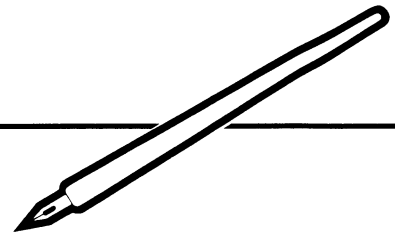




**Clarion**  
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 36, No. 14,15

July 31, 1987



## A hearty welcome

### Welcome

This past year two new churches were added to the federation of Canadian and American Reformed Churches: the now Canadian Reformed Church at Sackville and the now American Reformed Church and Laurel. What follows is a belated welcome. First I would like to make a remark about our name. Our official name is Canadian Reformed Churches. Since there are now already four churches within the federation situated in the United States of America, (one of) these churches should propose to the next general synod that the name be changed to *Canadian and American Reformed Churches*. Yes, the word *Canadian* comes first in my suggestion, not because the churches in Canada are more important, but because they outnumber those south of the border.

But let us go back to our welcome. It is a reason for thankfulness that two (small) congregations, separated from their former denomination because they wanted to remain faithful to the Head of the Church in every way, and, therefore, to His Word and will expressed in the Scriptures, met in our federation a group of churches with which they find oneness in the unity of the true faith as summarized and confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. They had and adhered to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms before, and, having studied the three Forms, they found the truth of God's Word faithfully confessed in them and could adopt them, since our churches adhered to them.

There is thankfulness and joy also because, in accepting these congregations within the federation of our churches, the churches in Classes Ontario South and Ontario North acknowledged them to be true local churches of our Lord Jesus Christ; true in the sense of Article 29 of the Belgic Confession. It is not so that they became true by joining our federation; they were true and faithful and this fact was acknowledged.

This acceptance does not mean that these churches were compelled to abandon every custom and form which they had before. I received an order of worship of the Laurel American Reformed Church, in which the Rev. Hofford was installed as minister of God's Word. It shows that the liturgy is different, but certainly not un-Reformed. And in the case of the congregation in Sackville, Classis Ontario North granted the request that the present elders, who were appointed as elders for life under the Presbyterian system of church government, remain elders for life. The different liturgy and eldership for life do not stand in the way of unity of faith.

In both cases, as when the Church at Blue Bell was received into our midst, it was evident that the admittance of these churches into our federation did not imply a judgment with regard to the (group of) churches to which the brothers and sisters belonged previously. In its advisory report that

served at Classis Ontario North of March 1987 regarding admission, the committee stated that, in a meeting with the session of the C.O.R.C. [Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church at Sackville] on February 7, 1987, it became clear that "the admission of the C.O.R.C. should be decided on the current basis of the C.O.R.C. and does not make any statement from the side of the Canadian Reformed Churches with respect to the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) from which the C.O.R.C. seceded. As far as could be ascertained, the congregation of Sackville fought the good fight to preserve the faith once for all delivered unto the saints."

Our churches have no relation with the PCA. We do with the OPC. The fact that both the Blue Bell congregation and the Church at Laurel left the OPC because of the officially supported practice with regard to admission to the Lord's table causes concern. The report of the Committee for Contact with the OPC for the Synod of Burlington, 1986, expressed this concern regarding the practice of "fencing" the Lord's table. This synod decided, among other things, "To pass on the report about the fencing of the Lord's table (...) to the OPC through its committee for Ecumenicity, along with the above considerations of the General Synod of 1986 and invite the CEIR to have meetings about these matters" (Acts, p. 60).

One of the two delegates of our committee for contact with the OPC, the Rev. R. Aasman, reported in his Ancaster Church bulletin about the visit to the 54th General Assembly of the OPC. He wrote, "It was evident to br. VanderVen and myself that there was a certain tension among the delegates, or commissioners, as they are called. On the one hand many of the commissioners expressed their desire to be orthodox and Reformed and identify with the very problems with which Blue Bell and Laurel had to struggle. On the other hand there was also an 'evangelical' influence at work which essentially falls into the error of the pluriformity of the church or the invisible church. This tension was evident time and again."

### Consequences

Adopting these congregations has financial consequences for our churches. All three (I include the Church at Blue Bell) are very small. They are needy churches. The churches in the Ontario South classical region decided to support the two new congregations in their midst. Classis Ontario North of June 1987 did not grant a request for help from the Sackville church. What was the ground for the latter decision? Was it the fact that there are more needy churches in the Classis Ontario North area, that Ottawa's church is already being supported and the Church at Orangeville is receiving help to sustain the Rev. Olij? Was it the fact that this Classis approved a proposal to institute a church in Elora and in Grand Valley, so that there will be two more small congre-

gations, although they will be quite a bit larger than Sackville? (By the way, we rejoice in this approval and in the addition of two more congregations, so that the Churches at Fergus and Orangeville will not grow too large.) I do not know the exact reason.

However, is the situation in Sackville not much more special and unique? Should we not draw the consequences of admitting this church into our midst and acknowledge their special situation, their isolated position, and the struggle they went through? Should we as brothers, not give them all the Spiritual and material support that they need and that we are able to give? Should our welcome only be in words? Should it not also be in deeds of financial aid?

This Christian norm and principle is pointed out by Christ's servants, James and John, so clearly! "If any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:17ff.). And, "What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can this faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:14-17).

I certainly hope that this decision not to accede to the request of the brotherhood in Sackville was not based on the ground that the means are not available in our midst, because that would simply be a lie. Sure, life is very expensive nowadays. A thousand dollars a month is often not enough to sustain a family. And church and school also demand large amounts of money; for many six hundred dollars a month is the minimum. This means that quite a few among us just manage to make ends meet. And it is through the faithfulness of these church members that the Lord sustains our churches, our schools, and all the other endeavours.



*Classis Ontario North of March 12, 1987. Two delegates of Lower Sackville, N.S., have taken their places as members of Classis*

It must also be said that this faithfulness is not found with everyone. Time and again one hears or reads about congregations where a certain part of the membership does not receive receipts for donations for the church with a certain amount that they can deduct from their taxable income, and the cause is not to be found with the treasurer of the church. These members do not voluntarily contribute to the church, while other do so only very little. They live as parasites and let the faithful brotherhood pay for their unfaithful, parasitic membership. In line with this, there are those who do not donate to the schools, let alone contribute membership fees. They make



*Congratulations to the delegates of Lower Sackville, N.S.*

the burden of their faithful brothers and sisters in the church and in the covenant so much heavier by not showing themselves faithful and reliable neighbours to them, while there is often not too much lacking in and around their own homes.

If, then, voices are heard that say: "There is an end to what we can do," this is understandable. But is it correct?

I said, I hope that money was not the reason, for that would mean that we have lost our faith, or rather that delegates at a classis, officebearers, leaders in the churches, have lost faith. Yes, if our church life becomes a matter of calculating what we *think* we can afford and of acting according to those calculations, *we have lost faith*.

This is not the way we worked in the past when building our churches. This is not the way we began our schools. We saw a calling from the Lord. That determined our decisions. Although our calculations showed: it is impossible, our faith said: the Lord wants us to do this. In that faith we went ahead. And the LORD, the Creator and Owner of heaven and earth, provided the means, as we trusted He would. Is that not the experience of many? Yes, as churches, as school societies, and as individuals, we have to say: that is exactly how it was and still is. When we see something as our calling, put upon us by our Lord and Master, for His service, for His church and kingdom, and we accept it, even though our calculations say that it is financially not feasible, our Sender does provide the means in His wonderful, unexpected ways. The promise about the windows in heaven that will be opened in the way of faith — which means, in the way of obedience (Malachi 3:10) — still proves to be trustworthy. The question is: Do we still have that faith? Or are we, living in a situation of great prosperity, abandoning that faith? When we had nothing to calculate, did we then have faith? Now that we can calculate, do we now go by what we think we can afford? I hope that that is not the case.

I have heard the remark that ministers have no financial insight. Even though this is a generalization, it may be quite true in a number of cases. But ministers are not called to be financial experts. Ministers of God's Word are called to show the way of faith! That is also what the financial experts in the church need: faith. Availability of money in the midst of our churches should not be the question.

### Counting the cost

Now one could ask, "Is there not that text about counting the cost before building a tower?" Certainly, there is. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself warned us (Luke 14:28), "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?"

However, if this word of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, is used in order to say: before we can decide to institute a church or to organize or expand a school, or to help a needy sister church in a particular situation, we must first calculate and be sure that we can afford it, then we totally misuse this

text. We would use it to attain the very opposite of what Christ meant with it. We would misuse the text to cover up our lack of faith or unwillingness to act out of faith and obey the calling of the Lord. This can sound sharp, and it may be sharp, but that does not mean that it is not right. We have to sharpen each other up in faith. God's Word is sharp. It is meant to work as a two-edged sword. In Hebrews (4:12) we read that "the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Let us have a look at the context of Luke 14:28. There Christ is speaking to the multitudes about the consequences of following Him and becoming His disciples. He says (v. 26ff.), "If any one comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." And then follows that word about building a tower and first calculating the cost. Christ uses a second parable, that of a king planning to go to war. His concluding lesson is, "So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple" He adds, "Salt is good; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?" (v. 34).

What Christ means is clear. If someone wants to be His disciple, he must beforehand calculate the cost of that discipleship; he must be aware of, and accept, the consequences. That cost is (those consequences are): you must be willing to lose or give up everything for Christ, even your very life, let alone your possessions. You must be willing to be a steward of what God has entrusted to you in His service, for His kingdom. You must be willing to be a slave of Christ who cannot say about anything: that is for me, apart from being a servant of Christ. Everything is for Christ and for His cause and its promotion. And if a person is not willing to give up everything for Christ and His kingdom, even the most intimate relations, even one's life, Christ cannot use him as His disciple. The Lord's evaluation is: no good!

Am I denying the need for financial experts and careful calculations? If the reader comes to that conclusion, he is wrong. Such calculations by experts definitely have a valid place. "Is this budget correct? Is that income possibility reasonable? How is the situation?" But this must have a place within the framework of faith; it must not break down an acting in faith. Of course, we have to consider the situation. If, for instance, there are five poverty-stricken families in a certain place, must they say: let us build a church that can seat some five hundred persons, and let us build a nice big school? Of course not. But one who understands well will grasp what is meant. Let me quote Christ again: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Luke 14:35).

If we really and honestly calculate the cost of this discipleship, can we, then, truly say, in our present situation, with all the money floating around and being spent for all kinds of things which we like to have and do: we are not able, as churches together, as church members in a certain area together, to put a few more thousands of dollars on the table for the work of the Lord? Must our consistories say that? Or our major assemblies? If that is the message from our membership in general, must we then not conclude that there is something wrong with us? Does it cost too much? If we think that it costs too much, are we calculating amounts of money or are we calculating the cost of discipleship? Yes, indeed, it is not a question of dollars. It is a question of faith, true, living faith, and faithfulness, and discipleship.

There may be quite a number of people for whom it will be hard to put more money on the table of church and school, since the two already cost a number of millions. Who can deny that? But is that the case with all of us?

It was through faith that the brothers and sisters in Sackville first seceded to remain faithful to their Master and then asked to become part of our federation, greatly honouring our churches. They considered that obedience to the Head of the church, to maintain the unity of the church; to give and to receive in the communion, the brotherhood, of the saints. Otherwise they would not have done so. Let us, then, continue together with them in that faith, faithful to our God and to one another, as brothers and sisters and as sister churches in truthful discipleship.

## The picture of the early church in Acts

This leads my thoughts to a matter which I have wanted to bring to the attention of the readers for some time already. Around Pentecost it struck me once again that we have such a beautiful picture of the early church in the first chapters of the book of Acts. This church life was the work of Christ through the Holy Spirit; He caused His word to have dominion in the hearts and lives of the believers. In Acts 2:42 we read regarding those who believed and joined the congregation that "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." And in verses 44 and 45 we get this picture: "And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need."

This last aspect of the picture is worked out in chapter 4:32-37, followed by the narrative of the deceit of Ananias and Sapphira and the exemplary discipline exercised by Christ Jesus Himself from His heavenly throne. It is for this aspect of the life of the young church in Jerusalem, immediately after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that I ask your attention.

What does it mean that those believers had everything in common and that they sold their possessions and goods and gave to the needy according to their need?

It has been said that the early church was communistic, having everything in common. But this is an unwarranted claim. In communism the people have all things in common in a forced way, while, in fact, it is not the people but the state, the government, the party, that owns everything. Communism says: all that is yours is ours, it must be ours; and it is taken from you. Communism denies the individual private property. Therefore it nationalizes land, factories, companies, and so on. In fact, it steals.

That is definitely not the picture of the church in Jerusalem after the sending of the Holy Spirit. Having all things in common there was a matter of spontaneous, free-will giving. Peter said to Ananias (Acts 5:4), "While it [this piece of property, J.G.] remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal?" This shows clearly the voluntary character of that giving. Their possessions were their own; they were, with the price, if sold, at their disposal. The Christian believers could freely use that as they saw fit. Private property was not denied them at all. God had entrusted it to them; and they saw themselves as stewards.

Now what is the meaning of the phrase about their *having everything in common* and selling their possessions to support the needy? It has been suggested that the first Christian believers in the apostolic church in Jerusalem sold every possession and property which they had, so that they eventually had nothing left; and that this was why this congregation later was so poor that fellow Christians in Greece and Asia Minor and Syria had to jump in and pour large amounts of aid into it. A baker, for instance, sold his bakery, gave the proceeds to the poor and became poor himself, since he had sold the means with which he was making a living.

One does not need to have much of an imagination to see that if this suggestion were correct, the church in Jerusalem

had to become poor and needy. Imagine one of our congregations. All the farmers and all the business owners sell their farm and their business and give the proceeds to the needy. Such a congregation would in no time be a needy church, and these farmers and businessmen, with their families, would become needy people. It can, therefore, simply not be true that this is the correct picture of the early church. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom, cannot make Christians foolish people, when guiding them with God's Word.

We have to see things in a different way. Luke, in Acts, does not say, for example, that Barnabas sold everything that he possessed. He sold a field. It does not say that Ananias sold everything that he owned. It was one piece of property. The word that is used for possessions literally means the things that are (there), the things that are available. One's possessions are the things that are there for him, which are available to him. What is meant is certain amounts of money, or possessions, or property in which a person has invested his money, but that he does not need for making a living.

Let us use the example of a businessman. Imagine someone who started a store and not only made a living with it, supporting a family and contributing to church and school and other related causes, but also was able to expand the business. Imagine further that he prospered so much that he could invest a certain amount of money in stocks and bonds as well as in extra property. You will understand, the money invested in stocks and bonds or in extra property are the things available to him. He does not need them for making a living and providing for the family. He does not need them for supporting the work of the Lord. The income from the business takes care of all those needs. No, the invested money is not needed to work with for the daily needs; it is just there for him as something extra.

What would such a businessman now do, following the example of Barnabas and others in the early church? He would sell some stocks or bonds, a piece of property that was available to him just as an investment, and he would give that money to the cause of the Lord, voluntarily, spontaneously, because he saw a certain need and because he had the money available. It would not really make him any poorer in his daily life. He could do this in faith. His treasure was in heaven, not in earthly possessions. His treasure was Christ and to serve Christ and His cause.

When we look at the houses we live in; when we see the kind of cars we put on the church parking lot; when we observe the ease with which we "have something to eat" in a restaurant or put wine or something stronger on the table; when we notice the kinds of vacation trips we allow ourselves; when we hear about the investments that are made in things that are just available, and so on and so forth (and I don't say that there is anything wrong with any of these things as such), must then our conclusion not be that, in general, we live quite comfortably; that, (again) in general, we are richly blessed. We do not really belong to the poor, but rather to the economic middle class, don't we?

The conclusion can be: if we would put only part of what is available to us as invested money (that is not needed for making a living and providing for the family and the kingdom of God) in special funds for specific needs or projects in God's kingdom and for His church, then the amount that would become available for direct church matters would not be small.

Let us remember that there is still so much to do in and for the kingdom of the Lord. Can we really say, as churches, that we cannot afford things we should do? Let us remember to think and speak and act in faith, as faithful stewards. Let us remember that it is a privilege and calling and joy to live as redeemed disciples of Christ.

J. GEERTSEMA



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

**EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:**

Editor: J. Geertsema  
Co-Editors: K. Deddens, J. DeJong,  
Cl. Stam, C. VanDam and W.W.J. VanOene

**ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:**

CLARION  
41 Amberly Boulevard  
Ancaster, ON, Canada L9G 3R9

**ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE**

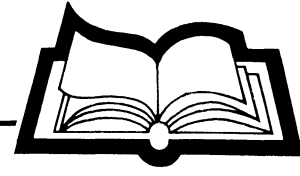
**MATTERS:** (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):  
CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.  
One Beghin Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5  
Phone: (204) 663-9000

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

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

**IN THIS ISSUE**

Editorial — A hearty welcome — J. Geertsema .....	306
From the Scriptures — The Parting Creed — J. de Jong .....	310
Reformation and mission <sup>2</sup> — K. Deddens .....	311
The Christian family budget — Cl. Stam .....	312
Ray of Sunshine — Mrs. J. Mulder .....	314
School Crossing — Are you an active member of the school society? — T.M.P. VanderVen .....	315
Press Releases .....	316
Canadian Reformed Teachers' College — T.M.P. VanderVen .....	318
Our political calling and the Christian Heritage Party, — F.G. Oosterhoff .....	321
Patrimony Profile <sup>45</sup> — W.W.J. VanOene .....	323
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty .....	325



“I wait for thy salvation, O LORD.” Genesis 49:18

## The Parting Creed

In the middle of the many blessings that Jacob as a parting father may pass on to his sons we find one interjection referring to himself. Throughout all the words of blessing, he wants his children to know that he expects all his help and deliverance from the LORD alone. It seems to us as a rather sudden and even inopportune interjection. Why would Jacob wish to say this? And why did he choose to give expression to his faith *here*?

These few words reflect Jacob’s continued struggle of faith even to his parting words. Jacob’s whole life in the service of the LORD is marked by the *antithesis* between faith and unbelief. He had been set apart by the LORD as the son of promise even before he was born. The LORD had announced his special place to Rebecca in the mysterious but clear prophetic saying: “The elder shall serve the younger,” Genesis 25:23b.

From the first Jacob sought the fulfilment of the promise in devious and underhanded ways. And even when he found his uncle Laban playing similar tricks on him, he had not completely unlearned following the desires of his natural heart. Was not Rachel his beloved, the chosen one of his heart? Yet the LORD had closed her womb so that she was barren. Her infertility became a point of conflict between her and her sister, and also strained her relationship with Jacob, cf. Genesis 30:2. When Rachel suggests that Jacob take Bilhah her maid as wife, Jacob consents. A son is born and Rachel calls his name Dan, saying, “The Lord has vindicated me!”

The intensity of the family conflict here indicates that Jacob was also caught up in the divine wrestling for priority that existed between the two sisters. And where did his sentiments lie? Repeatedly we find him siding with Rachel. She was the apple of his eye! So Joseph and Benjamin were his favourite sons. So obvious was the internal preferences in the family that it was enough to lead the other brothers to violent deeds of rivalry and envy.

Yet Jacob had to learn that his own preferences and choices were not those of the LORD. He had to learn to sacrifice the flesh to the Spirit! And his final words of confession here indicate that he did learn this lesson! Much as he had joined in Rachel’s schemes, and fervently prayed with her for a child, in the end he came to rest in the good pleasure and grace of God. Leah was the chosen in the eyes of the LORD! And he had to look to Leah as mother of the chosen Son of promise!

Jacob’s words, however, also form a warning for Dan and his brothers. In his parting words, Jacob confesses his own

guilt, and acknowledges that the desired promise comes outside of ourselves and our works, by grace alone! He learned to rest in the promised gift, and wait for the LORD to show His grace and mercy! That is also what he enjoins on his sons in these words.

But Dan does not follow this final appeal of his father. He carries on in the same deceitful way in which he was conceived and born. He chooses the style of his *mother*, and abandons the faith of his *father*. Although he joined in Israel’s battles along with his brothers, he became a ruthless and cruel fighter, exacting vengeance far exceeding what the LORD had asked for. And rather than wait for the LORD, Dan joined in the institution and propagation of graven images. Dan chose for the road of self-willed religion. In the end he loses his place in the salvation register of those who wait on the LORD, cf. Revelation 7:5ff.

Dan’s absence in the final list of the chosen sons of Israel shows the significance of Jacob’s parting words for the church today. These simple words have been the song of the saints throughout the ages. Among David and the prophets we often find a similar confession. Yet these words do not come automatically. Each generation anew must learn the secret of undivided devotion to the LORD, and of simple expectant hope in His redeeming hand.

For the long-awaited Messiah has come! The Son whom Jacob longed for has entered into our world and has completed His work on earth! He has given us redemption from sin apart from ourselves. But human nature has not changed. Countless are times and ways by which we try to determine our own salvation, or take matters in our own hands. The heart remains deceitful, and resistant to God’s continual leadership and direction.

So Jacob’s struggle of faith becomes the continued struggle of the Church today. As the father carried forward in faith, so the spiritual sons from every tribe and nation are called to follow in his steps. We must persevere in the struggle against the flesh which continually seeks salvation along its own, self-chosen ways.

Then — and only then — does this simple confession become the final chorus of the church’s song through the ages. Only then does this word become the fully eschatological confession through which we are lifted up and prepared through testing to enter the kingdom of glory. For Jacob persevered to the *end*, and so spoke these words. So we are called to endure to the *end*, and so enter His glory!

J. DE JONG

---

# Reformation and mission<sub>2</sub>

## Calvin

In my first article about Reformation and Mission I paid special attention to Luther and I said that is absolutely wrong to say, as many authors do, that Luther did not say anything concerning the Scriptural calling with regard to mission work. Some point in this respect especially to the Reformers' exegesis of *Matthew 28:19*, as if Luther and Calvin were of the opinion that the apostles had already done all the mission work, so that actually nothing was left for later times. But I stressed that we have to read Luther and Calvin in the context of their writings and, as far as this text is concerned, that over against Rome they very sharply rejected the idea of the *apostolic succession*.

At the same time it can be said that there are several places in Calvin's *Commentaries on the Bible* and also in his *Institutes* where we can see that Calvin did indeed have the idea that mission work had to be done and that it was not finished at all.

Let me mention first some texts of the Old Testament. In his Commentary on *Isaiah 12:4 and 5*, the Reformer writes, "He [the prophet Isaiah] means that the work of this deliverance will be so excellent, that it ought to be proclaimed, not in a corner only, but throughout the whole world. He wished, indeed, that it should first be *made known* to the Jews, but that it should afterwards be spread abroad to all men. This exhortation, by which the Jews testified their gratitude, might be regarded as a forerunner of the preaching of the gospel, which afterwards followed in the proper order . . . We ought especially to be inflamed with this desire, after having been delivered from some alarming danger, and most of all after having been delivered from the tyranny of the devil and from everlasting death." He continues his exhortation by showing what is the feeling from which this thanksgiving ought to precede; for he shows that it is our duty to proclaim the goodness of God to every nation." While we exhort and encourage others, we must not at the same time sit down in indolence, but it is proper that we set an example before others; for nothing can be more absurd than to see lazy and

slothful men who are exciting other men to praise God."

This is nothing else than the fervour of Calvin in seeing the duty of mission work as "proclamation to every nation."

Also in his Commentary on the last book of the Old Testament, the prophecies of *Malachi*, Calvin stresses more than once that God's Kingdom is not complete yet but that it is growing and increasing also in our times and that we

---

**“. . . for nothing can be more absurd than to see lazy and slothful men who are exciting other men to praise God.”**

---

also are involved in that continuation of God's Kingdom.

## New Testament

In his commentary of the Gospels, Calvin mentions in respect of *Matthew 24:14*, "And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come," that there are "antipodes" and other far removed peoples, whom even the last fame of Christ has not reached. So the gospel of the Kingdom must be preached to all nations!

In a similar way we can read Calvin's opinion concerning the spreading of the gospel in his commentary on the letters to Timothy. In connection with *1 Timothy 2:4* he writes: "The Apostle simply means, that there is no people and no rank in the world that is excluded from salvation; because God wishes that the gospel should be proclaimed to *all* without exception."

Also Calvin's similar comments on the second letter to *Timothy* and the let-

ter to *Titus* are to be mentioned, let alone what he said more than once in sermons on texts of the New Testament.

## Institutes

It is repeated many times in all kinds of books that Calvin said in his *Institutes* that the whole matter of mission had been finished at the end of the apostles' times. I said already that Calvin was of the opinion that there are no direct successors to the apostles, over against the ideas of the popes that they esteemed themselves as such, Calvin denied the "apostolic succession" and stressed that the office of the apostles was a very special and extraordinary office. But in the same context of his *Institutes* in which Calvin stressed this, he also added: "Although I deny not, that afterwards God occasionally raised up Apostles, or at least Evangelists, in their stead, as has been done in our time" (*Inst. IV, 3, 4*).

Time and again it is to be read in Calvin's *Institutes* that it is our duty to proclaim God's goodness all over the world, and there are many places in the *Institutes* in which Calvin points to the fact that the heathen nations may be involved in the whole matter of salvation. It is also repeated time and again that especially in his *Institutes* Calvin put so much emphasis on the doctrine of election that this doctrine is not to be combined with the idea of mission. This would then be a kind of "theological excuse": because of the accent on election and reprobation, the Reformed would have locked the door to mission work. But he who carefully reads the whole part on the divine election and reprobation in Calvin's *Institutes (III, 21-24)* sees immediately that this argument misses any foundation. Quoting Augustine, Calvin assures us, "Because we know not who belongs to the number of the predestinated, or does not belong, our desire ought to be that all may be saved; and hence every person we meet, we will desire to be with us a partaker of peace" (*Inst. III, 23, 14*). It is true that Calvin discerns between general and special calling. The general calling has to do with the outward preaching of God's Word, and the special calling is the work of God the Holy Spirit through which the preached Word of God is at-

tached in the hearts of men. But nowhere the conclusion is to be found in Calvin's *Institutions* that the Word of God is not to be proclaimed and to be preached to all nations.

### Prayers

Not only many sermons (more than 2000) of Calvin have been preserved, but also many prayers at the end of the sermons. Often these are prayers which have to do with the further propagation of the gospel. Then Calvin prays that the Word just preached may not only reach its goal in the hearts of the hearers, so that the congregation may bear many fruits, but also that the Word of God may be preached elsewhere and that it may also reach the hearts of the ignorant and those who have gone astray. In no way can one conclude from Calvin's prayers that the Reformer had no insight into the work of mission. On the contrary: many times he prayed that the gospel might be spread throughout the world.

### Geneva

When we have a look at the immense amount of work Calvin did in Geneva, we may even conclude that Geneva was a kind of *mission centre*. From all parts of Europe the students came to Calvin's city in order to be instructed in what he called the "pura doctrina," the pure doctrine of the gospel. And after having studied there, they spread the gospel over Europe, in many countries.

Some have objected more than once that this was only the preaching of the Word in countries which were already more or less christianized. But when we take into account how terrible the ignorance of the people was, we may say that it was indeed mission work, namely to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people that did not know its most elementary principles.

Besides, from Geneva Calvin wrote hundreds and hundreds of letters to many people in Europe, also to encourage the propagation of the gospel.

### No attempts?

Some have said, All right, but are there indeed attempts by the Reformers to go out with the Gospel and to proclaim the good tidings to the gentiles?

Now first of all I can point to what Luther said about the Jews and the Turks and how the people had to contact them.

In the second place I can repeat that Calvin had much influence in the whole of Europe and that there were many contacts in many countries. In the third place it must be said that in Reformation times the trade routes were especially in the hands of Spain and Portugal, Roman Catholic nations, so that it was almost impossible for the German, French, and Swiss people to go outside of Europe. But last but not least, in the fourth place: there was indeed a very important attempt at mission work in Calvin's times, namely in *Brazil*.

I will tell more about that in the next article, the Lord willing.

— *To be continued*

K. DEDDENS

---

## The Christian family budget

Undoubtedly most readers will be quite interested in the present topic. The word "budget" comes from the French *bougette*, which means "money bag" or "wallet," and experience has proven that whenever our wallet is the object of discussion, we are all deeply involved and vitally interested. One of the major activities in life is the making and spending of money, and our financial weal and woe is of prime concern to each one of us.

I do not want to deal with money or budgets in general in this article, but specifically with the budget of *the Christian family*. A Christian family has a different budget than a non-Christian family. At least, it will be the purpose of this article to demonstrate that difference.

### The need for a Christian budget

It appears to be a sad fact that most Christians hardly show a different pattern of consumption than non-Christians. Most consumers in the Western world all spend their money in much the same way on the same things: food, appliances, housing, transportation and vacations. There is not really a recognizable *Christian* consumer.<sup>1</sup>

For this reason Christian families are



also subject to many financial problems and woes. Many are not managing their finances as they should and subsequently cannot meet their commitments. This, in turn, leads to a host of other problems.

Statistics may vary from time to time, but it may well be expected that money problems lie at the root of 50-70% of marital conflicts.<sup>2</sup> This is especially true for *young couples* who have not yet accumulated many assets and have little experi-

ence to make responsible financial decisions. There is a pattern of chronic overspending and an inability to distinguish between needs and luxuries. In most of these cases, there is no operating on a Christian budget!

It is therefore necessary that Christian families establish a budget which is in keeping with the Word of God, sets the right priorities, and determines the proper goals.



## The basis of a Christian budget

The question needs to be asked: on what basis does a Christian family build its budget? Certainly there can be no other basis than what is asked in the law of God: the love towards the Lord and the neighbour!

A Christian does not budget in order to become rich. The Bible is clear and explicit in its warning for a striving after riches. We are reminded of the apostolic teaching, "If we have *food and clothing* (shelter), with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils . . ." (I Timothy 6:8-10).

A Christian budgets in order to serve the Lord and to meet his needs. The Bible does not forbid us to make a profit, and we may in our budget, if possible, also make room for the increase of our possessions, as we will see later. But we may not be motivated by greed, for then our healthy economical affairs become idolatry.

The Christian family budget will therefore show a good measure of *sobriety* and a keen sense of *priority*. We shall not live in extravagance, but place first things first. Also in our budget we shall seek first the kingdom of heaven, in the faith that all other things shall be ours as well.

## God and gold

There is always the question whether we should first determine what we need for ourselves and our family and then give of what is "left" to the Lord, or whether we should first give to the Lord and then live from "the rest." The same question has often been raised in connection with the fee for Christian education. Do I put the expenses for *church and school* at the top of my family budget, or does this come last, after all other items have been attended to?

This question is not difficult to answer. Whatever we receive, we receive from the Lord. We are only stewards of His manifold gifts. Our first purpose in life is to glorify the Lord and to worship Him. Thus the maintaining of the ministry and the church is indeed a priority. And if we are parents, our first task as parents is to teach our children the fear of the Lord. Thus the maintaining of the schools is also of great importance for a Christian family. The *spiritual needs* are never to be relegated to a place of lesser importance than the *material needs*! Our Lord warned us not to live by bread alone, but by the Word of God.

The gold also belongs to God and must be used for His service and for the instruction of covenant generations. Whatever we give to God, we give out of His

hand. It is a complaint of the LORD that Israel did not want to give or gave wrongly for the service of the LORD. It is also evident that unwillingness to give, means that the Lord's blessings are forfeited. There is often a relation between material poverty and spiritual deformation!

Churches and schools were built only because people saw these as a priority. Christians were prepared to live from what was left, and have been blessed immensely with increasing prosperity. The Apostle Paul wrote in this connection, "he who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and he

***"Also in our budget we shall seek first the kingdom of heaven, in the faith that all other things shall be ours as well."***

who sows bountifully will reap bountifully" (II Corinthians 9:6).

Therefore, at the top of the budget, the Christian family will place church and school as necessary items for true Christian living. Every week or every month these matters come first; it is the *hallmark of a Christian budget!*

## Giving cheerfully

It is at this point necessary to make some remarks on *how* we are to give for church, school, and other important causes or charities. If we do not give cheerfully, joyfully, and happily, our giving is in vain.

The key to giving is *love*. Whoever loves, gives gladly. Whoever loves, gives the utmost, even the last penny, if required. Whoever does not love, gives grudgingly, and will have to be reminded time and again. It has rightly been said that our giving is the barometer of our faith.

Therefore we should not give reluctantly, as if the money is wasted, or under compulsion, because we fear the consequences of not giving. But we should give with joy because the Lord has enabled us to be fruitful for His kingdom (II Corinthians 9:7).

The Christian family budget is built on the faith that the Lord will (continue) to provide, and that we may expect His blessing over the work of our hands.

## OUR COVER

*Wildlife in Manitoba*

*Photo courtesy Manitoba  
Government Travel*

## Setting up a budget

There are various ways of setting up a responsible Christian budget. We can distinguish between long-range and short term budgets, the latter often used to get out of immediate debts, the former often applied to achieve specific goals. The two can even be combined to meet the situations in which the family finds itself.

Above each budget we should write an important reminder: *control your spending!* The greatest single cause of family bankruptcies is uncontrolled spending and impulse buying. Connected to this is another important point: *know your needs!* The failure to distinguish between what is really necessary and what is not, has contributed to much financial distress in many homes. Combine the two: spend your money only on that which you really need. This is the basic principle of stewardship.

Some people have a built-in budget. They know exactly what is coming in and what is going out. Others will have to set up a written budget and keep accurate records. For many this is the only way to oversee their financial situation properly.

Both husband and wife should be involved in the planning of the family budget. The husband should, however, as head of the family, limit the spending and keep control of charge accounts. This remark is important in view of the fact that most spending is done by women, sometimes responsibly, sometimes not. Husband and wife communicate freely and openly with each other about money matters, but there must be one person with the final say. According to the Bible, this person is the husband.

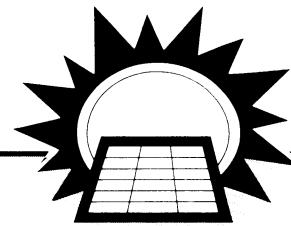
As far as our "needs" are concerned, we may distinguish between our routine needs, our special needs, and *emergency needs*. To deal with these needs, many families have three bank accounts: a checking account, a savings account, and an emergency fund. Some combine the last two into one: an account for special purchases or emergency situations. It is suggested that this account contain at least three months' salary. It may take some time to establish this account, but it will certainly prove helpful in keeping a family from poverty.

A Christian budget will give attention to three major areas: our spiritual, material, and social needs. Under *spiritual needs* we may include church and school. Under *material needs* we must list food, clothing, housing, medical costs, insurance, and also some savings. Under *social needs* we will place taxes and charities. A budget which is lacking in any of these vital areas, is not truly a Christian budget.

Most of the budget will have to do with our material needs. Some figures es-

— continued on page 320

# RAY OF SUNSHINE



The LORD is my song and strength and He has become My salvation.

Exodus 15:2

## Dear brothers and sisters,

*The children of Israel were standing at the Red Sea. They saw their enemies, Pharaoh's once so mighty hosts now floating to the shore like so many dead fish. Egypt's dangerous chariots, now buried beneath the water. The LORD had saved His people out of the hands of their oppressors!*

*In response to God's wonderful work of deliverance, Moses led God's people in a song of praise and thankfulness, "The LORD is my song and strength and He has become my salvation."*

*Israel acknowledged the hand of God in their deliverance.*

*The LORD worked redemption for His people, because He is merciful.*

*He executed judgment on His enemies, because He is righteous.*

*This song of Moses prophesies the triumph of God's faithful children over all anti-Christian powers. In Revelation 15 this song is called the song of the Lamb. There we are told how the apostle John, being in exile, heard the redeemed express their joy with the words of the song of Moses, the servant of God and of the Lamb. Those redeemed are very happy because the work of salvation which God began with His servant Moses, was fulfilled and finished by the Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. He paid the price for our freedom as children of God! Through faith we may belong, body and soul, to Him who won the victory over powers of sin and death.*

*Therefore the Church can and must be a singing Church! We have so much to be very happy about and there is so much reason to be very thankful to God!*

*The song of Moses and the Lamb has been the theme of the Church of Jesus Christ through the ages. Singing it with heart and mouth we are praising the works of the LORD which are great and we exalt His Name which is to be glorified. That makes us also stronger in our trust and confidence that we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ.*

*And once when all the struggles are over and when the good fight of faith has been fought, God's children will for ever and in perfect harmony join their voices to praise their Lord and Redeemer.*

*"Great and wonderful are Thy deeds, O Lord God, the Almighty."*

*What though my joys and comforts die?  
The Lord my Saviour lives;  
What though the darkness gather round?  
Songs in the night He gives;  
No storm can shake my inmost calm,  
While to that refuge clinging;  
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,  
How can I keep from singing?*

*(Robert Lowry)*

## Our birthday calendar for August

### PHILIP SCHUURMAN

102 Riverside Drive, Welland, ON L3C 5C7

*Philip is going to be 28 years old on August 5th. He works in the kitchen of a restaurant and is doing very well!*

### ROSE MALDA

Oakland Centre, 53 Bond Street, Oakville, ON L6J 5B4

*Rose's 30th birthday will be on August 9. She loves colourful cards!*

### FENNY KUIK

38 Rizzuto Bay, Winnipeg, MB R2C 3Y3

*Fenny will be 35 on August 18th. Are you still working at Premier Printing, Fenny? I hope to hear from you sometime!*

### JACK DIELEMAN

307 Connaught Ave., Willowdale, ON M2R 2M1

*Jack hopes to celebrate his 15th birthday on August 23rd. He is physically handicapped, but still very active in sports. I heard that you are going to High School in September, Jack? Good for you!*

*Congratulations to you all, and I hope you have an enjoyable day and receive lots of cards!*

## A request!

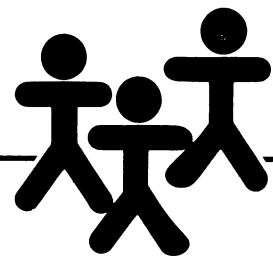
*A few weeks ago Adrian Dieleman (22 years) was involved in a serious car accident which left him paralyzed from his chest down. Meanwhile he has been operated on and there is hope that with continual therapy he will be able to regain some of the use of his arms. Although it is difficult for Adrian to accept the fact that he will remain partially handicapped, his trust is in the LORD, who is a stronghold in time of trouble and promises that He will never forsake those who seek Him, Psalm 9:9,10.*

*Please, remember Adrian in your prayers and show your concern by sending him a card or letter. His address is: Adrian Dieleman, Toronto Western Hospital, Room 5A-118, 399 Bathurst Street, Toronto, ON M5T 2S8.*

*I hope all our "Sunshine friends" will be able to enjoy a relaxing holiday season. May our heavenly Father keep us all in His care!*

Greetings,

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



## Are you an active member of the school society?

In a recent issue of a school magazine, I found the following statement from the board of one of our Canadian Reformed School Societies under the heading "Membership 2 year pre-support."

*... we will touch on the question of membership. Most of the members are aware that the principle of supporting the work of the school society is a covenantal responsibility. In view of this principle, our society has from its very beginning, established a policy whereby all members should have supported the school society at membership rates for a minimum of two (2) years prior to enrolling their first child in our school system. It is true that sometimes very special financial circumstances have prevented some parents from meeting their full obligations in this regard, while others have rightfully accepted their covenantal responsibility long before they enroll children in the school.*

It is sad that this needed to be written, but I am afraid that the question of membership in the local school society of brothers and sisters who have not, or have no longer children at the school is not being asked in one society only. In particular with regards to the high school one often gets the impression that Reformed (secondary) education is no longer considered a calling, but an option, to be taken serious, to be sure, but nevertheless an option. Membership of school societies has become likewise an option which is to be exercised when needed, that is when it is decided to send the children to that particular school.

I am sorry that support of the school society is considered dependent on whether or not children are making use of the educational services offered. Is the critical question whether the Reformed school offers the desired services for your children, services which are also offered elsewhere? Why is it necessary to almost beg for support of education which is in response to the Biblical man-



date? Again I quote from the same school magazine:

*It has come to our attention that during the next few years, we will receive enrollment requests from a number of families in our area who have contributed minimally or not at all up to this point. In order to offset this potential problem (!) the directors have instructed the Public Relations committee to prepare a letter positively outlining this long standing policy and sending it to all parents with pre-school children, who are not presently members of the society. At the same time we note that the P.R. committee has stepped up its membership campaign, and we hope and pray that it will visit many open doors and be blessed in its activities. As members we should also address this problem positively, perhaps starting with family and friends, let each of us urge our brothers and sisters to support and participate in this important work.*

I hope that "this problem" is also addressed from the pulpit. It should be a matter of course that the concerns of the school are the concerns of the whole membership of the church [Lord's Day 21(55)]. There are no reasons to with-

draw one's membership from the local school society. Within the communion of saints inability to fulfil one's financial obligations over against the school society should not be an argument, in fact, that confession of the communion of saints urges us to accept our responsibilities towards the education of the children of the church, whether we ourselves do or do not have children, and irrespective whether they are or are not of school age.

In the SCHOOL CROSSING of February 6, 1987, I made already brief reference to a Dutch publication, OPVOEDEN DOEN WE SAMEN (= Education is the concern of all of us). Here follow two larger segment of Veenstra's thoughts on the matter of support for the Christian school (my translation/adaptation).

1. *Speaking of the educational task of the family and that of the school may give the impression that the education of our children is a matter which can be divided over those two institutions. Such an impression is certainly not intended: education concerns all of us. There should be unity between the education at home and at school. This unity is, in the first place, based on the convictions shared by parents and teachers. We wish to maintain that the church is the foundation stone of Reformed education: education is our common concern and calling, because there is unity and co-operation between home and school on the basis of Word and confessions.*

*Reformed education also acknowledges the significance of the historical ties with our forebears who opposed many a heresy — also in the field of education — with the help of the church's confession. The school has her place within the communion of saints; the school of the parents is at the same time school of the church.*

2. *Maintaining the unique identity of the Christian school demands continuous co-operation and effort from parents, boardmembers, teachers, as well*

as teacher training institutions and other support services. Increasing specialisation brings with it the danger that the school becomes more and more independent and remote. This could lead us to forget the fact that the school in the first place has a serving function, assisting the family in its educational responsibilities. This serving function is not merely an historic development, it is based on the principle that the family retains the primary responsibility for the education of its children. Neither is it correct to suggest that the school is a mere servant of the family, to be ordered around by anyone who comes along. That shortchanges the own responsibilities and authority of the school. Although the parents retain the primary responsibility for

the education of their own children, the school supports all the families and stands 'in loco parentis.' The school belongs to the parents because the children belong to the parents, but individual parents do not own the school!

In this connection, our confession concerning the communion of saints is of importance: the school does not merely belong to a group of parents; it also belongs to the church. All brothers and sisters (must) have an interest in the education of the children of the church. The association which operates the school consists of members of the church, and those members are not necessarily parents! Not only is the Christian school a school of the parents, it is a school of the church. If we understand our confession

of the communion of saints, then this statement will not be considered a contradiction. Historically, both parents and non-parents have sacrificed a great deal in effort and money to maintain the Christian schools. The history of the Christian schools in the Netherlands tells of a childless Groen van Prinsterer who was a champion for the Christian school in the 19th century. In the support for Reformed schools by Reformed people we recognize the care of the Reformed congregation for the lambs of the flock.

Please, do not wait for the P.R. committee to contact you! Respond to your covenantal obligations!

T.M.P. VANDERVEN

## PRESS RELEASES



### Classis Ontario South, June 10, 11, 1987

1. *Opening:* On behalf of the convening Church at London, Rev. J. Moesker called the meeting to order. He read Psalm 48 after which we sang Psalm 48:1, 4 and Rev. Moesker led in prayer.

He welcomed the delegates as well as the students who were to be examined. He also called attention to the recent ordination and installation of Rev. K. Kok as minister of the Gospel in Blue Bell Penn.

2. *Constitution of Classis:* The Church at London examines the credentials of the delegates. All the Churches are duly represented by their first delegates (on the following day some delegates are replaced by their alternates). Four of the Churches have instructions re. Art. 44 C.O. Classis is constituted. Moderamen consists of: chairman: Rev. K. Kok; vice chairman: Rev. C. Bosch; clerk: Rev. P. Kingma.

3. *Adoption of Agenda:* After some changes and additions the provisional agenda is adopted.

4. *Preparatory examinations:*

a. Three students presented themselves to be examined with a view to candidacy for the ministry of the Gospel in the federation of Churches. These students included the brs.: K. Marren, R. Schouten, G. vanPopta. The students were examined one at a time in the order listed. Br. G. vanPopta was examined on the second day of classis.

b. Examination of documents: One at a time the students submitted the

necessary documents as specified by Synod 1958 (acts Art. 188). In each instance these documents were found to be present and in good order.

c. Sermon proposals: Each examination commenced with a sermon proposal. The following were presented: K. Marren: Philippians 2:12, 13; R. Schouten:

Leviticus 6:1-7; G. VanPopta: Mark 11:15-17.

Classis discussed each sermon proposal in closed session and decided in each case to continue the examination.

d. Examination in exegesis of Scripture and Doctrine of the Church: Each of the students was examined in exegesis of both an Old Testament as well as a New Testament passage. These examinations were followed by examinations in the doctrine of the Church.

e. Discussion of examinations and declarations: In the case of each student Classis concluded that the outcome of the exam was satisfactory and that each student could be declared eligible for call within the federation of Churches. Each student promises not to teach anything which conflicts with the Word of God and the confessions of the Church.

f. Opportunity for congratulations: In each case Classis joined in thanksgiving to our heavenly Father and the candidates were congratulated by the chairman on behalf of Classis. An opportunity was given to the delegates to congratulate the candidates and the family members present.

5. *Reports:*

a. Classical Treasurer: This report gives a financial statement for the last fiscal year. It is reported that the books of the classical treasurer were audited by the Church at Lincoln and were found to be in good order. The treasurer's report is adopted.

b. Fund for Needy Students: A financial statement for the period March 1986

## CHURCH NEWS



### ELORA INSTITUTION

With joy in Christ, who gathers His church to the end of the age, we announce the institution of the Canadian Reformed Church at Elora. The institution will take place on September 6, 1987, at 4:00 p.m. in the St. John's Anglican Church, at the intersection of Smith and Henderson Street in Elora, Ontario. Visitors are cordially welcome.

\* \* \*

DECLINED to the Church at Kelmscott, West Australia and to the Church at Hamilton, ON

REV. W. DEN HOLLANDER  
of Winnipeg, MB.

- June 1987 is presented. As of June 1987 there is a balance of \$4,679.46. The financial statement is adopted.

c. Classical Archives: It is reported that the classical archives were checked and were found to be in good order.

d. Report: Venue of future classical meetings: Classis decides that future classical meetings in district ON South will be held on a rotating basis at Ancaster, Attercliffe, Lincoln, and London.

e. Report Comm. Letter to Presbytery of Philadelphia (letter of November 28, 1986): Classis decides to answer this letter and to conclude the exchange of letters with this answer. A copy of the letter of the Presbytery as well as a copy of Classis' answer will be sent to the Comm. for Contact with the O.P.C.

f. Report Fund for Needy Students: Classis considers this report and decides to give support to Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel MD. The total assessment for the Churches in the classical district will be \$17.50 (Can.) per communicant member for the period April 1, 1987 - December 31, 1987. This amount includes the assessment for Blue Bell, (\$6.25) as well as Tri-County (\$11.25).

6. *Question Period ad. Art. 44 C.O.*: A number of Churches make use of the opportunity to ask advice in various matters pertaining to the proper governing of the Churches. This advice is given in closed session.

7. *Appointments*: Date of next Classis: September 9, 1987; Place: Ancaster, ON; Convening Church: Smithville; Proposed modermen: chairman: Rev. J. Moesker; vice chairman: Rev. P. Kingma; clerk: Rev. K. Kok.

Classis appoints br. P.L. Schuller as classical treasurer.

8. *Personal Question Period*: Some of the delegates make use of the opportunity to ask questions.

9. *Censure ad. Art. 44 C.O.*: The chairman notes with thankfulness that there is no need for censure.

10. *Adoption of Acts and approval of Press Release*: The Acts are adopted as read and the Press Release is read and approved.

11. *Closing*: We sing from Psalm 116:7, 8 and the chairman Rev. K. Kok closes Classis with prayer of thanksgiving.

For Classis,  
C. Bosch

### **“Anchor” Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, June 12, 1987**

The chairman br. J. Witten opened the meeting with Scripture reading and prayer and then welcomed all the members present.

After the adoption of the previous

meeting's minutes, the resignation of the Anchor Home Director Daryl Kooiman was discussed. Subsequently the Board decided to advertise for a replacement to fill the position. The Board is also advertising for a counsellor and a relief counsellor.

The tapes and videos of the recent combined choir concert will soon be available. The tapes will be selling for \$10. each and the videos produced in VHS and Beta will be selling for \$19.95 each.

The Summer Camp Committee reported that, although most details for the camp have been arranged, a few helpers are still needed.

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

K.J. SPITHOFF

Correspondence Secretary

### **Classis Ontario North, held on June 18, 1987, at Toronto, Ontario**

1. *Opening*: On behalf of the convening Church at Fergus, the Rev. Cl. Stam calls the meeting to order. He requests all present to sing Hymn 40: 1, 4, reads Romans 8:1-17, and leads in prayer. He speaks a brief word of welcome, especially to Cand. P. Aasman who will undergo preparatory examination.

2. *Examination of Credentials*: The delegates of the Church at Burlington-West examine the credentials. It appears that all Churches are duly represented. The Churches at Toronto and Guelph are represented by an alternate delegate.

3. *Constitution of Classis*: Classis is constituted. The officers take their place: chairman: Rev. P.G. Feenstra, clerk: Rev. J. de Jong.

Since Rev. D. de Jong, who was scheduled to be assessor, is absent, the Rev. Cl. Stam is prevailed upon to take his place in this function.

The chairman makes mention of the passing away of the Rev. W. Loopstra.

4. *Adoption of Agenda*: The following items are added to the provisional agenda: Under VII

a. Report of the Committee for Needy Churches

b. Report of the Church at Orangeville on the Rev. C. Olij Fund.

c. Report of Church visitation to Orangeville.

The agenda is adopted.

5. *Preparatory Examination Cand. P. Aasman*: The necessary documents are inspected and found to be in good order. The examination takes place.

A sermon proposal on Romans 8:14-17 is heard. In closed session Classis decides that there are no objections to continue the examination.

Exegesis O.T. is examined by the Rev. J. de Jong (Psalm 2).

Exegesis N.T. is examined by the Rev. M. Werkman (Matthew 8).

The Rev. J. Mulder conducts the examination in doctrine and Creeds.

The members of Classis take the opportunity to ask additional questions.

After the examination is concluded, it is evaluated in closed session. Classis decides that there is no objection to declaring br. P. Aasman eligible for call in the Canadian Reformed Churches for the period of one year. Br. Aasman is informed of this decision and is congratulated by Classis. He signs the Form of Subscription for candidates. Hymn 5:1 is sung; Classis adjourns for lunch.

#### 6. *Reports*:

a. Classis takes note of the report of the Committee for Needy Churches re the request of the Church at Lower Sackville for support to call a home missionary. Will be dealt with under agenda 10 a.

b. Report of the visitation to the Church at Orangeville, April 24, 1987, by Rev. J. de Jong and Rev. J. Mulder is read. Classis gratefully takes note of this report.

c. Report of the treasurer of the Fund for Needy Churches. It appears that the amount in the fund per June 16, 1987 is \$5920.81. Classis takes note of this report. The Churches that are in arrears are urged to meet their obligations orderly and on a monthly basis (\$6.50 per communicant member for 1987).

d. Report from the Church at Orangeville re the Rev. Olij fund is discussed. Classis to contribute \$18,420.00 to this fund (\$10.00 per communicant member) for the period July 1, 1987 - June 30, 1988.

7. *Question Period Art. 44 Church Order*: The Church at Fergus mentions that it has still not yet received Church visitation in the past years and requests that this be done.

The Church at Ottawa requests pulpit supply for after October 1987. It is decided that this request should be dealt with at the September Classis.

The Church at Ottawa also requests whether Classis in the future can be convened on Fridays (instead of Thursdays). This will be dealt with under point 11 a).

8. *Instructions*: There are no instructions.

#### 9. *Correspondence*:

a. Letter of the Covenant Canadian Reformed Church at Lower Sackville, N.S. requesting financial support from to call a minister who will also engage in home mission.

In this connection the report is read of the Committee for Needy Churches. This Committee recommends the following:

“1. that Classis approve the request

— continued on page 320



# Canadian Reform

## May 29, 1987: Sixth anniv

On May 29, 1987, graduation exercises were held for the fourth consecutive year as nine students received diplomas from the Teachers' College in Hamilton.

The evening began with an excellent dinner prepared by the Ladies' Auxiliary. While graduands, staff, and invited guests enjoyed food and fellowship, they were entertained by first and second year students who had ably organized this part of the program.

The actual graduation exercises began at 8:15 p.m. when the graduands entered. The chairman, Mr. A.J. Hordyk officially opened the festivities and wel-

comed the audience. The address to the graduands was delivered by the Reverend G. Van Dooren who talked about the 'authority' of teachers in Canadian Reformed Schools. He pointed out that although our schools are certainly not parochial we should not discount the role of the church altogether. Neither should we disregard the role of government in the education of our children. And even though our schools are definitely parental in nature, even parental authority in the classroom has its limitations. But we should avoid any suggestion that teachers have authority by virtue of their 'office,' a sort of sphere-sover-

eignty philosophy. Ultimately the teacher's authority rests with God Himself, with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Only in complete dependence upon Him can teachers exercise authority.

The principal, Mr. T.M.P. VanderVen reminded us that the College had now completed its sixth year of operation and that after tonight some thirty students had successfully finished their studies and found employment in our own schools. He emphasized that although the year had been relatively uneventful and we could not point to any great accomplishments we could and should be thankful for the 'little' things, the little



### Canadian Reformed Teachers' College — 1986-1987

*First Row: Dr. W. Helder, Mr. A. Witten, Mrs. L. Selles, Mr. W.F. Horsman, Mr. T.M.P. VanderVen. Second Row: Ted VanderVeen (Burlington), Jim Schuit (Dundas), Henrietta Bartels (Smithville), Sylvia Kampen (Burlington), Stephanie Berends (Surrey), Sharon VanderSluis (Carman), Joyce Veenendaal (Carman), Karen Kuik (Carman), John Siebenga (Abbotsford). Third Row: Margeret VandenHaak (Beamsville), Sharon Knol (Shelburne), Helen Sikma (Cloverdale), Yvonne Viersen (Neerlandia), Linda Jager (Smithville), Nancy VanderGriendt (Niagara), Joanne Doekes (Orangeville), Christina Brink (Toronto), Janice Lof (Smithville). Class of '87: Sylvia Kampen (Sylvia has excepted a teaching position in Burlington), John Siebenga (Yarrow), Ted VanderVeen (Burlington), Stephanie Berends (Cloverdale), Christina Brink, Joanne Doekes (Orangeville), Sharon Knol (Waterdown), Janice Lof (Smithville), Yvonne Viersen (Smithville).*

# Teachers' College

## and fourth graduation



daily graces bestowed on us. He also provided the audience with a little background information about each of the graduates.

The conferring of diplomas was next on the program. Receiving the Diploma of Education were Sylvia Kampen, John Siebenga and Ted VanderVeen. The Diploma of Teaching (3-year program) was conferred upon Stephanie Berends, Christina Brink, Joanne Doekes, Sharon Knol, Janice Lof, and Yvonne Viersen.

Stephanie Berends spoke on behalf of the graduates. In her address she contemplated the past, considered the present, and concentrated on the future. She briefly reviewed life as a student, the fact that this evening they were graduating, and that just a few weeks from now they would be teaching in their own classrooms. She expressed gratitude to parents, teachers, and supporters of the Teachers' College but above all to the LORD.

Mr. H. Berends closed the evening with a prayer of thanksgiving.

W.F. HORSMAN

### Principal's address (adapted)

Mr. Chairman, members of the Board, Rev. G. VanDooren, friends, relatives, colleagues, students, and above all, graduands!

The schoolyear 1986-1987 has drawn to a close for the Teachers' College — another year of the LORD, during which He gave us so many little things for which we often forgot to give thanks. Helen Steiner Rice reminds us of this in her poem THANK GOD FOR LITTLE THINGS:

Thank you, God, for little things  
that often come our way —  
The things we take for granted  
but don't mention when we pray —  
The unexpected courtesy,  
the thoughtful, kindly deed —  
A hand reached out to help us  
in the time of sudden need —

These words take on additional meaning at the completion of another year together as students and faculty of

the Teachers College, as Board and supporters; as brothers and sisters in our LORD: often the ways of the LORD are not along the great and miraculous, but the LORD is the LORD of small things.

1986-1987 does not characterize itself by great strides forward. No further headway towards possible recognition of the college, no large throngs of new students, no new building, no surplus in the coffers of the treasurer . . . Indeed, it is good to remember on a day like this that it is not always the big headlines that count. Steiner's prayer should also be ours,

Oh make us more aware, dear God,  
of little daily graces . . .

And it were those little daily graces that allowed the College to operate this past year, and that allowed another 9 students to reach the end goal of their studies at the C.R.T.C. Those of you who are familiar with the school scene across the nation will recognize that the total of now 30 graduates of the College have indeed made their presences felt and will continue to do so. It will also be clear that the dearth of teachers is still with us, as a number of schoolboards are too well aware of.

Where are the young people with an interest in teaching? Why is it that established teachers seem to continue to leave the profession? Why are there so few males interested in a teaching career? These are the kinds of questions that we find ourselves faced with today. Tonight's graduates could select from among a number of job offers. And that is pleasant for them, to be sure, but it is also indicative of the need for teachers.

Our children are worthy of good, quality teachers, people who are able to guide their students on the freeways of formal learning: well marked out, well organized, planned, structured; but also on the sideroads of personal development and contact, often winding and narrow, with unexpected turns, unplanned, unstructured, hazardous perhaps, but so important.

A teacher's work is long-lasting; he or she touches his or her students for life:

the teacher's work has relevance to eternity and for eternity: we are preparing our students for their God-given task in life. But often the emphasis lies on that small word 'we,' and that may make teaching at times frustrating, in particular when our so-well-meant advice is ignored, and when our so-well-explained lessons seem to be so easily forgotten. The most difficult part often lies in genuinely allowing your students to be themselves, to allow them to control their own learning, to struggle their own struggles; in remembering that it is *their God-given* task we are preparing them for. It is difficult for teachers to step back.

A difficult art in helping  
is knowing when to stop.  
Living with the young  
we have it in our power  
to rob them,  
and even destroy  
by overhelp,  
all in the name of love.  
(G.E. Frost)

Each one of you, the Class of '87, has been given your own task. We, your faculty, hope that we have been able to help you help yourself; you have the skills to execute that task well; be found willing to take upon yourself that task that your Father has given you, and do not shun the responsibilities attached to that task. Teaching is demanding profession, certainly not a 9-3 job. Reach out for your students, help them grow as persons, guide them in their learning; prod and goad, console and encourage, scold and praise; indeed, teach them the ways of the LORD.

But in the hustle and bustle of everyday classroom activity, do not forget that what you are allowed to be and to do as a teacher does not in the first place depend on you and your personal qualities, but rests in that mightiest of all our confessions: In the beginning God spoke . . . and the design of our human existence came into being. Your work rests on and in that WORD. Therefore, let your words to your students always echo the Word of your Father and Maker.

T.M.P. VANDERVEN

## PRESS RELEASE

— continued from page 317

of the Church at Lower Sackville to provide financial support for a minister. The total support requested for 1987 is \$12,750; for 1988 is \$26,500.

2. that Classis instruct the Churches to pay \$6.50 per communicant member (as budgeted for 1987) in anticipation of the needs of the Church at Ottawa and Lower Sackville in 1987.

3. that Classis at this time instruct the churches to budget \$20.00 per communicant member for the year 1988."

Classis decides not to accept the recommendations of the Committee. The following proposal is adopted:

1. Classis takes note of this request and expresses gratitude for the desire of the Sackville congregation to have its own minister.

2. Classis considers it premature to make a decision on this request since the information presented to Classis in the Committee's report has not

been available to the Churches.

3. Classis urges the Churches further to consider the request of the Sackville Church and the accompanying Committee report.

4. Classis requests the Sackville Church to place this matter on the agenda of a future Classis.

b. Letter from the Church at Fergus (plus appendices) regarding the institution of a Church in the Elora-Salem-Alma area.

Classis gratefully acknowledges this development and advises to proceed with institution. This institution will take place, the Lord willing, on Sunday, September 6, 1987. The Church at Guelph will represent Classis at this occasion.

c. Letter from the Church at Orangeville asking advice re the institution of a Church in the Grand Valley-Belwood area. Classis gratefully acknowledges also this development and advises to proceed with this institution as well. This event will take place, the Lord willing, on

July 19, 1987. The Church at Fergus will represent Classis at this occasion.

10. *Appointments:* Convening Church for next Classis: Guelph. Date: Friday, September 18, 1987, at 9:00 a.m. Place: Burlington-West (Rehoboth). Moderamen: chairman: Rev. R. Gleason, clerk: Rev. P.G. Feenstra, assessor: Rev. J. de Jong.

11. *Question Period:* Question Period is held.

12. *Censure ad Art. 44 C.O.:* Need not be exercised.

13. *Acts:* The Acts are read and adopted.

14. *Press Release:* The Press Release is read and approved.

15. *Closing:* The chairman thanks the members of Classis for their work and effort. He thanks the ladies of the hosting Church for their services. The meeting sings Psalm 107:12. After thanksgiving to the Lord, the meeting is closed.

For Classis,  
Cl. Stam, assessor e.t.

## The Christian family budget

— continued from page 313

time up to 60%. It is important that we seek a proper balance.

### Saving some money

It is the idea of a budget that we balance income and expenses. Actually it is important even to try to save. There is nothing wrong with seeking some financial security, also for the future. This, too, belongs to Christian stewardship.

Saving begins with small quantities and should be planned over a long period of time. Saving must be taught in the home, for example by opening accounts for each child and encouraging them to bring some money there regularly. In this way a sense of responsibility and pride is instilled in the children.

Remember the regular, small amounts! Those who wish to save too much at one time, easily become discouraged and give up completely.

Time is an important factor in the family budget. We do not live for our riches, and our goal as Christians is not to gain great wealth. We need not accumulate all our possessions in a few years. We need not have everything right away. If the Lord grants us His blessing, we will in time accumulate many gifts.

Therefore we need not buy a ticket in the lottery game or seek a job with a get-rich-quick formula. The Lord blesses faithfulness. Faithfulness in working, in giving, in saving. We will find that we are able to meet our needs and commitments,

and still have something left over. That is the experience of God-fearing families.

### Financial problems?

Christian families, too, will at times have financial problems. There is often so much that needs to be paid: mortgages, transportation, education, etc. It is not always easy to make ends meet, especial-

ly when church and school must also be maintained. It requires constant diligence and careful management, keeping the priorities straight always. There is no easy way out. Sometimes there are lean years. Sometimes we will need help from relatives or the communion of saints. The Lord has also made His will known in this respect that we shall care for each other.

Most financial problems, however, are not caused by the cost of our spiritual needs. Our churches and schools run on carefully planned budgets, and the cost is kept as minimal as possible. If all families would participate fully, the cost would be even less per family. No family has gone broke because of the costs of the Kingdom!

Financial problems in the home are mostly the result of poor stewardship and outright mismanagement. Overspending and charging to a credit account are the main culprits which cause family bankruptcy. It is precisely because of our greater commitments that we, as Christians, must live soberly and carefully, taking care to stay out of financial woes.

A Christian budget alone will not solve the problems. To go about with our money and possessions in a Christian manner is the beginning of a lasting solution.

CL. STAM

### I Timothy 6:6-8

*There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content.*

<sup>1</sup>J. Douma, *Vrede in de Maatschappij*, Kampen, 1985, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup>Carole Gift Page, *Let Not Money Put Asunder*, B/P Publications, Denver, 1974, p. 14ff.



---

# Our political calling and the Christian Heritage Party<sup>1</sup>

The Christian Heritage Party has not received a great deal of attention in the Canadian Reformed press. With the exception of an interview and a series of articles by Prof. J. Geertsema in *Clarion*, and some brief references by one or two other authors, the new party has pretty well been ignored by our two national periodicals, *Clarion* as well as *Reformed Perspective*.

This reticence is rather surprising, especially in view of the fact that the creation of the C.H.P. has been responsible for a veritable reawakening of political interest among us, and for the revival of ARPA societies in various localities. Much soul-searching has been going on this past year about our political task and also about the attitude to be assumed toward the newly established party. Prof. Geertsema's articles, which contained critical remarks as well as positive evaluations and constructive suggestions, gave further impetus to this development. All these soul-searchings, discussions and deliberations remained, however, localized and informal.

This lack of formal discussion, and the general dearth of information, were among the reasons why the Hamilton-Ancaster ARPA was more than willing to act upon a suggestion by Jack Schoeman of Ancaster (of the Ontario Organizing Committee of the C.H.P.) that a regional meeting be organized which would be wholly devoted to the issues connected with the C.H.P. and its reception among us. It was agreed that the meeting would be held in a central location, that it would be widely advertized, and that it would feature a four-member panel, a panel discussion, and a general discussion.

On June 4th, only a few weeks after the suggestion had first been made, the meeting did indeed take place. It was held in Burlington, and it was attended by members from congregations throughout the region, including far-away ones like Toronto, Fergus, Guelph and Orangeville. The large attendance — the gym of Burlington's John Calvin School was packed — suggested that the effort to bring the issues into the open was widely



Panel: (l-r) Prof. J. Geertsema, Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff, Prof. Dr. C. van Dam, Mr. T.A. Zietsma (moderator), Mr. E. Vanwoudenberg

appreciated. This impression was strengthened by the audience's response to the presentations, and also by the calibre and tone of the general discussion. Disagreements and questions remained, but genuine attempts were made (to quote one of the panelists) to build each other up and seek Scriptural directions in our political endeavours. With these goals in mind, many in the audience availed themselves of the opportunity to make comments or ask questions. In fact, audience participation was so lively that in the end the moderator had to cut off the discussion in order to ensure that those who had to travel a long distance could get home before midnight.

## Issues under discussion

The meeting was organized by Jack Schoeman and chaired by Mr. Henk VanBeelen, retiring president of the Hamilton-Ancaster ARPA. Mr. Tom Zietsma of Hamilton was moderator, and the panel was formed by Mr. Ed VanWoudenberg, interim leader of the C.H.P., Prof. J. Geertsema and Dr. C. VanDam, both of the Theological College, and myself.

Some time after the meeting I was asked to prepare a press report for *Clarion* and to enable me to fulfil that task I was provided with a tape of the proceedings. While listening to that tape I was once again impressed by the wide-ranging nature of the presentations and discussions. Many of the questions that are being asked among us on the issue of Reformed political action in general, and of our support for the C.H.P. in particular, were raised and discussed at the Burlington meeting of June 4th.

Much attention was given to the question of the relationship between church and political party; for example: should a Christian political party to which we can give our full support be restricted to members of our own church? Or are the tasks of church and state sufficiently different to allow for cooperation among Christians of different ecclesiastical allegiances for the simple purpose of reaching certain well-defined political goals?

And what about the foundation of such a party? Can we (or must we) demand that it base itself upon the Word of God as summarized in the Reformed

Confessions, the Three Forms of Unity? Or is it sufficient merely to insist that in our political cooperation with other Christians we be allowed the freedom to express our convictions and that we will not be forced to compromise them?

Still another question: assuming that we should aim for the ultimate establishment of a confessionally-based party, must we at the present time refrain from extending any support at all to an association like the C.H.P., and give our vote to one of the mainline parties as heretofore? Or is it our duty, instead, to make use of existing opportunities and therefore support the efforts of the C.H.P. to proclaim Christian principles in politics by (at the very least) giving it our vote?

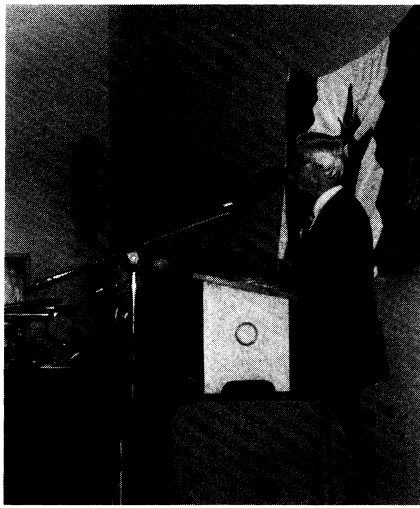
In addition to these "central" issues, more general ones were addressed as well. Among these were questions relating to the task of a Christian government in a pluralistic, post-Christian society, to the nature of truly Christian political action, and, in connection therewith, to the differences between Christian socio-economic principles on the one hand, and traditional-conservative ones on the other.

Because of the relevance of these issues, and in order to do justice to the speakers, I will give a separate summary of each of the presentations, as well as a report of the ensuing discussion. I will cover the presentations in the order in which they were given, beginning with Mr. Van Woudenberg's, continuing with Prof. Geertsema's and my own, and concluding with Dr. VanDam's. If necessary to clarify a point, I may occasionally bring in points not included in the presentation itself, but made later, during the discussion.

### **Ed VanWoudenberg on the C.H.P.**

Mr. VanWoudenberg used the fifteen minutes allotted to him to give information on the background, structure and objectives of the Christian Heritage Party. The need for a separate party was first clearly realized, he told his audience, at the time of the introduction of Bill C169, which aimed at the curtailment of free speech during election time. The bill, which the courts later declared unconstitutional, was introduced by the Liberals but had the support of the other two parties.

In spite of the Progressive Conservatives' approval of Bill C169, many Canadians expected a change for the better in Ottawa when the Conservatives gained their large victory in the latest federal election. These hopes were sorely disappointed. Although the new government must be credited with some constructive policies, especially in the economic field,



*Prof. J. Geertsema*

it did not prove itself to be essentially different from its Liberal predecessor. The Progressive Conservative Party, too, bases itself on humanistic principles, denying the sovereignty of God, and therefore also refusing to admit that there are God-given, absolute standards of right and wrong. Like the Liberals, the Conservatives embrace situational ethics: whatever is socially acceptable (such as, for example, abortion on demand) is considered ethical.

And while it is true that there are "saints in Caesar's household" — i.e., that there are confessing Christians among our Members of Parliament — these men and women are prevented by party discipline from deviating from the party line and are therefore unable to fight for their convictions, or even to express them.

It became abundantly clear, Mr. VanWoudenberg continued, that the only way to affirm the rights of God the Creator and Redeemer in national politics, and in the nation's parliament, was by means of the establishment of a separate party. It was this conviction that gave birth to the Christian Heritage Party.

Mr. VanWoudenberg mentioned the opposition the new party had encountered, also among Christians and among his fellow church members. He urged his listeners not to judge the party unheard, but to study its constitution and objectives. He concluded with the words, "I rest my defence of my personal involvement and of . . . the Christian Heritage Party as a viable alternative for you to vote on in the next election on this knowledge: In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths, also politically."

### **The C.H.P. and the Reformed Confessions**

Prof. Geertsema began his presentation by reminding the audience of the articles he had devoted to the C.H.P. in

*Clarion*, and by stating that his views on the matter had remained unchanged.

Since his presentation is largely a restatement of these articles (which, incidentally, warrant careful reading or rereading by all those interested in Reformed politics) I will give only a brief summary of this presentation. The articles in question can be found in the *Clarion* issues of August 8, 22, September 19 and October 17, 1986.

As he had done previously, especially in the last of his four articles, the speaker commended the C.H.P. for attempting to fulfil the calling which has been extended to all Christians. Christ placed His church in the world to be the light of that world. This light must shine, both in order that people, seeing our good works, may repent and glorify God, *and* in order that those who reject the light may be without excuse in the day of judgment. Like the church in past ages we, Reformed Canadians who are living in the closing decades of the twentieth century, are called upon to confront our society with the living Christ as Redeemer and Lord — with His grace and with His judgment. That is what the C.H.P. is doing, and we may be grateful for its work in this regard, and also for the alternative it offers us as voters.

Prof. Geertsema expressed his regret about the party's lack of confessional clarity and its vague constitutional basis. Referring to the arguments he had provided earlier in greater detail, he restated his conviction that the Reformed creeds, as trustworthy summaries of God's Word, are the proper and necessary basis for all Christian activities and organizations, including political ones. At the same time he made it clear that the absence of such a basis does not mean that we should withhold our support and our vote from the C.H.P., so long as there is no better alternative. The C.H.P. is definitely to be preferred over the humanistic and secularized mainline parties. However, the leadership should be very careful that the influence of evangelical and Roman Catholic thinking will never cause it to compromise our Reformed views. Should that ever happen, Prof. Geertsema concluded, cooperation would become impossible for us.

— *To be continued*  
F.G. OOSTERHOFF

Tapes of the meeting may be ordered from  
Christian Heritage Party  
Ontario Regional Office  
P.O. Box 5235  
Station E  
Hamilton, ON  
L8S 4L3

Cost of tapes \$4.00,  
postage and handling included.

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

"We speak of 'contriving.' That's what it should have been. In reality this was not the case at all. Before the Congress had been opened, it had already been determined by the leaders what the result of the consultations was to be: This outcome was to be that everywhere in the country the bond with the Netherlands Reformed Church should be severed and 'the Synodical yoke cast off.'

"The Congress had only this double goal:

"1. To get as many consistories and consistory members along in the Doleantie-net; 2. to teach them how the casting off of the Synodical yoke and all that was connected with it was to be done.

"It was, of course, not known to everyone that everything had been fixed beforehand.

"Dr. Hoedemaker, e.g., did not have the slightest inkling of it. In high spirits he went to Frascati on the first day of the Congress, thinking that there he could let his voice be heard in warning against separation and schism in the Church. In that belief he even had urged many Consistories, especially in Friesland, to come and take part in the Congress.

"How great was his disillusionment to be!

"When he thought to be able to enter the gate of Frascati as a free man, he was given a card which he first had to sign and on which was printed the promise that he 'would cast off the Synodical yoke.'

"Indignantly Hoedemaker refused to sign. It was a Congress; he demanded to be admitted to it! It was, however, made clear to him by the ushers that they had been ordered not to admit anyone who had not signed. He then wanted to talk to Dr. Rutgers, who came, and with him he had a brief, quite vehement discussion but this did not lead to the desired result . . .

"Hoedemaker was excluded from the Congress and went home, indignant and sad, exclaiming, 'May God have mercy upon this people and upon our Church.'

"And with those assembled in Frascati the intended Secession was now settled by Dr. Kuyper and Rutgers."

Thus far the "report" of someone whose sympathies were not with the Doleantie!

Of Rutgers' sermons the writer quotes what Dr. Hoedemaker is said to have remarked once: "He makes it all as flat as a pancake."

What made the impression as if no divergent opinions would be tolerated is the declaration which was to be signed by those wishing to enter the building. It read: "The undersigned, member of the Netherlands Reformed Church at A. declares that he considers it the duty of everyone who wishes to honour the Kingship of Jesus in His Church, to cast off the yoke of the Synodical Hierarchy."

It is a big question whether this was a wise condition. On the other hand, it prevented a "fight" on the floor of the Congress about the question whether the yoke should be cast off, as only those were allowed to attend who were already convinced that it should be done.

The adversaries were quick in pointing out what they considered to be Kuyper's dictatorship.

"One was, therefore, bound beforehand. Once inside, one was no longer allowed to dispute about the truth or acceptability of the principle, laid down in the form. Whoever did not want to toe Kuyper's line could not take part."

Let us see whether there is any indication in the resolutions themselves which establish the impression that there was a pre-determined plan of action and a forgone conclusion and outcome.

## Conclusions

The first resolution states "that the brothers of Reformed confession assembled here, wholeheartedly agreeing on the ground of God's Word with the confession which our Churches have expressed overagainst Rome on the point of church government, and consequently bound in their consciences to uphold this confession also now over against the deviation which has become evident, testify and declare that the Synodical Hierarchy, which was imposed upon our Churches in 1816 has become apparent to be incompatible with the recognition of Jesus Christ as its Head and its King and, through its inherent principle, with irresistible force, pushes things so far that instead of the assembly of the believers and their seed — what the Church of Christ ought to be — there comes a completely wild mixture; that the authority of God's Word is replaced by the arbitrariness and authority of human ordinances; and that the Royal Regiment of the Son of God is pushed to the background by a board-tyranny incompatible with it."

The language and sentence-structure of such resolutions and declarations are oftentimes quite complicated. We would not be surprised if some think they recognize the hand of Dr. Kuyper in this formulation.

We would not be surprised either if we learned that this and the other resolutions were drawn up before the Congress.

What would be wrong with that?

Does this imply that all things had been arranged beforehand and that the purpose of calling the Congress together was simply to get as many people as possible along?

A decision to have such a Congress had been taken in April 1883. In the meantime history had seen a further development. Would it have been a responsible act to call so many people together without a definite purpose and without concrete proposals?

There had been ample time to think about and to discuss all matters pertaining to the development and to consider which way the Lord wanted His children to follow.

It would have been irresponsible to convene a Congress such as this one only to let people mill around aimlessly or to have them listen to impromptu speeches which showed no definite pattern and left everyone wondering what the learned and not-so-learned speakers really had in mind.

The first resolution is clear: Our confession compels us to reject an organization which renders it impossible to honour the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church.

Concerning the second resolution it has to be remarked that the question whether King William I had the right to interfere in the affairs of the Church — which question is answered in the negative by almost all jurists of this time — was not dealt with. Instead, the question was answered how it was possible that the hierarchy could enter and maintain its position in the Church.

In this respect the Church's own guilt was acknowledged.

"They testify and confess in the second place that in spite of this such a hierarchy, now in synodical form, has been introduced into our churches by culpable interference by the Government in the Majesty-rights of King Jesus; that this, however, has become possible by the even more culpable unfaithfulness of the Churches which, forgetting the benefits which they had received from their Lord in such a rich measure, had fallen asleep, and as at present confined themselves to a weak, brief, at least not general protest, whereby they themselves caused the false idea to arise as if they had recognized this hierarchy as the highest authority. Further, that this sinful insensitivity to the Majesty of their Lord has continued in spite of the fact that the continuing persecution of the believers belonging to them could and should have opened their eyes for the nature of this hierarchy, and more than once the opportunity to cast off the synodical yoke was given to them."

The third resolution dealt with the question what was to be done over against the second hierarchy.

By "the second hierarchy" reference was made to the "first hierarchy," this being the papal yoke which was cast off in the days of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. The "second hierarchy" was then the one that had been imposed in 1816.

The third resolution reads as follows.

"They testify and declare that after the final decision taken by the full Synod in the Amsterdam case, whereby five ministers of the Word and seventy Overseers and Deacons received the ecclesiastical death sentence for no other reason than that they refused to give in to the ungodly Synodical Hierarchy; and this in spite of tolerating with impunity the most absolute rejection of Christ even with members of Synod themselves, yea after the persecuted had declared to be prepared to part amicably and had appeared ready to take away the incriminated article, on the condition that they were free to honour Jesus' Kingship in the Church; — they have to give up all further efforts to break down this Hierarchy by itself, as being unpermitted and ineffective. That for this reason for us — as it did for our fathers in the century of the Reformation — the hour has come, in virtue of the right which the Word of God grants to believers and the duty which this Word imposes on them as well as on the Overseers, to cast off the yoke of the second Hierarchy without delay. That neither the former fault of the Government, nor the sins committed by the Churches take away anything at all from the full validity of either this right or this duty. That the promises — which may have been made in all sorts of manners by the Believers or by the Overseers — bind at present as little towards the Hierarchy as they held Luther

and Calvin and with them four martyrs back for even one moment from breaking with Rome. And that now, as in the sixteenth century, this casting off of the Hierarchical yoke is not allowed to be a withdrawing into our own circles, but has to have as its aim the general liberation of the Churches and, consequently, makes it our duty to inspire a general movement and the action which can support such a movement."

### Convent and Synod

The Congress of which we spoke was held in January 1887.

In June of the same year followed the "Synodical Convent of the Netherlands (Nederduitsch) Reformed Churches (Doleerend) in the Netherlands." It lasted from June 28 through July 1.

As they had to build up both their local life and their life as a federation, it was of utmost importance which direction they were going to choose.

There was not much of a danger that they would choose the way of another hierarchy, seeing they had just been liberated from one.

Would they, on the other hand, as a sort of reaction, fall into the trap of independentism?

When a return to the Church Order of Dort is genuine, there is no danger that the result will be either hierarchy or independentism. Then the correct course is followed.

This is what the Doleantie Churches did.

At the Synodical Convent the following statement was adopted.

"The local Churches are bound by divine ordinance not independentistically to remain on their own, but to mutually unite and to place themselves together under the sole command of the King of the Church. Only then would they be allowed not to seek federation and are they excused from it, if they cannot find it in obedience to the Word of God, but when it would tend to curtailment of the Truth or violation of the rights of the Royal Majesty of their only Head."

To the question: "How is such a federation established?" different answers were given.

The Doleantie took its starting point in the autonomy of the local Churches. When these autonomous local Churches come together in a federation, they do so voluntarily. Dr. F.L. Rutgers in particular was the man who formulated and defended the Reformed concept of Church Polity. His advice was often asked, and various replies to questions posed to him were later on published. Notes from his lectures have equally found their way to the printer.

Voorthuizen was the convening Church for this Convent. In the convocation this Church made it clear that it was to be a "Synodical Convent," and not a Synod, reason why the meeting would not have the right to deal with either Confession or Church Order.

What was discussed was, among other things, the question whether the federation was to be of a provisional nature, this with a view to the Reformed believers who had remained under the Synodical Hierarchy or who, like the people of the Secession, had their own ecclesiastical organization.

— *To be continued*



## Hello Busy Beavers,

Are you wondering about another . . . contest?  
 Good news!  
 It's time for our BIGGEST contest of all!  
 It's time for our big SUMMER CONTEST!  
 So, join in the fun everybody!  
 There are TWO parts to this contest.  
 There is the Quiz Contest, but also a Poetry Contest.  
 Join in both, or just the one — whatever you want.  
 But do join in!  
 Be part of the fun!

### QUIZ CONTEST

Use your story Bible to help you, Busy Beavers. Maybe it will even give you Bible references to help you.

And, of course, don't forget you may ask your family for help, if you need it!

#### QUIZ #1 What Colour?

1. the \_\_\_\_\_ Sea.
2. "Who are these arrayed in \_\_\_\_\_ robes?"
3. "He makes me lie down in \_\_\_\_\_ pastures."
4. ". . . you cannot make one hair \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_"
5. Lydia, a seller of \_\_\_\_\_
6. "Do not look at the wine when it is \_\_\_\_\_"
7. "\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have I none," said Peter.
8. "Lo, in her mouth was an \_\_\_\_\_ leaf."
9. ". . . though your sins are like \_\_\_\_\_, they shall be as \_\_\_\_\_ as snow; though they are like \_\_\_\_\_ they shall become like wool."

#### QUIZ #2 Birds Wanted

Can you give the names of the birds needed to finish these quotes from the Bible?

1. "Are not five \_\_\_\_\_ sold for two pennies? Fear not, you are of more value than many \_\_\_\_\_"
2. "But the \_\_\_\_\_ found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark."
3. ". . . the \_\_\_\_\_ has her home in the fir trees."
4. "But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like \_\_\_\_\_"
5. "You shall drink from the brook, And I have commanded the \_\_\_\_\_ to feed you there."
6. ". . . (Jesus) poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the \_\_\_\_\_, "Take these things away . . ."
7. "Even the \_\_\_\_\_ finds a home, and the \_\_\_\_\_ a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at thy altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God."

8. "And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the LORD, a pair of \_\_\_\_\_ or two young \_\_\_\_\_"
9. "O Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered your children together as a \_\_\_\_\_ gathers her \_\_\_\_\_ under her wings, and you would not!"

#### QUIZ #3 All J's

All the names for the answers start with "J."

1. He "boiled pottage" and stole his brother's birthright.
2. The walls of this city fell down after the besieging Israelites had marched around it seven days.
3. This man was sold into slavery but rose to be the king's right-hand man whose organizing ability saved the people from the threat of famine.
4. The biggest river in Palestine.
5. The writer of a book of the Old Testament. His prophecy was quoted by Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost.
6. He came from Bethlehem and his most famous son was first a shepherd and later king.
7. It was in this city that Peter saw a vision on the housetop to prepare him for the visit of the messengers from Cornelius.
8. He was an unwilling messenger to Nineveh, but eventually, after being thrown into the sea and swallowed by a great fish, he converted the city by his preaching.
9. He was a furious driver who avenged the death of Naboth by overthrowing Ahab's sons.
10. He commanded the sun and moon to stand still so that the Israelites could complete the pursuit and destruction of the Amorites.

For the POETRY CONTEST, Busy Beavers, you may send in as many poems as you like.

But just remember, they *must* be poems you made up YOURSELF!

I wish you all lots of success!

#### COMPOUND PICTURES

sent in by Busy Beaver *Christina Vander Velde*

Print the word describing each picture in the space beneath. Then put each pair of words together to make another word. Print that word in the space provided. Just for fun, draw a picture of the new word.

