

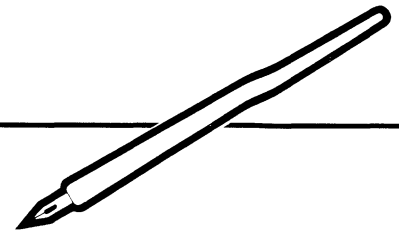
Clarion

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The torch with the Olympic flame

The torch is coming

Presently an exciting thing is happening. The Olympic torch is being carried from the east coast to Calgary to arrive there at the opening of the Olympic Winter Games. The flame came from Greece, from the Mount Olympus area, where the Olympic Games have their origin. A number of privileged Canadians are chosen to carry the torch over a distance of one mile and hand it over to the next lucky person. Others participate in the event by coming out and standing along the roads where the torch will pass. They cheer. It is a celebration. Sometimes people run to the torch to touch it. How heart-stirring and thrilling an event this is.

In many towns and cities one can see a flame of fire burning day and night in front of a government building. That flame is kindled with the fire of the torch. When the torch arrives in towns and cities, mayors and other dignitaries are present to welcome it. They hold speeches. Ministers are present to utter public prayers. Also the federal government was involved when the torch came to the capital.

Local and federal leaders of the country speak of the great symbolic meaning of the Olympic torch and of the games that will follow. It is symbol of the oneness of all Canadians. It is to bring out the good qualities of the Canadian people. It will unite us. Such messages we hear. And it seems that the torch does unite Canadians, anyway in part. Do not people of many beliefs and convictions come and unite around the Olympic flame?

Should it not excite us all? Is it not a great national, and therefore uniting, feat that the Olympic Winter Games are held in our country? And would it not be even more exciting if Canadian athletes were to win the gold? Would we not all proudly say: that is to the glory of our nation? How great we are, we Canadians! Yes, it is exciting for many, perhaps especially for those who are young. However, do we recognize the spirit which is at work here?

The origin of the Olympic games

I read through a number of articles in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* dealing with the Olympic games. Some of this information I pass on. The earliest recorded games were held in 776 B.C., but, at that time, the games were probably already centuries old. They were abolished in 394 by the Christian emperor Theodosius I, because they had become corrupt (*World Book Encyclopedia*). The games were reinstated in Greece in 1896 through the hard work of a young French baron, Pierre de Coubertin, in order to serve peace and unity between the nations.

The old Olympic games were held on the plains of Olympia close to the place Elis, at the foot of Mount Olympus. This mountain, the highest in Greece, was considered the dwelling place of Zeus. Zeus was the father and the highest of the Greek gods and goddesses. The Olympic games were held

every four years to his glory and honour at the occasion of a great festival for Zeus. His priests brought sacrifices and libations in his temple.

Then competitors and judges took an oath in which they promised to observe the rules. Processions were held, and the contests began. The winners were glorified. Poets wrote about their great and amazing achievements. Sculptors expressed the strength and beauty of the athletes in marble. Musicians sang about them. The winners became national heroes. And in all this Zeus was praised and given thanks.

One of the poets who especially sang about the glorious greatness of the winners and about the magnificence of Zeus was Pindar, who lived from approximately 515 to 435 B.C. In his songs three elements constantly return. The dominating theme is "the praise and worship of the god whose festival is being celebrated." Gratitude expressed to the god runs through the poems.

The second element that is worked into these poems is that of Greek myths. Myths are stories about the Greek gods and about the heroes who are half god, half man, one of the parents being god and the other human. With these myths the poet connected the "glorious present" of the winning contestants with the "even greater past of gods and heroes" who also came to amazing achievements in courage, endurance and physical strength. In this way the glorious achievements of the winning contestants was seen in the light of the greatness of gods and heroes. Man became almost as great and glorious as his gods and half-gods.

The third feature in the poems of Pindar about the winners of the games was the moralizing aspect. He sang about human ideals "of self-assertion, competition, and leadership." The greatness of a man, his courageousness, his physical strength, his inciting leadership, of course, showed first of all in being victorious in a war, but then also in winning the trophy in the sports contests. It all fitted in, and was product of, the Greek, classic mind in which man and his greatness and goodness is magnified. Heroes and gods are, in fact, idealized humans, complete with their desires, their lusts, their jealousy and their quarrels.

When the Olympic games were held a general truce was proclaimed. Wars between cities and tribes were interrupted in order to give the athletes from all over the country the opportunity to take part in the contests. In this way the games were seen as a uniting force. They served unity and brotherhood.

There was also another aspect. The games served also business and commerce. Now there is nothing wrong with doing honest business. But we may keep in mind that trade and commerce was an important aspect with sports events as it is in our days.

Further, when the Olympic, and other games were held, especially later in the Roman period, they became very much entertainment for the masses. It was not sport for the sake of sport alone anymore.

Glorification and idolization of man

The conclusion that can be drawn from the information about the classic Olympic games is that in them man is exalted. The games show what some human beings can achieve through endurance and training, through mental and physical strength, through courage and skill. It is true, the achievements in sports, as in other fields of human endeavour, are often amazing. And these things are very exciting for many. However, it is not less true that in all this man is glorified. For the Greeks it was also to the glory of the gods, the idols. In other words, the Olympic games were set in the framework of idolatry.

How is that today? Are things very different? Is it not so that in modern sports winners are often not just admired because of their achievements, but glorified and even idolized, even though it may be only for a short period? Must we not conclude that the whole quadrennial event is set in the framework of the glorious greatness of mankind that in these athletes comes to great achievements and so is strengthened in the expectation that it can and will build up a good world for itself by its own powers?

A very important aspect of the games is also today, as we can hear, that the games are expressing and promoting brotherhood and unity and peace in a nation and among the nations. Many nations, even those involved in warfare or a cold war, send their athletes. And the message is that all war between the nations should cease, and that they should live together in peace and togetherness as that is peacefully done at the games.

However, what kind of brotherhood? What kind of unity? What kind of peace? It is a brotherhood and unity and peace of glorious man. I see here something of the ideal, the dream of a united, strong, mankind that builds its own paradise. I hear in this call for unity of all the nations the sound of that old call for a united mankind of which we read in Genesis 11. The first part of this chapter speaks of the building of the tower of Babylon. This old Babylon will culminate in the unity of which Revelation 13, 17 speaks? Don't we have here a form of that old call for all men to become brothers of which Beethoven sang in his Ninth Symphony: "All men will be brothers." Did not Karl Marx dream of it in his way? And Alexander the Great before him? And Caesar Augustus, and Napoleon and Hitler following them in their own fashions?

The antithesis

Of course, this dream of, and call for, unity of all men can be heard in so many forms and ways. And it sounds so good. But God's Word teaches us that this present history is dominated by the antithesis that He has put in paradise for the redemption and salvation of His people. With other words, God separated mankind into seed of the woman and seed of the serpent. God maintained that spiritual enmity. If He had not, there would not have been any seed of the woman left.

The result of God's faithfulness is that since Cain and Abel there are these two kinds of seed. There is the serpent and his seed, and there is the woman and her seed. There are believers who follow Christ in obedience of faith according to His Word, who glorify God and boast in Jesus Christ and form a company of servants of God; and there are those who boast in man, glorify him, and seek to promote and establish the kingdom of human brotherhood and peace without obedience to God's Word, who refuse to live out of faith in God and His Christ.

Genesis tells us that many followed in the ways of Cain and were seed of the serpent. Before the flood mankind was one in its rebellion against God. After the flood a new mankind built itself a city with a tower, Babylon. It is pictured in Genesis 11 as a mankind that sought to remain united and strong in

its own power and wisdom, in opposition to the true God and His will.

When we look at the whole matter of the Olympic event with its ideals and messages through the glasses of Scripture, must we not discover the principles of old Babylon, the city of man, which stands in opposition to the Jerusalem that is above, the city of God. We smell the breath of the kingdom of man who glories in himself. We sense the spirit of man who builds his own peace.

I write these things in order that we may be warned and not be drawn along in the general excitement that sports events cause. I do not say that we cannot have some admiration for the achievements through endurance and steadfast training. Paul uses winning the prize in sports contests as an example for believers who are to train in godliness in order to gain the prize which God promises to those who fear Him. We can read about that in I Corinthians 9:24-27, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but that only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified."

There is also Hebrews 12:1 and 2, "Therefore . . . let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

To that perseverance in faith belong many things. One of them is that the world with all its splendid ideals and its glorious idols does not get us in its grip. Sports, or rather, "bodily training is of some value," Paul writes, but he adds that "godliness is value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life that is to come" (I Timothy 4:8).

We have to watch that also in this field of sports we maintain the antithesis and live by the Scriptures. Sports can also for us, for Christian young people, become an idol to which are given so much free time and money that it can become like a sacrificing to an idol, while the love for the Lord suffers, since there is hardly, or no, time and attention for His Word and for Spiritual growth in His service and for obedience to His Word.

Let us watch ourselves. Also on this point of sports we are to live with the Scriptures as guide, having a different view, and per consequence living a different life in distinction from the world. Also here Paul's word in II Corinthians 6:14-7:1 in which he maintains the old antithesis is applicable:

"Do not be mised with unbelievers.
For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity?
Or what fellowship has light with darkness?
What accord has Christ with Belial?
Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?
What agreement has the temple of God with idols?
For we are the temple of the living God;
as God said:

I will live in them
and move among them,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be My people.
Therefore come out from them,
and be separate from them,

says the Lord,

and touch nothing unclean;
then I will welcome you,
and I will be a father to you,
and you shall be My sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty.

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.”

Can those who perform in sports excite us with their achievements? What about the Lord and His holy service? What about an obedient life for Him in accordance with His will? Can that excite us? Do we get warm inside when the Word of God comes to us with its marvelous promises and its obligation of faith? What has priority in our thinking, in our speaking, and in our actions? Is it the same as that which has priority in the world? Or is it the kingdom of God and its righteousness?

Is it a joy to participate in the matters of church, mission, Reformed education for the youth of the church, charity, and so on? Or do we give some money to those causes sighingly, while we offer with great delight lots of God's dollars for the modern idols. Is it so that, as far as we are concerned, God's cause suffers, while we gladly support the causes that eventually so very much serve the cause of the adversary? I simply ask. Let us keep such questions in mind with all things. Let us remember, Christians are citizens not of Babylon, but of the new, heavenly Jerusalem.

J. GEERTSEMA

The gospel brings to light what in your heart you hide₃

Inaugural Speech delivered at the Theological College/Convocation Evening, September 11, 1987

The essential point in, and context of, the parable of The Sower

In order to see the connection with the parable of The Sower, we must do two things. In the first place we must try to grasp the essential points of this parable itself, and in the second place, for a better appreciation of the two parables of The Sower and of The Lamp, we must pay attention to the wider context of the gospel of Luke in which they appear; we must see these parables in their own place in the course of the narrative as Luke tells it and presents it to his readers, and as it shows the situation, the *Sitz im Leben* of that moment in the ministry of the Lord Jesus.

The parable of The Sower itself

In the explanation of the parable of The Sower we find two key words. The first one is the noun "word" and the second is the verb "to hear." The former points at Christ Jesus and expresses what He is doing: He sows the seed of God's Word, the gospel. The latter points at the hearts of the hearers of this word and the different conditions of those hearts.

We can say that in this parable of The Sower the Lord describes His own experience as the great Prophet and Preacher of the Word of God, the gospel of salvation. He preaches the good news of the redeeming kingship of God. He brings that redemption to Israel, God's covenant people. He has done so now for some time, so that there has been time enough for that seed of His Word to germinate and grow and mature and to bear fruit. What is the result?

To begin with, Christ sees before Him

people who have kept their heart closed to the gospel, who give Satan the opportunity to snatch the sown word immediately away. Christ experiences with other listeners that they show great enthusiasm at first, but later on they turn away when discipleship comes to mean suffering hardship. In the third place, the Lord is confronted with hearers who listen, certainly, but who are so occupied by the cares and pleasures of a life for themselves that the plant of a "temporal faith" that grew from the germinated seed of the gospel is choked before it can bring forth the fruits of true discipleship as demanded, and worked, by the gospel, namely, dedicated and committed service to the King.

However, in His disciples who keep following Him with that committed faith, the Lord experiences the gift of His Father, granting Him children who have an open, receptive heart. They are the good soil. In them the gospel bears fruit. In them the seed of God's Word works with the result that they do what the gospel teaches. In their heart and life God's redeeming kingship is acknowledged and so their life is (being) restored to what God meant it to be. They are the branches, ingrafted into the vine. Thus the parable of The Sower shows the contrast between hearers with dull ears and a fat heart and hearers with an honest and good heart.

Now there is one aspect in the parable of The Sower, that we should not overlook, because it is a clear link with the following parable of The Lamp. It is this aspect that the seed, when it has been sown, reveals the different soil conditions. In Palestine, the sowing of seed precedes the ploughing.³⁸ The seeds are sown in

between the stubble of a field that has been harvested. The first includes places where people's feet have formed a path, and where rocks are close to the surface so that there is only a very thin layer of soil; it also includes patches with the roots of thorns and thistles.

These different conditions of the soil are not always immediately visible after a harvest and before the next sowing. It is only after the field has received the seed, has been ploughed, and has had the time to let the seed germinate and grow and mature that these different soil conditions show up. Only then one can see where, before, the path ran, because there one does not find plants at all; and one can see where the rock is close to the surface, because there the plants are only tiny and withered; and where the roots of the thorns were, because there the thorns have choked the grain; and one can also see where good soil is, because there the grain produces fruits.

This revealing function of the seed connects the parable of The Lamp with that of The Sower. Just as the seed, having been sown, reveals the different conditions of the soil, so the lamp has the function of revealing what is hidden in the darkness. Is it foolish for man to light a lamp and then cover it, so it would be foolish for God to kindle the lamp of the gospel, and then cover it. God sent His Son with the light of the gospel of His saving kingship. That light must shine; it is its function to bring into the open what otherwise would remain covered and hidden. That light must reveal and bring into the open, not only where sinful hearts open up as eager soil to receive the seed of

forgiving grace in the way of repentance from sin to God, but also where sin and unbelief, hypocrisy and hidden disobedience to God's will prevail in the soil of hearts that are hardened against the call for repentance and fruit-bearing. The gospel brings to light what in their hearts people hide.

The gospel of the kingdom has here the same function as what the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 1:23ff. declares to be the function of his preaching of Christ crucified. It is "a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." We mention also what Paul writes in II Corinthians 2:15ff., "For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life." That revealing function of the gospel is also expressed by James, where he compares the Word of God, which is the gospel of Christ Jesus, with a mirror that shows people who and what they really are: hearers and doers of the Word, or only hearers and not doers, cf. James 1:23-25.

Coming now to a conclusion with regard to the essential meaning and message of the parables of The Sower and The Lamp and the link that connects them, we can formulate the result of our investigation as follows: The parable of The Sower depicts what Christ as Preacher of the gospel experiences; it shows the factual situation of a growing separation between fruit-bearing disciples and fruitless, disobedient unbelievers. This separation comes about through the different reaction of the hearers to the gospel. This is the main point of the parable of The Sower.

At the same time this parable shows the other aspect that the sown seed also functions as a revealing agent; it reveals the different kinds of soil, the different conditions of the hearts of the hearers. This "other" aspect becomes the main point in the parable of The Lamp, which adds the message that the revealing character of the preaching is a must. God wants the gospel proclamation to have this revealing function, because the gospel proclaims and brings about both salvation and judgment; salvation to those who receive it in faith, but judgment to those who reject this grace in unbelief. The proclamation of the gospel is, and has to be, the handling of the first key of the kingdom of God which opens and shuts, (cf. Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. 31).

We can see this connection aspect even more clearly when we pay attention to the wider context in which the two parables of The Sower and The Lamp are placed in the gospel of Luke.

The wider context of the parables

Luke begins the new part of his narrative as we have it in Chapter 8 by telling us that Christ Jesus went from city to city and from town to town proclaiming and bringing the good news (= the gospel) of the kingdom of God. With these two words, "proclaiming" and "bringing the good news of God's kingdom," Luke characterizes the ministry of the Lord in Chapter 4:43ff. Christ says there to the people, "To the other cities also I must bring the good news of the kingdom of God; for I was sent for this purpose." And Luke adds the remark, "And He [Christ] was preaching in the synagogues of Judea." This theme of the Lord as the proclaimer of the gospel of God's kingdom is taken up again in the beginning of Chapter 8.

However, in Chapter 4 Luke not only characterizes the charge of Christ Jesus as proclaimer of the gospel; he also gives a more precise description of the contents of that gospel. Luke does this by telling us what happened in the synagogue of Nazareth. At that occasion Christ read Isaiah 61:1ff. This quotation functions as the theme for this gospel and for the ministry of Christ as Luke describes it. The Isaian promise reads: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." Also in this prophecy of Isaiah the words "proclaim" and "preach the good news" have a central place.

The term "the acceptable year of the LORD" is an indication of the great Year of Jubilee, but then not in its Old Testament form, but as the fulfillment of this Old Testament shadow.³⁹ We cannot elaborate on this here, but one thing that we must keep in mind is that the Year of Jubilee speaks of the restoration and renewal of life in a new freedom through the grace of Israel's God. It is God, as the mighty and gracious king, who brings this restoration about. Therefore it is the restoration of the kingship or kingdom of God.

This restoration of the "acceptable year of the LORD" is proclaimed and realized, in accordance with God's will, through His anointed Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Him and accept His message, receive that restoration to new life, which means that they receive first of all the forgiveness of their sins so that they have a restored relation with God. An example of this part of the restoration we find in Chapter 7:36-50, where Luke narrates God's restoring work in the woman "who was a sinner" (verse 37), who anointed the feet of the Lord and to whom the Lord said, "Your sins are forgiven" (verse 48), and "Your faith has saved you; go in peace," (verse 50).

That restoring power of God, the King of Israel, can further be seen in what Luke writes in Chapter 8:3 concerning the wom-



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en of whom some were healed of illnesses and demon possession, and who followed the Lord and His disciples and "provided for them out of their means." The Year of Jubilee's restoration of life is received in those healings and in the fact that lives are renewed and placed in the service of Christ and the kingdom of God with loving, thankful dedication.

However, not all believe in Christ Jesus as their Saviour. Luke showed that already in Chapter 4, in the story about the rejection of the Lord by the people in the synagogue in Nazareth. Such a rejection is also described in Chapter 7:18-35. In this passage Luke narrates how John the Baptist sent two disciples to Christ Jesus with the question, "Are you He who is to come, or shall we look for another?" John heard in prison about the works of Christ. Those works were exactly those described in Isaiah 61, as well as in Isaiah 35:5ff., cf. also Psalm 146. John, however, had proclaimed that there would also be judgment. He had preached that people had to repent, because the Lord Himself was coming with God's judgment against those who would refuse to confess their sins and repent from them. John had said, "The axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire," (Luke 3:9). John had spoken about the winnowing fork in the hand of the one coming after Him, with which He was going to separate wheat from chaff, gathering "the wheat into his granary," while the chaff "he will burn with unquenchable fire," (Luke 3:17). However, in the works which the Lord was doing, John did not see that axe, that winnowing fork. That was his problem.

Christ's answer is: John, look at the works which I do. They are messianic works. Here is the saving kingdom of God. God shows in these works that He is the redeeming King. But these works, done according to Isaiah 61, etc., are not only bringing about the restoration of God's kingdom, they, at the same time, are themselves the axe and the winnowing fork. God's judgment is at work in the preaching and healing. B. Holwerda writes, "The preaching itself is the winnowing fork" and "The offence is in the gospel itself."⁴⁰ And Joachim Jeremias writes, "The message of Jesus is not only the proclamation of salvation, but also the announcement of judgment, a cry of warning, and a call to repentance in view of the terrible urgency of the crisis."⁴¹ Therefore, it is this twofold message of salvation and judgment which is present very strongly also in the parables. That here we have the key to solving John's problem is shown in the conclusion of Christ's answer to the Baptist, namely, "And blessed is he who takes no offence at me," (7:23).

Many did take offence at Him. We read further (Luke 7:34) how the Lord compared the generation of those days with children in a market place, unwilling to play any game with other, inviting, children. The message was: God sent John the Baptist, and they rejected him; God sends His Son, and they also refuse to accept Him. In other words, although Christ comes with the proclamation of the good news of God's redeeming kingship, that is, with the restoration of the fulfilled Year of Jubilee, many refuse to accept this message and so to share in the treasures of grace. This refusal to see the need for grace and to repent is a negative reaction to the gospel as proclaimed by Christ Jesus. In this sense we can say that this negative reaction is caused by the gospel and its preacher. The gospel works reaction, either positive or negative. We have here the truth that is expressed by the apostle John in these words, "And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," (John 3:19).

Now the metaphor or simile of the children in the market place is concluded with the words, "Yet wisdom is justified by all her children." In these words we meet again the contrast between the children who do believe and the others who first rejected John and now reject Christ. However, God's saving wisdom, connecting John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ, connecting John's message of repentance with the proclamation of restoration of life through Christ, is justified, i.e., it is shown to be the right, effective saving, divine wisdom in the children of the kingdom, the disciples of Christ, who have accepted both John and Christ, both repentance and redemption, and who so are saved, whose life is restored, in that way.

Summarizing what is said above regarding the meaning of Chapter 7:18-35, we can formulate the message in this passage with the words of Paul, already quoted above, that the gospel as proclaimed by Christ is "to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life," (II Corinthians 2:16). It is the key that opens and shuts (Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. 31). That gospel brings separation between believers and unbelievers; it teaches what sin really is in God's eyes and, then, brings into the open, on the one hand, who has a listening ear and a repentant heart, open to God's redeeming grace for sinners, and, on the other hand, who refuses to acknowledge his or her sins and hardens his or her heart against the gospel as an unrepentant hypocrite. It does this, because the character and function of the gospel is that it must disclose everything and bring all things into the open. The gospel

brings to light what in your heart you hide. Here is the connection of the preceding chapters with the two parables in Chapter 8:1-18.

In the following passage, Chapter 7:36-50, that saving wisdom of God which combines John's call to repentance with the salvation of God's kingdom through Christ, is illustrated by Luke in such a beautiful way with his narrative about the woman "who was a sinner," but repented and showed this to the Lord Jesus in the dining room of Simon the Pharisee. She was a child of that wisdom and had her sins forgiven; she received the peace of God's redemption. At the same time, Simon the Pharisee is warned against the danger of self-righteousness and the consequential little or lack of love, and lack of repentance, together with God's judgment, God's covenant curse upon that unbelief.

The situation in Christ's ministry: the "Sitz im Leben"

When, Luke, then, continues his narrative in Chapter 8, telling the reader about the concrete situation of that moment in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, we learn in the first place that the Lord, in spite of the rejection, went on with His work of proclaiming and preaching the gospel of God's saving kingship. However, we learn further that we have no mere repetition here of what we know already from Chapter 4 about the task of the Anointed of the LORD and the faithful discharge of that task. There is progress and development. The rejection has become more outspoken. The separation between believing disciples, the children, and the unbelieving crowds and their leaders, has become sharper.

But this development and progress is not only there in the hearers, as the result of the preaching, in salvation for the one and in hardening unbelief with the other; it is there also in the manner or form in which Christ is preaching in that situation and from that very moment on. All three synoptic evangelists present to us the same picture regarding that situation and the motivation or reason for Christ's speaking to the crowds in the form of parables, the parable of The Sower being the first one. A study comparing the three synoptic gospels on this point, and dealing with the similarities and the differences, would be very interesting, but falls outside the scope of the present study. However, it is clear that one of the features of the picture that all three gospels have in common is that this speaking from now on in the form of parables is done in the context of judgment.

Confining ourselves to the gospel according to Luke, we have seen that this aspect of judgment comes out quite strongly in the context, in Chapter 7:18-35, in

the passage beginning with the question asked by John the Baptist. In Chapter 8 we read that this judgment is also given by Christ as the reason for His speaking in the form of parables. Luke, like Matthew and Mark, mentions that reason with a quotation of, or reference to, Isaiah 6:9ff., where Isaiah is called by God as a prophet who has to announce God's judgment to Israel. Luke does not give an exact quotation. What he writes is more a reference. In Chapter 8:10 he gives the response of Christ to the request of the disciples for an explanation of the parable of The Sower. The Lord said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand."

We cannot elaborate on this reference to Isaiah 6:9ff. here, but only point to the fact that, by referring to this Isaian text, Christ showed that He saw His task in that situation as analogue to the charge of the prophet Isaiah in the situation in which he was called; and that charge was to announce judgment to a covenant people that had made their hearts dull of hearing.

Thus the development or progress in the preaching of Christ is that this preaching is, from now on, mainly in the form of parables and is, therewith, dominated by

God's judgment. In the hardening in unbelief of the people, Christ saw at work God's judgment as prophesied by Isaiah. In that preaching in parables He works along with, and in accordance with, the will and work of the Father. His speaking in the form of parables is execution of God's judgment because of maintained unbelief and the refusal to repent and to bring forth fruits of conversion and faith.

To say it in Old Testament terms (e.g., Hosea 4:1, Micah 6:1): God has a court case with His people, in which He is both prosecutor and judge. He accuses His people with the very gospel that they reject; with the preaching of both John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ. The life-restoring grace of the fulfilled Year of Jubilee has been presented to you by the promised Messiah, but you have rejected it by repudiating Him; I find in you no fruits of repenting faith, fruits of the seed of the gospel working in your hearts.

In light of the above, it can be clear that the parable of The Lamp, as we have explained it, not only forms a unity with the parable of The Sower, but also fits very well in the wider context of the course of the narrative of Luke, and forms a logical unity with that context. It also fits exactly in the situation, the *Sitz im Leben* of that moment. Christ Jesus and His gos-

pel is God's lamp, placed in the midst of God's covenant people, Israel, where it puts everything in its sharp light. It shows not only salvation; it shows also (and that is the point here) sin, unbelief, hypocrisy, empty fruitlessness. It has to do this, so that when the rejection of the gospel of God's Anointed receives as recompense the punishment of rejection by God in His judgment, the accused will have no excuse. It was told them. The light was there. The light of God has to shine. Everything has to come into the open.

— *To be continued*
J. GEERTSEMA

³⁸Joachim Jeremias, o.c., p. 11ff., who refers in note 3) to "G. Dalman, 'Vierlei Acker,' in *Palästina-Jahrbuch*, 22 (1926), pp. 120-32. b. Shab. 73b: 'In Palestine ploughing comes after sowing'; this is still done today (G. Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, II, Gutersloh, 1932, pp. 179ff.). Tos. Ber. 7.2 mentions eleven successive processes leading up to the finished product: 'he sows, ploughs, reaps, binds sheaves, threshes . . .'; . . ."

³⁹Robert B. Sloan jr., *The Favorable Year of the Lord. A Study of Jubilatory Theology in the Gospel of Luke*, Schola Press, Austin, 1977; and: Ch. Rupke, *Het Jubeljaar is aangebroken*, Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, Goes, 1974.

⁴⁰B. Holwerda, *De Wijsheid die Behoudt*, Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, Goes, 1957, p. 77.

⁴¹Joachim Jeremias, o.c., p. 160.

The Antichrist and the man of lawlessness₃

Speech delivered for the League of Canadian Reformed Women's Societies on October 21, 1987, in Burlington South

The form of the Antichrist

From all of these Scripture references we are now in a position to develop a unified picture of the Scriptural view of the Antichrist. The texts present a varied picture, but a certain pattern does emerge, and it is this pattern which we wish to isolate. Essentially the New Testament picture of the Antichrist is much more detailed and complex than that given in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament prophecies focus primarily on a *political* apocalyptic figure, a world ruler who will severely persecute the people of God. Daniel identifies this figure as Antiochus Epiphanes, but also sees this figure as a type of the antichristian power which will manifest itself in greatness just before the appearance of the Son of Man and the institution of His

reign in heaven. And just as Daniel describes in great detail the visible appearance of a certain person in the end-time age, so we may expect the visible appearance of a similar figure before the final return of the Lord Jesus in glory.

One may wonder whether it is actually correct to speak of the Antichrist of the Old Testament. Christ had not yet appeared! Is it then correct to refer to opposing powers as the Antichrist? I think the expression may be retained if we keep the antithesis inherent in the mother-promise (Gen. 3:15) in mind. If we consider that the struggle which both Ezekiel and Daniel describe is essentially the same battle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, then we can also understand the expression "Antichrist of the Old Testament."

On the other hand, Bavinck is correct

in stating that the real manifestation of the Antichrist only takes place in the new dispensation. While the essential spirit is present in the Old Testament, the embodiment and growth of the Antichrist as an end-time figure belongs characteristically to the New Testament. As Bavinck says, "it is the appearance of Christ which awakens the antichristian principle."¹²

In this light, the New Testament figure of the Antichrist understandably shows a different form from that of the Old. Both the apostles Paul and John speak more of an *ecclesiastical* and religiously-qualified end-time opponent of the Lord Jesus. And in Revelation, the ecclesiastical and the political figure appear to be woven together in the coming of the two beasts, one from the sea, the other from the earth, as well as in the appearance of the great harlot. Like the dragon, the beast on which

the harlot sits also has seven heads and ten horns, Rev. 17:3.

The New Testament passages make clear that the Antichrist represents a collective idea, and a collective power. John speaks of many Antichrists who have already gone out in the world. These are all known by the same trait: the denial of the Word come in the flesh. This does not imply that the Antichrist is strictly speaking only an "office" or a particular "spirit." The texts stress that the Antichrist takes the form of a man, i.e., he becomes a particular person. With G.C. Berkouwer, therefore, we reject the opposition between the Antichrist as power and as person, since both are reflected in this figure.¹³

We also agree with Berkouwer and Prof. Doekes in rejecting Hepp's idea of various dictators and rulers as *forerunners* of the Antichrist.¹⁴ The central point in I John is that the church lives in the *last hour*. The time is *short*, the ages have been pressed together (cf. I Cor. 7). The danger of the idea of a "forerunner" is that we can sit back and assure ourselves that we need not be too careful, since we at present only meet forerunners of the Antichrist, and that the real Antichrist has not yet appeared. Nothing could be further from the truth! John wants all attention directed to the fact that the Antichrist has already appeared and has begun his work in the world. The Lord wants the readers to recognize the coming and appearance of the evil one right now. As Prof. Doekes says, the chief feature of the New Testament Antichrist according to John is that he is the "defender and propagator of an anti-Scriptural teaching."¹⁵ Therefore he must always be *discerned* in the world.

This leads us to stress the idea of the collective embodiment of the antichristian idea, as Dr. Greijdanus introduced it in his commentary on Revelation. In fact what we see throughout history is the steady embodiment or incorporation of the one person of the Antichrist. Throughout history we see the *spirit* of apostasy and rebellion taking human form. And the prophecy of Scripture tells us that this process will come to a head with the concentration of antichristian world power in *one man*. But the movement and preparation towards this goal has already been active since Pentecost.

With the commentators of the *Statenvertaling*, we can also say that the expression "man of lawlessness" refers to none other than the man who fully gives himself over to sin. He is the spiritual incarnation of the sin against the Holy Spirit. He is the incarnation of Satan, the dragon in human form. He is fully human, and yet by his wonders is like an angel, almost superhuman. And the many figures like this who have already passed the stage of world history are not forerunners, but

actual partial *manifestations* of the future man of sin. The only point of difference is that in all previous and contemporary antichristian figures, the wall of restraint has not yet been removed. Just like the Roman emperors, Napoleon and Hitler encountered natural and political limitations to their struggle for universal power. But one day the earth will help the dragon, and the world will no longer possess an Allied front against the evil horde. One day Satan will be loosed, Rev. 20:8, all restraint will fall away, and the LORD will permit evil to become incarnated in its full-blown human form, and in its full evil character. The temptor of the beginning will almost be able to achieve his goal of seducing the entire human race. That was his object when he first approached Adam, and his punishment is that he is also held to the fanatic pursuit of his goal to the end of time. Whereas first he *willed* to do only evil with mankind, after his punishment he *can* do only evil with mankind. He wills and cannot but will evil continually. So he will also grasp for the whole of mankind in his incarnation as the man of sin.

The rise of the Antichrist

Scripture speaks of the Antichrist appearing for "a time, times and half a time," Dan. 7:25. (This period represents the time of the persecution of the church, the forty-two months of Rev. 13:5.) The first period tells us about his rise, and includes the entire history of the church, up to the day that Satan is loosed. In this period, the spirit of apostasy grows and comes to a head. It culminates in the arrival of the cosmic, and universal world power, the Antichrist in full bloom.

The second period points to the intense period of persecution that the church will endure. After his rise to power, the Antichrist takes his seat in the temple of God, and claims himself to be God. He will introduce a new religious order, and attack the church with unprecedented fury. Days of darkness and tribulation will follow for the church, and the two witnesses will lie slain in the street, Rev. 11:7, 8. But the beast from the abyss will only attain

a Pyrrhic victory. He will pretend that he has the victory, and will exalt himself as the one who recovered from the mortal wound. But his claims will be illusory and his schemes will be exposed as being counterfeit.

With respect to the place of women in the new order, we know from Dan. 11:37 that the man of lawlessness will also be one who despises the love of women. Women may claim to have emancipated themselves from the authority of men, but their claims will be shortlived. The Lord Jesus was aware of how terrifying the rule of the lawless one would be for women when He said, "But alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days!" (Matt. 24:19). The evil one will show no mercy to the helpless or the unborn.

The fall of the Antichrist

We must also consider the third period, the end of the Antichrist, since in all texts from Ezekiel to Revelation his doom is foretold. Years ago Prof. V. Hepp argued that, being a human fully given over to sin, the Antichrist would be required to undergo death in its fullness, that is, both temporal and eternal death. He argued this view on the basis of Daniel 12:11, 12 which according to him referred to the death of the Antichrist in time, and of his coming to life again. Daniel speaks of a lengthening of days after the first death of the Antichrist. The one who perseveres will then outlive the Antichrist.¹⁶

In one of his early articles in a theological journal, K. Schilder criticized Hepp's view, and argued that Scripture leans strongly towards the view of an immediate full-scale judgment of the man of sin in this life. In other words, upon His return, the Lord Jesus will snatch the man of sin by his neck and visibly throw him bodily and physically into the bottomless pit.

Schilder argued his case by initially showing that Dr. Hepp had incorrectly used Daniel 12 to bolster his argument of a temporal dying and rising of the Antichrist. Daniel nowhere intimates that the Antichristian figure will come to life again. He does say that the believers will outlive the lawless one. But according to Schilder, if one assumes with Hepp that this text suggests a death and reappearance of the Antichrist for judgment in this life, then he must also conclude that the unbelievers and the followers of the beast will outlive him as well — a conclusion which the invocation of blessing in Dan. 12:12 does not support.¹⁷

Schilder then turned to the other passages dealing with the return of Christ. He argued that for believers as well as unbelievers the initial coming to life again at the moment of Christ's return is not part of the blessing or curse of the



The Church at Ancaster, Ontario, commenced worship services at a different location, namely:

Redeemer College
777 Highway 53 East
Ancaster, Ontario

gospel, but belongs to the paradise world order that the Lord had instituted already before the fall. A reappearance in the flesh is itself not a blessing or curse, and not grace or wrath. Unbelievers, too, will rise at the last day and will receive their bodies again in order to be judged according to what they have done in the body, whether good or bad.

But by the very nature of the case, the Antichrist suffers a different fate. He is the incarnation of Satan himself, man fully given over to sin. According to Schilder, an unbiased reading of Rev. 19:19, 20, as well as II Thess. 2 tells us clearly that the punishment reserved for this figure is not only of a different degree, but also of another order. Paul says that suddenly the Lord Jesus will appear and will slay the evil one with the breath of his mouth and destroy him with His coming. Rev. 19 and 20, too, speak of the beast being captured and immediately cast into the bottomless pit. His judgment takes place before the final judgment! His judgment will be the public manifestation to all flesh of the victory of the Son, and it will lead all others to tremble in fear.¹⁸

An important feature of this judgment is the justice of God manifested in it. As the incarnation of Satan, the man of sin exalts himself above angels and above God himself. But he remains man! Yet he is also judged and condemned by a Man! Each to His own, each according to the rule of the ancient covenant — such is the rule of God's covenant justice! Thus, the final act of the removal of the man of sin is not a violent triumph over Satan by Christ, but the fair and equitable judgment of Man against man and of Angel against angel at the last hour of world history. Hence this act represents the triumph of justice over injustice, and of right over evil.

Summary

In the description of the Antichrist given here, we have attempted to piece together the combined testimony of Scripture with regard to the man of sin. Here the central discovery has been that the process of the coming of the Antichrist is the process of the embodiment or incarnation of the power of evil in the flesh. Sin takes on its most terrible form in the figure of a human person. And all the movement and the general spiritual direction of the world today is directed to this end.

How true are the words of the Lord Jesus! Where is the Antichrist? False Christs and false prophets are everywhere, and they are even divided among themselves. The televangelists violently oppose Gorbachev, but in the end they might just be working to the same goal! Pop artists from East and West sing and play for peace, but both foster the arrival

of the age of lawlessness. The cultural heroes, the filmmakers, the artists and writers, the political and religious leaders, the pope and the World Council of Churches — all these movements, both in their internal differences and in their underlying unities move the whole world to the day of the manifestation of the evil one, the beast from the abyss, the Antichrist.

**“But those who are
spiritually tuned
to the age will
recognize the
coming of the
Antichrist in all
areas of culture
today.”**

We then cannot say directly that Pope John Paul II is the Antichrist, or that Michael Jackson is the Antichrist (to mention some examples). Yet the *spirit* the pope represents and the *spirit* which exudes from him is the spirit of the Antichrist, and thus the Reformers were not far off in taking the Papacy as the centre of the Antichrist. Orthodox Roman Catholics consider him to be a new Jeremiah who brings the Word of God to a disbelieving and unrepentant people, a people hardening in sin. But anyone schooled in Luther and Calvin will recognize in the Pope the *false prophet*, who with platitudes and stereotype phrases preaches in such a way that many are wrong and many are right, too. He defends traditional morality, but also espouses liberation theology. And he also knows how to soften a hard line for the sake of the

peace and unity of his internally divided organization.

But those who are spiritually tuned to the age will recognize the coming of the Antichrist in all areas of culture today. Immorality, labour unrest, recurring coups, the appearance of such figures as a Khomeini and a Khadafy — these are signs of the approaching man of lawlessness. These are more than forerunners — the voice of the Lawless One crackles loud and clear in all their addresses. It rings forth from the soldiers in Iran and Iraq, and the cry of hatred goes over the whole world.

Hence the word of the Lord Jesus applies to the church in ever greater measure today: “Watch and pray that you come not into temptation.” For only those who equip themselves in the power of the Spirit will be able to withstand the evil day.

J. DE JONG

¹²H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, IV. (4th ed., Kampen, 1928), p. 658.

¹³G.C. Berkouwer, *De wederkomst van Christus*, (Kampen, 1963), p. 50.

¹⁴L. Doekes, “De Openbaring van de Wetteloze” *De Reformatie*, Vol. 57, (1981-82), p. 91; G.C. Berkouwer, p. 50.

¹⁵L. Doekes, “De komst van de Antichrist” *De Reformatie*, Vol. 57, p. 44.

¹⁶V. Hepp, *De Antichrist*, (Kampen, 1921), pp. 171-172.

¹⁷K. Schilder, “De Ondergang van den Antichrist” *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift*, Vol. 21 (1920), pp. 36-37.

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OUR COVER

Celebration in Manggelum, Irian Jaya, Indonesia, during the institution of the Gereja Reformasi, September 27, 1987.

Photo courtesy of
Bram Vegter

The “Statenvertaling” — a timely gift

In December 1987 *Clarion* carried some articles about the “Statenvertaling” on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of its publication. The “Statenvertaling” is the Dutch Bible translation made by decision of the Synod of Dordrecht 1618-19 and financed by the States General of the Netherlands. The first edition was published in 1637.

The “Statenvertaling” can be mentioned in one breath with the King James Version of 1611. It would be interesting to compare these two translations. I once read a study by the Leiden New Testament scholar J. de Zwaan. He compared Calvin, the King James Version and the “Statenvertaling” as far as the letter to the Ephesians is concerned. The remarkable result of his study was that the King James and the “Statenvertaling” have an advantage over Calvin: they are less dependent upon the Vulgate, the Latin translation authorized by the Roman Catholic Church. And of the two 17th century translations the Dutch one — somewhat later than the English version — has even a higher scientific value. Dr. de Zwaan surmised that further investigation will confirm that the “Statenvertaling” shows a more accurate and felicitous judgment than the King James Version, which had already superseded Luther’s translation in quality.

But let me not wander off into a discourse about the value and significance of the beautiful and powerful Bible translation with which I grew up and on which I had the privilege to be nurtured.

This article is meant to make you participant of the great joy that the librarian of the Theological College in Hamilton recently experienced. Thanks to a generous donation we received a first edition “Statenvertaling,” precisely in the year of its 350th anniversary! It was the copy that once belonged to brother Gerrit Winkel, who, born in Hoogeveen in 1905, emigrated to Canada in 1949.

We thank the Winkel family in Edmonton for the generous manner in which they made sure that their family Bible would find a good home. We are really thrilled by the idea that precisely at the end of the year 1987 we obtained an exemplar of the first printing of this Bible

translation. This version has made a tremendous impact on Dutch church life and general culture. The famous *Kanttekeningen* or marginal notes have been of great significance in and for the development of Reformed theology in the Netherlands.

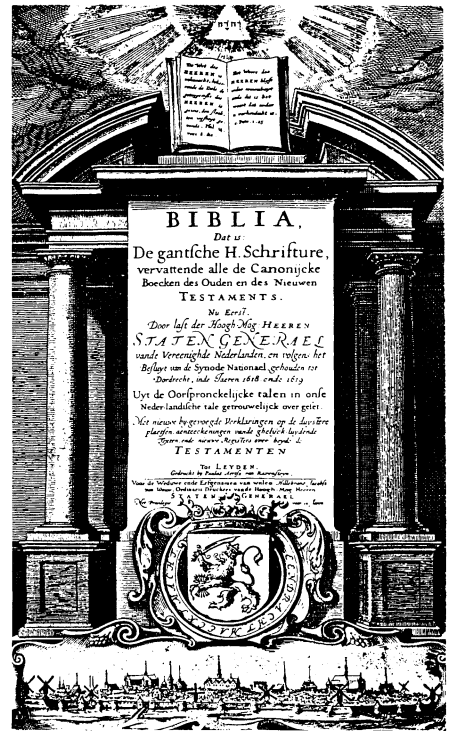
In the past, pecuniary reasons prohibited our purchasing a copy. Our library must be built up in a modest way and we can only use the gifts of the Ladies’ Aid for books that are of direct help to our students.

Therefore we are very grateful that as a special gift we have now received a Bible of such historical value. Generally speaking I think that books of this nature should find a place in a library. Such books are taken good care of in *institutions* where scholars are supposed to know the significance of their library holdings.

We are planning to have a display case made in which we can show some of our older books. Visitors — and especially elementary school classes on their excursions — will then be able to peruse some of the treasures of the past. And I will be delighted to tell you about some of our precious items.

Probably someone who has studied the title page of the first edition of the “Statenvertaling” as it was printed on page 533 of the *Clarion* issue of December 4, 1987, will ask the question how I ascertained that the Bible we received is a first edition. The reader will not find a date on that title page.

Let me answer this question. First of all, the picture in *Clarion* was not complete. I do not know where it came from, but it is a “castigated” picture. We will reprint the front page — not of our copy, for this page is somewhat damaged — and if you compare the two pictures you will see that on the real page there is a triangle with the Hebrew characters that spell the name of JHWH. Some years later this symbolical illustration was erased according to the wish of some regional synods. Precisely the presence of this illustration makes it clear that you have to do with one of the first printings. Furthermore in the copy we received there is an authentic signature under the Act of Authorization and we find even the date



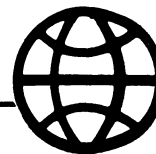
1637 in handwritten form. The publisher of the first edition was the widow and estate of Hillebrant Jacobsz van Wouw; the printer, Paulus Aertsz van Ravensteyn.

At the bottom of the title page the reader will see a panorama of the city of Leiden, the place where the “Statenvertaling” was prepared and the first edition was printed.

In my personal library I have a 1643 edition “T” Amstelredam, By Francoys Lieshout, Boeckvercooper op den Dam, 1643.” The title page is almost identical. The triangle is still there. Only this time the panorama is not of Leiden but of Amsterdam and the three Andrew crosses of the Amsterdam logo are prominently displayed. This edition came about by consent of the Burgomasters and regents of this city. Comparison of the two editions helped me ascertain the authenticity of the 1637 one.

Are there more early editions of the “Statenvertaling” or other old books among our readers? Please make sure that they do not fall into the hands of people who do not know their value. I do not only think of their material value but of the fact that through them many generations drank from the fountain of God’s living Word that abides into eternity.

J. FABER



GENEVA

"There are no theological or ecclesiological issues which need divide us as churches."

This was the conclusion reached at the recent bilateral talks between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Disciples of Christ. According to Alan Bell, Theological Secretary of the WARC, the conclusion was with enthusiasm adopted. The agreed statement of the two bodies will be submitted to the churches of the two communions before they will be considered at the WARC General Council slated for Seoul, Korea in 1989. Said Bell, "Disciples and Reformed are already united in various parts of the world, how could we not say this?"

A similar conclusion was reached in the dialogue which the WARC held with the World Methodist Council. At that meeting both parties agreed that those doctrinal matters on which there had traditionally been tension "ought not to be seen as obstacles to unity between Methodist and Reformed." The WARC Executive Committee has requested the member churches of the Alliance to consider whether in their area a Reformed/Methodist union might be initiated. (RES NE)

What about Arminianism and the Canons of Dort?

No one who adheres to the Arminianist ideology and rejects the truth confessed in the Canons can still be called "Reformed."

COURT RULING

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that religious organizations may discriminate on the basis of religion in their hiring and firing for any position. Previously, a lower court had ruled that religious employers could refuse to hire people outside their faith only for narrowly-defined religious jobs such as pastors and teachers.

"There is ample room under the Establishment Clause) of the U.S. Constitution) for benevolent neutrality which will permit religious exercise to exist without sponsorship and without interference," wrote Justice Byron White. In responding to a challenge to a 1972 law that exempts religious groups from federal anti-bias standards, Byron said, "A law is not unconstitutional simply because it allows churches to advance religion, which is their very purpose." (NH)

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINS (RNS, NOV 4)

Buddhists have become the first religious group outside the Christian and Jewish segment to be permitted to supply chaplains for the U.S. armed forces.

A Defence Department survey found that at least 2,493 Buddhists of various sects and ethnic backgrounds were in military service in 1984. (CN)

SIDNEY, AUSTRALIA (RNS)

The Roman Catholic Church has overtaken the Anglican Church to become Australia's largest religious denomination.

Figures from the 1986 census also show Judaism as fourth in strength among the country's non-Christian religions, behind Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. (CN)

SAD STATISTICS

A poll of Protestant clergymen conducted by sociologist Jeffrey Hadden revealed the following: 10,000 clergymen of whom 7,441 replied when asked if they accepted Jesus' physical resurrection as a fact:

51% of Methodists said "No."
35% of United Presbyterians said "No."
30% of Episcopalians said "No."
33% of American Baptists said "No."
13% of American Lutherans said "No."
7% of Missouri Synod Lutherans said "No."

When asked if they believed in the virgin birth of Jesus:

60% of Methodists said "No."
44% of Episcopalians said "No."
49% of Presbyterians said "No."
34% of Baptists said "No."
19% of American Lutherans said "No."
5% of Missouri Synod Lutherans said "No."

When asked if they believed that the Scriptures are the inspired and inerrant Word of God in faith, history, and secular matters:

87% of Methodists said "No."
95% of Episcopalians said "No."
82% of Presbyterians said "No."
67% of American Baptists said "No."
77% of American Lutherans said "No."
24% of Missouri Synod Lutherans said "No." (CN)

AMSTERDAM

Dr. G.C. Berkouwer declared here in a TV interview that he regretted the deposition of Klaas Schilder by the synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in 1944. Berkouwer, Professor Emeritus of the theological faculty of the Free University of Amsterdam, was himself moderator of that synod. It made a decision, he said, which was unwanted but impossible to avoid.

Dr. G. Puchinger, noted interviewer of Dutch personalities, commented in *Trouw* a few weeks later that people should be thankful for Berkouwer's painful admission. "The synod (of Almere) should reflect on this issue because of the extensive effect of the judgment (of 1944) on the Reformed people. Prof. Berkouwer is now supporting those who regretted his policy of 1944, and this unheard of fact in the history of the church should cause the synod to reflect, simply because such a situation has never before arisen." (RES NE)

One can regret something and yet remain convinced that it was the correct thing to do in the given circumstances. Apparently Dr. Berkouwer is still convinced that it was a necessary and unavoidable action.

Pray, what has really changed?

This admission is worthless, as the correctness of the action is still being maintained.

LONDON, ENGLAND

Leaders of the Church of England rejected a move to oust homosexual priests, calling instead for them to repent and to be treated with compassion.

By a 388-to-19 vote, the church's policy-making General Synod of bishops, clergy and laity defeated a motion that would have declared homosexuality, adultery and fornication "sinful in all circumstances."

The vote was in favour of a motion saying that homosexuality, adultery and fornication fell short of the Christian ideal of confining sexual intercourse to marriage.

The successful motion said adultery and fornication "are sins against this ideal and are to be met by a call to repentance and the exercise of compassion." (CN)

The Christian Heritage Party: a newcomer on the federal scene



Delegates to a political convention held in Hamilton, Ontario, on November 18-20 witnessed a truly remarkable event: namely, the birth of the Christian Heritage Party (CHP), a new federal political party. To be sure, this party was already officially recognized on June 17, 1986, but it was only after this founding convention that one could speak of a party with an elected leader (Ed Vanwoudenberg) and a national executive, as well as an officially adopted constitution and platform.

What does this party stand for? How should we regard it? It is the purpose of this and a following article to pass on some of the highlights of the founding convention so that we can get an idea what this party is and strives for from the official documents that were approved. Secondly, some related questions such as our attitude to this party will be considered.

Principles, objectives and membership

The first official business that the 534 registered delegates dealt with was the Party Constitution. Important for our discussion are especially the principles and objectives of the CHP. I will let the Constitution speak for itself. First, the principles.

Party principles are based on these Biblical ethics and are unalterable:

- (a) We believe there is one Creator God eternally existent in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- (b) We believe the Holy Bible to be the inspired, inerrant written Word of God and the final authority above all man's laws and government.
- (c) We believe civil government to be under the authority of God.
- (d) We believe the purpose of civil government is to ensure freedom and justice for a nation's citizens by upholding

law and order in accordance with Biblical principles.

- (e) We believe that decision-making processes by civil government must not in any way contravene these Biblical ethics. (Art. 1.2)

The objectives of this party are described as follows:

The aim of the CHP is:

- (a) To provide true Christian leadership and to defend, promote and uphold Biblical principles in federal legislation.
- (b) To contend for, and attain the leadership of the federal government of Canada through the existing democratic process. (Art. 1.3)

Membership requirements include subscribing to the CHP's principles and constitution, and signing the application form prescribed by the party (Art. 1.4). By doing the latter, one affirms belief in God, the Creator, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and the inerrancy of the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God.

The CHP also adopted a solemn pledge which must be endorsed by all those who wish to stand for executive or elected office.

The preamble of this pledge reads:

We, citizens of the Dominion of Canada, Executive Members of the Christian Heritage Party of Canada . . . adhering to the Christian faith, having as our desire the glory of God and the coming of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as well as true liberty, safety and peace, pledge before the most High God to uphold the following principles.

These principles, briefly summarized, include: recognition of the importance of the family unit; opposition to abortion and euthanasia because God is the author of life; the recognition of laws of sexual morality as established by God; parental responsibility to educate their children;

the different offices of church and state; the responsibility of the government to serve and protect the people whose duty it is to submit to God-ordained authority; and the need for Biblical principles in economic matters.

Statement of beliefs and party principles

In this statement the foundational convictions of the CHP are explained in greater detail. For example, under the heading "We Believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ" we read of the significance of Christ's death and resurrection and how all this was prophesied in the Old Testament. After stating that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to Christ, the statement continues: "His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom and His Lordship we acknowledge over every area of life. As His disciples we are charged to be righteously interacting with society until Christ returns in power and glory to make all things new (Revelation 1:8; 22)" (Section C).

Elsewhere in the statement the CHP affirms, among other things, "We believe that all civil governments — local, provincial, and national — derive their authority from God, not from the people (John 19:11). No man, therefore, has any rightful power over other men unless it is received from God. All human power, including all civil authority, is delegated and ministerial (Romans 13:4)." Later, also in Section E, the document states: "We reject a secular humanistic worldview that places man at the centre of reason, knowledge and insight for determining social policy."

Regarding authority and norms we read (in Section F), "We believe that God is the only ultimate authority: all other authority is delegated and therefore limited. Each sphere of authority should be recognized as subservient to God. . . .

Nothing could benefit a civil government more than to pass legislation which is in accordance with the Law of God. The Word of God should be the rule of law while the Biblical view of decency and good order should set the standard for any nation. That nation's citizenry is blessed which seeks to base its civil laws on the Bible. (Proverbs 8:18; 10:2; 11:4; 12:28; 14:34; 16:12; 20:8; 25:15)."

Resisting the temptation to quote the entire document, I will quote a few more sections dealing with key principles the CHP stands for in order that some appreciation of the direction of this party can be attained. "When a society rejects Biblical principles in favour of manmade community standards (e.g. national consensus) as the basis of its legislation, then that society advances toward legalized sinfulness and ultimate disintegration. It has made a god of a human idol and will therefore receive increasing judgment and social death. Being under the authority of God, civil government, therefore, has a duty to enact laws which make the pursuit of sin more difficult and the pursuit of virtue easier (Psalm 11:3)" (Section G).

"The reasonable limits of rights and freedoms are those limits expressed in the Bible. Without this safeguard, the danger is real that democracy becomes abused and freedoms violated when dissenters use their influence, whether by majority vote or manipulation, to abridge or abrogate fundamental rights to which every Canadian is entitled. Inevitably the result would be an amorphous, godless and authoritarian state, rather than 'one Canada under God.'

In order to resist further erosion of our Christian heritage we believe that any decision-making process (such as legislation, plebiscite, or referendum) must not contravene Biblical principles. In this way — insofar as it applies to Canada — God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Section H).

To read the documents associated with the birth of the CHP is to experience a welcome breath of fresh air in the current overwhelmingly secular atmosphere of the federal political scene. Here the Scriptures are appealed to for direction and guidance. But, how well are the Biblical principles articulated into concrete policy?

Policy

It is beyond the scope of this article and *Clarion* to go at length into this matter. Some generalizations and examples will need to suffice.

Considering that the policy resolutions deal with the entire spectrum of federal jurisdiction, the CHP has made an impressive beginning on which in several cases more refined or detailed resolutions

can be built in the future. As far as I am able to judge, the adopted resolutions form a very good start. There is an obvious and consistent attempt to undergird policy with Biblical thinking.

To illustrate some of the points just made, consider these examples on some current hot issues. As can be expected, a strong stand was taken against abortion and euthanasia and for capital punishment. The restoration of the Lord's Day Act is also desired. "A weekly twenty-four hour period of business closure should apply to all non-essential services and businesses across Canada. In respect of our Christian heritage, the day of closure should be Sunday; however, reasonable allowance should be made for those who, because of religious convictions, observe a different day of rest." (03.1.5 - cf. 06.2.6) The party took a stand against issues such as obscenity, certain forms of reproductive technology and universally state-funded day care. "Besides being prohibitively expensive, such a scheme would only serve to further encourage mothers to neglect their primary duty to rear their own children. . . ." (06.4.7).

On economic matters many diverse items are covered and the policy calls, e.g., for responsible free market economy, privatization, voluntary union membership and a balanced budget. Certain compassionate needs must be met. "We affirm that the civil authority must ensure that adequate provision is made for those in our society who are truly helpless or needy, or are neglected by those upon whom God has laid the primary responsibility for their care." (06.3.3) Further, "we affirm that Canadian citizens should not lack essential food, shelter, and clothing, but 'to be our brothers' keeper' does not establish an indiscriminate and universal claim on public charity for those able but unwilling to work. Welfare services should be provided by government only after the prior spheres of responsibility have been exhausted." (09.1.1) "We believe that the *prevention* of hardship (rather than its alleviation after it has arisen) is the key to reducing welfarism, and that the stability of the family is basic in this regard." (09.1.2) On private property, the CHP affirmed the privilege to private enjoyment of property, not for abuse or despoliation, but as a trust from God. (03.0.3) Further, the CHP also came out in favour of responsible stewardship of natural resources, control of environmental pollution and the family farm.

Concerning other matters, the policy on AIDS called for a national advertising campaign "which stresses that virtue is a necessity, not an option" (09.2.4). Educational media should be prepared accordingly. Furthermore, the need for mandatory blood testing and hospices speci-

fically for AIDS patients was affirmed.

Because of the great importance of education and the justified high premium we place on it, I am passing on the complete text of what was adopted at the convention on this matter (09.3).

1. Primacy of Parental Authority

The particular responsibility of the parents for the education and development of their children must indeed be recognized by government. We affirm that parents have the primary responsibility of educating their children at home, or delegating this task to the schools of their choice.

2. Education and Values

As a consequence of its duty to protect the spiritual freedom of its subjects, government must base its educational policy on the principle of freedom in the choice of school, in accordance with the general guideline that the home and independent school should be the rule and the state (public) school a supplement. The parents' duty to be informed as to the content of their children's education must be protected by law.

3. Availability and Financial support

It is a matter of public interest that there be adequate educational facilities, and that everyone be enabled to receive instruction and training suited to his aptitude and ability. The government must accord equal treatment, financially and otherwise, to independent and to state education in order that the freedom of private education is respected and guaranteed.

4. National Guidelines

Because of the significant role which education plays in cultivating the moral foundation on which the continued well-being of Canada depends, we suggest that all publically-funded education should be subject to national guidelines which uphold a basic respect for God, family, national allegiance and our national heritage. Safeguards and disincentives should be in place, at the federal level if necessary, to discourage any publically-funded institution from openly teaching neutral or positive attitudes toward abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, suicide, homosexuality, or extra-marital sex, "creative visualization," or any political ideology which favours world government at the expense of national sovereignty.

This extremely small and somewhat random selection of CHP policy will have to do as a sampling of the general direction of this party. Next time let us consider how we should regard this party.

— *To be continued*
C. VAN DAM

Thankfulness and prayerful anticipation

Saturday afternoon, September 26, 1987.

A large crowd of parents, children and school supporters had gathered for official opening exercises on the lawn at the new school building on the Garafrana Road in Fergus, Ontario. The chairman of the Board of the Canadian Reformed School Society of Fergus, Guelph and District, Mr. Leonard Lodder, read from Holy Scripture Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and impressed gratitude to the Lord in prayer.

In a short address he mentioned: "Our God, the Giver of life, has provided the society with a tool to carry out the task of educating the covenant children in the fear of His name. The new school building is not in the first place an object of beauty but a tool for teaching, an aid to instruction. Many questions needed to be answered in order to create the right environment where teaching and learning can happen efficiently. So far the comments have been admirable. The new facility is also a testimony to the community of the society's commitment to covenantal education. The instruction is not carried out in isolation; it will be quality education only if ruled by the Word of God."

Mr. Alan Snowe, Reeve of West Garafrana Township and Mr. Gerry Beirnes, Mayor of the town of Fergus were present



The official ribbon cutting

as honoured guests. Both spoke words of congratulation. The honourable Perin Beatty, Member of Parliament for Wellington-North had other commitments that afternoon, but was so kind as to send a 3' x 6' Canadian flag which will daily be put to very good use. The Stichting Hulpverlening aan Gereformeerd Onderwijs in het buitenland (foundation for Aid to Reformed Education abroad) at Emmeloord, the Netherlands sent a letter to acknowledge an invitation to attend and to express gratitude to our heavenly Father with the words of David which fit the occasion:

"Thine O Lord is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Thine; . . . For all

things come from Thee, and of Thy own have we given Thee (I Chronicles 29:11a and 14b).

This foundation, which has financially assisted and anticipates to provide more help, urged the society to keep building until its dreams have come true. (The present new building provides accommodation for staff and classrooms for Grades 1 thru 6. Plans are to complete the school with a gymnasium and high school facilities, since the present Junior High School in Guelph barely can accommodate the growing student body.)

The audience was treated with the singing by the school children of Hymn 57: "Thank the Lord and come with praise." John Gansekoel (Grade 6) and Jack Thalen (Grade 1) presented the school with a cassette player after which the audience sang the prayer of Hymn 50: "Come Lord Jesus, Maranatha . . . let Thy refining Spirit us with flaming zeal endue."

The official ribbon cutting was performed by Michelle Lodder (Grade 2) and Eric Van Raalte (Grade 6) assisted by the principal Mr. A. Gunnink and the contractor for the building project Mr. M. Van Grootheest. A photo taking session for the board and invited guests and an open house for all concluded the joyous event.

All praise be to our faithful God who instilled the willingness in His people to build this beautiful (just about debt free) facility. May He grant the means and zeal to complete the project for His glory and the well-being of many children and children's children.



The new school building is not in the first place an object of beauty . . . but an aid to instruction

F.W.

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

The letter also stated that they "were of the opinion that it would not make any sense, after your silence, to renew the negotiations which the Synod of Kampen broke off, on the same footing; especially since it may not be denied that the year which covered these negotiations made the holy cause deteriorate rather than to make progress. Even though our Churches maintain what they declared at Kampen, yet they were of the opinion that they should open the way for you once again to seek the reunion which it was then tried to achieve, *this time on a broader basis*. It is for this reason that our Synod now comes to declare to you that our Churches are not only prepared, but wholeheartedly long for, yea consider it their duty the sooner the better to unite with your Churches on the basis of unity in Reformed Confession and Reformed Church government. On their part they, therefore, put no other condition than that the united Churches shall honour the Three Forms of Unity as agreement of ecclesiastical communion."

In other words: Forget about the Draft-Act.

The ball is now in your court.

You tell us now on what conditions you are prepared to come to a merger.

The silence and lack of further contact — although unintentional and caused by various factors beyond the control of the brothers — did bear fruit.

It was now up to the forthcoming General Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, to be convened in Leeuwarden on August 18, 1891, to come with concrete proposals.

Regulation 1869: Exit

The mood in which the Christian Reformed brothers travelled to Leeuwarden to constitute the Synod of 1891 is described in a preface to the Acts, written by the moderamen (= the elected officers).

"The Synod of Leeuwarden, whose 'Proceedings' we introduce with these words, will be unforgettable in the history of the Christian Reformed Church.

"The brothers came to Friesland's capital city more from a sense of duty than that they were eager to go, more in a depressed mood than in high spirits, because the Synod was there. Small wonder!

"Two times already, both at Assen and at Kampen, efforts — and serious efforts they were! — had been made possibly to come to a union with the Netherlands Reformed Churches. In vain.

"It almost looked as if the distance which separated us had increased.

"Would a third try succeed now? Would not the distance be increased even more? That's what was being thought, that's what we were afraid of.

"However, we cannot but note the special guidance of God's Providence in arriving at the well-known decision which — even before these 'Proceedings' have appeared in print — has been so favourably received. He caused us to follow paths which we did not know, to a decision of the result of which we did not expect much."

Synod Leeuwarden 1891 was opened on August 18, 1891. It was not till the second week that "the important matter re the negotiations regarding the Union with the Nederduitsch Reformed Churches" was put up for discussion.

Thirty-eight letters, signed by a total of about eighteen hundred persons, had been received urging to work towards union.

One question this Synod had to deal with was the Regulation of 1869. The Doleantie Churches had serious objections to it. As we have already mentioned before, there was no special love for it within the Christian Reformed Church either.

Various proposals were tabled, and a proposal by Dr. H. Bavinck was adopted. Bavinck stated that, even apart from any question of union with the Netherlands Reformed Churches, the Regulation should be abolished. In his proposal he did not even mention the union, but only spoke of "objections raised against the Regulation of 1869 from within our own circle." No provincial synod had expressed itself in favour of retention. The only condition Synod put was that the unity of the Christian Reformed Church should be preserved and their assets juridically remain unaffected.

Consent of the congregations was to be secured and, having received it, a committee appointed for this purpose was to inform the Government of the change.

Almost four months later, on December 15, a submission was sent to the Queen-Regent — Queen Emma was Regent as her daughter, the later Queen Wilhelmina, was only eleven years of age — that with unanimous and complete agreement of the Congregations the Regulation had been changed so that only the Church Order would be in force from now on.

One consistory disagreed. It declared that it would not send delegates to a classis unless classis returned to the Regulation of 1869. It stated that the other Churches were no longer Reformed.

The end-result was that the minister with four consistory members were suspended and deposed.

This was the first schism as a result of the coming merger.

The Regulation of 1869 was not the only victim.

We recall that the Draft-Act of Union was sent to the Churches, accompanied by an explanatory memorandum.

It was sent rather late, due to the necessity of asking legal advice here and there and as a result of a meeting with the Minister of Justice. In some quarters the delay caused suspicion and ill feelings, but deputies did not delay sending it on purpose.

Apart from its late arrival, however, the contents of the Draft-Act did not meet with favourable judgment at all. Soon it became clear that no merger would have to be expected on the basis of this document.

The Provisional Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Churches had been aware of this as well, and therefore expressed the willingness of the Netherlands Reformed

Churches to consult and negotiate further on the basis of Confession, Liturgy, and Church Order.

Since all provincial synods judged that the Draft was unacceptable, Synod Leeuwarden declared "that the Draft-Act is set aside by it and that it has lost all contractual meaning as basis for negotiations."

Instead, Synod expressed unanimously "that it wants to try to come to Ecclesiastical Union with the Netherlands Reformed Churches on the basis of Unity in Reformed Confession and in Reformed Church government."

Back at square one?

The First and Second Points

We recall that there were three points which came to the fore time and again.

They were: the "principle of the Secession," the institution of Doleerende Churches in places where already a Christian Reformed Church existed, and — last but not least — the Theological School. Now that the Provisional Synod of Leeuwarden had, in fact, given "carte blanche" and declared, "You tell us then how you want it," it was to be expected that the Christian Reformed Synod made relevant statements regarding the three above-mentioned points.

In the first place, therefore, we'll ask what it decided regarding the "principle" of the Secession, or, to put it in other words: how does the Christian Reformed Church regard the Netherlands Reformed (Hervormde) Church and how do the Doleerende Churches stand over against it?

Saturday, August 29, 1891, the Synod declared, that the Christian Reformed Church, acknowledging the important difference between secession and doleantie, firm in the conviction that the Secession of 1834 was a work of God —

leaving the view of the Church and of its rights to and for the responsibility of the Netherlands Reformed Churches,

nevertheless remaining willing, in spite of the unmistakable differences yet, with a view to and in virtue of the unity in confession and church government, at least to try to come to a union with the Netherlands Reformed Churches and ecclesiastically to live together,

judges that such an effort could succeed when

1. mutually, sincerely and unreservedly, the to-be-united Churches are recognized as true and pure Reformed Churches regarding Confession and Church Order;

2. (it is recognized) that breaking the ecclesiastical communion not only with the boards of the Netherlands Reformed (Hervormde) Church but also with the members corporately and locally is commanded by God's Word and the Reformed Confession and is therefore necessary;

3. and that no persons may be recognized as members of the united Churches except those who express agreement with the Reformed Confession and Church Order and wish to live accordingly.

And that the union itself can become a fact only on the following conditions:

1. Mutually no attestations shall be given or received except to or from recognized Churches, which stand with them on the same basis and have broken with the Netherlands Reformed (Hervormde) Church;

2. (they) mutually recognize and consider legitimate each other's members, ministers, candidates, offices, attestations and discipline;

3. mutually no congregation or consistory shall be formed in places where a Congregation of the united Churches already exists, while each member keeps the freedom after the union to remain where he was a member before the union.

4. mutually it is declared not to have in view a combination but a merger into one Reformed Church in the Netherlands, leaving the moment and manner of merger of two or more Reformed Churches in the same place to the judgment of the respective Consistories and Classes.

The Third Point

The third point was: the Theological School.

Would this institution be sacrificed or would the brothers insist on it that the Churches should retain their own institution for the training for the ministry?

Two times a Synod had already stated very clearly that the principle of an institution of their own should be upheld by the Churches: the one of Assen and its continuation in Kampen.

What was Leeuwarden 1891 to do?

There were divergent opinions regarding this point. The one provincial synod judged that for the time being the Theological School should be maintained. Another provincial synod declared that the principle should be upheld. A third one suggested that no decision should be made till after the merger. There was a willingness also to accept candidates from the Free University if the Churches should have sufficient supervision.

A lengthy discussion marked the seriousness of this point. One brother warned that postponement of a decision till after a merger could result in that the Theological School became a bone of contention.

The result of the ample deliberations was, however, that it was declared unanimously that Synod was convinced that the principle should be preserved that the Church has the calling to have its own institution for the training of its ministers, at least as far as the theological training is concerned.

From the Directors of the Free University a letter had been received "containing the request that Synod appoint a Committee which may advise and eventually comment at the appointment and dismissal of Professors of Theology of the Free University."

Synod judged "to be unable at present to comply with the request of Messrs Directors, since

1. The matter of Union between the Nederduitsch Reformed Churches and the Christian Reformed Church is still under discussion, and

2. Because what is being asked by Messrs Directors is in any case insufficient."

By the above decision a grave danger to the Churches had been averted. The importance of it would not be realized for many years or even decades. It is safe to say that the course of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands would have been greatly different if the Theological School had been surrendered and sacrificed, to be swallowed up by the Free University or, in any case, to be degraded to a Bible School. Viewing the history during the following fifty years renders us the more grateful for what at the Leeuwarden Synod of 1891 was justly called "the special guidance of God's Providence."

— *To be continued*

The Annual Convention of the League of the Canadian Reformed Women Societies of Ontario

Once again League Day was held in the Burlington Ebenezer Church with lunch in the John Calvin School. This time the day was hosted by the ladies of Burlington South.

After singing Psalm 89:1,4,12, Mrs. VanDelden, our President, read from Matthew 1:18-23 and led in prayer. She welcomed all of us with the theme "Immanuel, God with us." This name has been a comfort to God's people throughout Scripture, and will continue to be so until the end of times, when the Antichrist will show his power.

A thank-you letter from the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College was read. They received the collection last year. We also received a letter from the mission field in Irian Jaya from Mrs. Vegter and Mrs. Versteeg. This letter gave us some news from that area, and thanked us for the society letters and League Day cards. (They really do read every name!)

Roll call was held. There were 369 ladies present, including some from the west and Holland. We concluded the business part of the day with the singing of our League Song.

We had a unique situation at this League Day: our essayist and speaker are husband and wife. Mrs. Marg De Jong, wife of Rev. J. De Jong, presented the essay in the morning. It dealt with "Mary, Mother of Jesus."

Not much has been recorded about Mary the mother of Jesus in the Bible, but much has been said about her in the history of the church and she is the focus of much attention in other churches today. The Roman Catholics are well-known for this, and the pope has declared this year the "Marian year."

Teachings in the early church included: a. Mary is the mother of God (Theotokos) and therefore has the closest relationship to God, b. she remained a virgin throughout her life, c. the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which absolves Mary of all original as well as actual sin, d. Mary did not die but was "assumed" into heaven, e. she is a mediator between God and man.

The Reformation brought about a change in Marian theology. Luther con-

demned Rome, saying, "The papists have made Mary an idol." Although Luther continued to consider Mary as the Theotokos, "Mother of God," he also said that as a person the virgin Mary is not greater than Mary Magdalene the sinner. Calvin took as example Elizabeth, who honoured the virgin, but also showed that everything hinged on God's wish to accept her.

Mrs. De Jong then went through the Bible passages about Mary, beginning with Luke 1:26-36. Here the angel addresses Mary as "Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with you." The R.C.'s translate this as "Hail Mary, full of grace" and use this text to say that she is a source of grace to others. Calvin writes, however, that her favour is the undeserved favour of God. When Mary responds to the message of the angel with "How can this be since I have no husband?" the R.C.'s infer that Mary had previously made a vow to remain a virgin her life long and therefore, even after Jesus was born, did not continue in a normal married relationship. The angel answers her question and Mary, in faith, responds "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word." In faith she accepted the task demanded of her.

Later when Jesus is twelve and remains behind in the temple, we are told that Mary "kept all these things in her heart." Mary must have wondered about many things.

Mary has a role in Jesus' public ministry only once, at the wedding in Cana. Here she is admonished by Jesus, "Woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." Only the Father in heaven directs the Son in His work on earth. Here we see the beginning of the end of Mary's special role in the life of Jesus. The R.C.'s use Mary's role in the changing of the water into wine as proof that she is a mediatrix for mankind as she places herself between her son and mankind.

When Jesus is on the cross, He addresses her as "woman" and gives her into the apostle John's care. Here Jesus ends His special relationship to Mary, and the new bond uniting them is one of faith. In Acts 1:14 Mary is present as one of the

believers in the early Christian church.

In Luke 11:27,28 when a woman in the crowd calls out to Jesus, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that you sucked," our Lord Jesus replies, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it." Our Lord Jesus does not exclude Mary, but includes her and all believers. This demands from us, that we hear the Word of God and do it, every day again, just as Mary very willingly was, as Luther put it, "the workshop in which God operated."

After singing the first three verses of Hymn 13, the song of Mary, time is given for discussion. The collection is then held and \$667.61 is collected for the Canadian Home Bible League for the distribution of complete Bibles. We again sing, this time Hymn 15, and then walk across the parking lot to John Calvin School where lunch (a delicious cold plate) is served.

The afternoon session is opened with the singing of our National Anthem. Entertainment by the hosting society is provided. Mrs. H. VanHuisstede sang two solos, accompanied by Mrs. A. Spithoff on the organ.

We sing Psalm 68:1,12 and then, in preparation for the afternoon's speech, read II Thessalonians 2. Rev. J. De Jong was welcomed. His topic, "The Antichrist and the Man of Lawlessness," is then presented.

This topic was chosen by Rev. De Jong because of the tremendous resurgence of interest in the macabre and the demonic, and because antichristian pressures in our world keep increasing. There also remains a good deal of confusion as to who the Antichrist is, and as to what his actual role and function is according to the Bible.

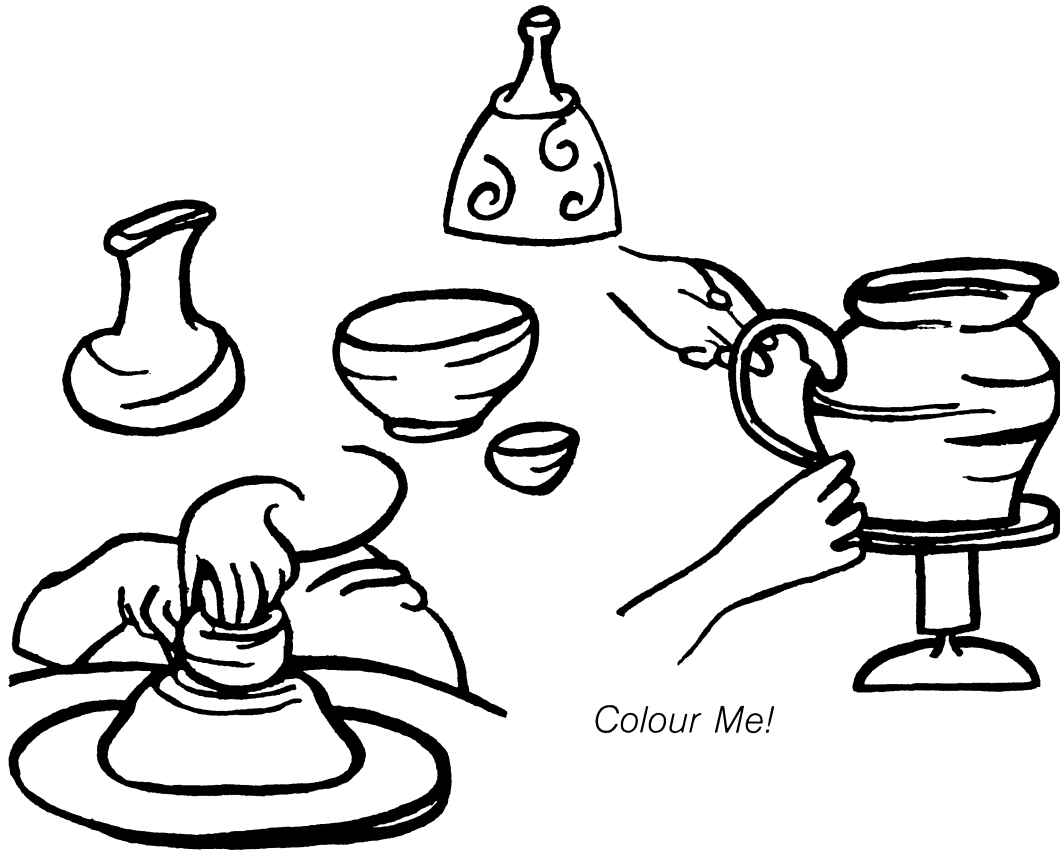
I will keep this summary very brief as Rev. De Jong's speech will appear in *Clarion*.

Rev. De Jong quickly reviewed different views that have been presented through the ages as to who the Antichrist would be. Some Bible passages were studied so that we could develop a picture of the Scriptural view of the Antichrist. Since the Ascension and Pentecost there have

— continued on page 43

Search & Find

- by Mrs. J. Roza



THIS MONTHS CATEGORY:

Occupations and hobbies

POTTERY is one of the oldest of all crafts. This particular handicraft was also practiced in Biblical times. Clay is the basic material of pottery and can be found particularly around river beds.

In the Old Testament a certain prophet was told by the Lord to go to a potter's house. In this particular setting Jesus chose to teach this prophet some valuable lessons. This man began prophesying in Judah halfway through the reign of Josiah. Who is this prophet?



TEXT: Isaiah 64:8, *Yet, O LORD, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou art our potter; we are all the work of Thy hand.*

Women's Societies League Day
— continued from page 41

been, and are today, many partial manifestations of the Antichrist. This will continue until, in the last days, the Antichrist will show himself as one man. He will claim to be God. There will be great persecution in the church. But the Lord Jesus will return and will slay the evil one and he will be destroyed.

After singing Psalm 79:1,4,5 time was given to ask Rev. De Jong questions on the topic. As time had run out, he prom-

ised to answer these questions in *Horizon*.

Mrs. VanDelden thanked the Burlington South society for all the work done for this day. They are a small group, but the day was well organized. Rev. and Mrs. De Jong were thanked for the time and energy put into the making and giving of their speech and essay. Much food for thought was provided. Our accompanist for the day, Mrs. Aafke Spithoff, who is becoming very experienced at this, was thanked for leading us in our singing. And last, but not least, Mrs. Reinink, Vice-President, came forward to express

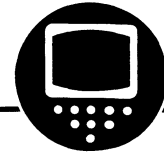
thanks to Mrs. VanDelden who so capably led the meeting again, for the fifth year.

To close the day we sang Hymn 41 and Rev. J. De Jong closed with us in prayer.

Before we went home, however, refreshments were again served in the gym. This gave all of us a few more minutes to meet with friends and acquaintances from other congregations. The social aspect of the day is always enjoyable.

ANNETTE NOBEL
Recording Secretary, LCRWS

PRESS RELEASE



Inter League Publication Board meeting with Executive Committee, October 19, 1987.

Mr. C. Hoff opened the meeting with Scripture reading and prayer. The progress report revealed that:

1. 500 copies of *Young Peoples Church History Vol. I* by W. Meijer have just been published. 150 copies had been ordered by Launceston, Australia, while the rest would be sold as sets with volumes II and III. No reprints would be made.

2. *Revelation Vol. I* by Rev. L. Selles should be printed by March, 1988.

3. *Believing and Confessing Vol. I*, a commentary on articles 1-19 of the Belgic Confession, should be ready for release by February 1988.

4. *James and Peter* will be redone and will not be printed as yet.

5. *Minor Prophets, Luke, and Romans* should all be released by fall, 1988.

All of these outlines are currently being translated and/or edited.

6. *A Clearing in the Jungle*, concerning mission work in Irian Jaya, will be finished once a commitment by the Mission Board of Toronto for 500 copies has been realized.

A proper bookkeeping system has been implemented. For the year ending May 31, 1987, Net Income was \$2,762. Sales equalled \$14,314. Inventory at end of year was \$11,221. Assets totalled \$24,785.

The promotion committee reports that most congregations now have an ILPB representative although regular contact with the West remains difficult. The representative should have a complete set of all books carried by the ILPB.

W. VANDERVEN

Thanks and praise to our heavenly Father for the precious gift of one of His covenant children:

RACHEL ANNE

Born December 15, 1987, to Bill and Linda Dokter (nee Hutten); a sister for *Julia, William, and Alisha*.

534 Ontario Street
PO Box 588
Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0



With thankfulness to the Lord who brought us together, we

ANITA TENHAGE
and
CLARENCE JANSEN

wish to announce our engagement.

December 25, 1987

161 Barnett Crescent, Fergus, ON N1M 3E5

Loppersum 1938 — February 16 — 1988 Chatham
Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.
Romans 12:12

With joy and thankfulness to the Lord, we will celebrate, D.V., the 50th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents:

JOHAN (JOHN) POOL
and
JANTJE (JANE) POOL (nee Apotheker)

Their thankful children and grandchildren:

Thunder Bay, ON: Harry Pool

Smithers, BC: Ann and Henry Penninga

Timothy, David, Jeremy, Ruth,

Esther, Jonathan, Mark, Lydia

Edmonton, AB: Lucy and Cecil Greidanus

Nadine

Coaldale, AB: Frank Pool

Linda, Jonathan, Jennifer, Danielle

Edmonton, AB: Ben Pool

40 Elm Street, Apt. 329

Chatham, ON N7M 6A5