited.

The Ring ministers came, of course, to fulfil their obligations, and the Sacraments were administered by them, but this did not do all that much for the upbuilding of the Congregation. It even happened more than once that no one came to the table of the Lord, not even an office-bearer when the Lord's Supper was being administered. And for this they then had made the difficult trip to Kootwijk!

In order to make it possible for the congregation to hear God's Word explained every Sunday, the Classical Board of Harderwijk approved of it that a "Teacher of Religion" was sent to Kootwijk. His name was Hendrik Koestapel. He originally studied for the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church, but he was not a man of study and the exams were too hard for him. He was, however, able to speak a simple edifying word and became a "teacher of religion" in the Netherlands Reformed Church in Putten on the Veluwe, from where he went to Kootwijk.

Koestapel's salary was Fl. 500.00 per year: Fl. 300.00 state salary, Fl. 200.00 from the congregation. He appears

to have had more interest in farming than in the spiritual wellbeing of the congregation. The top floor of the parsonage was used for storing the grain he grew, while a shed with the parsonage was used as a barn.

In the summer of 1885 Koestapel died, and now the congregation missed even the little guidance which this man had given it.

b. Where to Study?

On the twenty-seventh day of March in the year 1857, a baby boy was born whose life would be intertwined with the further history of Kootwijk's Church. His name: Jan Hendrikus Houtzagers.

The young Jan not only was *able* to learn well, he also showed interest in studying, and his parents were thinking of sending him later on to university to study theology with a view to the ministry.

However, a nervous breakdown caused him to be most times in bed for a period of about two years, during which time he lost his father. When his mother moved from Utrecht to Ede in Gelderland, his health was restored completely and he soon caught up in his studies. The lessons he received privately resulted in his being registered as a student of theology at the University of Utrecht.

This happened on September 20, 1878.

Although the lectures at the University did not honour the Word of God as the infallible rule of faith, this did not appear to bother the young Houtzagers too much. That what he learned at the University conflicted with the simple faith of his mother was something which did not disturb him unduly.

And yet, he did not have peace of mind.

Then something else happened.

A new university was to be opened in Amsterdam, a free institute of higher learning. It was intended for the "stricter ones," those who were often mocked because of their seriousness and strictness. Houtzagers' mother wanted him to go there.

In preparation of his transfer to the new university Houtzagers corresponded with Dr. A. Kuyper, and upon the latter's advice he first completed the propaedeutic studies in Utrecht. Having done this, he was not yet prepared to go to Amsterdam, and felt much more like going to Leyden, where the lines drawn in Utrecht would be continued and followed consequently, going in the direction pointed out by the father of modernism Prof. Scholten.

Discussions with Dr. Kuyper finally led, after much inner struggle, to Houtzagers' decision to continue his studies at the newly established university.

Thus, on December 13, 1883, Jan Hendrikus Houtzagers passed the final examination and became the first graduate of the Theological Faculty of the Free University.

Two persons who sent him congratulatory messages were to become close allies in the struggle that was to follow and were to support him by their friendship.

They were, in the first place Mr. Dr. W. van den Bergh, minister of the Netherlands Reformed Church at Schaarsbergen, and, in the second place, the Rev. J.J. Ploos van Amstel, minister of the Netherlands Reformed Church at Reitsum in Friesland, who wrote, "My dear young friend and brother in our Lord Jesus Christ! God the Lord render you more and more capable and make you a rich blessing!"

c. A Call

Now that Mr. Houtzagers had completed his academic studies for the ministry, he would be eligible for call after having passed the required ecclesiastical examination.

There was one big question: Would the ecclesiastical assemblies examine him, a graduate from the Free University?

Although many a congregation still desired to hear the old, Reformed truth, to extend a call to someone who had studied at that new university of Abraham Kuyper was something else!

Once, when the Rev. G. Vlug of Nijkerk conducted a service in Kootwijk in October 1884, he spoke with the brothers about the sad situation and condition of the congregation as a result of the lengthy vacancy, and he drew their attention to the first theological graduate of the Free University, adding to this that, in his opinion, there was a "reasonable chance" of success if they extended a call.

Since the brothers of Kootwijk knew very little about Kuyper's institute and nothing at all about that first theological graduate, they first went out to gather some information. Their investigation resulted in the invitation to Cand. Houtzagers to come to Kootwijk to conduct some services.

It was on Sunday, November 11, 1884, that he delivered a "sermon" — we would say that he spoke an edifying word, or that he "exhorted" — on Psalm 130:7 and 8.

The Consistory did not wait long, but gave Mr. Houtzagers to understand that they would like to call him and to have him as their pastor and teacher. And when Cand. Houtzagers came again and conducted services on January 25, 1885, the bond which already existed between him and Kootwijk's congregation became stronger.

Kootwijk's office-bearers did not rush into things. The Church was small and poor. Calling a candidate who was not in possession of a degree from a State University and who, besides, was a Reformed confessor, could result in loss of state subsidy.

On the other hand, they considered that their prospects were very dim if they had to rely on ministers who were already serving or on candidates from state universities — assuming even that these were Reformed enough to be called.

Thus, after ample consideration and greatly assisted by Dr. W. van den Bergh of Voorthuizen — he had in the meantime moved from Schaarsbergen to Voorthuizen — the Consistory decided on March 25, 1885, to promise to extend a call to Cand. Houtzagers.

The document which was drawn up and was sent to the Candidate shows the seriousness and sincerity of the brethren. Stressing that they fear the worst for the Church at Kootwijk if the vacancy should last much longer, they also make clear that "they cannot decide again to extend a call in the normal way to ministers or candidates of whom they know beforehand that they will decline. To pray in the Consistory when such a call is extended just for the show, is unholy and hypocritical, and they no longer want to render themselves guilty of such a profanation of prayer."

They further state that they have asked and received advice from neighbouring ministers and that, if Cand. Houtzagers declares that he will accept such a call, they will proceed to it after proper ecclesiastical examination.

— *To be continued*

News Medley — continued from page 224

I am in full agreement with London.

I am convinced that — even after Synod 1986 — we are not obligated to ask these deputies to be present and to give their concurring advice.

Our readers will understand that I am hesitant to say even more about the 1986 General Synod, for the impression may be given as if I cannot see any good in what that assembly decided. Such an impression would be completely wrong. I have expressed this, too.

Let me first quote what the relevant passage says. It is on page 33 of the *Acts*. There we find under “Considerations”

“1. The procedure for admitting other churches to the federation has always been a matter of local churches with the judgment of classis and the concurring advice of deputies of regional synod.”

This is a *consideration*, and therefore explains how Synod came to its decision. It is not a decision by Synod by which the Churches are bound at all.

Let me first write some praising words, and certainly not in order to soften the blow!

Synod was faced with the request to give guidelines for admission and also to give guidelines how to deal with the question of lifelong eldership in what is now the Covenant Canadian Reformed Church of Sackville NS.

At least, that's what I gather from the *Acts*.

Synod did not accede to these requests, and was absolutely correct in refusing.

The brothers came to their refusal on the basis of some considerations.

In the above quoted consideration they wished to point out that it is not a general-synodical matter when a Church is admitted into the federation. You are at the wrong address, they wished to make clear. Matters start locally.

We are thankful for this conclusion.

In their consideration, however, — and this is not a decision! — they made a sweeping statement for which I have not found any proof, in spite of my search for it.

I would love to see this proof, and shall give ample room in my column to any previous member of Synod 1986 who can substantiate this consideration.

I have a few questions about it as well.

Is it really true that admission of a Church is — and “has always been” — “a matter of local churches”??

Admission into the federation is *not* a matter of local churches, but of the federation. The federation starts at the classical level.

Thus admission of a Church into the federation is a classical matter, not a matter of local Churches.

It was good when, on the basis of this consideration, Synod decided “we have no task here.”

They went overboard by referring to local Churches.

They went also overboard by considering that it “has always been” so that the “concurring advice of deputies of regional synod” was needed.

If a minister is involved, deputies should be there and advise, but then *not* regarding the admission of a Church. They should be there and advise regarding the admission of that minister.

Synod 1986 did not say: Deputies must be there and advise.

Synod 1986 considered — without giving any evidence for it — that this was always the case.

I contest that it was always the case.

And gratefully conclude that it is not necessary either and that no classis can justly be accused of not abiding by general-synodical decisions if it acts on its own without regional-synodical representation.

Let's have a few relaxing moments.

Burlington South's bulletin tells us that “a semi-dress rehearsal for this performance will take place. . .” Any admission tickets needed for the show?

And in Neerlandia there was the sad situation that “A run-down of the minister's salary is discussed.” I would never have let it get that far.

In the Burlington West Church “The ‘Steeple Fund’ will not be discontinued yet, since donations for this fund are still coming in and are also needed to reach our goal.”

“Also the renewal of the organ console has the attention of the committee” of Administration.

Burlington West is not the only congregation where the organ receives much attention.

In Toronto the Organ Committee reported that “Total costs of this undertaking will in all probability rise to \$20,000 instead of \$15,000 — largely due to inflation and taxes.

Toronto was also to test a sound system for the hard of hearing. No result has been come to our attention yet.

Back to Burlington West.

“Church Growth/Pastoral Work: proposals made are again discussed briefly but it is decided to continue the discussion in a special meeting — when also the committee of brothers of ‘East’ ‘South’ and ‘West’ is expected to have met and come with suggestions.”

From Fergus comes the following information: “A letter from a group of people re instituting a church in Grand Valley. Will be dealt with in a meeting with deacons.”

In more than one bulletin I read about letters received which were held over till a meeting with the deacons.

This is one of the drawbacks of separate meetings. I am also wondering why these letters are brought at all to meetings where the deacons are not present, since it is known beforehand that they won't be dealt with there anyway. No wonder the meetings sometimes last till the wee hours of the morning.

Then I rather side with Lincoln: “There was no incoming mail to be discussed.” Mind you, this was an exception, I understand.

A last item from Canada: Lincoln's consistory report states, “There seems to be more interest and dedication in the young people's society, which the consistory thankfully takes note of.”

I pass this on with joy, for in the same stack of bulletins which I read for this medley I also found the opposite. It is, therefore, a reason for joy when we can relay glad tidings.

Let's end our journey this time in the far, far south-west.

The Byford, Western Australia, consistory report tells us that “Word has also been received that Rev. and Mrs. Bruning are willing to go to Papua New Guinea for some time. As there is a change in Government policy and the group there is not registered and accepted as a religion, it is difficult to receive a visa for more than a few months. Br. and sr. Buist have been found willing to go there to organize and prepare a few things.”

Whatever other news there may be in bulletins received this morning will have to wait till next time, for I should not try your patience too sorely.

There is still one thing I have to ask our correspondents.

During the past few years our address changed a few times so that there are still brothers and/or sisters who send the bulletins to previous addresses.

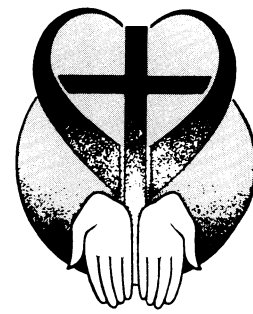
May I request each and every one to take good note of our address as it is now?

For your convenience it be repeated here.

31405 Springhill Court, Clearbrook, B.C., V2T 4J9. Tel. (604) 853-0330.

You know now where you can find me and where — I hope — your bulletins will find me, too.

VO



CRWRF

Kampuchean refugees know fear again

During the past two years, CRWRF has been pleased to support the work of Michael and Oetje Madany, Reformed believers working in the midst of a leprosy community in Eastern Somalia. They work as part of a team under the auspices of World Concern, Michael as team leader and agriculturalist, Oetje, by contributing her nursing skills and caring for their infant daughter, Alida.

A recent furlough enabled them, after visiting family and World Concern personnel in the States, to meet with our executive committee and a few supporting churches here. We were all impressed again by their work and Christian commitment.

It was also interesting to hear more about the new venture they hope to embark on at the end of this year. Plans are to move approximately fifteen kilometres southeast of their present home to initiate a Range Management project. It is a well-thought out, exciting vision to have local farmers introduce fast-growing trees that will provide fodder for their cattle in the dry season and thus increase production of a most valuable and necessary commodity: milk. At present, when the rains stop, cows have little to eat and thus produce only minimal amounts of milk. Subsidiary project goals would be to improve soil fertility through the newly-introduced nitrogen-producing trees, and to improve local diet by diversification of crops.

Oetje, while caring for the family, would seek to establish relationships with area women, informally giving nutritional advice, as well as possibly initiating small projects to meet existing needs. Of course, in all their work, their desire and goal will continue unabated, to be salt and light in the predominately Moslem society in which they live.

We at CRWRF hope to continue our small contribution to their living expenses, and to assist more substantially with the planned development project which has impressed us as an example of truly "appropriate technology." But, more specifics on that in an upcoming report.

For now, the Madanys are still very much a part of the team on Labadaab Island. Oetje contributes to the health care team, though the arrival of a western doc-

tor late last year means her efforts here can now be of a parttime nature. Much has already been accomplished in providing treatment programs for leprosy patients, and in the training of national health workers. Future plans include more surgery and nerve adjustments (now that a surgeon is there) as well as screening of all children in the leprosy villages.

Michael continues to work with nationals to improve the demonstration gardens and encourage local farmers to plant worthwhile crops. These include such species as the moringa tree, which, when planted as hedges and windbreaks around plots of land, will provide much needed fuelwood for the people in years to come. He anticipates turning over much of his responsibilities in this area to trained nationals before leaving later this year. His time is also occupied with overseeing other team efforts, e.g., the building of mud stoves and the production of adaptive footwear, which is of such benefit to those who, due to the debilitating effects of leprosy, have lost feeling in their hands or feet.

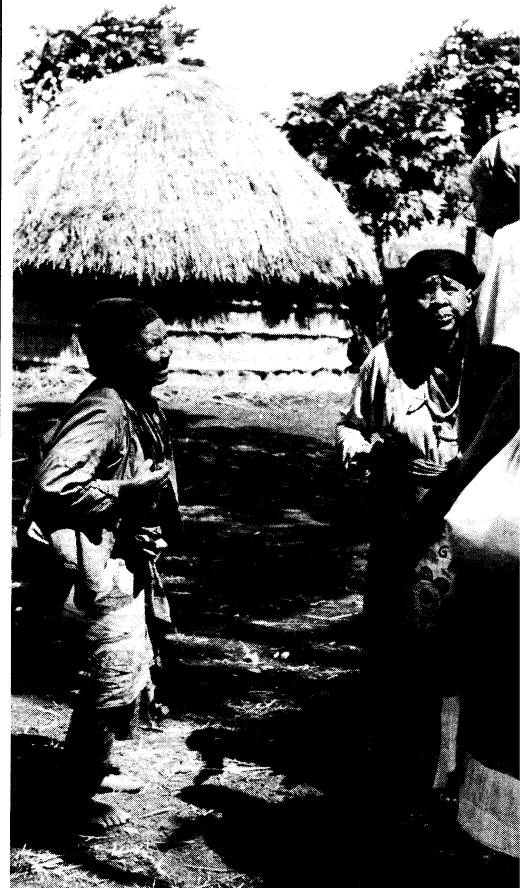
A recent newsletter describes something of the area in which they live and work, surroundings vastly different from the experience of most of us. Michael writes,

No doubt the only way one can begin to fully understand conditions on Labadaab is to come for a visit. If you do decide to come, you are most welcome — we are always happy to have guests. A few photos — or even many — do not totally communicate what would be experienced by living here for a few weeks.

Take sounds for example. If you were staying in our compound or walking through the villages, you would hear the typical countryside sounds of chickens cackling, the bleating of sheep and goats, and the lowing of cattle. From time to time, you would hear passersby on the footpaths conversing in the singsong Maymay dialect. However, added to these would be sounds more familiar to you — tractors, trucks, and other machinery from the huge sugar plantation nearby. Nighttimes can be quiet, but there is often some unique

background music that shows our compound's unique location in terms of spiritual geography.

The large riverside village of Kamtaande lies less than a half kilometre to the southwest of our home. Its inhabitants are not leprosy patients (they live in four villages just to the north and east of our compound). Rather, their ancestors came from what are now Malawi, Mozambique, and Tanzania. Kamtaande, along with most villages on the Juba River, was founded by ex-slaves a century ago. Many of the customs and traditions of the forefathers have been retained beneath a more



Oetje converses with two elderly ladies from one of the leprosy villages

recently acquired Islamic veneer.

The most noticeable custom — and one you would likewise be quickly aware of — are the nightly drum concerts and dances. The sound of drumbeats comes clearly through the warm night air to our home. Sometimes it lasts only from sunset till 9 or 10, while on other occasions it may go on all night and even into the daytime. Sometimes it is for more-or-less recreational purposes, but often the drums signal other purposes. In the mornings when we see Hintiro or anyone else coming down the path from Kamtaande, we ask what all the noise was about last night. From their answer, we have an idea of our neighbour's nocturnal activities. "Waa iska iyaar" means it was just a dance for fun. "Lumbe" means a frenzied attempt to exorcise evil spirits; "aynyaguu" means the night was full of animistic rites, including praying to an idol of sticks, inside which two men cavorted around as the bystanders danced and prayed. Altogether, these drumbeats remind us of the spiritual darkness and enslavement of those that worship a bunch of sticks tied together to appear as an elephant or giraffe, (Isaiah 40:18-31, Acts 14:15).

Few of the residents of the leprosy patient villages dare to go to the nighttime dances in Kamtaande. If caught, they face a fine of several hundred shillings since participation in those rites is forbidden by the mystic Sufi sheiks that rule the four villages.* However, that doesn't mean there are no sounds of music that you could hear from these villages in the evening. If you were staying in our compound, you would likely hear a digri — the



Some of Alida's friends are not much older than she is; here a daughter of one of the local sheiks is held by her mother, while the little girl's aunt, Faadumo, holds Alida

chanting of religious songs by members of various Sufi orders. The chanting may go on for a few hours on normal evenings, but several times a year there are longer digri sessions. At the pilgrimage time, hundreds of pilgrims gather from all over south Somalia at the mosque in Hatul Baraka (fifty meters north of our house). In this mosque is buried a famous Sufi saint and many of the pilgrimage rites are connected with prayers to him at his tomb, along with much kissing and adoration of the ornately decorated grave. For several days, the chanting lasts for most of the night and then, on the final day, it culminates in a marathon 15-20 hour session.

The format is for two rows of men, all dressed in white turbans and long white robes to face each other and then to chant hymns of praise, mainly to the founder of their particular order. There are also rhythmic bowings and swaying that increase in pace until at the end one only hears, "Ilaah, Ilaah" being shouted rapidly. Some dancers fall to the ground, others have euphoric trances or hallucinations. A different situation from the drum beating in Kamtaande, but also one that brings us to our knees before our heavenly Father on behalf of our neighbours. These sounds through the night remind us of what Jesus said in Matthew 6:10 and John 14:6.

May these "windows" into another world remind us to pray for Madanys and for all those who face the challenge of being ambassadors for Christ in the Moslem world. Let us also daily seek to be His ambassadors in the neighbourhoods, communities, and cities in which we live.

* Islam has been the main religion of Somalia for over a thousand years, but there are diverse branches and practices e.g., the four leprosy villages are under the rule of powerful sheiks.

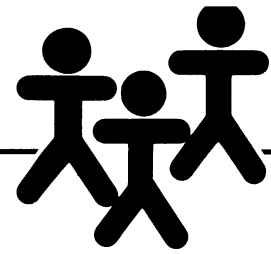


Two agricultural workers plant banana seedlings in the demonstration garden

Gifts for the work of CRWRF may be directed to:

CRWRF
PO BOX 797
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y7

All gifts are gladly received. Donations of \$10.00 or more will be issued a receipt for tax deduction.



This time we present some thoughts on an annual problem; look at an article about the importance of story-telling in Bible class; and share with you a parent's view of education in one of our schools.

Every year, usually beginning in January, many of our schools go through a period of uncertainty as one or more staff members indicate they will not be returning in September. When the staff member is a principal the uncertainty can turn into a minor crisis. We can take comfort in the fact that in the past usually these situations have been resolved but it is still disquieting to hear that some teachers are choosing to leave the profession completely. It is not our responsibility to question the motives of those teachers who make that decision but we hope the trend will be reversed soon because we cannot

afford to lose too many experienced teachers. In fact, there is every reason to believe that we will need more teachers in the future. On January 5, 1987, a new school was opened in Langley, BC. The Credo Christian Elementary School has an enrolment of ninety-seven and four full-time teachers. In September, 1987 a new school will open its doors in Flamborough, ON. The expected enrolment there is also more than ninety and plans are to start with four full-time teachers. There are some schools seriously considering adding more grades. In Ontario, changes in the secondary programs increase the need for competent teachers at the senior level. Let us work and pray — in order that more young men and women who have the potential to become teachers will choose to do so.

In the *Orange Courier* we read a translation of part of an article which was written on the occasion of a new printing of "Naam en Feit." This series of four booklets was(is) used by many children in the Netherlands to aid in the memorization of Biblical facts. The John Calvin School in Australia translated these a number of years ago and the sample page (shown below) illustrates the format of these booklets. While the author of the article, J. van der Steeg, praises this series he is nevertheless concerned that it can be misused by putting too much emphasis on memorization of facts. He points out however that this is not the fault of the books but more a matter of how they are put to use. He writes:

"Traditionally Christian, as well as Reformed schools, have distinguished themselves from other schools by the frequent use of story-telling. In history and in Bible lessons story-telling was considered the primary method of teaching. Every school day started with a Bible story.

What is story-telling? It is using words to paint the events in such a way that the listening child actually sees images arise in his mind. It is an art, but it is an art that can be learned.

Do children remember the stories they hear? Yes, indeed. Even weeks later many children can recount the flow of the story. One reason for this is the emotional aspect of story-telling. Many Christian schools in the past used story-telling exclusively, but some questions could be raised. Should we not systematically and intentionally do something to encourage retention? Yes! But not in such a way that story-telling is neglected. In other words not by assigning pages in "Naam en Feit" instead of telling a story. Why not a five-minute quiz, say twice a week after the Bible lesson. Of primary importance is the condition that the facts the children are to learn are directly related to the contents

of the stories they have heard. The contents of the stories should determine what the children must memorize. A good method to use is to choose the appropriate material from "Naam en Feit" after telling a story or a series of stories. Employed this way "Naam en Feit" can be a useful tool for the teacher.

N.F. 2/24

ELI and SAMUEL

1. Name the mother of Samuel.

2. Name the high priest with whom Samuel grew up.

3. Who were the wicked sons of Eli?

4. What was their work?

5. Where was the tabernacle situated?

6. Who appeared unto Samuel one night?

7. What did the Lord declare concerning Eli and his sons?

8. With which nation did Israel find itself at war?

9. What did Hophni and Phinehas carry with them to war?

10. What happened to the ark?

11. What did the Philistines do with the ark?

12. What happened to Hophni and Phinehas?

13. What happened to Eli when he heard the outcome of the battle?

14. How did God plague the towns where the ark was taken?

15. How was the ark restored to Canaan?

Hanna.

Eli.

Hophni & Phinehas.

They worked as priests in the tabernacle.

At Shiloh.

The Lord.

They would die on the same day.

With the Philistines.

The ark.

It fell into the hands of the Philistines.

They brought it to the temple of Dagon.

They were killed.

He fell off his chair and died.

With sores and mice.

On a cart harnessed with cows.

N.F. 2/24

The sores with which the Philistines were punished were very painful, especially because they seemed to be situated in secret places. The Bible speaks of "secret" places. As well, the country was plagued with a severe outbreak of mice, a heavy punishment, not only for damage to crops but also for the spread of disease.

C. Which name does not belong?

Moses - Eli - Hophni - Phinehas

Shiloh - Samuel - Hagar - Eli

Place in the correct order:

Othniel - Rahab - Potiphar - David

Achan - Abel - Jethro - Abram

D. Learn: (revision)

John 3:16

For God so loved the world,
that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in Him
should not perish,
but have everlasting life.

B. Facts to remember:

In the tabernacle stood a lampstand of pure gold with seven arms or branches. In the temple of Solomon were also golden lampstands, five to the right and five to the left in front of the holy place. The arms of the lampstand were beautifully decorated. On top of these arms were trays in which were placed wicks and oil. Every morning the lamps were cleaned and filled, while towards evening they were lit and left to burn until the Levites. The upkeep of the lamps was the responsibility of the Levites. The oil used for this came from olives, which were crushed with a stamping device.

a story or a series of stories. Employed this way "Naam en Feit" can be a useful tool for the teacher.

The following article appeared in Burlington's *Home and School* and provides some food for thought.

The value of Christian education

My son is enrolled in a public school kindergarten. He learns his colours, numbers and letters the same as he would if he attended a Christian school. Or does he . . . ?

My other children attend John Calvin School. They also learn letters and numbers. They learn Math and Science and learn songs. They have lunch time and recess where they play (and fight) with their friends. Sounds the same as any school, right?

When I walk into my son's school I feel like a stranger. I don't know the principal or the teachers, not do they know me. I see the walls decorated with the children's Art work. A few months ago the children in Grade 5 were asked to draw a picture of their favourite hero. I've never seen so many "Rambo's" in all of my life! At the annual Book Fair all the latest books were available for the children to purchase. The entire month of January and half of February was centred around Valentine's Day. Their theme

was "caring — sharing — loving" — a whole classroom full of Care Bears! The children were taught about loving and caring *because* it was going to be Valentine's Day. Does it stop after that? Now they've started on Easter Bunnies!

I am not trying to be overly critical of my son's school. Nor is this an article written with the intent to stimulate adding a kindergarten to our school. I am only trying to share my feelings with you as I deal with the two different schools that my children attend.

The atmosphere is different. All of my little guy's friends talk about nothing else than wrestlemania, Hulk-Hogan and He-Man. Isn't that what little boys are made of?

Yes, I agree that we cannot shelter them completely from all of this, and that we have a lot of the same in our school too. I also agree that the school does not either instill or prevent these things. But, I do know that "our school" has a different atmosphere. It's healthier. There's a better balance. Even with all of the talk about magical, muscle-bound heroes and the latest fashions, there is still a definite difference. Our children, though not any better than other children, are different. They have the mark — the touch of God on their foreheads. When you walk into our school you feel comfortable. These

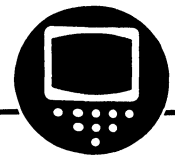
are all your brothers and sisters — the students, the teachers, the board. Sure, our children learn Math and Science from the same textbook that is used in public schools too. But these subjects can be taught differently. Our children are shown God's might and splendour in all of their subjects. They are taught sincerely, not just a sprinkle of religion here and there. It's a lot more than Bible lessons and Church History — it's a whole package: our schools are not perfect — far from it. We as parents, teachers and board have made mistakes — some have been difficult to overcome. Teachers change — the board changes — different people and different ideas. But we together serve one God who does not change and who has promised to be our God forever — ours and the children He has given us. We have an obligation too — a promise that we made at baptism. Would you rather send His child to a school where everyone is a perfect stranger or to a school where everyone, though far from perfect, are your brothers and sisters and who walk along life's path with you?

How do you put a pricetag on that?

A Parent

T.M.P. VANDERVEN

PRESS RELEASES



Classis Ontario South, March 25, 26 and April 1, 1987

1. *Opening*: On behalf of the convening Church at Lincoln Rev. G. Wieske calls the meeting to order, requests that Psalm 122:1 and 3 be sung, reads Ephesians. 4:1-16 and leads in prayer.

He welcomes all the delegates, the Deputies of Regional Synod (Art. 48 C.O.) the Revs. J. Mulder and M. Werkman and the guests from Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel, MD. In his opening words he mentions the passing away of br. Garnet Peet.

2. *Credentials*: The credentials are examined and all the Churches are found to be properly represented. The Churches at Chatham, London, Hamilton and Smithville have given instructions.

Classis is constituted and the moderator is as follows: Rev. P. Kingma, chairman; Rev. C. Bosch, clerk; Rev. D.G.J. Agema, vice-chairman.

3. *Agenda*: After some additions the agenda is adopted.

4. *Peremptory Examination of Cand. K.A. Kok and Approbation of Call*:

a. Classis proceeds with the peremptory examination of Cand. K.A. Kok, minister-elect of the American Reformed Church at Blue Bell, U.S.A. All required documents are found to be in good order.

b. Br. Kok presents his sermon proposal on Ezra 4:1-3. In closed session Classis discusses this proposal and decides to continue the examination. Closed session is terminated and br. Kok is informed of this decision.

c. The examination continues as follows: Rev. R. Aasman examines in Exegesis O.T. (Ps. 42 and 43). Rev. J. Moesker examines in Exegesis N.T. (Mark 9:33-50). Rev. P. Kingma examines in what the Churches confess concerning the Scripture and the Person and Work of Christ. Rev. G. Wieske examines in Church History. Rev. J. VanRietschoten examines in Ethics. Rev. M.H. VanLuik examines in knowledge of Holy Scripture and Church Polity. Rev. D.G.J. Agema examines in Diaconology.

d. In closed session Classis decides that the outcome of the examination is favourable. The Deputies of Regional Synod are in agreement with this decision. Closed session is terminated and br. Kok is informed of the decision.

Classis rises to sing Psalm 122:2 and all present are given the opportunity to congratulate br. Kok.

e. Classis, upon recommendation of the Church at Ancaster, decides to grant the Church at Blue Bell, US \$6,000.00 for the year '87. The Churches will be assessed CAN \$6.25 per communicant member. Monies are payable to br. B.F. VanderBruggen (1339 Snake Road, PO Box 600, Waterdown, L0R 2H0), and should be designated Fund for Needy Churches.

f. Classis approbates the call of br. Kok and br. Kok signs the Form for Subscription for Ministers in the Classical district Ontario South. He receives a written declaration of the outcome of his examination and the approbation of his call.

5. *Adjournment*: Rev. Agema requests that Psalm 43:3, 4 be sung and leads in

prayer. Classis is adjourned until March 26, 1987 at 10:00 a.m.

6. *Reopening*: The chairman Rev. P. Kingma reopens the meeting. He requests the delegates to sing Psalm 100, reads Psalm 100 and leads in prayer.

Roll call is held. The Deputies of Regional Synod are present again.

7. *Advice Deputies (Art. 48 C.O.)*:

a. Classis rejects a motion reading: Classis decides to ask the concurring advice of the Deputies of Regional Synod in the matter of receiving the Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel. Ground: This is in harmony with the conclusions of Synod '86 given in Art. 85 of the Acts of this Synod.

b. Classis adopts the following motion: In accordance with Art. 48 C.O. Classis decides to ask advice of the Deputies Regional Synod in the matter of receiving the Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel, MD.

c. Classis decides to add to the decision to ask for advice rather than concurring advice the following grounds:

1. It is not explicitly stated in the C.O. that concurring advice of Deputies Regional Synod is required.

2. Synod 1986 in Acts Art. 85 has not proven that it has always been a practice in the Canadian Reformed Churches to ask concurring advice of Deputies Regional Synod in case of receiving a Church into the federation.

3. Classis judges that Art. 85 III, B, 1 is a consideration for a decision and not a synodical decision.

d. The following proposal is adopted: Subsequent to the acceptance of Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel into the federation of Canadian/American Reformed Churches, Classis decides to ask the concurring advice of Deputies Regional Synod in the receiving of Rev. B.R. Hofford as Minister of the Word into the federation of Canadian/American Reformed Churches. This is to be done in analogy of Art. 5 C.O. and Acts General Synod 1965, Art. 39 A, page 16.

8. *Request Tri-County Reformed Church*: The following motion is proposed and unanimously adopted:

1. Classis declares that Rev. B.R. Hofford c.s. brought their complaint concerning the fencing of the Lord's Supper properly to the 50th General Assembly of the OPC. They were unjustifiably denied their complaint; and therefore the Tri-County Reformed Church has rightfully separated herself from the OPC.

2. Classis judges that it is not within the province of Classis to make further pronouncements regarding the OPC, since it is a matter which ought to be dealt with by a General Synod.

3. Classis decides to grant with gratitude, the request of Tri-County Reformed

Church at Laurel, MD, to be affiliated with the federation of Canadian/American Reformed Churches with all the rights and obligations on the basis of her wholehearted agreement with and adoption of God's Word as summarized in the confessions of the Canadian/American Reformed Churches and the Church Order of the Canadian/American Reformed Churches.

4 a. Classis decides, because the consistory of Tri-County Reformed Church consists of only two members, to advise the consistory to increase as soon as possible the number of office-bearers to at least three.

4 b. Classis also decides to conduct the colloquium with Rev. B.R. Hofford at a later time.

5. Classis decides to send a copy of this decision to the Synodical Committee for Contact with the OPC and to let every Church in the federation know of the affiliation of Tri-County Reformed Church.

After this all present rise to sing Psalm 89:7 and 8 and Rev. D.G.J. Agema leads in prayer of thanksgiving. The brothers receive the opportunity to congratulate the guests from Laurel.

9. *Colloquium with Rev. B.R. Hofford*:

A colloquium is conducted with Rev. Hofford, Rev. P. Kingma speaks with Rev. Hofford about the confessions of the Churches. Rev. J. VanRietschoten speaks with Rev. Hofford about Reformed Church polity. Also the other delegates are given the opportunity to ask Rev. Hofford questions.

In closed session Classis discusses the colloquium and judges that it has no objections to receive Rev. B.R. Hofford as minister of the Word into the federation of Canadian/American Reformed Churches. The Deputies of Regional Synod are in agreement with this decision. Closed session terminated.

Rev. B.R. Hofford now signs the Form for Subscription for Ministers of the Word in the Classical District Ontario South. The chairman requests the delegates to sing Psalm 134. All present receive the opportunity to congratulate br. Hofford.

It is decided to adjourn Classis and reconvene on Wednesday, April 1, 1987, at 10:00 a.m.

10. *Personal Question Period*: Chatham reports on Fund for Needy Students (Art. 20 C.O.). The assessment is at this moment \$7.50 per communicant member.

Blue Bell asks for classical representation at the ordination of br. Kok on April 12, 1987. Rev. B.R. Hofford is appointed to represent the Churches in the classical District Ontario South.

Lincoln notifies the delegates that the address of the classical treasurer is: br. P. Schuller, RR 2, Philp Road, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0.

11. *Acts and Press Release*: Acts Art. 1-14 are read and adopted. Press Re-

lease Art. 1-10 are read and approved.

12. *Adjournment*: The chairman thanks the Deputies of Regional Synod for their cooperation, patience and contributions. Rev. J. Mulder requests that Psalm 138.1 be sung and leads in thanksgiving prayer. The meeting is adjourned till April 1, 1987 at 10:00 a.m.

13. *Reopening, April 1, 1987*: The chairman, Rev. P. Kingma, calls the meeting to order. He requests the delegates to sing Psalm 122:2, 3, reads Hebrew 13:7-25 and leads in prayer. In his opening words he mentions the passing away of Rev. W. Loopstra. He welcomes all the delegates, especially the delegate from Laurel. Roll call is held, some alternate delegates are present.

14. *Appeals*: In closed session Classis deals with two appeals.

15. *Question Period Ad Art. 44 C.O.*: The Churches at Grand Rapids, Chatham and London ask advice in matters of supervision and discipline. Advice is given in closed session. The Church at Grand Rapids also asks advice in the matter of Minister-at-large, and the Church at Laurel requests financial support. The request is given to the delegates of Ancaster. This Church will provide the next Classis with a recommendation.

16. *Letter of Presbytery of Philadelphia of the OPC*: Classis decides to conclude the exchange of letters with the Presbytery of Philadelphia of the OPC as initiated by a previous Classis by a letter sent on December 11, 1985 with a response to their letter and not to continue hereafter with the exchange of letters.

Grounds: a. The Presbytery is a permanent body and addresses Classis as if it were a permanent body. Since Classis is not a permanent body no Classis should engage in permanent exchange of letters.

b. The matters dealt with in these letters concern all the Churches in the federation. For this reason the Canadian Reformed Churches are dealing with these matters at the synodical level with the General Assembly of the OPC through appointed deputies.

A committee consisting of the Rev. R. Aasman, C. Bosch (convener) and G. Wieske, as well as the brs. G. Schutten and A. DeJong is appointed to submit a draft letter to the next Classis.

17. *Appointments*: Next Classis: June 10, 1987. Convening Church: Church at London. Proposed moderamen: Rev. K.A. Kok, chairman; Rev. P. Kingma, clerk; Rev. C. Bosch, vice-chairman.

The Church visitors are appointed as follows:

Ancaster: Rev. D.G.J. Agema and Rev. G. Wieske; Attercliffe: Rev. R. Aasman and Rev. C. Bosch; Blue Bell: Rev. B.R. Hofford and Rev. P. Kingma; Chatham: Rev. J. Moesker and Rev. M.H. Van-

Luik; Grand Rapids: Rev. M.H. VanLuik and Rev. J. VanRietschoten; Hamilton: Rev. R. Aasman and Rev. C. Bosch; Lincoln: Rev. D.G.J. Agema and Rev. C. Bosch; London: Rev. M.H. VanLuik and Rev. G. Wieske; Smithville: Rev. D.G.J. Agema and Rev. J. VanRietschoten; Watford: Rev. J. Moesker and Rev. J. VanRietschoten; Laurel: Rev. P. Kingma and Rev. K.A. Kok.

18. *Personal Question Period*: Was made use of by some delegates.

19. *Censure Ad Art. 44 C.O.*: Is not necessary.

20. *Acts and Press Release*: Acts are read and adopted. Press Release is read and approved.

21. *Closing*: The chairman thanks all for their cooperation. Rev. Agema requests that Psalm 48:1, 4 be sung and closes the meeting with prayer.

For the Classis,
D.G.J. AGEMA, vice-chairman e.t.

Regional Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Western Canada, Chilliwack, BC, March 31 - April 2, 1987

With a view to the serious matters on the agenda of Regional Synod, the convening Church had called the congregation at Chilliwack together for a prayer service Monday evening before Synod. The Rev. C. Bouwman conducted the service and preached on Ephesians 3:20.

1. On Tuesday, March 31 at 9:00 a.m. the Rev. C. Bouwman, on behalf of the convening Church called the meeting to order in a Christian way. After the credentials were found to be in good order, the following executive officers were elected: Rev. J. Visscher, chairman; Rev. M. van Beveren, vice-chairman; Rev. M. VanderWel, clerk.

Regional Synod was constituted.

2. Upon the proposal of the executive, letters of br. J. De Vos, and of the brethren W. Holwerda and J. VanderDeen were declared inadmissible because those brethren had not been wronged according to Art. 31 C.O. in the matters they brought forward.

Two appeals of the Orthodox Reformed Church at Edmonton (c/o Rev. S. DeBruin), namely, re Classis Alberta/Manitoba of October 7-9, 1986, and re Classis Alberta/Manitoba of January 13-14, 1987, were declared admissible because the brethren who claim to be the continuation of the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton, had a complaint on the ground of Art. 31 C.O.

The Church at Coaldale also appealed decisions of above mentioned Classes Alberta/Manitoba.

3. *Classis Pacific of April 1986* requested that copies of the Acts of Region-

al Synods be sent to the Classical Church for the Archives. Since the Acts of Regional Synods are accessible to the Churches and to Classis through the archives of Regional Synod, it was decided not to grant the request.

4. The Providence Church at Edmonton as Church for the Archives of Regional Synods, requested that Regional Synod establish a guideline as to what should be filed in the archives. The request is granted.

5. The Orthodox Reformed Church at Edmonton (Rev. S. DeBruin c.s.) requested Regional Synod to declare that Classis Alberta/Manitoba of October 1986 had erred when it requested the consistory of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton to retract delegates which according to their own decision deviated from Scripture and Confession.

Synod granted the request, because delegates sent with proper credentials cannot be refused by a Classis. To reject a delegation in spite of proper credentials and to request a Church to send other delegates at the constitution of Classis, is going beyond the jurisdiction of a Classis.

In answer to a request of the Church at Coaldale and of the Orthodox Reformed Church, Regional Synod declared that the convening Church for Classis Alberta/Manitoba of January 1987 at the constitution of Classis, and Classis itself were correct when they did not accept the credentials signed by an office-bearer who was suspended from office in accordance with Art. 71 C.O. Synod further stated that a convening Church must examine the credentials on the basis of the credentials themselves and not on the basis of various submissions placed on the agenda of Classis.

In reply to a request of the Church at Coaldale, Regional Synod declared that Classis Alberta/Manitoba of January 1987 was correct when it judged that the provisional release of Rev. S. DeBruin was warranted because of the emergency situation which existed in the Immanuel Church.

Answering another appeal of the Orthodox Reformed Church, Regional Synod stated that Rev. S. DeBruin should have acquiesced to the decision of the consistory to suspend him provisionally from office. The Subscription Form gave him the right to appeal but not the right to liberate himself from (part of) the consistory before the appeal process had been exhausted. Rev. DeBruin incorrectly appeals to the case "Hamilton" as mentioned in the Acts of Synod Homewood-Carman 1958, in which case the minister involved followed the church-orderly way after suspension by his consistory.

As Rev. S. DeBruin c.s., in the period from December 20, 1986 to January 13,

1987 demonstrated their refusal to recognize the supervision of the majority of the consistory of the Immanuel Church and did not approach the neighbouring Church for action against the brethren deemed by them to be unfaithful, Classis Alberta/Manitoba of January 1987 rightly concluded that Rev. DeBruin c.s., had withdrawn themselves from the Immanuel Church and that further disciplinary action could not be taken.

6. A report of Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O. was taken note of.

7. The following appointments were made: Treasurer for Regional Synod: br. H. Lubbers, Coaldale; Church for the Archives: Providence Church Edmonton; Church for the Inspection of Archives: Immanuel Church Edmonton; Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O.: from Classis Alberta/Manitoba: Revs. M. van Beveren and J.D. Wielenga, alternate Rev. A. de Jager; from Classis Pacific: Revs. M. VanderWel and J. Visscher, alternate Rev. B.J. Berends. Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer was appointed to check the wording of the Regulations of Regional Synod and to report to the next Synod. Convening Church for the next Regional Synod to be held in the Fall of 1988; the Church at Coaldale.

8. *Censure ad Art. 44 C.O.* was not necessary.

9. The Acts were adopted. The Executive was appointed to take care of the Press Release.

10. The vice-chairman led in prayer, after which the chairman declared Regional Synod closed.

M. VAN BEVEREN, vice-chairman

Classis Pacific, April 8, 1987

1. *Opening*: On behalf of the convening Church at Lynden, the Rev. A. van Delden calls the meeting to order. He requests the singing of Psalm 66:1, reads Philippians 2, and leads in prayer. All the brethren are welcomed. The Revs. J. Visscher, C. Van Spronsen and C. Bouwman are congratulated with the acceptance of their respective calls. Rev. M. VanderWel is congratulated on the occasion of his 25th anniversary in the ministry of the Word.

2. *Examination of Credentials*: All the churches are properly represented. Four churches send instructions with their credentials.

3. *Constitution*: Classis is constituted. The suggested officers take their place. They are Rev. M. VanderWel (chairman), Rev. A. van Delden (vice-chairman), and Rev. G.H. Visscher (clerk).

4. *Agenda*: Added to the provisional agenda are 1. an appeal from br. J. van Til and 2. an invitation from the Church of Langley to have sent a delegate to the welcome evening of Rev. J. Visscher.

5. *Correspondence Received:*

a. From the Church of Smithers, a request is made to revise the Regulations of Classis Pacific regarding the central location for the convocation of Classis. After discussion, Classis decides not to accede to the request, and to maintain the central location of Langley.

b. An appeal is received from br. J. van Til regarding a decision made by the consistory of the Church at Chilliwack to extend a call to the Rev. C. Van Spronsen. An ensuing discussion led to the following decision: "Classis Pacific, having taken note of the appeal of br. J. van Til, decides that the consistory of the Church at Chilliwack was correct in the procedure used to call Rev. C. Van Spronsen to serve the house congregation in Vernon.

c. From the Church of Surrey, a proposal is received to change an article of the Regulations of Classis regarding the support of Theological Students. The Church of Surrey proposes to change it in such a manner which would lead the

Deputies (of the Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry) to consider possible income from the home church prior to assessing the churches in the Classis. Classis decides not to grant this request, and to maintain the article as it presently stands.

6. *Approbation of Calls:*

a. Having heard the documents read, and having found them in good order, Classis decides to approve the call extended by the Church at Chilliwack to Rev. C. Van Spronsen to serve the house congregation of Vernon.

b. Having heard the documents read, and having found them in good order, Classis decides to approve the call extended by the Church of Langley to Rev. J. Visscher.

7. *Requests or Proposals or Instructions:*

a. The Church of Langley seeks advice regarding the remuneration for classical appointments. Advice is given.

b. The Church of Cloverdale requests

monthly pulpit supply. This request is granted.

8. *Reports:*

a. The classical treasurer, A.H. Lubbers submits the 1986 statement for the Classical Fund, for which he is thanked.

b. The Church of Houston reports that the Classical Archives are kept in good order by the Church of Smithers.

9. *Question Period Ad Art. 44 C.O.:* Classis goes into closed session.

10. *Appointments:* The necessary appointments are made.

11. *Personal Question Period.*

12. *Censure Ad Art. 44 C.O.*

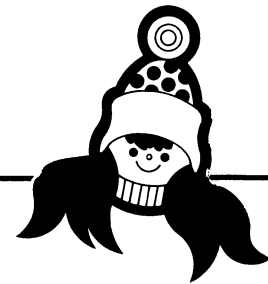
13. *Adoption of Acts and Approval of Press Release.*

14. *Closing:* Rev. M. VanderWel requests the singing of Psalm 90:1, 8 and closes thereafter with a prayer of thanksgiving.

On behalf of Classis Pacific,

A. VAN DELDEN, vice-chairman e.t.

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

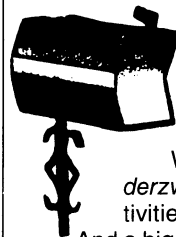


Hello Busy Beavers,

Let's start with a poem by Busy Beaver *Hilda Buitenhuis*.

SPRING

1. Spring has come
With all its flower buds,
After the thaw
With the water and mud.
2. When the thaw comes
The rivers overflow.
Later they go down
And again become low.
3. We dig up our garden
And plant our seeds
Then watch our plants grow
And supply our hungry needs.
4. Then begin to grow
All the lovely plants,
And scurrying around
Are all the lively ants!
5. To God we are thankful
For the beautiful spring.
To God be the glory
And the praises we sing.



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Sarah Vanderzwaag*. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver activities. Thank you for the puzzle. Bye for now, Sarah. And a big welcome to you, too, *Marc Schouten*. Thank you for sharing those funny riddles with the others. Will you write and tell us about yourself sometime?

Welcome to the Club, *Karen Vanderveen*. We are happy to have you join us. Yes, I really liked your picture! I can see you like to draw. And I can see you like horses! Keep up the good work!

Thank you for the puzzles, *Lois Lof*. I see you really mean to keep those Busy Beavers busy. That's great. And I'm glad you had such a good time during the spring break. Write again soon, Lois.

Hello *Alice Van Woudenberg*. It was really nice to hear from you again. Sounds to me as if you were really busy during that spring break and had lots of fun with your friend. Keep up the good work!

Thank you for the puzzle *Brian Jager*. Looks to me like you'll be a good writer! Will you write and tell us about your favourite book?

What a good book you were reading *Linda VanSydenborgh*. Have you read the sequel yet? The meeting with the mission workers sounds interesting, Linda. Are you sorry skating is finished?

FANTASY GARDEN

By Busy Beaver *Betty Bergsma*



RIDDLE FUN

from Busy Beaver *Marc Schouten*

1. What does a frog do when he has a flat?
2. How did the thief make a pig of himself?
3. Why couldn't the mechanic tear himself away from the cars?
4. What do you bake for a police officer on her birthday?
5. Why did the bookworm have an upset stomach?
6. What stories do baby oranges like?
7. Why can't you trust a shark?

(see answers)

Quiz Time!

SPRINGFLOWER WORD SEARCH

by Busy Beaver *Mariet Nap*



— a sign of spring

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

Words to find

poppy
 marigold
 waterlily
 sunflower
 primrose
 clover
 buttercup
 rose
 thistle
 geranium (2x)
 forget-me-not
 violet
 daffodil
 iris
 petunia
 tulip
 dutchmen's breeches
 goldenrod

Busy Beaver *Marjorie Barendregt* writes:

How many words can you find in

HEAT WAVE
HOT NIGHTS

Find 34 in each!

Give it a good try!

Picture by Busy Beaver *Linda Stam*

Me and my
 wishing for dog.



Answers

Riddle Fun:

1. He calls for a toad truck 2. He was a burglar 3. He was caught in its clutches 4. A cop cake 5. He couldn't digest all the facts 6. The Tales of Mother Juice 7. There's something fishy about him!

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

Why don't you drop me a line and tell me what you did for your Mom on Mother's Day?

With love to you all
 from Aunt Betty