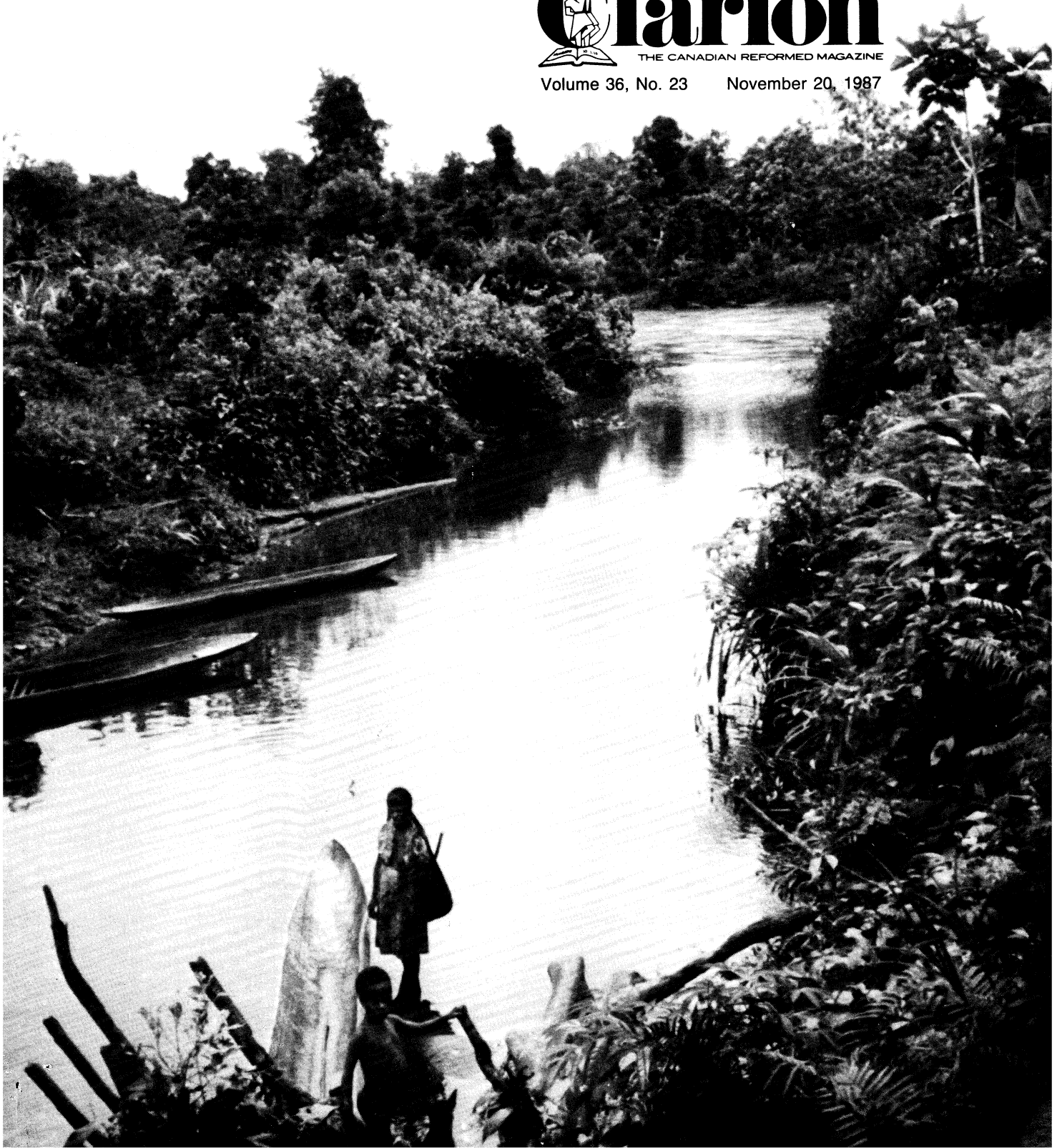




Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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The task of government today: some introductory remarks²

In the previous article we saw that the removal and prevention of all idolatry and false worship and the destruction of the kingdom of anti-christ were not the task of government today. Hence the deletion of such words from Art. 36 of the Belgic Confession in 1905 was justified. The removal of these words raises questions. What is the task of government with respect to the church? What can and what can government not tolerate? Let us first consider the issue of toleration in the light of Scripture, starting with the Old Testament.

Toleration

Because Israel as a nation was the covenant people of God, all who lived in her midst, including strangers and sojourners, were expected to obey the same laws, as given by God to Moses. (See, e.g., Ex. 12:19, 48ff.; Lev. 16:29-31; 17:8-16; 20:2-5; 24:16; Num. 15:15ff.; 19:10.) There was no room for arbitrary self-willed religion. No room for tolerating uncleanness in a land that was to be holy to God (cf. Ps. 78:54; Zec. 2:12). In light of this, it is noteworthy, that there was no law instructing the authorities to urge strangers to become believers. No such coercion was exercised. (How differently, well-meaning but mistaken Christian rulers later sometimes acted.) Of course, proselytes were heartily welcomed and after circumcision could also partake of the Passover (Ex. 12:48), but nowhere do we read of pressure being exerted here by civil authorities so that converts be won for the LORD. This was not their duty.

Perhaps it is with this in mind that we should consider the rule of David over territories conquered outside Canaan. He had subdued and placed under his authority Moab, the Aramaean kingdoms of Hadadezer (Damascus and Maacah), Edom and the Ammonites (II Sam. 8:2-14; 10:6-19; 12:26-31), yet there is nowhere any hint that he worked so that "all idolatry and false worship may be removed and prevented." (There was such a command for Canaan, Deut. 7; cf. II Sam. 5:21 and I Chron. 14:12.) Also no special attempt was made to make them worshippers of the true God. Since his office as godly king over these gentile peoples is most parallel to the office of government today, this attitude — let us call it tolerance — points to a principle that can be important for discerning how the task of government should be perceived today.

That a government tolerates false religion (because it is not in its jurisdiction to fight heresy with the sword) is not in disagreement with Scripture. In this connection reference has been made to Matthew 7:12: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" If one asks freedom of worship for himself, he should also grant it to others. After all, in God's long-suffering, the good grain as well as the weeds are allowed to grow together, until the time of harvest, when God himself will separate the two (Matt. 13:36-43).¹ From the above, it can be concluded that government can tolerate what a church cannot and may not countenance.

At this point it can be noted that when European society was no longer united in the Roman Catholic Church, then the toleration of each other gradually grew out of necessity, if only

to safeguard the stability of the state.² It was not a conviction that came in the first place from Scripture, but it did find Scriptural support, as has just been noted. Although we have seen how Calvin was a child of his times in his view of capital punishment (by the state) for heretics, yet it was Calvin's insistence that both church and state have their own authority and neither must rule over the other that had implications leading to toleration. Calvin's conviction that the church be free and independent meant in practice that in countries where the Calvinist Reformation took a firm hold, the state was forced to define and set a limit to its powers. The basis was thus laid for spiritual and political freedoms which the state did not grant, but recognized.³

It is important to recognize that toleration as it developed in the sixteenth century is of a different origin and spirit from the toleration of which we hear all around us today. Whereas the early toleration was a result of the Reformation and the practical need to distinguish clearly between the different tasks and positions of church and state, toleration in our secular society is rooted in the autonomous man of the eighteenth century Enlightenment who claims to have all types of rights (e.g., right to abortion, gay rights, etc.). What now is the task of government today in a pluralistic and secular society with respect to these ungodly "rights"?

Some Biblical principles

Before we deal with the present situation, we need to turn again to the Scriptures, for God's Word teaches us certain basic truths that are of utmost importance in this context.

In the first place, God created heaven and earth. As Creator He is sovereign, and not the people or any government. God's rights come first, and not whatever man may imagine his rights to be. To God rulers and government are therefore responsible first of all, and only then to the people.

In the second place, the governing authorities as instituted and ordained by God are servants of God (Rom. 13:1-7). Thus, as has already been implied, they are bound by the norms of God's law — insofar as the state has jurisdiction and competence. For example, the state cannot compel "that I rightly come to know the only true God, trust in Him alone, submit to Him with all humility and patience" (Heidelberg Catechism on the First Commandment). However, the true God is to set the norms and goals of government. Government has to reckon with the First Commandment! Another example is the Eighth Commandment. Before the new version of the Catechism was adopted, Question and Answer 110 read: "God forbids not only such theft and robbery as are punished by the magistrate, but also" A distinction is made between what government can do and cannot do. So government is to rule according to God's law according to the competence God has given it. Indeed, all people are to be subject to God's law. "Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the duty of all men" (Eccl. 12:13).

In the third place, also unbelieving and ungodly governments are used by God to maintain justice and righteousness,

to preserve the peace and thus also to protect "the church and its ministry in order that the kingdom of Christ may come, the Word of the gospel may be preached everywhere, and God may be honoured and served by everyone" (Art. 36 of the Belgic Confession). This is already evident from Romans 13:4 where the pagan Roman authorities who are a terror to bad conduct are called God's servant for the good of the church. It is also clear whenever the ruling authorities acted justly and so in effect promoted the well-being of the church. For example, when Claudius Lysius prevented Paul from being killed by the Jews, he honoured Paul's civil rights and in the process was of great service to the church who retained this apostle (Acts 23:12-35). Christians are therefore exhorted to pray for all those in high authority, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way" (I Tim. 2:2).

In the fourth place, the authority of civil government is limited. We have already seen this earlier, but here should be stressed what Calvin insisted on, namely, that church and state have their own jurisdiction, and neither must rule over the other. Calvin speaks of a "twofold government in man: one aspect is spiritual, whereby the conscience is instructed in piety and in reverencing God; the second is political, whereby man is educated for the duties of humanity and citizenship that must be maintained among men. These are usually called the "spiritual" and the "temporal" jurisdiction . . . by which is

meant that the former sort of government pertains to the life of the soul, while the latter has to do with the concerns of the present life . . . The former resides in the inner mind, while the latter regulates only outward behaviour. The one we may call the spiritual kingdom, the other, the political kingdom." (Calvin, *Institutes*, III, xix, 15 [Battle's edition].) This limit to civil authority can explain why David apparently did not force the true worship of the LORD in conquered territories outside the land inhabited by the twelve tribes. There is, politically speaking, religious liberty. This is a very important principle. It has given and still gives room, so to speak, for Christ's work of gathering His Church. The government has to see to it "that not a single religious, political or social organization exerts spiritual pressure on public society."⁴

— *To be continued*
C. VAN DAM

¹See Douma, *Politieke verantwoordelijkheid* (1984) 127; also E. Van Middelkoop, *Reformatie en Tolerantie* (1985) 20.

²Van Middelkoop, *op.cit.* 19.

³Van Middelkoop, *op.cit.* 24-25, 34. For Calvin, see his *Institutes*, IV, xi.1, 3, 4, 5; IV.xx.1.

⁴Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond, *Guidelines for National Reformed Politics* (1979), Art. 5.

Making babies₁

The following is a slightly revised version of a speech held for the Ladies of Houston and Smithers on their annual "League Day," held on June 10, 1987, at Houston.

Everyone will be familiar with the Sears Catalogue. With this catalogue in your hands, you can do your shopping while you sit in your comfortable chair. Now just imagine that you are leafing through a catalogue not filled with clothes, furniture and bedlinens, but with page after page filled with pictures of smiling happy babies! No, this is not even a catalogue of babies up for adoption, but of babies you can grow yourself in your womb. All you have to do is decide what type of baby you would like, a boy or girl, one with blue eyes and blond hair, or brown eyes and brown hair. And, you don't even have to be married! Whatever you desire, with the help of your doctor you can become the mother of a child. A frozen embryo is waiting for your order!

I'm sure that this sounds rather strange to your ears. We are all so used to the traditional way in which a husband and wife, under the blessing of the LORD, may conceive a child, which is then born some nine months later. Even the term "making babies" sounds wrong in our ears. Babies are not made by us, but the LORD makes them.

The age we live in has seen some



tremendous developments in the field of technology, also in the field of medical science. Things that were never dreamed of fifty or even ten years ago are being done today. This is also true when it comes to babies, their conception and birth. For, while one group of scientists is probing the depths of space, another is probing the very fountains of life. Man increases in technological ability, and strives to control everything, also the whole birth process.

Paradox

Why does man want to control the birth process, yes, even conception? It really is amazing that such great efforts are exerted to bring about conception in some women, while every day thousands of babies are routinely murdered in the abortion process. Still, it is one of the par-

adoxes and ironies of human life that while the one woman or couple does not want a child, and will just have it killed, other couples desire to have a child but are unable to receive one. According to statistics, one in nine couples of childbearing age, cannot conceive or easily maintain a pregnancy.

Reasons

Various reasons are suggested as to why there seems to be such a high incidence of couples being unable to conceive. In some cases, women are suffering adverse effects of medication their mothers may have taken while pregnant. Thus some drugs taken while they were pregnant have been linked with rare forms of vaginal cancer or pelvic abnormalities in the daughters they bore. There is also a frequent occurrence of endometriosis,

where the uterine lining gets into places where it does not belong. One specialist reported that over 50% of the women he dealt with had this problem. There is also a high rate of women who have chlamydia, a sexually transmitted disease. Both endometriosis and chlamydia can cause serious difficulties in conceiving.

Many women also suffer side effects of birth prevention methods used earlier in life. The Intrauterine Device (I.U.D.) commonly used in the sixties and seventies, has contributed to pelvic inflammatory disease.

The primary problem, however, seems to be age. Many women are trying to have their first child only after they have busily pursued personal goals and careers. They have postponed childbearing, having placed it low, or last, on their list of priorities. It is thus especially women past the age of thirty, seeking to have their first child, who face the greatest difficulty in achieving conception.

Various methods

Various methods have been developed to try and make it possible for apparently sterile couples to conceive a child.

In some couples, the problem lies with the wife, in that there is a physical problem. This problem can be anything from complete sterility to having blocked fallopian tubes or some other physical obstruction which prevents the male sperm from reaching the egg.

If the problem is merely a physical obstruction, although all the other body parts are in good health, all that may be needed is some corrective surgery. The possibility is also there to artificially inseminate the wife with the husband's sperm. This requires the assistance of a doctor. There is even a method now whereby the eggs of the women are helped to bypass the obstructions in order to make it possible for the sperm to fertilize them. In these situations, even though there is the assistance of a doctor, conception takes place in the womb, and the child is fully the offspring of the father and mother. This method is called "artificial insemination by husband" (A.I.H.).

The situation is different if one of the persons is completely sterile. If the husband is sterile, the possibility is there to obtain the sperm from an anonymous donor. This is called "artificial insemination by a donor" (A.I.D.). Here various possibilities exist. A woman may simply be artificially inseminated by sperm from a donor, in the hope of achieving conception. More common in this respect is what is popularly known as "test tube babies." Several eggs will be taken from the wife, and under laboratory conditions, they will be fertilized with the sperm of some donor. This is more correctly called "in vitro fertiliza-

tion," meaning, that it is done in a small glass dish used by scientists. Then the doctor picks one of the fertilized eggs, which he implants in the woman. The rest of the fertilized eggs are either discarded or can be frozen for future use.

In this situation several objectionable elements enter the picture. First, a third party enters the marriage relationship in the form of an anonymous donor. Though the donor and the couple may never meet, his genetic material is still introduced. In connection with this there will be objections to the way in which the donor obtains his sperm. Further, often money is paid to these donors. In the second place there is the fact that fertilization takes place outside the womb. In the third place there is the fact that unused fertilized eggs are discarded, thus basically killing a fetus, since life begins at conception.

Then there is the possibility of the woman's being infertile. Again there are various approaches. It is possible for another woman to donate her eggs, which are then fertilized in the laboratory by the sperm of the sterile woman's husband. Once fertilized, the embryo is implanted in the sterile woman. A variation is that a donor woman is artificially inseminated. The fertilized egg is then flushed out of her and implanted in the sterile wife. This is called "in vivo fertilization," or "embryo transfer."

We can think of the same objections as before, namely, that a third party enters the marriage bond by contributing her genetic material. Again fertilization takes place outside the womb, which means that some embryos will have to be discarded. Even in the cases of embryo transfer, many embryos are destroyed in the process.

Another variation is that the donor woman not only contributes some eggs, or allows conception to take place in her womb, but that she will carry a baby for another couple. This is what is called "surrogate motherhood." Once the baby is full term, it will be genetically half the surrogate mother's and half the father's from which she was artificially inseminated. A recent case in the U.S. brought this procedure to everyone's attention.

A variation of the surrogate mother is that another woman becomes the host mother, while the baby she carries is genetically that of another man and woman. Such a host woman merely places her womb at the service of another couple who, either because of health reasons or out of convenience, do not want the natural mother to carry the child.

Ethical considerations

We have suggested some areas of objection already. There is the fact that a third party enters the marriage relationship, even though this third party may re-

main anonymous. Normally when a third party enters the marriage covenant, we call that adultery, sin against the seventh commandment. Some argue that this is not the case here, for no one is motivated by lust. Still, we are dealing here with a technical, medical case of adultery. We should keep in mind the way the LORD made things in the beginning. The creation order is that husband and wife, united in love, would bring forth children. The norm, that is, the rule, is that children are born within the family. Where a donor enters the picture, the genetic material of someone else than the father or mother is introduced. One of the legal parents will not be a full biological parent. We should not confuse this with abortion, for here we are dealing with premeditated actions to conceive and bring forth a child.

Also in the sphere of the seventh commandment is the matter of decency. We confess in L.D. 41 that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. One can question whether this is maintained when reproductive organs are manipulated outside the bond of marriage, in order to produce eggs and sperm for donation. A man would have to use various means either privately or under supervision of a doctor to obtain sperm samples. Such actions would be questionable. The LORD has placed sexual deeds within the framework of marriage. When a man does this alone, he separates what God has joined together.

Also for women donors, it amounts to unnecessary manipulation by doctors to obtain eggs. In all these things bodies become objects of human manipulation.

There is also the consideration that a man may father many children while never being married! Likewise, ethical problems arise when a single woman desiring a child would be artificially inseminated. We can even hear of lesbian couples getting children by means of this technology. The begetting of children is then placed outside the scope of marriage.

We must also note that the sixth commandment comes into play. Especially when fertilization is done outside the womb, many fertilized eggs have to be discarded. This amounts to abortion! Even in embryo transfer, eight out of eleven attempts to flush out the fertilized egg, fail. In all these efforts abortion is easily considered. If the parents or doctors suspect deformities, they will easily abort. If, in the case of a woman donor who was inseminated to have the fertilized egg flushed out there is a retained pregnancy, again abortion would be an easy option.

We can see then that man starts to play with life. He tries to make it at will, and if it does not suit him exactly, then it is done away with at will.

There is also the element of greed and exploitation. Some will donate or be

a surrogate mother for a large fee. Thus, there is an attempt to make money from one's reproductive capabilities, which the LORD has given to be used within the bonds of marriage.

Psychological problems

There are also many psychological problems. Certainly, there may be initial joy for a couple previously unable to conceive. But, later, problems can arise. A father may start to resent a child that is not biologically his. The same could happen to the mother. This will easily happen if the child later has behavioural problems.

We should not discount this possibility. Even in the case where parents adopt a child, behaviour problems are often wrongly blamed on the original parents. In the case where a woman conceives through the sperm of a donor, there might even grow a longing in her to find out who really was the father, thus upsetting the love for her husband.

In the case of a surrogate mother, she may become very attached to the child and not want to give it up. Women who miscarry can feel a sense of great loss, especially if the baby had come almost full term. Maternal instincts would have

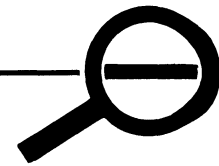
to be suppressed for a mother to simply give up a child she carried in her womb.

There is also the problem that can develop for the child. There is the question whether parents should tell the child its special origin. If they don't, then they live their whole life with a lie. However, when the child knows, it is only natural that there will grow a longing to know who his real father (or mother) is. No matter how good the home may be, the desire to know one's biological roots is very strong.

— *To be continued*

E. KAMPEN

PRESS REVIEW



Catechism preaching

We are in the Canadian Reformed Churches quite used to the fact that once per Sunday (usually in the p.m. service) we hear a *catechism* sermon. This means a sermon that is based on the text of the Heidelberg Catechism, following the Lord's Days in sequence each Sunday.

This is not a matter of the personal preference of the ministers. The churches together have made the following agreement in Article 52 of the Church Order, "The consistory shall ensure that, as a rule, once every Sunday the doctrine of God's Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism is proclaimed."

Sometimes there is no "catechism sermon," for example, when the local minister is on holidays or has an exchange. But usually there is a catechism sermon, so that we can say the rule is adhered to in *all* our churches.

The same is apparently no longer the case in the Christian Reformed Church. Although the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church also stipulates (Art 54b) that "At one of the services each Lord's Day, the minister shall ordinarily preach the Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism, following its sequence," it appears that "catechism preaching" has come to fall under some neglect, mildly said.

I gather that some of the objections against regular "catechism preaching" are that it is too doctrinal, not based on a direct Scripture text but on a man-made formulation, and simply not interesting. This situation was reason for the editors of *The Outlook* (October 1987) to devote various articles to the matter of "catechism preaching." Let me first quote from these

articles, and then later make some comments of my own.

Why catechism preaching?

From an article written by (Rev) J.A. Wesseling, I quote the following. Rev. Wesseling points to the already quoted Church Order article and writes:

Behind this formal regulation, there is the ongoing need to preach the gospel

in all its fullness, calling sinners to repentance and faith and also helping saints to grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We all recognize that these aims of gospel preaching are only achieved when the Holy Spirit's accompanying work is accomplished in those who hear.

A quotation attributed to B.B. Warfield deals with this same subject: he reportedly said: "Two things keep the



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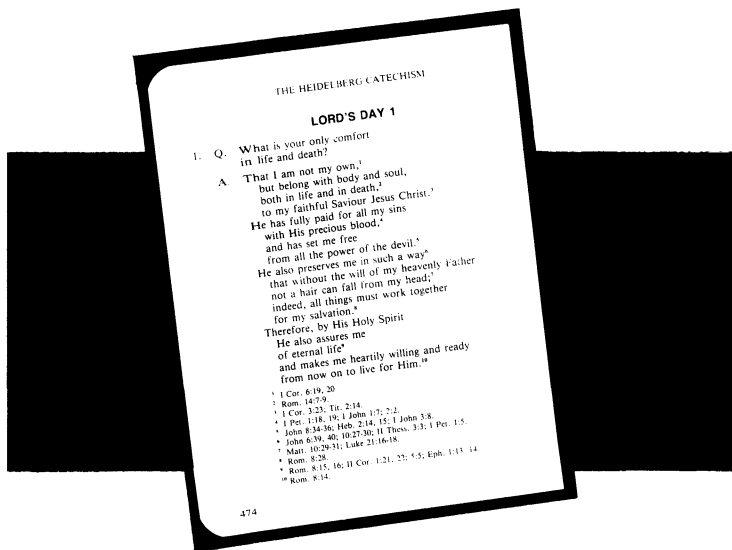
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relatively small CRC straight in an ecclesiastically crooked world: the systematic instruction of its youth and the preaching of the Heidelberg Catechism.”

Both the calling to repent and believe and the building up of believers are readily accomplished through Catechism preaching, since the Catechism unfolds the Bible’s teachings of these purposes. It is the most evangelical of the Reformation-time Catechism, most suited for evangelizing; natural for instructing people from diverse religious backgrounds, or with no background in a church at all. Every minister who has ever instructed people with a view to membership in the church realizes how ideal the Heidelberg Catechism is for this purpose, because of its realistic and warm approach to the heart in unfolding the truths of God’s Word.

When we do preach the Catechism as defined by the Church Order, several good things follow immediately: 1 — we have ½ of a preaching plan already. It is good to have a preaching plan, I believe; artificially-construed ones are available, but not realistic in many instances; 2 — we will have to discipline ourselves to deal with all the phases or angles of the redemption drama revealed in Scripture; 3 — we will be involved in a real learning experience ourselves as we work through the truths summarized in the Catechism.

The Heidelberg Catechism remains highly praised, widely used and is one of the few things surviving from Reformation times as still being up-to-date; the reasons for this, I believe are: 1 — It is thoroughly Biblical; 2 — It is very personal and experiential; 3 — It is sharply practical, showing the ethical side of Calvinism in a clear, cogent way; 4 — Generally, it is peaceful and irenic in tone. (Recall that the more militant Question and Answer 80 were added only after the Council of Trent had reaffirmed the teachings of transubstantiation, the necessity of the sacrifice of the Mass for forgiveness for both the living and the dead, the adoration of the Host, and the pronouncement of anathema on all who

differ with these positions.) 5 — The question and answer method sets forth the Biblical teaching of salvation in a clear way.

What will happen with God’s blessing when the Word is preached as summarized in the Catechism? I believe you will see a growth in grace and knowledge beyond the present levels, and people will be challenged with the need for conversion as the demands or challenges of the Word are presented. As far as the minister himself is concerned, he will have to focus on the whole gamut of revealed truths when he follows the subjects as the Catechism deals with them.

Keeping uniquely Reformed

From an article by Sjikr Bajema (an Australian minister), I quote the following lines on the necessity of “Catechism preaching”:

Our Confessional standards keep us uniquely Reformed. They ensure that we know why we are in our present faith. Their faithful exposition must be continued.

Heretical teaching invariably attacks the Confessional standards. Already in the late 16th century the Remonstrants (Arminians) were opposed to Catechism preaching, and that trend has continued, as can be seen, for instance, in recent G.K.N. renovations of the Canons of Dort (i.e. Articles 6 and 15, together with paragraph 8 of the First Head of Doctrine being made optional in the subscription form for office bearers).

As Van Dellen and Monsma (In *The Church Order Commentary*) point out: Catechism preaching is beyond a doubt one of our strongholds. Consequently we must guard it against any and all dangers which threaten its continuance of which may help bring the custom into disfavour.

The Confessional standards illuminate the central teaching of various parts of Scripture by placing these truths in the context of related Scripture. We argue that “Scripture must be read in the light of Scripture.” Catechism preaching is

the logical end-product of this. Thus it is doctrinal teaching. “Doctrine” as a word does not go down too easily in many evangelical churches today. But we all have a belief in doctrine because we all believe in something, even if it is only oneself. It is impossible to avoid belief of some form or other.

What Catechism preaching involves is the exposition of the Biblical position, known commonly as the Reformed faith. In a world where there is much shallow Christianity, and self-conceived, self-constructed delusions, a thorough understanding of God’s truth is very necessary. And not only a more thorough knowledge results, but also there is much comfort for the believer. The Confessions, at the time of the Reformation, were useful in times of stress. So too, now, we can turn to these Confessions to reassure us in times of difficulty . . .

I can wholeheartedly agree with the above-quoted authors that “catechism preaching” is necessary and vital for proclaiming the “whole counsel” of God to the congregation and for preserving the Reformed character of the church. Lack of catechism preaching only leads to shallowness and confusion and often subjects the congregations to the personal (and whimsical?) insights of the minister.

How to preach on the catechism

Having agreed on the necessity of “catechism preaching” does not mean, however, that we are out of the woods in this respect. For next is the very important question: *how* should our ministers preach on the catechism?

There seem to be two basic methods: the one is called the “Catechism-text Method,” indicating that one bases the sermon on the text of the catechism, while the other is called the “Scripture-text Method,” indicating that the sermon is based on a text from the Bible, while the catechism functions as a reference. I quote from an article by Randal S. Lankheet.

The “Catechism-text method”

When I refer to the one as the “catechism-text method,” I do not mean to say that this method does not take the Scriptures into account. All of us would agree that every catechism answer is filled with Scriptural content and, in many cases, quotes or refers directly to a particular Bible text. So I do not mean to play off the catechism against the Bible. My labeling of these two main methods concerns the *starting point* of the sermon and the *development* of the main points of the sermon outline. Where does the pastor get his main theme for his catechism sermon? From a particular Lord’s Day or particular answer within a Lord’s Day? Or from a particular Bible text? And how does the pastor decide the main

points of his sermon? By looking at how the Bible text flows in its logical or rhetorical development? Or by checking the particular Lord's Day or a particular answer to one of the questions within the catechism?

Let me give two examples to show the differences between these two methods of writing the catechism sermon. Take question 86, part of Lord's Day 32, which basically asks, "why must we do good?" The catechism answer may be divided into three main points, each point giving a reason for doing good works. We ought to do good works: 1) for God's sake (to "show we are thankful to God . . . and so that he may be praised"), 2) for our own sake ("so that we may be assured of our faith by its fruits"), and 3) for others' sakes ("so that by our godly living our neighbors may be won over to Christ"). So this would be the sermon outline, using the catechism-text method. (Perhaps I have already violated the purest form of the catechism-text method by outlining a sermon based on only *one* answer when Lord's Day 32 actually contains *two* questions and answers. A rigorously consistent use of the catechism-text method would require 52 sermons, each based on one of the 52 Lord's Days.) In further expounding these three points of his catechism sermon, constructed according to the catechism-text method, the pastor would draw upon the various Scriptures footnoted in answer 86.

The Scripture-text method

Now take that same theme, namely, the importance of doing good works, and let us proceed from the Scripture-text method. To begin with, I know of no Scripture text which lists in one place all three of the catechism's reasons for doing good works. However, I can find a text which mentions at least one of the reasons. Take Matthew 5:14-16, considered under the sermon theme, "Christians Shine As Lights." Briefly scanning the text (without, I must confess, having studied it carefully or yet having preached on it), a basic sermon outline emerges. Focusing on light and how Christians shine as light, the outline might take shape as follows: 1) its nature ("you are the light" — what is light?), 2) its display ("cannot be hid" but is "put on a stand"), and 3) its usefulness ("gives light to all in the house"). Or, if one is inclined to alliteration: 1) its essence, 2) its exhibition, 3) its effectiveness. (Of course, pure Volbedian construction would also require alliterative adjectives, no matter how redundant: its pure essence, its public exhibition, its practical effectiveness.) As you can readily see, this sermon begins with the Scripture text and is developed in harmony with the text. As a catechism sermon on question and answer 86, the preacher would pull in the

part of the catechism answer which teaches that God is praised as we perform good works. He might even make reference to the fact, taught in Matthew 5:16, that our good works serve as a witness to our neighbors (another fact noted in answer 86). But in this sermon the preacher would not mention how good works assure us of the genuineness of our faith. Why not? Simply because Jesus does not address this matter in Matthew 5:14-16. That would have to wait for another sermon, with another theme based on another Bible text.

By this time, the differences between the catechism-text method and the Scripture-text method should be quite obvious. The two methods offer two different ways of writing the catechism sermon, from the choosing of a main theme to the logical or rhetorical development of the sermon outline.

Lankheet and also others in this issue of *The Outlook* prefer the Scripture-text method. Rather than preaching on the catechism, they would preach on a Bible-text that is related to the Lord's Day "in sequence" for that Sunday. But Wesseling writes that he prefers to "preach a topical sermon and to use Scripture to substantiate what you present." I gather that P. de Jong advocates a combination of both methods, perhaps with emphasis on the text of the Catechism.

A catechism sermon must be a catechism sermon!

I must agree with Wesseling that a "topical sermon" on a catechism Lord's Day is required in "catechism" preaching. One should stick to his text, even if that text happens to be a Lord's Day (or a part of a Lord's Day).

A minister will certainly have to choose some relevant Scripture passages to illustrate how the contents of the Lord's Day indeed accord fully with Scripture, but he is not preaching about those Scripture passages themselves!

There has been discussion on this point for quite some time. Already Abraham Kuyper pointed out in his day that if a minister preaches on a Scripture passage (instead of the Lord's Day he is supposed to deal with), he indicates that the confession may not be based wholly on Scripture and that the catechism is not entirely trustworthy. Instead, according to Kuyper, a minister must point the congregation to the Scripture passages which have been given with the Lord's Days!

One cannot have two texts: a Scripture passage and a Lord's Day, for then injustice will be done to both. The character of a Bible text and the purpose of a catechism text are then misunderstood. The Bible text is misused as a "flag" to legitimate the catechism.

C. Veenhof has written about the Scripture-text method of catechism preaching, "Although apparently intending a greater honour for the Scriptures, one has in fact, by adding a text, taken away from the honour of Scripture, misunderstood the essence of the Catechism, and brought about a homiletical contradiction" (*Predik Het Woord*, Oosterbaan en LeCointre, Goes, n.d., page 214).

When a minister preaches about a particular Lord's Day, he will have to proclaim the full gospel, as set forth in that part of the confession of the church, and he will do so with unmistakable references to Scripture, so that the congregation knows: this is the Word of God! But he will also stick to the text of the catechism as closely as he can, so that the congregation also knows: this is what the church confesses on the basis of God's Word. His theme and points will then be formulated from out of the contents and flow of the Lord's Day with which he is dealing.

Perhaps many Christian Reformed ministers have forgotten the advice given by their very own ministers J. van Dellen and H. Keegstra in 1915, "Taking a [Bible] text with the catechism preaching is not to be advised." I believe indeed that in such a case the Bible text is not properly explained while the catechism text is neglected.

It happens that ministers read the catechism Lord's Day which is "on tap," but then hardly refer to it again and instead deal with various related Scripture passages. This is to me not what is meant by "catechism preaching." Catechism preaching is accurately explaining and proclaiming the Word of God as summarized in a particular Lord's Day, using the formulations and the expressions which the churches have accepted as being fully Scriptural.

It seems to me that the "Scripture-text Method" of "catechism preaching" will not save the catechism preaching in the Christian Reformed Church, but will, instead, devalue it even more. For this method only holds up the *appearance* of catechism preaching, while it is not. I would have preferred to read in *The Outlook* a stronger plea for true catechism preaching. Sjirk Bajema comes the closest to the truth when he suggests that the "Scripture-text Method" is not "Confessional preaching. Rather this practice leads many people to believe that a Catechism sermon is not a sermon on the Word of God."

The Christian Reformed Church today needs solid catechetical and confessional preaching so that the sound doctrine there may be preserved and promoted according to the Scriptures.

CL. STAM

Sphere sovereignty³

A last point I would like to discuss in connection with sphere sovereignty is whether it leads to free enterprise. It has been argued that since Kuyper's theory originated from fear of state influence in all areas of life, this meant a negative attitude toward government interference in the socio-economic sphere. It may be true that several of Kuyper's spiritual descendants did not recognize the importance of the role of the government in this area. It is even possible that such a view brought them "close to the tyranny of the economic sphere over other areas of life, which is, in fact, directly opposed to the idea of sphere sovereignty."¹ But one must do justice to Kuyper himself. It is not true that Kuyper mainly recognized the negative task of the government with regard to public justice.² In as far as Kuyper's followers have used his theory for such a negative view on the state, they were not in the line of Kuyper's own thinking.

It is true that Kuyper expected the welfare of a nation not from state interference with economic life but from individual initiative.³ But this does not mean that Kuyper advocated economic liberalism. He argued that "the social question has become *the* question, the burning *life-question*, of the end of the nineteenth century."⁴ According to Kuyper, the root of the problem lay in the individualism of the nineteenth century:

Moreover, the Christian religion has, as a fruit of divine pity, brought into the world the pity of a love springing from God — the French Revolution placed over against that the egoism of the passionate struggle for possession.⁵

Kuyper's concern for the social question was noted in 1872, when he wrote a series of articles on "The Social Question" in *De Standaard*.⁶ The articles were a sharp attack on nineteenth-century Liberalism. Again, Kuyper regarded this Liberal philosophy as the result of the French Revolution of 1789, which had replaced the close tie of members of the same estate with the isolation of the individual and the centralization of capital. It was, in his view, time for Christians to participate in the discussion on the workers' situation since the labour question is for the Christian the most important social question because it is concerned with the improve-

ment of the situation of those who, according to God's Word, regard labour as the result of a divine ordinance and thus as the condition of life for all creatures, for him who wears a crown and purple as well as for him who is less well off, who is called upon to make a living in his honourable workman's clothes. Labour is the fruit of faith; it is the temporary punishment for sin; labour, just like sin, makes all of us brothers. The labour issue is the brother issue.⁷

Kuyper went on to argue for an improvement in the material condition of the workers, which "often puts the woeful condition of the slave population of ancient paganism in its shade . . ." To come to such an improvement, unions and strikes were justified, according to Kuyper. He further pleaded for shorter working days and against the labour of women and children.

In fact, Kuyper went so far as to admit the truth of the Marxist accumulation theory: "Inevitably, capital absorbs more and more capital, until it meets a power of resistance which it cannot break."⁸ Accordingly, Kuyper thought that improvement lay "along the socialist path," although he meant with this not a program of social democracy, but a program following from his view of the community as an organic unity.⁹ In his advocacy of government interference, Kuyper proposed a Labour Code in 1874 when the Conservative Heemskerk-Cabinet presented its budget. The idea was ridiculed by the Liberals.¹⁰ At one point during his speech, Kuyper grabbed his Bible and read:

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon

you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts [James 5:1-4].

Kuyper did not regard this plea for government interference incompatible with his theory of sphere sovereignty. In fact, the government had to interfere, according to Kuyper, to come to a more precise definition of the boundaries of the sphere of the government.¹¹ Government interference was necessary to protect the existence and sovereignty of the other spheres. Thus Kuyper argued that the state had a threefold duty:

1. Whenever different spheres clash, to compel mutual regard for the boundary lines of each;
2. To defend individuals and weak ones, in those spheres, against the abuse of power of the rest;
- and 3. To coerce all together to bear *personal* and *financial* burdens for the maintenance of the natural unity of the State.¹²

It is clear, therefore, that the idea of "economic tyranny" over other spheres of life was certainly not inherent in Kuyper's theory of sphere sovereignty. May this be an example to us as we set our first steps into the political area.

HANS BOERSMA

OUR COVER

View of Tatan River in Mangelum

Photo courtesy:
Bram Vegter

¹Okke Jager, *Schrale troost in magere jaren* (Baarn, 1976), 53.

²As against Meulink 19.

³A. Kuyper, *Christianity and the Class Struggle*, Trans. Dirk Jellema (Grand Rapids: Piet Hein Publishers, 1950), 58. Henceforth referred to as *CCS*.

⁴*CCS* 43.

⁵*CCS* 33; cf. *OP* 359.

⁶The discussion of these articles is based on P. A. Diepenhorst, *Dr. A. Kuyper* (Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn, 1931), 147-64.

⁷Quoted from Diepenhorst 149ff.

⁸*CCS* 36, n.19; cf. *OP* 365.

⁹*CCS* 41.

¹⁰*OP* 370ff.

¹¹*OP* 366.

¹²*LOC* 97.



Most of the news this time will come from Australia. The brotherhood down there will be thrilled to know that we pay good attention to their Church life and are particularly pleased with the apparent influence of the Canadian ministers in their midst!

It appears that they have quite an impact on several things. Perhaps they could also achieve that I no longer have to read the Dutchism "Family A.," but will from now on see the proper "the A. Family." Mind you, this mistake is not typically Australian; also in our own midst it appears difficult to make people see the light.

In a previous *Clarion* we read a report on the farewell evening of Dr. and Mrs. Hur who left Kelmscott to take up a position at the Seminary in Busan, Korea. There we discovered something about "stanzas." With us, too, there are quite a few who speak of "verse 3 and 4" when they refer to the stanzas of a song. Apparently as a result of Rev. Huizinga's influence, the tide is turning in Australia.

In a report by two brothers who were delegated to their synod, I read about our colleague Huizinga, who had the great privilege of being first clerk of that synod (!), that he apparently recorded the decisions in the manner which we follow in our Acts of Synod. The remark was made "While this may seem terribly complicated and uninspiring, we are convinced that the churches will be served well by it and are thankful that we could learn *something* from the maple leaf crushers 'up-top' because 'stanza' is simply unacceptable."

That these remarks and this gentle ribbing do not show any lack of appreciation may be clear from the following about the Acts.

"Rumour has it that most of them were written (typed) sometime between 6:00 and 9:00 a.m. and 9:30 and 11:30 p.m. daily. Add to that his duties as chairman of Committee 1 and the daily devotion to testing Albany's clear water — no, not *always* in a heated pool — and you have left some 5-6 hours of sleep. Not bad for a Canadian." Thanks for the compliment. We are not all living in igloos here, mind you.

As for some decisions of this synod, I expect that we shall read the press release also in our own press, but would like to pass on now already that the brothers decided that the Australian Churches will support our Theological College with a set amount per communicant member per year. We are thankful for this. However, I am almost more thankful still for the decision to instruct deputies to investigate the possibility of making preparations for their own training for the Ministry.

It is a great blessing that we are able to assist our Australian sister Churches by providing the necessary instruction of their young men who aspire to the ministry, and we gladly do so, as we did show in the past. But the burden of providing this instruction rests on these Churches themselves in the first place. As long as they are not able to do so due to lack of manpower we shall happily assist them.

It may seem to be a hopeless undertaking seeing the rather small number of Churches to make preparations; but then, who could foresee some thirty years ago that we would ever be able to have our own institution? All the Lord asks of us is that we shall do whatever we are able to do and that we keep our mandate in view. Much wisdom and prosperity, brothers!

Another decision about which I am happy is that, finally, the Australian sister Churches will be allowed to use all the

Hymns in our *Book of Praise*. "Synod decided to introduce the probat-Mionary use of the deleted hymns by the churches till the next synod."

What I am wondering about, however, is whether it is correct that this decision was made upon the suggestion of one of the brothers. "Upon the submission of Rev. W. Huizinga synod repealed the decisions of previous synods to use a limited number of the Hymns in the *Book of Praise*." Is it not so that synods should deal with proposals and submissions by the *Churches* only? I find this strange.

Another decision which gladdened my heart. "The proposal of deputies to delete the word 'Christian' from the Apostles' Creed (Art. IX) was adopted."

And a final "general" news-item: Also in Australia the brotherhood has come to the establishment of a Political Party.

As mentioned before, Dr. Hur has left for Korea there to teach at the Seminary. He informed the brotherhood that he has to deliver thirteen lectures per week! I would consider this almost impossible, unless the same lecture is to be given to different groups of students so that no more than six or seven lectures would have to be prepared. The time of preparation must be taken into account as well.

"A portrait of Rev. Hur has started a portrait gallery of ministers in our consistory room. As he was our first minister, that portrait is our entire gallery." Even when you get another minister, your gallery will not be expanding too fast, we hope.

The Kelmscott consistory also decided to join with Armadale and Byford in the formation of a retirement fund, as also in the publication of a combined Church directory.

"It is decided to direct the funds donated by the Kelmscott catechism students to the Library Fund of the Theological College in Hamilton."

The work done by calling committees sometimes benefits other Churches. We can see this also from the fact that a letter was received "from the Launceston Calling Committee seeking information on the calling work undertaken by us. They seek this information to assist them in their efforts as they work towards the institution of a new congregation sometime early next year." We may therefore look forward to seeing another Church in Tassie. That will make seven Churches in Australia, once the Bedforddale Church has been instituted.

The Byford consistory discussed the liturgy. Apparently different ministers follow a different liturgy. Now the consistory tried to bring some uniformity, at least for their own congregation. "The result of the discussion was that the order of liturgy as printed under 'A' on page 581 of the *Book of Praise* will be followed." In case one of our ministers goes visiting there, and is requested to conduct a service, he knows now.

"In times past, the reading of the law was followed by the Lord's summary of Matthew 22. What will happen from now on is that a summary from elsewhere in Scripture may be used also, if e.g. circumstances in the congregation or the thrust of the coming sermon make an alternate summary preferable. Similarly, if your minister feels it more proper to forego the summary after the law altogether, he may do so."

"The consistory favours the reading of the 'summary' after the law but agrees that it should not be obligatory. Ministers may delete the reading of the summary when circumstances make this desirable."

I never read a so-called "summary," and have given my reasons for this more than once in the past. I do not believe

that the words of our Saviour's in Matthew 22 are a "summary" of what we read in Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5. I wholeheartedly believe that the Ten Words are still fully binding on the Church today, via Christ our Lord, and that we should not give the impression as if a New Testament addition (under the guise of a "summary") is needed. However, let this suffice for the moment.

Another item from Byford's consistory. "A suggestion that in the future we also celebrate the Holy Supper during the afternoon service is discussed briefly. It is pointed out that persons eligible to babysit seldom witness the celebration of the Holy Supper. On the other hand, it may be possible to solve this problem by organizing a creche in the new meeting room." Don't they alternate the babysitters in Byford?

Finally, the Armadale consistory report tells us that "A telephone link will be made between the church and the hostel, to enable residents to listen to church services." Too bad that there is no possibility to get permission to bring a line across the street so that telephone charges could be avoided!

We spent quite some time with the eucalyptus-leaf chewers down under and return to our own balmy climate.

On November 1st the institution of the Vernon Church will have taken place. At the moment of this writing it is still future, but there is no possibility to have this information with our readers before that date. We are thankful for the progress of the work there and express the wish that also numerically there may be growth in the future.

In the Maranatha Church in Surrey "the quality of wedding Bibles to be presented by consistory is discussed." It is a pity that nowadays it is very difficult to get a decently bound Bible unless one is prepared to lay out quite an amount. Of several consistories I read that they ordered a number of the Bible-plus-*Book of Praise* which Premier Printing is about to publish, with the express condition that these will be used as a present to couples getting married. I am quite certain that the binding of these Bibles will be satisfactory and that they won't fall apart into loose pages as soon as you have opened them wide three or four times.

At the same consistory "the need for continuing the Lord's Supper celebration during the afternoon service was questioned and will be discussed at another time." We are waiting.

Building plans have been drawn up in the Fraser Valley for a church building and for a parsonage.

As for the church building, this is the case in Lynden, Washington. Rev. van Delden wrote about a hearing "in the Court House in Bellingham on October 27 at 9:30 a.m. If I understand this correctly, this hearing pertains to the granting of the permit needed for the church building." As we write this before the date, we don't know the result yet, but have our doubts that any serious impediment will have come up.

The plans for a parsonage are Langley's. After a lengthy search a property was finally located, and now the activity to provide decent lodging for their minister is coming into high gear. It is not so that Rev. J. Visscher does not have decent lodging for himself and his family at the moment. On the contrary, you should see the house! The problem is that the Rev. J. Moesker and family would like to move in right away when the moment has come for their switching to the Fraser Valley. If our sunny, summer-like weather holds out for a while, much progress can be made within a short time, once the permits have been secured. However, we badly need rain, would you believe it?

Perhaps this is the proper place to draw attention to the first issue of *Diakonia*, a new periodical for office-bearers. The contents are formed by an introductory article by the Rev. J. Visscher and a translation of an article from *Dienst*, a Dutch periodical for office-bearers. We are very happy with the appearing of this periodical as we badly need something for the



instruction of office-bearers. It is for this reason that we would urge all consistories to subscribe to it for all their office-bearers, while also brothers who did serve — and thus also may expect to serve again — would do well by taking out a subscription.

Let no one be deterred by the fact that it contains a translated article. (By the way: the first sentence under the line on page 3 should have read "For that reason alone it would be good if each consistory organized . . ." To use "would" twice in the way it is done is wrong.) As long as we do not have the so much needed manpower (and, alas, willingness!) to provide the desired instruction, we shall act wisely by drawing from the resources of our Netherlands sister Churches. I am certain that the editor will make the necessary adjustments if a certain article is not wholly applicable to our situation in the form in which it has been written. Subscribe and use!

On our way to Ontario we stop over in Carman.

Writing about the — then — forthcoming classis, Rev. de Boer writes, "There is an appeal questioning whether the Three Forms of Unity must be mentioned in the credentials to major assemblies. It is argued that the Churches of the federation have bound themselves to these three forms and it is therefore superfluous and unnecessary to be named in the credentials."

Frankly, I do not understand what the objection could be to mentioning the Three Forms of Unity in the credentials. Definitely, it is not necessary to mention them expressly, as we have formed the Federation of Churches because of the unity of faith expressed in these Formulas. And I would not be opposed to accepting credentials which do not mention them expressly, as long as it is understood and established that this does not mean that the members of classis or synod are not bound by them in their decisions and in all their actions.

I always liked the formulation in credentials that the brothers have been authorized to deal with all matters properly brought to classis and that they are to do so "in total submission to the Word of God, in faithful adherence to the Confessions, and with loyal observance of the adopted Order." In this manner the difference in authority between God's Word and the confessions is maintained, and yet it is made clear by what the brothers are bound in all their labours. Good instructions and proper authorization can prevent much trouble.

What could be against it to have them mentioned? It always makes me sort of suspicious when a long-standing practice all of a sudden is object of an "appeal." If one wants to be freed from the binding to the confessions, let him say so openly, and we know what we have to do. If one does not have any such intentions, what is the argument why binding to the confessions should not be mentioned? Perhaps I am too suspicious, but we have experiences, don't we?

Another item from Carman.

"Complaints about the clarity of reading services of some elders are received and discussed. It is decided to explore areas for improvement including improvement to the audio equipment."

We mention this only because we think that more congregations have the same problem. It would not be fair to load

the burden of reading services upon the shoulders of only a few. Yet it is a fact that the one brother reads more clearly and thus edifies the congregation more than the other. This has nothing to do with dedication or love for the work; this is simply a matter of abilities in this particular respect. I know quite a few brothers who do not want to lead a service because they are aware of it that their voice is not strong or clear enough to fulfil this task properly.

A consistory would hesitate to tell a brother, "Sorry, but you had better not read again, since we have received several complaints that people cannot understand you." Yet when this is done with love and understanding, the brother will gratefully accept this and, perhaps, even be happy that this responsibility has been taken off his shoulders.

Another item from Carman made me frown, as I did not get it.

"The role of a photographer at wedding services will be spelled out clearly to couples intending to be married."

Is here the hybrid of an official service for the solemnization of a wedding raising its head? Or is a wrong term used?

If the solemnization is done in a worship service, no photographer should be taking pictures, in my opinion. We do not allow this in other services either.

If the solemnization is not done in a worship ceremony but in a private ceremony — be it that it takes place in the church building — the consistory has no right to discuss what

the role of a photographer should or should not be. This is then completely up to the minister and the couple. It is wise to discuss it privately, and I always tell the couples, if they ask, that no pictures should be taken during the address and during the prayers. Sometimes a photographer approached me with the question, and then I gave the same answer, adding that this was the young couple's day and that they should have lots of pictures to remind them of this day of joy and happiness.

A happy note: The Burlington-West bulletin contains the following item in the consistory report. "A family who left for Hamilton's Church sends a note of thanks for the Christian fellowship and pastoral care received here in the congregation."

It is the first time that I read something like this, and thought it worthwhile to include it in our report. Beautiful!

Now a last item.

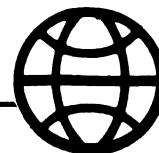
From the Elora Church: they have proposed to the Fergus consistory "to issue a combined Church bulletin until December 1987." Keep it up.

And to several bulletin writers: do not write the Dutchism "Decided was . . .," but the proper "It was decided . . ."

By the way: in a recent article I typed that I was "wrapped" over the knuckles. Let's simplify this and free ourselves from wrappings by making it "rapped." I discovered this myself. Nice, eh?

VO

INTERNATIONAL



CANADIAN SCENE

The use of daytime running lights on road vehicles to help cut down on daytime accidents is an idea that is growing in popularity. Studies conducted in Canada, the United States, Sweden and Finland consistently show that the use of daytime running light systems reduces multiple vehicle crashes and accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists during daylight hours.

Transport Canada has stated that for Canadians, use of daytime running lights would save 120 lives, prevent 38,000 accidents, eliminate 11,000 injuries and save \$200 million in related medical costs annually.

CANADIAN SCENE

In a recent study funded by the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council, researchers state that peer pressure and parental and sibling influence are the key factors influencing young Canadian children to start smoking.

The study, based on interviews with 1,012 young Canadians between the ages of seven and 15, was conducted by the Children's Research United of London, England, a specialist in child research.

Glen Smith, chairman of the research company stated at a press conference in Toronto that the study reveals that on average, one in nine Canadian youngsters in the seven to 15 age group smokes.

In Norway, one in six in the same age group smokes, in Spain, one in 14, in Australia, one in nine and in Hong Kong, one in 100.

ADDIS ABABA (APS)

Thirteen years of Marxist rule in Ethiopia have not succeeded in curbing the growth of the Protestant church, in spite of the fact that 95 per cent of Ethiopia's churches remain closed today.

Although significant pressure has been executed by the government of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam to eradicate the practice of the Christian faith, that same pressure may be responsible for the astonishing growth of the Ethiopian church.

Last year alone, the Lutheran Mekame Yesus church reported an increase of 50,000 new members and the Ethiopian affiliation was classified as the "fastest growing Lutheran church in the world," according to Oyvind Aadland, a missionary with the Norwegian Lutheran Mission.

Most of the churches which were

"nationalized" by the Ethiopian government in the early days of the military coup which ousted Emperor Haile Selassie, remain closed or house a variety of government offices today. Yet the same regime which ordered the confiscation of church properties and the imprisonment of thousands of Christians over a ten-year period beginning in 1974, looks the other way when Christians meet in house churches today.

With the loss of church structures in which to meet, Christians have developed an intricate and highly-organized network of house churches which have thrived in spite the fact that houses are subject to confiscation and members to imprisonment if worship services are discovered. (RES NE)

MOSCOW

The Russian newspaper *Pravda Vostoka* reports a steady increase in the number of atheist couples who want a church wedding. The couples find the civil ceremony meaningless and are looking to the church to provide "something special." The paper, claiming that orthodox priests use marriage "to win over the hearts of the people," called on civil registrars to spice up their ceremonies. (RES NE)

VO

Ordination and installation of Rev. Schouten

October 4th, 1987: A day of excitement, a day of joy, a day of blessing for the congregation of Calgary! After more than four years, this Canadian Reformed congregation was again to receive a pastor and teacher!

Rev. M. van Beveren led the morning service in which Rev. R.A. Schouten was ordained and installed as a minister of God's word. Rev. van Beveren based his sermon on Titus 2, with special emphasis given to verses 11-15. His theme: "The power of God's grace in this world," as explained in two points:

1. The light of God's grace.
2. The result of God's grace.

1. Paul instructs a discouraged Titus to teach the Cretans "what befits sound doctrine;" their lives should be in harmony with the doctrine of salvation. This doctrine of salvation is the power of Titus' preaching, because the power of God's grace sets people free.

The grace of God, and His goodness and loving kindness, appears like the sun: rising daily, giving light to all those in darkness and in the shadow of death. God's grace shines for the salvation of all men; there is no distinction, it is the same powerful light for all. And it is a free gift!

The light of God's grace is also the power of preachers and office-bearers. Our minister, too, may become discouraged like Titus, yet it's his charge to be the messenger of good tidings! For only God's grace can change lives; this is the encouragement for Christians in the fight against sins.

2. We are **all** instruments in God's hands, but only His grace brings sinners back to Him. In the words of verse 12, it is the grace of God that "trains us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world."

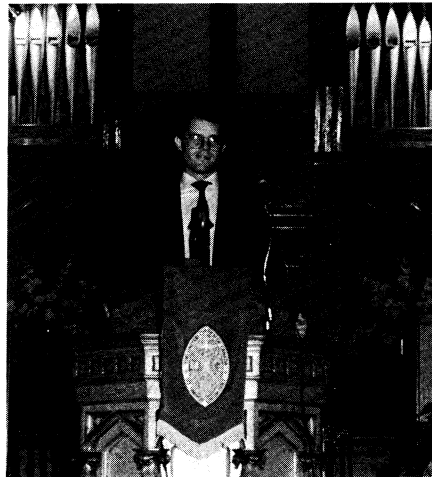
Therefore it's a privilege for a minister to be ordained, and to proclaim the light of God's grace, His good tidings; from the pulpit, in our homes — wherever God calls him. May we walk in the light preached by our minister!

Rev. van Beveren then proceeded with the ordination and installation of candidate Schouten. After the form was read and questions given, br. Schouten re-

sponded with certainty: "I do with all my heart." The elders and Rev. van Beveren then participated in the "laying on of hands," and Rev. Schouten heard the words, "God . . . who has called you . . . enlighten you . . . govern you in your ministry that . . . it may bear fruit to the honour of His Name . . . Amen."

At the close of the service, the congregation responded with the singing of Hymn 40:1,2,5.

The afternoon service was highlighted



by Rev. Schouten's inaugural sermon, based on II Corinthians 5:18-20. His theme was "reconciliation as the basis for ministry;" this reconciliation:

1. Is a gift.
2. Involves a Ministry.
3. Implies a calling.

1. We are new, we are free as a gift from God! Through Christ, **God** reconciled us to Him; God has taken the initiative to give reconciliation, as Romans 5:10 says: ". . . while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. . . ." Despite our rebelliousness, God no longer reckons to us our sins because payment has been made! (John 3:16).

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace, we're no longer burdened by the weight of our sins, because of the gift of reconciliation.

2. Paul defends himself as an apostle of Christ, appointed by God who is his source of authority. Paul became instru-

mental in spreading the gospel, because he's been given the ministry of reconciliation. As such, Paul is an ambassador of Christ — an official representative, a herald of Christ.

It is God who calls, equips, trains, and ordains men to be his ambassadors (Romans 10:14-15). His work continues today! A minister is Christ's herald. We, as congregation, must respond to God's herald with obedience, for the herald's voice is binding because he speaks for God.

3. All ministers must appeal to God's people, that they be reconciled. This gospel of reconciliation must be the main focus of the ministry.

We have been redeemed. Hence it is the duty of the minister to exhort the congregation to live a life worthy of redeemed. "Be ye reconciled." That's the herald's official message. Will we heed the call of God, through His minister? Today and everyday, "be ye reconciled!"

In believing and accepting this gospel of reconciliation, we can be strong in the Lord.

Continue in the faith!

In response, the congregation rose and sang the beautiful words of Psalm 85:3,4:

"Let me now hear what God the Lord will speak,
For to His saints who in their hearts Him seek;
He will proclaim His steadfast words of peace. . . ."

After the service Rev. van Beveren brought congratulations from the churches in the Classis Manitoba/Alberta. Then representatives from the Providence and Immanuel Churches in Edmonton and from the Church at Coaldale addressed the minister and the congregation with their greetings. Greetings received by mail were also read from the Churches at Neerlandia, Winnipeg and Carman.

The day was closed with the sharing of refreshments and fellowship in the church basement. A day with many reasons to be thankful which Calgarians will remember for a long time.

For the congregation
RON BOS

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

2. A Church, to be appointed for each Classis by the above-mentioned Deputies, shall convene the first assembly of all Churches in these Classes on a day, hour, and place to be determined by both Synods. Further, at these assemblies matters shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Church Order.

3. Delegates of all Churches which have accepted this accord shall be admitted to these Classical meetings with proper credentials; on the understanding that each Church shall delegate this first time according to the rule and the manner in which it has done it until now with the approval of its Classes.

4. Before the delegates of these Churches will be admitted to deal with matters and vote on them, they shall, the first time, declare their wholehearted agreement with the Three Forms of Unity by placing their signature; further they shall, on behalf of their Churches, submit in writing the following declaration:

First, they neither do nor will allow anyone to partake of the Lord's Supper except after he has proved himself willing to submit to the Ecclesiastical Discipline; on the other hand, no one whose confession and conduct is irreproachable and of whom it has become clear that he submits himself to the discipline of the Churches, is being barred from the Lord's Supper; the Ecclesiastical Discipline will be exercised faithfully by them in order also further to keep holy the holiness of the house of the Lord and to bring back those who stray from their way;

Second, concerning the Holy Baptism they mutually shall refrain from baptizing again and thus consider as baptized everyone of whom it is clear that he was either sprinkled with water or immersed in water into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in an act which intended to be baptism and by a person who within his own circle was recognized as one authorized to do so.

Third, mutually the Churches shall do their utmost endeavour, with God's gracious help, to move those descendants of the Churches of our fathers who until now persevere in their erroneous way to a renewed adherence to the pure confession or to a better practising of this confession, and thus to openly joining the purified Church formation by recognition of its offices and their functions. This includes that, when giving attestations, these may never become a reason why persons who had been freed from the Synodical Hierarchy would get under it again upon leaving.

5. To the end that the coming together in major assemblies be no empty show but full reality, all particular Churches which until now came together classically in their own circle, shall from now on abstain from these gatherings within their own circle and loose the bonds which until now legally obligated them to it.

6. The Classical, Provincial and General assemblies which in this manner will be convened exclusively on the basis of the Church Order of 1618/1619, shall carry the name of Classical Meetings, Particular Synods and General Synods of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

7. Regarding the relation of the Churches towards the Government, each particular Church shall be left complete freedom, and it only has to see to it that it not abandon the principle of the independence of the Church; that in this respect it act not in combination with any other Church but solely on its own; and that it do not enter into any arrangement whereby the free cooperation with the other particular Churches would be cut off or impeded.

8. The existence of two Church formations in the same city or village — however much it is mutually considered as an in-principle-abnormal thing — shall be tolerated because of the need of the times, with prayer to God that by His grace ways may be found at last to cause this irregularity to cease.

In anticipation of this both Consistories shall show their goodwill now already to cover this breach as much as possible:

1. by for the strengthening of the ecclesiastical discipline not admitting to the Holy Supper anyone who because of confession or conduct is being dealt with by the other Consistory; 2. by mutually admitting each other's members to the Holy Supper; 3. by causing the arrangement of the public gatherings of the believers to be done as much as possible with common consultation; 4. if so desired, by mutually delegating a brother to each other's meetings for the maintenance of correspondence; 5. by acting jointly towards third parties in all matters pertaining to the worship or the Reformed confessions; and 6. by having the announcement of time and place of the so-called public worship services to be made jointly as soon as possible.

9. Wherever locally the disposition arises to enter into a closer bond, also as far as the formation of the Churches is concerned, both Consistories shall do this by means of a contract — always with approval of the Classis — in such a manner and fashion that the title and management of each one's property remains as it is, and also that the one have nothing to do with the responsibility for what belongs to the other, but that for the Ministry of the Word and of the Sacraments as well as for the ecclesiastical discipline, both consistories form a combination. A sample of such a contract is enclosed. See Appendix A.

10. In the matter of the Ecclesiastical assets, the Diaconal assets and the Schools of each particular Church shall remain free to possess and administer them in the manner it judges to be proper. However, all Churches shall be bound to inform Classis of all communications sent to the Government and of all transactions or arrangements which are made with the Government in this respect.

11. The assets which any group of Churches possessed jointly until present, such as funds and buildings, which are the property of the "Christian Reformed Church" remain wholly at the disposal of the Purpose, of the Church or of the Deputies that the Synod of this group will appoint to this in its last separate assembly. Under no condition shall the Churches of the other group be permitted to mingle in this.

12. The major assemblies mentioned in Art. 6, as consisting of Churches of both formations, abstain as such from any interference in the proceedings of a Consistory beside the existing one in places where a Consistory of the Christian Reformed or Netherlands Reformed formation is already found.

13. If, after this arrangement has come into force, in a place where already one of the two formations which now enter into a contract does exist, a Consistory might present itself with the request to be received into the now formed church federation, the Classis shall comply with this request only in case it becomes clear: 1. that this Consistory fully agrees with the now contracting Churches in Confession, Liturgy and Church Order; 2. that the Consistory is prepared — according to the concept added to this agreement — without delay to enter into a combination with the Consistory that is already in existence in that place; and 3. that such persons belong to this Consistory or have cooperated in its formation who beforehand had been admitted to the Holy Supper by the Consistory formed in that place which had already been received into this church federation.

14. The combined Churches shall have a Theological School or Theological Seminary. In case the existing Theological School in Kampen should be transferred to the United Churches by the last Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, this one shall be counted as such. This School or this Seminary — if necessary — shall have to provide completely for the training of the future Ministers of the Word. If, however, such an arrangement is offered by the Directors of the Society for Higher Education on a Reformed basis, whereby the Synod of the combined Churches will have a proper right of say in the appointment, the eventual suspension and the dismissal of Theological Professors, and supervision over the instruction to be given is assured, and on the basis of this an agreement is made, the Ecclesiastical Seminary shall serve exclusively the practical training and be established in Amsterdam. The appointment, eventual suspension and the dismissal of the Professors at this Seminary shall rest with the Synod, but in any case the Docents, engaged at present at the now existing Theological School in Kampen, shall be transferred, with full retention of their honoraria, to which shall be added such an increase as results from the higher cost of living in Amsterdam than in Kampen.

Professors who, while connected with this Seminary, are also appointed as ordinary Professors by the Society for Higher Education on a Reformed basis shall serve the Churches without remuneration insofar as simultaneously they remain Professor at the Seminary.

Acceptable or Not?

It was a lengthy document, but we considered it wise to insert it in its entirety. The attentive and knowledgeable reader will have noticed that it faithfully follows the line of the Doleantie. Efforts to bring about some changes in it were practically doomed to failure almost from the very beginning as the one thought permeates each and every part.

We cannot but point to the important place which is assigned to Classes. Matters which basically are exclusively local matters are put into the hands of classes. One

would not have expected this from the men of the Doleantie, but they, too, still had to remove all old leaven, something which they did not succeed in achieving completely.

As history progresses and we follow the developments further, it will become evident that the thoughts expressed in this Draft-Act and the line followed in it remained alive, surfacing time and again, finally to gain the upper hand and causing much harm to the Churches.

The Draft-Act was presented to both Synods.

As for the Provisional Synod of Utrecht, it did not need much time to accept it. In one session on Jan. 16, 1889, it decided: Adopted. Via telegram the Christian Reformed Synod at Kampen was informed of the decision.

“As chairman of the provisional Synod of Utrecht I hasten now already to inform you by telegram that, after animated and serious discussion, this Synod unanimously has adopted the Draft-Act unchanged. (w.s.) P. van Son.”

One wonders whether the qualification “animated and serious” is justly used, seeing the rather limited time within which the unanimous decision was reached.

Although the Provisional Synod at Utrecht adopted the draft unanimously, the brothers were warned not to expect a similar result at the Christian Reformed Synod, in session at Kampen. It was almost certain — Kuyper told them — that some of the Christian Reformed deputies would come with amendments, especially regarding points 12, 13, and 14.

When the Assen Synod continued its sessions in Kampen on Jan. 15, 1889, the one harboured the hope that a merger would be approved, while the other was afraid that a clear “No” would lead to the breaking off of the negotiations and as a result to a continued separate existence.

At the Kampen Synod the course followed by the deputies was questioned by some. Why, when the Doleantie deputies had declared that they could not negotiate on the basis of Assen’s decisions, did our Deputies continue the discussion? Did they, after having heard that statement, in the continuation of the discussions act in an official capacity or as private persons?

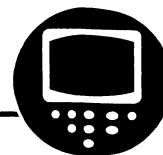
Synod came to the conclusion that, in the given circumstances, deputies could hardly have followed a different course.

Also the fact that the draft was sent to members of Synod only eight days before the resumption of the sessions was criticized. The reply was that “there was fear that in the press a Synod would be held even before the Synod to which deputies had to report could have been informed about what transpired.”

No fewer than seven sessions were dedicated to this matter. Oftentimes the church building (the Burgwalkerk) was packed with interested church members.

It is not our intention to describe in detail what was decided regarding the various articles of the Draft. What is of importance is the end-result. May it suffice to mention that especially the articles 12 and following were the crux of the matter.

— *To be continued*



Classis Pacific, October 6, 7, 1987

Opening. On behalf of the convening Church at Smithers, Rev. B.J. Berends calls the meeting to order, sees to it that it is opened in the usual Christian manner, welcomes the brothers including candidate M.K. Marren and the Reverends M. van Beveren and J.D. Wielenga, deputies ad Art. 48, C.O.

The Church at Lynden reports that the credentials are in order. Thus Classis is constituted and the officers take their place. They are: Rev. A. van Delden, chairman; Rev. G.H. Visscher, vice-chairman; and Rev. J. Visscher, clerk. The agenda is adopted.

Representing the Churches are Rev. M. VanderWel and J.K. Flokstra for Abotsford, Rev. C. Van Spronsen and G. Breukelman for Chilliwack, H. Berends and A. Nap for Cloverdale, Rev. E. Kampen and M. Onderwater for Houston, Rev. J. Visscher and J.H. Knol for Langley, Rev. A. van Delden and R. Faber for Lynden, Rev. B.J. Berends and G. Hofsink for Smithers, Rev. G.H. Visscher and G. Vane for Surrey.

Peremptory Examination of Candidate M.K. Marren. Candidate Marren presents his sermon proposal on Luke 15:11-32. After discussion in closed session, it is decided to continue the examination. Candidate Marren is then examined by Rev. C. Van Spronsen on Genesis 14 and Psalm 87, by Rev. G.H. Visscher on Matthew 5 and Hebrews 2, by Rev. E. Kampen on knowledge of Holy Scripture, by Rev. M. VanderWel on doctrine, by Rev. B.J. Berends on Church History, by Rev. E. Kampen on ethics, by Rev. van Delden on Church Polity and by Rev. J. Visscher on diaconology. After discussion takes place and the advice of the deputies is heard, Classis decides that it can admit candidate M.K. Marren into the ministry. The chairman informs candidate Marren of this decision, commends him and his ministry to the LORD in prayer, requests that Psalm 134 be sung, after which the opportunity is given for congratulations.

After supper, the call of candidate Marren by Smithers for the work among the native people is approved and the candidate agrees to sign the subscription form.

Examination of br. D. Moes. In connection with his request for permission to speak an edifying word in the Churches (Art. 21, C.O.), the relevant documents are checked and when found to be in good order, br. D. Moes presents his sermon

proposal on Hebrews 13:9-14. After Classis goes into closed session and it is concluded that there is no objection to continue the examination, Rev. M. VanderWel examines br. Moes re doctrine, and others also receive the opportunity. After considering the matter, Classis notifies br. Moes that his request has been granted; he is also informed that since the practice of submitting sermons to the lecturer of diaconology is impractical in this case, he is to submit copies of his edifying words to the deputies for examinations prior to delivery. After br. D. Moes promises to teach nothing contrary to the Reformed doctrine and the vice-chairman Rev. G.H. Visscher leads in prayer, Classis is adjourned for the day.

Re-opening. The next morning the chairman reopens the Classis in the same Christian manner. The same brothers are present with the exception that br. G. Breukelman has been replaced by br. P. Van Woudenberg as delegate for the Church at Chilliwack.

Request of Church at Chilliwack re Okanagan Valley. The Church at Chilliwack requests advice of Classis re the request of their members in the Okanagan Valley to institute a Church (Art. 40, C.O.). An accompanying letter from the members in the Okanagan Valley is read as well. After discussion it is decided that favourable advice can be given in this matter. Some appropriate words are spoken by the chairman and the Rev. C. Van Spronsen at this historic moment in the life of the Churches in British Columbia.

Thereafter a discussion takes place re the request for continued financial support. Bearing in mind the recommendation of the committee for needy Churches, Classis decides to grant the request for support of \$23,295 for 1988.

Request of Church at Lynden. The Church at Lynden, Washington requests continued financial support; in their request they make mention of the fact that they would like to construct their own Church building in the near future and express the wish that this not jeopardize the granting of their request for continuation of support. As reasons for constructing a building at this point, they bring up the need for enhancing their own identity in an area where various Reformed Churches exist, the need for more appealing and functional worship facilities, and more adequate nursery facilities; they state that these needs cannot be met as long as they continue to meet in the facilities of the Protestant Reformed School nor are

other facilities available in the area.

Classis grants this request for \$8,100 Cdn with the understanding that Lynden will endeavour to become self-sufficient as soon as possible. This makes the total required by the committee for needy Churches \$23.85 per communicant member in 1988.

Reports. A report from the Church for auditing the books of the treasurer is read and is noted. The report from the committee for financial aid to students for the ministry is also taken note of. A letter from br. G. van Popta is read in which he expresses gratefulness for support received. The committee informs Classis that no money will need to be collected in 1988, and Classis decides that the remaining funds will be transferred to the fund for needy Churches.

Question Period ad Article 44 C.O. After lunch, in closed session, the Churches at Cloverdale and Houston respectively ask for and receive advice in matters of discipline. Several other questions are asked by Churches and dealt with.

Appointments. The Church at Surrey is appointed to convene the next Classis at Langley on Friday, January 8, 1988, or if it is not needed at that time, on Friday, April 8, 1988. The suggested officers for the next Classis are: Rev. G.H. Visscher, chairman; Rev. J. Visscher, vice-chairman; and Rev. C. Van Spronsen, clerk.

The Reverends M. VanderWel and J. Visscher are appointed as deputies for examinations. The following ministers are appointed as examiners. Old Testament exegesis: C. Van Spronsen; New Testament exegesis: G.H. Visscher; knowledge Holy Scripture: E. Kampen; knowledge doctrine and creeds: M. VanderWel; Church History: B.J. Berends; Church Polity: A. van Delden; ethics: E. Kampen; diaconology: J. Visscher.

As Church visitors are appointed: the Reverends B.J. Berends, M. VanderWel, C. Van Spronsen, G.H. Visscher and J. Visscher, with E. Kampen as alternate. To the Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry are appointed br. K. Huttema, Rev. A. van Delden and Rev. M. VanderWel (convener).

Rev. M. VanderWel is appointed as counsellor for the Church at Chilliwack and receives Classical pulpit supply. Rev. M. VanderWel is also appointed to represent Classis at the institution of the Church in the Okanagan Valley and Rev. C. Van Spronsen is appointed to represent Classis at the ordination of candidate M.K. Marren.

Personal Question Period. Advice is

requested as to the procedure for electing one elder and one deacon prior to the institution of Vernon. No one else makes use of this opportunity.

Closing. Censure ad Article 44 C.O. is not deemed necessary. After the acts are adopted and the press release is approved and the chairman leads in thanking, the Classis is closed.

For Classis,
G.H. VISSCHER, vice-chairman, e.t.

Regional Synod East, October 15, 16, and 22, 1987, at Lincoln, ON

Article 1. *Opening:* On behalf of the convening Church at Lincoln, the Rev. G. Wieske requests all present to sing Hymn 36:3,4, reads James 1, and leads in prayer. He welcomes the delegates and notes that there is a substantial number of appeals at this Regional Synod.

The Church at Hamilton is congratulated with the ordination of the Rev. P. Aasman as missionary to Brazil; the Rev. R. Aasman is congratulated that he could ordain his brother. Gratitude is expressed that the Church at Ottawa could receive a minister in the Rev. G. van Popta. It is mentioned that the Rev. J. Moesker accepted a call to the Church at Cloverdale, BC. One of the delegates is consoled with the passing away of a brother.

The Rev. Wieske expresses the wish that the brothers may have a good meeting in the unity of faith.

Regional Synod East 1987 is declared opened.

Article 2. *Credentials:* The Rev. C. Bosch and br. P. vanderSchaaf are requested to examine the credentials, which are reported to be in good order. Both Classes are properly represented by their delegates. There is one alternate delegate from Classis Ontario North.

Article 3. *Officers:* The following officers are chosen: chairman: the Rev. J. Mulder; vice-chairman: the Rev. Cl. Stam; clerk: the Rev. R. Aasman.

Article 4. *Constitution of Synod:* The officers take their places. Synod is constituted. The chairman thanks the meeting for the confidence expressed in the officers.

He also thanks the chairman of the consistory of the convening Church for opening the meeting and expresses gratitude to the Church at Lincoln for preparing and hosting Regional Synod. He states the desire that Synod may have a good meeting which may be upbuilding for the Churches.

Rev. Wieske is invited to join Synod in an advisory capacity.

Article 5. *Agenda:* After a few additions are made, the agenda is adopted.

Article 6. *Reports:*

a. Report of the Treasurer of Regional Synod, br. P.L. Schuller, covering the period of October 11, 1986 - August 31, 1987. It appears that all Churches have paid in full; there are no arrears.

Synod gratefully takes note of this report. The treasurer is honorably discharged for this period of time. The assessment fee for the year 1988 is maintained at \$2.50 per communicant member.

b. Report from the Church at Lincoln re the auditing of the books of the treasurer. All has been found in good order. Regional Synod gratefully takes note of this report.

c. Report of the Church at Toronto re the archives of Regional Synod East, stating that all the material received has been properly filed. This report is gratefully received for information.

d. Report from the Church at Brampton on checking the archives of Regional Synod East. It appears that the file of Regional Synod East of October 1986 is complete and that the archives are in good order. Regional Synod gratefully receives this report.

e. Report of the Deputies ad Article 48 Church Order.

1. Report from the Rev. J. Mulder and M. Werkman on a visit to Classis Ontario South of March 25, 1987 for the peremptory examination of Candidate K. Kok and to advise Classis on the admission of the Tri-county Reformed Church at Laurel, MD., into the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches.

Deputies could concur with the decision of Classis that there are no objections to admitting Candidate K. Kok to the ministry of the Word in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Classis did not require the concurring advice of the Deputies on the admission of the Church at Laurel. The Deputies of Regional Synod objected at Classis to this procedure. The Deputies did give concurring advice, upon the request of Classis, to receive the Rev. B.A. Hofford as minister in the Canadian Reformed Churches. Rev. Hofford first underwent a colloquium.

The Deputies request Regional Synod to rule whether or not concurring advice of the Deputies of Regional Synod is required in order to admit other Churches into the federation of Churches.

Synod decides first to deal with the request of the Deputies ad Article 48 and right after that to deal with the appeal of the Church at Burlington-West (Agenda 8a) which basically covers the same matter.

Regional Synod makes the following decision. Regional Synod

1. Gratefully receives the report of the Deputies ad Article 48 Church Order, dated September 18, 1987, and approves

of the actions of the Deputies mentioned in this report.

2. Decides not to set a rule, as requested by Deputies, since a procedure has been formulated by General Synod 1986 (Acts Article 85 III, A,B,C.).

3. With respect to the colloquium of the Rev. B. Hofford (mentioned in the report), Regional Synod refers to a decision that whenever ministers from Churches with which we have no sister-Church relationship are admitted to serve in the federation, these ministers first shall undergo the equivalent of a preparatory/peremptory examination (Acts, General Synod Edmonton, 1965, Article 39A). Regional Synod judges that this also applies to ministers who come into the federation with their congregation.

As decided earlier, Regional Synod next deals with the appeal of Burlington-West against the decision of Classis Ontario South of March 26/27 to admit the Tri-county Reformed Church at Laurel without the concurring advice of the Deputies ad Article 48 of the Regional Synod. Synod, having read this appeal, considering point 2 of its decision on the report of the Deputies ad Article 48 Church Order, namely that "a procedure has been formulated by General Synod 1986. . .," decides to answer the Church at Burlington-West that this procedure should have been followed by Classis Ontario South of March 26/27, 1987.

2. Report of the Rev. J. Mulder and the Rev. Cl. Stam on a visit to Classis Ontario South of September 11, 1987, for the peremptory examination of Candidate P. Aasman. Deputies could concur with the decision of Classis to admit Candidate P. Aasman to the ministry of the Word in the Canadian Reformed Churches. This report is gratefully accepted.

3. Report of the Rev. R. Aasman and the Rev. C. Bosch on a visit to Classis Ontario North of March 12, 1987 to advise Classis on the admission of the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church at Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, to the federation of Churches. The Deputies gave concurring advice that this Church be admitted to the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches. This report is gratefully accepted.

4. Report of the Rev. R. Aasman and the Rev. J. Van Rietschoten on a visit to Classis Ontario North of September 18, 1987, for the peremptory examination of Candidate G. van Popta. The Deputies gave concurring advice that Candidate G. van Popta be admitted to the ministry of the Word in the Canadian Reformed Churches. This report is received with gratitude.

Article 7. *Instructions:* A letter is read from Classis Ontario South of September 11, 1987, proposing that Regional Synod

“appoint a committee to study the feasibility of reorganizing the current two Classical districts into three Classical districts, in detail, and to report to the Churches prior to the convening of Regional Synod 1988.”

Regional Synod decides that since the number of Churches has increased in the past years, a committee can properly be appointed with the following mandate:

1. To investigate the feasibility and desirability of dividing the Regional Synod East district into three Classical districts.

2. If such investigation leads to positive proposals, to come forward with concrete suggestions as to how this division shall be arranged, with proper regard for the financial implications of such a re-division (for needy Churches, mission etc.).

Copies of the report of this committee shall be sent to the Churches in the district of Regional Synod East at least six months before the next Regional Synod and to the convening Churches of the Classes which will be held prior to the next Regional Synod.

Article 8. *Appeals*: Synod deals with an appeal against a decision of Classis Ontario South of March 25/26 and April 1, 1987. Since this appeal concerns a matter of discipline, it is read in closed session. This appeal is declared admissible.

Synod begins the discussion of this appeal.

Article 9. *Adjournment*: Due to the late hour, after the singing of Psalm 119:13 and prayer, Regional Synod is adjourned until the next day, Friday, October 16, at 9:00 a.m.

Article 10. *Reopening*: The chairman opens the meeting at the appointed time in a proper Christian fashion.

All delegates are again present.

Article 11. *Appeals (continued)*: Synod continues the discussion of the appeal mentioned under Article 8. Regional Synod decides not to accede to this appeal, and the appellant will be informed accordingly.

Article 12. *Acts*: The Acts, Articles 1-12, are read and adopted.

Article 13. *Press Release*: The Press Release, Articles 1-13, is read and approved.

Article 14. *Appointments*: In the committee to study the re-division of the Regional Synod East district into three Classical districts (see Article 7) are appointed: Rev. R. Aasman, Rev. D. DeJong, and br. A. Witten.

The following appointments are made: Treasurer Regional Synod: br. P.L. Schuller; Church to audit the books: Church at Lincoln; Archives: Church at Toronto; Check archives: Church at Brampton; Deputies Regional Synod, for Classis North: Rev. R. Aasman and Rev. J. Van

HYMN 38

Winchester New Hamburg, 1690

1. The Spir-it, sent from heav'n a-bove,
Shows us the way of truth and love.
The Prom-ised One dwells in our hearts;
He light and life to us im-parts.

Rietschoten (Rev. C. Bosch, alternate); for Classis South: Rev. J. Mulder and Rev. Cl. Stam (Rev. M. Werkman, alternate).

Article 15. *Adjournment*: The chairman requests the meeting to sing Psalm 147:1, and leads in prayer. Regional Synod is adjourned until Thursday, October 22, 1987, at 9:00 a.m.

Article 16. *Reopening*: On October 22, 1987, the meeting is reopened at 9:00 a.m. The chairman, Rev. Mulder, calls the meeting to order. He requests that Psalm 56:4 and 5 be sung, reads Psalm 50:7-23, and leads in prayer. Roll call is held: all delegates are present; an alternate delegate has come for Classis Ontario North.

Article 17. *Appeals (continued)*: Regional Synod deals with an appeal against a decision of Classis Ontario South of March 25, 1987. Since it concerns a matter of discipline, Synod enters into closed session.

Regional Synod decides not to accede to the request of the appellant, who will be notified of this decision. Closed session is terminated.

Article 18. *Appeals (continued)*: Regional Synod deals with an appeal of br. C.J. Burger and br. G. Kruyswijk of Grand Rapids (U.S.A.) against a decision of Classis Ontario South of December 10, 1986. This appeal objects to the fact that Classis Ontario South of that date declared a letter of these brothers, regarding the “ministry at large” as proposed by the Church at Grand Rapids, as inadmissible. The brothers contend that Classis should have granted their request to appoint a committee to “investigate the legality of the ministry-at-large.”

Regional Synod decides not to accede to the requests of these brothers because the matter of the “ministry at large” does not belong to the Churches in common (Article 30 Church Order) and because the letter to Classis was not an appeal (Article 31 Church Order) and therefore indeed inadmissible.

Article 19. *Appeals (continued)*: Re-

gional Synod deals with an appeal from the Church at Burlington-South against a decision of Classis Ontario North of December 11, 1986 to deny a request for revision of a decision of Classis Ontario North of June 25, 1986 in which Classis “authorizes the Church at Orangeville to ask the churches in the classical resort of Ontario North for the necessary amount per communicant member, which amount will be forwarded to the Church at Orangeville for the support of the Rev. C. Olij family.” The Church at Burlington-South objects against the manner in which Classis implemented the decisions of General Synod 1986 regarding the support of the Rev. C. Olij.

Regional Synod considers among others, that the help of the sister Churches, upon approval of the Churches in Classis Ontario North, is properly given to the Church at Orangeville, and not to the Rev. C. Olij, and decides not to grant the appeal of Burlington-South.

Article 20. *Personal Question Period*: Personal question period is held.

Article 21. *Preparation Next Regional Synod*: The Church at Guelph is appointed as convening Church for the next Regional Synod East which will be held, the Lord willing, in the fall of 1988.

Article 22. *Censure*: Censure ad Article 44 Church Order is not required.

Article 23. *Adoption of Acts*: The Acts, Articles 15-23, are read and adopted.

Article 24. *Approval of Press Release*: The Press Release, Articles 14-23, are read and approved.

Article 25. *Closing*: The chairman thanks the members of Regional Synod for their effort and cooperation. He expresses the wish that the decisions of Regional Synod may be blessed by the Lord to edify the Church of Christ.

After Psalm 135:1 and 10 are sung, the Rev. Cl. Stam leads in thanksgiving and prayer. Synod is closed.

For Regional Synod East 1987,
CL. STAM, Vice-chairman e.t.

**Consulaat-Generaal
Der Nederlanden
CONSULATE GENERAL
OF THE NETHERLANDS**

LAATSTE BEKENDMAKING

Zoals reeds eerder bekend is gemaakt, is op 1 januari 1985 een nieuwe Wet op het Nederlanderschap in werking getreden.

Een belangrijke wijziging is, dat kinderen van een Nederlandse moeder, die geboren zijn vóór 1 januari 1985, Nederlander kunnen worden.

Deze kinderen, mits zij op 1 januari 1985 nog geen 21 jaar oud waren, kunnen volgens een overgangsbepaling op eenvoudige wijze de Nederlandse nationaliteit verkrijgen.

Indien zij jonger zijn dan 18 jaar, kan de moeder — die op 1 januari 1985 Nederlandse was — voor al haar wettige en niet-wettige kinderen een optieverklaring afleggen, waardoor de kinderen onmiddellijk de Nederland-

se nationaliteit verkrijgen, in veel gevallen naast de nationaliteit die zij aan hun buitenlandse vader ontlenen.

Indien de kinderen de leeftijd van 18 jaar hebben bereikt, moeten zij zelf de optieverklaring afleggen. Hierbij gaat het alleen om kinderen, die op 1 januari 1985 nog geen 21 jaar oud waren.

Deze overgangsbepaling was van kracht gedurende drie jaar, dus een kind dat op 2 januari 1985 21 jaar werd, heeft tot 1 januari 1988 de tijd om door het afleggen van een verklaring tevens de Nederlandse nationaliteit te verkrijgen.

Verlies Nederlanderschap door meerderjarige Nederlanders.

Een meerderjarige Nederlander verliest de Nederlandse nationaliteit:

- door het vrijwillig verkrijgen van een andere nationaliteit;
- wanneer betrokkene na zijn meerderjarigheid (dus 18 jaar) gedurende een ononderbroken periode van 10 jaar woonplaats buiten het Koninkrijk heeft in een land

waarin hij is geboren en waarvan hij eveneens de nationaliteit bezit.

Verlies Nederlanderschap door minderjarige Nederlanders.

Een minderjarige Nederlander verliest de Nederlandse nationaliteit:

- indien zijn vader of moeder een andere nationaliteit verkrijgt en hij in die verkrijging deelt of deze nationaliteit reeds bezit;
- indien zijn vader of moeder de Nederlandse nationaliteit verliest, anders door verkrijging van een andere nationaliteit;
- indien hij zelfstandig dezelfde nationaliteit verkrijgt als zijn vader en moeder.

In al deze gevallen verliest de minderjarige echter *niet* de Nederlandse nationaliteit zolang één van zijn ouders Nederlander is.

Voor verdere inlichtingen kunt U zich wenden tot het:

Consulaat-Generaal der Nederlanden,
1 Dundas Street West, Suite 2106,
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 1Z3
Telephone (416) 598-2520

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



Hello Busy Beavers,

Are you curious who won the Summer Contest?
I will tell in a moment.

First, I want to thank all those who sent in their entries.

You did a great job!

I had trouble deciding who the winners should be!

One person had typed all the quiz answers and gave all the Bible references.

Keep up the good work everybody!

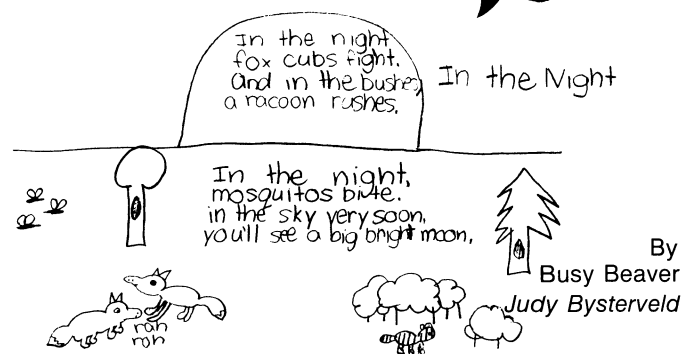
Congratulations to Busy Beaver *Alida Knol*, the senior winner in the Quiz Contest, and also to Busy Beaver *Lisa DeHaas*, the junior winner. An HONOURABLE MENTION goes to Busy Beaver *Earl Van Assen* for a terrific entry!

The winner in our Poetry Contest is Busy Beaver *Hannah Helder*. And an HONOURABLE MENTION goes to Busy Beaver *Billy Dekker*.

Again, congratulations on a job well done! I hope you enjoy your prize.

The LORD
is my Shepherd.

Calligraphy by Busy Beaver *Wendy Beijes*



Time for BIRTHDAY WISHES!

December is just about here!

We all wish the Busy Beavers celebrating a December birthday a very happy day with your family and friends. We wish you, too, many happy returns of the day. And above all, may the Lord bless, guide, and keep you and us all in the year ahead!

December

Cynthia Van Raalte	2	Richard Feenstra	16
Sophia Van Raalte	4	Stuart Schenkel	16
Annette Bax	7	Lisa De Boer	17
Hannah Harlaar	9	Joni Dekker	24
Neil Van Seters	10	Wendy Hovius	24
Carla Schoon	11	Alwin Plug	26
Stacey Schutten	12		