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The role of the preaching in Reformed liturgy¹

The topic with which we are presently concerned,¹ is of great importance and constant relevance to the church. When we speak about the role of the preaching, we are dealing with the *central* element in the entire worship service. If we take the preaching out of the liturgy, we cut out the heart of the very service of the Lord and we disembowel the church.

On the surface it might seem superfluous to speak about the role of the preaching in a gathering of Reformed people. Was it not the very essence of the great Reformation that the power of the Word of God was rediscovered and the preaching was reinstated as key moment in the liturgy? For many centuries now the preaching of the gospel has been our forte and strength. Does not the Belgic Confession in Article 29 rightly put forward “the pure preaching of the gospel” as the *first* mark of the true church? Why would we as Reformed people have to meditate together on the role of the preaching?

Well, there is every reason to do so. The attack on the centrality of the preaching in the liturgy does not cease. Throughout the ages Satan has tried nothing else than to lead God’s people away from the glorious liberty of the Word into the bondage of ritualism, symbolism and idolatry. He attempts this also in our time.

Attack on the preaching

At the beginning of this century, there was in Europe a remarkable “liturgical movement” in the Reformed Churches. This movement, led in the Netherlands, for example, by the Groninger professor Dr. G. van der Leeuw, contended basically that in the Reformed liturgy the preaching had received too prominent a place above the sacrament. As a matter of fact, this movement sought to re-establish the definitive position and constituting character which the Lord’s Supper once had in the church. The worship service was seen as being a *sacramental* occurrence in which the preaching was not allowed to dominate.

This attempt to lead the church back into the “cursed idolatry” of Rome met with much resistance in the Reformed Churches.² The positive effect of this “liturgical movement” was, perhaps, that it asked more attention for other, neglected parts of the liturgy, but the negative effect was indeed that the central role of the preaching was undermined and an era of liturgical innovation began.

Since the early part of this century, however, a new and greater threat has emerged with respect to the role of the preaching. The “traditional” sermon (and with it the whole idea of preaching) has in the past decades come under much criticism and is today in some “Reformed” circles considered an *anachronism*, something which has had its time and is now out of date.³

Let us look at some of the statements currently being made about the preaching as we know it. The traditional preaching is considered to be a dull and dreary monologue which no longer functions in this media-oriented age with its fast-paced programming and instant communication. Many churches are steadily losing members and many of the members who stay

apparently do not really feel that they are suitably addressed in the preaching. Many sermons just pass most people by as being somewhat irrelevant and entirely impractical. Most preachers seem to be stuck with an ancient form and do not really address the true need and real situation of the hearers.

The theology of communication

Preaching is seen by many today as a “one man show,” too much of a monologue, essentially a very subjective and authoritarian form of communication which is no longer effective. Therefore, in an attempt to halt the exodus of disgruntled and uninterested members, many churches are spicing up the liturgy with various alternative activities, more congregational involvement and a general “loosening up.” We see this process taking place not only in the (Synodical) Reformed Churches in the Netherlands but also in the Christian Reformed Church in Canada and the United States. And if preaching in general is discredited, especially *catechism preaching* has become unpopular.

If in the past we have seen various “theologies” emerging, for example, the theology of hope or the theology of liberation, today we see an entire new field, the theology of *communication*. Anything that does not measure up to scientific standards of modern communication is cast aside as being of no use today for the church of Christ. And behind all this is the basic idea that the Bible itself, written 2000 years ago in another age, has no communicative value today. It is really Scripture criticism which has led also to liturgical experimentation!

We, too, are placed before some of these questions. Do we today still need “preaching?” Is our liturgy not dominated too much by the traditional sermon? Is there an underestimating of the sacraments, particularly the Lord’s Supper? Is the preaching today still effective and functional? Are not many sermons indeed dull monologues which lull people to sleep rather than keep them awake?

There are basically two questions here.⁴ The first question is more general: do we still need preaching? The second question is more specific: are today’s sermons adequate and effective? And only if we respond positively to the first question, does it make sense to ponder some aspects of the second one.

The character of the worship service

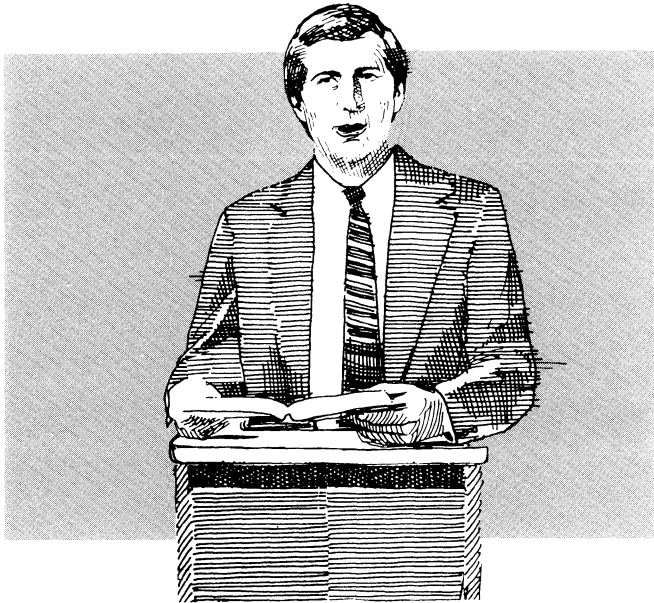
We must, also in the light of the above, defend vigorously today both the absolute *necessity* as well as the lasting *centrality* of the preaching in Reformed liturgy. The word “liturgy” means *service*, and it denotes both the contents and the order of the worship service. There can be no liturgy without preaching and in the liturgy the preaching takes in the key position.

We understand this all the more when we look at the *character* of the worship service. The worship service is nothing less than a *covenantal meeting* between God and His people.⁵ This means that it is a special and unique meeting, a holy service, which cannot be compared to any other meeting on earth.

Already in the Old Testament, the LORD *gathered* His people at the tabernacle and the temple. We find echoed in the

Psalms the joy of God's people at being called to this worship, e.g. Psalm 122:1, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go to the house of the LORD!" Not only did the LORD provide His people with a specific gathering *place*, but He also determined a special *day*, namely the sabbath, a day of solemn rest, "a holy convocation" (Leviticus 23:3).

This gathering or convocation always had a joyous character and is called in the Bible "an appointed *feast*." It is a celebration of reconciliation with God through the blood of the covenant, the sacrificial offerings, an enjoying of the peace and prosperity with God which He grants in His grace. This festive character of worship even deepens in the New Testament when the congregation rejoices in the reconciliation brought about by the blood of the one sacrifice of Christ!



The liturgy of the New Testament Church is fully determined by this one, given sacrifice of Christ. Christ is now in heaven as Mediator before God's throne. It has been said that the actual "liturgy" (for "liturgy" means basically the official work of Christ which He performs in the heavenly sanctuary, see: Hebrews 8-10) takes place in heaven.⁶ That same word "liturgy" now means to us the worship and service as it takes place in the gathering of the congregation.

The centrality of the preaching

In the New Testament worship service, God meets with His people in the new covenant established by the blood of Christ. It is a meeting in Christ, which takes place on the day of His glorious resurrection, by the power of His Spirit.

It is a meeting of two parties, God and His people. There is an experiencing of communion, an exchange of information, an engaging in conversation. We understand, of course, that it is the Lord who *initiates* this communion. He first calls His people and speaks to them. And the people may respond to His call and His Word in praise and prayer. It is the Lord who through the Word shapes, forms, and receives the believing response of His people!

Already in the time of the Old Testament there was the preaching of the gospel, the teaching performed by the priests and Levites. This tradition became especially accepted after the great Exile in the synagogues. The heart of the gathering in the synagogue was the reading and explaining of Scripture. Christ Himself during His earthly ministry followed this pattern, attending the gatherings in the synagogue, partaking in the reading and teaching of the Word of God.

In the New Testament Church the preaching immediately took in a central place. Already on the day of Pentecost, the signs had to be explained by the Word. The "great commission" which Christ gave to His disciples (Matthew 28:16-20) is one of preaching, sacraments and discipline, in that order, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations [preaching], baptizing them into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit [sacraments], teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you [discipline]"

The meetings of the congregation — indeed the life of the church! — are unthinkable without preaching. The hearts of people are opened by the preaching of the Word (Acts 16:14, the case of Lydia). This is clearly the teaching of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, "But how are men to call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10:14 & 15). The conclusion there is that "faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the *preaching* of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

Worship results from faith. Faith comes through the Word that is preached. Therefore the Word and its preaching take in the central place in Reformed liturgy. The preaching of the gospel is the first and foremost as well as the lasting and remaining task of the church throughout the latter days, as Paul admonished Timothy, ". . . preach the Word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort . . ." (II Timothy 4:2).

The church has therefore always maintained that the reading of the Word of God and the preaching of the gospel by lawful office-bearers is the heart of worship, the key and central element of the liturgy. It has been called the *constituting factor* and the *continuing factor*.⁷ Only by the divine Word, by the power of God's spirit is the church of Christ built and gathered. How else shall the people respond if not first God speaks?

This is the difference between church and sect, between church and cult. The sect or the cult establish themselves on human ideas and preferences. Like-minded people gather for their own purposes. Humanistic ideology leads to heathen idolatry. There is no communication from above, no communion with heaven. But the Word and its pure preaching makes the decisive difference between the church of God and the cults of man.

CL. STAM

¹Speech held for the League of Canadian Reformed Men's Societies, April 9, 1988, at Attercliffe, ON.

²See e.g. the essay of R.H. Kuipers in *Van den Dienst des Woords*, Oosterbaan en Le Cointre, Goes, 1944, p. 56 ff.

³I refer here to a number of publications, from which some material is borrowed:

Anne van der Meiden, *Alleen van Horen Zeggen*, Ten Have, Baarn 1980.

Dr. K. Runia, *Heeft Preken Nog Zin?*, Kok, Kampen, 1981.

Dr. C. Trimp, *Communicatie en Ambtelijke Dienst*, De Vuurbaak, Groningen, 1976.

Dr. C. Trimp, *Woord, Water en Wijn*, Kok, Kampen, 1985.

Henry J. Eggold, *Preaching is Dialogue*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1980.

⁴Runia, o.c. p. 16.

⁵See e.g. my *Everything in Christ*, Premier Printing, Winnipeg, 1979, p. 135 ff. See also:

Dr. K. Deddens, *Waar Alles van Hem Spreekt*, De Vuurbaak, Groningen, 1981, p. 10 ff.

G. van Dooren, *The Beauty of Reformed Liturgy*, Premier Printing, Winnipeg, 1980, p. 15.

⁶Dr. C. Trimp, *De Gemeente en Haar Liturgie*, van den Berg, Kampen, 1983, p. 58.

⁷See G. van Rongen, *Zijn Schone Dienst*, Oosterbaan en Le Cointre, Goes, 1956, p. 93;

K. Deddens, o.c. p. 54.

The boundaries of the church¹

Editorial note: *The Rev. J. Mulder sent us the following transcript of a speech that Dr. J. Faber delivered to the congregation of Burlington West on February 19, 1987. We gladly comply with his request to publish this as a report of that meeting. The topic is important enough.*

The speaking style of this address has been maintained. The subheadings are from the editors.

Introduction

The topic for tonight does not speak about the geographical boundaries of the church. Nevertheless, you will understand that the image — for there is an image in that title — is taken from geographical boundaries or limits. So, if you speak about the boundaries or the limits of the church, you are more or less dealing with the question who is in and who is out. Who is within the boundaries and who is outside the boundaries?

And if we speak about that topic of “The Boundaries of the Church” then we have to do basically with two situations. You have to do with the situations of individuals, believers or non-believers and where are those believers. Are they inside the church or can there be believers outside the church? So, then you speak about individual believers.

You can also think of communities. Then you come into the topic of the distinction between the true and the false church. The boundaries of the church — what do they mean for the topic of the true and the false church?

I come back to that distinction between individuals and communities. But let me immediately say that basically that is the distinction that you find in our Belgic Confession in Article 29 when on p. 462 of our Book of Praise there is spoken about the marks of the true and the false church. Then the Confession says in line 5 from the bottom on p. 462:

“We are not speaking here of the hypocrites, who are mixed in the Church along with the good and yet are not part of the Church, although they are outwardly in it. We are speaking of the body and the communion of the true Church which must be distinguished from all sects that call themselves the Church.”

You can say in that passage of our Con-

fession you have a distinction between individuals and communities or bodies. So, that are already two aspects of our topic that we have to keep in mind.

Let me also immediately by way of introduction — I am still busy with introductory remarks — say to you that I do not think that you will get tonight all answers to all questions for basically when we are busy with the topic then we are busy with all kinds of aspects — the work of Christ, the actions of man, the church in the eyes of God and the church in the eyes of man. But we are also busy with the factor of sin in human life and as soon as sin comes into the picture you will never be able to build up a complete harmonious system in which you have answered all questions. That is the destructive power of sin — there is so much sin also with respect to the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sin also of the children of God. We all have only a small beginning of the perfect obedience. We also have only a small beginning of the perfect obedience with respect to the church. We should be aware of the fact that because of that factor of sin we cannot exhaustively answer all questions.

That work, let me mention a topic, if you speak about the question whether the baptism of a person who has been baptized outside the church is a valid baptism or not — a well-known question and a very practical question. Then if you study that question then you can try to give an answer to all kinds of questions. I tried to give an answer.¹ But I am aware of the fact that also in that respect you always come into contact with sin which makes it impossible to give a completely harmonious answer, for the situation is not harmonious. The situation is a situation that has been caused by sin in human life.

And then you will understand that there is another introductory question. You will understand that the question about the boundaries of the church basically is answered by the deeper question about the church itself. What is the church of God? Now I will not repeat what I, for instance, have published in *Clarion* about the Church and the Reformed Confessions.² Although also tonight we will touch something of it, but I would like to begin with an historical part in order to

show you something of the fact how in the history of the church — in the broadest sense in the history of Christianity — there has been much discussion about the topic that we discuss tonight. Then I would like to make some systematic remarks about the topic.

The Donatist heresy

If we speak about the history of this question about the boundaries of the church then I would like to take you back to the struggle against the Donatists. You may ask, who are those Donatists? In what time period are we when we speak about the struggle against the Donatists? Well, we are in the fourth century after Christ. And if we speak about the struggle against the Donatists we speak especially about our brother Augustine who has taken part in that struggle against the Donatists in his own manner. What was the situation? Well, the situation was this — that in 305 there was a very great persecution of the church in the Roman Empire. It was the last persecution but it was certainly not the least persecution and during that persecution of the church in North Africa there had been what we would call ministers who had not been completely faithful. When there was the obligation to hand in Bibles, then some did so. And after that persecution, the question came up — who was good and who was wrong during that persecution? What do we do with ministers of the Word who have been wrong during that persecution? I tell it now in my own words what was the case.

There was in North Africa a man who was ordained to be a minister of the Word or episcopus, overseer of whom some rumoured that he had not been faithful during the persecution. Then there was a group, a staunch group of North African Christians who later received a leader with the name Donatus (therefore they are called Donatists) and that group of staunch North African fiery Christians said — If you have an overseer, a minister of the Word, a bishop who has been wrong during the persecution then he is an unholly man and then the sacraments that he administers are not true sacraments. So the validity of the sacraments was, as it were, combined with, coupled to the holiness of the one who

administered the sacraments. Then they placed themselves apart from the Catholic Church.

Basically there in North Africa they established their own schismatic groups and they proclaimed — we are the true church. The Catholic Church is the false church. We are the true church. They built up a whole system and within that system they also took up the idea that only baptism within the true church is true baptism. Therefore if someone joined the sect of the Donatists then he had to be baptized. We would say he had to be re-baptized. But they said he had to be baptized. And they spoke about the church — the true church — as a very closed concrete but also closed, positive entity. And that church was the church of the Donatists in North Africa.

Augustine's response

Then Augustine wrote his books and his pamphlets against those Donatists. And Augustine brought forth all kinds of arguments in connection with the sacraments. I will not go into that now but the main point is that Augustine dealt with the topic of the church and the concept of the church. He made some distinctions. Augustine said to those Donatists — in the first place — you have to distinguish between the church as it is now and the church as it will be after the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those Donatists took the text from Ephesians 5 about the bride of Christ, that the bride of Christ is without spot or wrinkle and they said, — and that was combined with the idea of the purity of the church and the purity of the offices of the church — they said, the bride of Christ is without spot or wrinkle! Then Augustine said, wait a moment, for we are not yet on the new earth! You must make a distinction between the church as it is now and the church as it will be after the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, sure, the Lord Jesus Christ will present to the Father His Bride as a Bride without spot or wrinkle. But that is an eschatological promise. That is no reality yet. You have to take that into consideration.

And the following point that Augustine brought forward over against those Donatists is this that he said you speak about the church in a kind of positivistic manner; for you the boundaries of the church are completely clear. He who belongs to the Donatists in North Africa is within the church. And he who does not belong to the Donatists in North Africa is without the church — outside the church. But then Augustine said, but you should refine your speaking about the church. And he took some texts from Scripture in order to explain that.

He took the text from II Timothy 2 where we read in verses 19 and 20:

“God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and 'Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.' In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and earthenware, and some for noble use, some for ignoble.” Now Augustine took that passage of Paul to Timothy and he strongly stressed, the Lord knows who are His. As you know, Augustine was the one who later brought forward, also in the beginning of the fifth century, God's eternal decree over against the Pelagians. The Lord knows who are His. And Augustine said, in that great house of God there are different vessels, not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and earthenware. And he said, therefore within the church, within the house of God you must make a distinction. You must know of a distinction. You must know of those who are by the electing grace of God true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and those who although they are in the church are not true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord knows who are His.

And then he took another passage from Scripture: I John 2. The apostle John writes the antichrist has come therefore we know that it is the last hour. “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that it might be plain that they all are not of us.” Then Augustine says, you see here

the apostle John makes a distinction between those who were in us and with us, but who were not of us and they have gone out because they were not of us. They were *in* the house but they were not of the house. They seemed to be inside but in reality they were outside. And then Augustine made the distinction between the communion of saints and the communion of the sacraments. That communion of the sacraments is a very large communion. All those who participate of the sacraments. But that communion of the saints is within that communion of the sacraments and that is the communion of the true believers in Jesus Christ. God knows who are His. So he made a distinction between the communion of the saints and the communion of the sacraments.

Augustine also wrote about that there can be wolves within the sheepfold and there can be sheep without the sheepfold. In his book on baptism against the Donatists he said there are some who as yet live wickedly or even lie in heresies or the superstition of the Gentiles and yet even then the Lord knows those who are His. For in that unspeakable foreknowledge of God many who seem to be without are in reality within. And many who seem to be within are really without. You will understand that this is important for the so-called topic of the boundaries of the church. Augustine says you should speak in a spiritual manner. You can have people who seem to be outside who are in reality within — namely, according to that



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foreknowledge of God. God knows who are His. And there are people who seem to be inside — think of the hypocrites — but in reality they are outside. That was the way in which Augustine tried to overcome that church concept of the Donatists which I call a positivistic church concept.

In that evaluation of the divergencies between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Canadian Reformed Churches the deputies also have quoted from Augustine, and they have quoted from Augustine because Augustine precisely in that point speaks about the church which is the church in the eyes of God. And you may say that in a certain way when Calvin speaks about the church. (We will come back to this.)

Developments in Rome

If we now go further in the history of the doctrine about the church for a moment, then I must say that that which Augustine had taught did not completely stay within the church. Especially in the Middle Ages and in the time of the Counter-reformation, the Roman Catholic Church came to a rigid position — a rigid position in this respect that only those people are really members of the church who have been baptized and who give themselves obediently to the government of the hierarchy especially of the Pope of Rome.

In the Counter-reformation Roman

Catholics spoke about the church as a visible entity as visible, one wrote, as the Kingdom of Venice or as the Republic of Rome. So visible is the church of God. It has visibility and you can precisely say who are members of that body and who are not members of that body and that body of the Roman Catholic Church is the one holy catholic and apostolic church of the creed.

Now you will understand that that rigid Roman Catholic position could not be completely maintained. Therefore you find in Roman Catholicism all kinds of attempts in order to give opening to the idea that there are believers outside the Roman Catholic Church, while nevertheless the Roman Catholic Church is the one holy catholic and apostolic church.

One of the attempts that the Roman Catholics have undertaken is the attempt of the desire of the church. The Roman Catholic theologians said that baptism is necessary for salvation but they also said that in the case of, e.g., the murderer on the cross there was no possibility for baptism anymore. Nevertheless, the murderer on the cross did not get lost, he entered paradise. Why? Because in his speaking he showed a desire for baptism. That desire for baptism takes in that situation the place of baptism itself. And so they said, if there is a person who lives outside the Roman Catholic Church but he wants to do what is good in the eyes of God then implicitly he has the desire of

being a member of the Roman Catholic Church. For that is good in the eyes of God. So there is a desire of the church and that desire of the church gives believers outside the church a certain relationship to the church.

Also, in that Roman Catholic way of thinking, especially about baptism, everyone who is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit basically has a relationship to the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church is the only true church and the sacrament is the sacrament of the church. So if you are baptized then, whether you know it or not, because of that fact of baptism you basically are under the jurisdiction of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. For that baptism has an indelible character; it makes a mark that cannot be erased.

Or they came up with the construction of the body of Christ and then they said with a human person you have a body and a soul. Now they said, so it is with the church as the body of Christ. You can make a distinction between the body of the church and the soul of the church. And someone can belong to the soul of the church without belonging to the body of the church. Someone can belong to the body of the church without belonging to the soul of the church. That is one of the ways in which the Roman Catholic doctrine has tried to find an answer to the question about the boundaries of the church.

The Second Vatican Council that was held from 1962 to 1965 made a whole statement about the church and they said there can be elements of the catholic church outside the catholic church and because of those elements of the catholic church outside the catholic church there is a direction towards the catholic church. They then made a whole circle as it were of all kinds of relations to the Roman Catholic Church. Relation of those who are in the Roman Catholic Church and who are true believers. Relation of those who are in the Roman Catholic Church and are not true believers. The relation of those who have been baptized outside the Roman Catholic Church and who nevertheless have a relation to the Roman Catholic Church. That is the way in which Roman Catholicism has tried to answer the questions that arose from their own church concept.

— To be continued
J. FABER

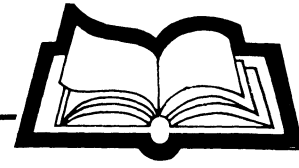
HYMN 36

Sull' ich meinem Gott Johann Schop, 1641, alt

1. He has come, the Ho-ly Spir-it!
Je-sus left us not a-lone
When He went up to in-her-it
Might and glo-ry on the throne,
For He sent the One He prom-ised:
Ho-ly Spir-it, Power of God.
Let us spread this truth a-broad
And un-ceas-ing-ly de-clare it.
Let us now our voic-es raise:
To the Spir-it we give praise.

¹Dr. Faber dealt with this question in his dissertation, *Vestigium ecclesiae. De doop als 'spoor der kerk' (Cyprianus, Optatus, Augustinus)* 1969 [ed.]

²See J. Faber, "The Doctrine of the Church in the Reformed Confessions," *Clarion*, 35:2-4 (1986). [ed.]



“Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.”

John 14:11

Final Options

In His parting words to His disciples, the Lord Jesus appears to give them a double choice with regard to their faith. Either they believe that He came from the Father, or they may believe in Him for the sake of His works themselves. He had previously said something similar to the Jews when He exhorted them that “even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father,” 10:38. These statements have even led some to suggest that the Lord Jesus speaks of two different types of faith, holding that if the one is not attainable, He would settle for the second. After all, faith in His works is better than no faith at all!

However, the Lord Jesus does not introduce a number of options in the way of faith and obedience. There is only one way of salvation! In fact, He scolds the disciples that they had not progressed more in faith. And He asserts that if the first part of His call to faith is as yet too impossible for them to believe, then they should still believe in His works so that, through constant faith in and reflection on them, they might be led to see Him as the Son of God.

How could the Lord Jesus appeal to His works in this way? From the first the Lord Jesus taught that the works He did proved that the Father had sent Him, and that the Father was working in and through Him, 5:36. Repeatedly, the Lord Jesus shifts the attention from Himself to the Father. In a sense, His works are the works of the Father done in and through Him. They are strictly speaking not His own works, but the works which the Father allowed Him to do, John 8:28. He is the faithful Messenger and Ambassador of God.

And what makes His works different? As He Himself says, He did the works which *no one else did*, 15:24. His mighty works were both quantitatively and qualitatively distinguished from all the works of the prophets before Him. To be sure, His greatest wonders — the resurrections of the dead — had occurred in the Old Testament, too. But never had they occurred as frequently as performed by the Lord Jesus, and never in His new way. His way was the way of the new beginning, the way of a new creation! He spoke and it came to be; He commanded and it was done! He spoke in His own name, His own authority and His own power, (Calvin).

From all this His claim that “I am He” (8:28) was proven to be true! “No one ever spoke like this man!” (7:46). The works themselves proved that He came down from heaven as the special Messenger of God, the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. Even the term “work” as used by John coincides with the Septuagint rendering of God’s

creation work. In His work, the Lord Jesus brings paradise back to us! The garden of the beginning is recreated through the wonderful power of God on earth in the Messiah!

Even if the disciples and others only believed in the works themselves, they would in time necessarily be led to the fundamental reality that Jesus was the Son of God, the heavenly King! In fact, the Lord Jesus, in giving what appears as a double option, prepares the disciples for His coming ascension. He leaves room for them to come to greater understanding! He leaves room for the events to come to do their work! He leaves room for His disciples to see how His ascension will form the last missing piece in the puzzle of His works, by which they can only come to one conclusion: He is the Messiah. For He not only said that He came from the Father; He also announced that He was returning to the Father again, cf. 7:33, 8:21.

Faith in His works is then not enough for us! In fact, Christ always ties His works to His message! As He says to the Jews, “This is the work of God that you believe in Him whom He has sent,” 6:29. All the works only confirm His words. And His word is confirmed in His ascension! This glorious exaltation leaves only one option of faith for the disciples and for us: all His works point to the central truth that “I am He!”

Later we find the disciples of Jesus working in the same way as their Master. Peter also starts “from below” with the many signs and wonders of the Lord. In his first sermon, he introduces the risen Lord as “Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know, —” Acts 2:22. From the signs and wonders Peter comes to the resurrection and ascension, and so he preaches Jesus as the Son of God who came to pay for our sins and thus open the door to the paradise of God!

So we may know and confess our Saviour. He did the work that no one else did! He opened paradise for us! And we have the testimony made more sure, through the prophetic word given to us. Both the words and the work point to the restoration of God’s glorious beginning for us! And today we have a greater testimony than the apostles. It then remains for us not only to believe the works themselves, but also believe in the words of the Lord Jesus, and in the apostolic testimony. For He came that we may have life, and have it abundantly! He came from God, and went to God again in order that God’s gift of eternal life might be given to us!



From down under . . .

. . . two news items which are of interest. The first item deals with supplementary teacher training. Our Australian sisterschools cannot boast a Reformed training institution for their teachers. The Boards there have always considered it necessary to provide additional training for their teachers to equip them the better for the work in Reformed schools. As a result, a REFORMED EDUCATION DIPLOMA was designed to supplement the training of teachers at secular institutions. In a recent school magazine the Board's chairman, br. J. Eikelboom, reported on the graduation of "the class of '87."

The graduation ceremony of eight students who successfully completed the fifth course of the Reformed Education Diploma took place recently in the Highschool Library. Two years of evening classes and home study culminated in a happy and festive gathering where the beaming students were the centre of attention. Parents, relatives and friends were there to witness the graduation and enjoy the late supper, well organized by our Home Economics teacher ably supported by a number of helpful and friendly girls. The audience first listened to a brief outline of the extent of the work done by the students during their two years of studies, followed by some remarks on the importance of the course for the development of our young teachers in particular, and the continued well-being of our Reformed Schools. Parts of a paper by br. van der Ven, originally presented to the Summer Convention of the Western Canadian Reformed Teachers' Association at Langley, BC in August 1986, were referred to, in particular some of the thoughts of Dr. J. van Bruggen (1983) which were found to be of great interest, as evidenced by the reactions later on during the evening.

"As one of the characteristics of reformed education van Bruggen emphasizes the need for continuous self-examination whether our actions do measure up against God's demands; and this self-examination certainly includes our actions and deeds as Reformed-Christian teachers in a Reformed-Christian classroom. He iden-

tifies three essential elements of true Christianity and thus of true Christians:

- a) *faith* as expressed in the Apostolic confession;
- b) *conversion and regeneration* as directed by the norm of God's law in the Ten Commandments: obedience;
- c) *prayer* as taught in the Lord's prayer."

In the address these elements were further developed, with the aim of placing this graduation event into the perspective of the great importance of these students work for Reformed Education.

Following the handing out of the Certificates — with applause from the audience — one of the students responded in expressing thanks to God as the giver also of the opportunities for these studies and the good results achieved. Finally, one of the parents spoke a few words of thanks and appreciation, to all who had participated in the course work. It was an evening of joy and gratitude.

As announced earlier, another course is being planned to commence early next year with the aid of recent papers and publications on Reformed Education philosophy and curriculum. May this work continue and prosper

for the benefit of the schools, to the glory of God and the promoting of His Kingdom.

We add our congratulations and best wishes. It is most gratifying to notice Reformed people across the world sharing the same concern for the training of teachers for Reformed schools.

The second item from "down under" concerns expansion. The Armadale John Calvin School will be expanded to include a senior high school division. Grade XI was started this past February, and Grade XII will be added, the Lord willing, next year, 1989. The principal of the high school, br. S. H. Terpstra writes about the organizational consequences of these expansion plans, the need for added facilities and additional staff. But he emphasizes the need to continue to think about the unique character of this Reformed high school, and how that character should be realized in the school's curriculum. He comments,

However the most important aspect of our work, the one which takes the most time, and which is the most intangible of them all, is the aspect relating to the fact that the John Calvin School is our school, the school which is founded on the baptismal promise of the parents, and which professes to be an extension of the home where children are brought up in the knowledge of the Lord contained in the Scriptures and Confessions. The School's task is to unveil a little more in each lesson of the revelation of the Lord in His Word and His works. This means that we are not able to just take over the courses of the Secondary Education Authority which are permeated by humanism, and which have as their intent the prime objective to create good human beings who are able and capable of fulfilling and achieving that which their heart desires.

Our task in each subject area, indeed in each subject component, is to determine the way in which that particular component functions within the framework of our school and contributes to its purpose so that our students realize and accept that they are children of the Lord and that they are studying His words and works. Courses at this school have as their objective that the student grow in knowledge

OUR COVER



and acceptance of their Lord who has established the covenant with them and who demands an obedient way of life in joyful service.

That is the real work which needs to be done and which has been commenced in the various areas over the past few months. It is work which is of an ongoing nature, and which requires much effort and insight as well as help from other people within the Association at various times. It is of paramount importance for the school so that it maintains and fulfils its function as Reformed School in Australia.

Indeed, our teachers, together with their Boards and Education Committees, must continue with what Terpstra calls "the real work." Since Reformed education comes alive in the classroom, in the everyday learning environment when teacher and students meet, applying the principles of Reformed education to the everyday situation of the classroom is an ongoing concern of all involved. This work will never finish. Novices will need to make these principles their own; experienced teachers will continue to refine their art as Reformed teachers. Teachers and others can only grow in knowledge,

understanding and expertise by being actively involved in this work — in daily lesson planning, in conference, convention, and workshop, in special curriculum development activities such as those undertaken by CARE, the committee for curriculum development. It is imperative that this work continues in order that our schools can fulfil their function as Reformed schools across the world. Parents, support your teachers and committees in this important work.

T.M.P. VANDERVEN

Perspectives on teaching and learning

Speaking and listening: Language — God's divine gift

But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" Genesis 3:9

When we speak we usually address someone with whom we wish to share and exchange ideas. Such speaking tries to reach out to the other, and tries to make the other understand, providing that we talk TO the other and not AT the other. When we find ourselves speaking AT the other, we tend to rattle on without regard for the ideas of the other: we are not really listening, that is we are not trying to understand, consider and weigh ideas. We are then not engaged in a two-way conversation. Speaking always assumes listening, as the front of a coin assumes a reverse.

At times we talk to ourselves, especially when we have to solve a difficult problem, or when we are troubled. Such speaking (muttering) seems to be more a matter of thinking out loud than an exchange of ideas; we sometimes need such mutterings in order to properly evaluate our own thoughts.

Speech not only assumes a listener, but also a smaller or larger vocabulary, the organic "bricks" of the language. But language needs more than words. Single words without a context do not make a language. The French recognize the important difference between a word-in-context and a word-without-context by using two different words: "mot" indicates a word without context, while the word "parole" means a word in context. Therefore the French call the Bible, the Word of God: la Parole.

During the development from baby to adult, we learn language always in con-

text, from babblings which are often readily understood by mothers, to single-word sentences, to increasingly complex sentences and so on. Language learning always results from the need for and the desire to communicate, which is the context for language learning. Indeed, one of the greatest miracles of human development is the acquisition of language: a six-year-old is a most competent and expert communicator, he is able to speak and listen, to express his thoughts and to respond to the thoughts of others! Rarely do children fail to learn to become efficient language users, a miracle indeed.

We learn the language of our mother, our mother tongue. In that language we express our thoughts and feelings, our desires and frustrations, our ideas about others. The greater the language facility, the greater the vocabulary, the better we are able to express our views and opinions to others. Although three hundred words may be sufficient to communicate with others, a larger vocabulary will allow us much greater subtlety and precision in expression.

Language is also the culture tool par excellence. Without language man would have been severely hindered in the execution of his cultural mandate. At Babel God confused the language of the people, which made them unable to communicate, resulting in the unfinished tower.

Often the question is asked whether animals also have a language. It is known that some animals can communicate, for instance by warning each other. Such

warning sounds have been taped and are sometimes used to drive off unwanted birds in orchards. Of interest is also the research with dolphins which has led us to discover how these animals are able to respond to distress signals. When such signals are received from a dolphin in distress, other dolphins respond to this communication by organizing an efficient rescue squad and bring their endangered comrade to the water surface. However, we should not think of such communication as a language in which the dolphins would be able to share and exchange thoughts. This ability of dolphins does not lead to the development of a "dolphin culture" either.

Indeed, man only has the true gift of language, a divine gift of the Triune God. But this gift is not only used for good, but also for evil. I think of the Letter of James. In chapter 3 the apostle writes, *if any one makes no mistakes in what he says he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also*. A few verses farther on he writes about the tongue, a little member only, which *boasts of great things*. He compares the tongue with a fire, with an unrighteous world which is set on fire by hell. *With it we bless the LORD and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the likeness of God*.

Listen to the discussion between Satan and Eve: *Did God say, 'You shall not eat . . . ?'* And having committed the first sin, the language coarsens, and is misused with the brazen accusation, *The woman whom thou gavest to me . . .* A

little later we read of the discussion between God and Cain after the rejected sacrifice while Abel's slain body is left in the field, when Cain answers the LORD's question with an insolent, *Am I my brother's keeper?*

Indeed, language is a divine gift, but a gift which has been stolen by Satan.

True conversation means reaching out to the other, evaluating the thoughts and ideas of the other. When we have a serious conversation with someone — no, not when we are engaged in mere chatter or empty bickering — we soon enough discover whether the other's thoughts have depth and substance, whether he has thought about things. And if that is the case such a conversation can be uplifting and inspiring. Therefore, if we wish to speak with one another we ourselves

must have something of substance to talk about as well, ideas and thoughts which must be normed by our Christian faith to the Word of God. To put it in other words, before we can truly speak with the other we ourselves should have the firm conviction of faith through which our mind is renewed.

Such a conviction, such faith does not blow through the window, it is acquired through hard labour, the labour of reading and studying. Upbuilding conversations can only come about when we have gained knowledge of the Scriptures, when our mind is filled with God's thoughts. Such knowledge will help us to withstand Satan's lures; it will save us from empty and vain chatter; it will help us use the divine gift of language to the glory of God and to the benefit of our neighbour. Are

we active enough in this regard? Do our conversations and our discussions at home, at school, in social encounters, at youth club, at our societies, reflect the wisdom of God? Do we use the means given to us in the treasures of good literature?

Let us encourage our young people to soak in the riches of God's Word so that they have indeed worthy thoughts to think about. Let all of us practice what we preach — and remember the words of the apostle James.

T.M.P. VANDERVEN

Based on P. Jasperse: JONG EN BEJAARD IN DE MAALSTROOM, Deel I, "Onze Gespreken," and "Spreken en Luisteren," pp. 18-25. Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1973.

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

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OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

BAKKER, Jelle, geboren op 1 oktober 1922, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Terschellingstraat 38, Den Haag, naar Canada vertrokken op 25 september 1952.

VAN DE BELD, W.J.A., geboren op 27 november 1922, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: G. Doustraat 194 1A, Amsterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 13 juni 1957.

BLANKERT, J.C., geboren op 26 juli 1922, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: K1. Merwede 19, Diemen, naar Canada vertrokken op 12 november 1958.

VAN EIJK, Willem, geboren op 25 augustus, 1922, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Bilderdijkstraat 18, Gouda, naar Canada vertrokken op 16 juni 1958.

VAN GELDEREN, P., geboren op 5 februari 1923, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Meeldijk, Spijkenisse, naar Canada vertrokken op 23 mei 1967.

VAN DER KRAATS, Hendrikus, geboren op 2 oktober 1922, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Gildestraat 2, Vught, naar Canada vertrokken op 17 juli 1953.

LEEMBURG, Sjoerd, geboren op 21 februari 1905, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: van Nijenrodestraat 5, Den Haag, naar Canada vertrokken op 3 juni 1958.

VAN LUNENBURG, Gerhardus Hendricus, geboren op 11 december 1922 te Haarlem, laatste woonplaats in Nederland: Haarlem, naar Canada vertrokken op 30 maart 1954.

PADBERG, Albertus M., geboren op 14 maart 1909, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Bultsweg 61, Enschede, naar Canada vertrokken op 1 april 1959.

ROBLES, Abraham gehuwd met Jeanette HEERTJE, beiden gewoond hebbende te Toronto op 44 Walner Road. Dit adres dateert van 1953.

DE RUITER, Nicolaas Maurits en Louis Leonoardus, beiden geboren te Den Haag resp. op 12 mei 1945 en 26 april 1947. Naar Canada vertrokken op 1 mei 1958.

CHURCH NEWS



CALLLED to the Free Reformed Church at Kelmscott, West Australia (second call)

REV. C. BOSCH

of Smithville, ON

* * *

CHANGE of place and time of worship:

CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF ELORA, ON

Meeting place: Alma Community Hall
Times: 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

SCHUTS, M.A., geboren op 21 december 1909, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Kramatweg 84, Amsterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 27 april 1953.

SMIDT, Johannes, geboren op 17 november 1908, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Kievitslaan 89, Vinkeveen, naar Canada vertrokken op 21 december 1962.

SJOERDS, Rintje, geboren op 20 januari 1908, laatste woonplaats in Nederland: Amsterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 17 juli 1967.

SPITSE, Klasinus, geboren op 23 oktober 1907, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Zwarteweg 63, Aalsmeer, naar Canada vertrokken op 7 februari 1952.

TULP, Wilhelmina, geboren op 4 januari 1928 te Amsterdam, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Koningstraat 21, Hilversum. Naar Canada vertrokken op 5 april 1962.

VLOOSWYK, Johannes, geboren op 25 oktober 1907, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Nieboerweg 9, Den Haag, naar Canada vertrokken op 19 juni 1952.

WESTHOVENS, Peter Jozef, geboren op 5 november 1922, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Wilhelminastraat 39, Meerssen. Naar Canada vertrokken op 21 juni 1966.

VAN WISSEN, Johannes Adrianus, geboren op 8 juli 1926 te Delft, laatstbekende woonplaats in Canada: Alliston, ON.

De Consul-Generaal
voor deze:-
Mevr. G. SCHNITZLER
Fgd. KANSELIER

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

In 1894 the first Synod was held of those who now called themselves the Christian Reformed Church. It was held in Utrecht.

The moderamen of this Synod stated in the preface to a brochure that this document "is printed on behalf of Synod, according to the mandate of Synod."

The title of the booklet reads, *Historical Information about the Secession and the Doleantie As Also about the Grounds on Which the Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands Has Continued to Exist Also after the Union of June 1892.*

In this booklet we find the at least semi-official reasons formulated not by others but by the persons themselves who were convinced that they could not go along with the merger of 1892.

The grounds which are given are basically the same ones which we heard before, with a few elements added.

There is, in the first place, the complaint that the principle of the Secession has been abandoned and sacrificed. Further it was stated that "the union was one with the old adversaries of the Secession who only because of the failure of their efforts in the Netherlands Reformed (Hervormde) Church were pushed towards merging." In the third place there is the accusation that the Congregations have been lorded over and that they silently had been led off the proper and correct way. Their assets, too, it was said, were withdrawn from the purpose for which they had been established and gathered. The name of the Church also played a part: we have been deprived of the name in which a principle of the Secession was expressed.

First about the above-mentioned reasons.

It will not be necessary to add much to what has been said before in order to refute these claims.

As far as the "principle of the Secession" is concerned, it has already been shown that the brothers of the Christian Reformed Church certainly did not abandon this. The Draft-Act was rejected by them and later on also set aside by the Netherlands Reformed Synod. In its stead came the declaration by the Christian Reformed Leeuwarden Synod of 1891, which was accepted by the Netherlands Reformed Synod of The Hague 1891. For clarity's sake we repeat the second point here.

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

If this means a giving up of the "principle of the Secession," we do not know what then this "principle" was.

As for the statement that the Doleantie Churches were more or less compelled to seek union because their goal had not been achieved, this is an allegation which is hard to prove. It may have been true that "In 1891 their condition was pretty bad. They had lost the court cases. The doleantie-zeal had cooled down. The doleantie action was at a dead end. The Netherlands Reformed (Hervormde) Church experienced a revival. The anti-revolutionary politics had suffered tremendously under these relations. It was misery on all sides."

Let all this be true. Should, then, not the "special providence of God" be recognized in this course of events?

It is always dangerous to reason along the lines of "What if . . .?"

Let us, however, for a moment, for the sake of argument, assume that the Doleantie had succeeded in all these above mentioned points instead of having to cope with the one disappointment after the other. What could have been expected in that case? In all likelihood this, that a merger — if anything at all would have come of it — had to be effectuated on the terms of the Doleantie Churches. May we, then, not recognize the hand of the Lord in bringing about such a situation that a merger not only was going to be considered but even became a fact? In any case, even if the Doleantie Churches were brought to seeking a merger "by necessity compelled," this is still no reason why a merger should be refused or condemned. After all, both the Christian Reformed Church and the Netherlands Reformed Churches were standing on the same basis. There may very well be a considerable amount of truth in the thought that no merger might have occurred if the Doleantie had turned out to be a "success story." The following may provide an indication in that direction.

"It was understandable that the consistory of the Christian Reformed Congregation of Amsterdam immediately took some action after the suspension of the ministers and consistory members by the Classical Board of Amsterdam. For this consistory appointed the three ministers that were there, Rev. Gispen, Neyens and Brouwer and the oldest three elders to bring a visit to Dr. A. Kuyper to have a discussion with him about what had happened and what was to happen now. This committee was delegated by the consistory of that time in the sacred belief that soon they could arrive at cooperation, and the committee stressed to Kuyper that the doors of the Christian Reformed Church were wide open for him and his followers and that nothing would be more according to the desire of the Christian Reformed than that they were to proceed being of one mind and one soul. These naive brothers really did think that a second secession took place there and that the new movement immediately would seek contact with the Christian Reformed; they had looked at the Doleantie through Secession glasses. Would they ever be disappointed!

"Dr. Kuyper received the Committee from the Amsterdam Consistory very kindly, but when they got to the critical point, that the doors of the Christian Reformed Church were open for Dr. Kuyper and his fellow soldiers, he made a movement with his hand which showed clearly: you don't have to count on that, because we don't even consider this. The committee returned from their visit very disillusioned and reported on it at the consistory. And then the ministers strongly urged the consistory to take action against those of the members who visited the gatherings in the halls."

Should, with a view to this, our conclusion have to be that a merger would have become a fact anyway, even if the Lord had not brought the brothers together? Never.

The Other Reasons for Dissent

Another reason brought to the fore was that the name of the Church had been sacrificed.

In the first place, this refers to the plural Churches on which the Doleantie brothers insisted. We saw before that the Christian Reformed brothers were afraid that by abandoning the singular of Church the unity would be more or less denied. Yet they agreed to the plural.

Of more (sentimental) importance was to them the word "Christian." They had become fond of it, neglecting the fact that it was only because the Netherlands Reformed (Hervormde) Church lay exclusive claim to the title Reformed (Gereformeerd) that in 1834 the name Reformed (Gereformeerde) Churches could not be carried.

At the union with the "Cross Churches" in 1869, the name Christian Reformed Church was chosen, as the Hervormde Church still had not given up its claim. Any other name but Reformed (Gereformeerde) Churches was a temporary designation and thus there should have been thankfulness that finally the old name was possible and became a reality.

The argument that the Christian Reformed Church was robbed of its name does not sound very impressive and convincing in light of what already the brothers in the days of the Secession were trying to express: we are the (continuation of the) old Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

The Doleantie Churches objected to the word "Christian." On them and others maintaining the word "Christian" would make the impression as if they were going to be "absorbed" by the Christian Reformed Church instead of merging with them. Annexation, however, was not the intention.

Behind their refusal to accept the word "Christian" and their objection even to the impression as if they were received into the Christian Reformed Church, there may also have been a certain conviction that the "principle" of the Doleantie was just as correct as the "principle" of the Secession and that for that reason they wished to avoid anything which might cast a shadow of doubt on the fact that here two "equals" merged.

Deletion of the word "Christian," however, was not a reason which could stand as a valid argument why union was not allowed.

As for the argument that anyone wishing so had been entered into the membership registers without examination or discipline being maintained — which was another point brought to the fore — we realize that with every reformation there are members who go along without being fully aware of the issues at stake but who follow simply because they like their minister or are attached to their place in the pew, or for whatever other impure reason there may be.

In the Secession as well as in the Doleantie the "place in the pew" was of no influence at all: the buildings were lost. Although, therefore, there may have been impure motives, and although persons may have been included in the membership whose confession or conduct made them worthy of discipline, two aspects should be borne in mind.

In the first place, when a consistory decides to cast off the yoke and leads the congregation towards freedom, it is only a matter-of-course that all who were members

before that decision and follow the office-bearers, are continued as members. Even if only a minority of the consistory leads the brothers and sisters to freedom, they will have to count as members all those who follow them in the path of obedience.

Thus it is only logical that all who followed the office-bearers in the Doleantie were counted as members.

This argument would have some strength of conviction if the Doleantie Churches had been slack in exercising discipline and had continued to let all whose confession or conduct were reprehensible continue as members in good standing without applying discipline where necessary. There is no indication that they were unfaithful in this respect.

Another objection to the union was that the members of the congregation had not been consulted. If this had been done, and their vote had been asked, it was claimed, the result would have been totally different and there would have been no union.

It is difficult to say with certainty what would have happened. The claim may or may not have been correct.

What is certain is that leaving a decision up to the members of the congregation is not Reformed Church Polity. The right of decision rests with the consistory. We mentioned it before.

A consistory will do well when informing and consulting with the congregation wherever deemed necessary and whenever possible. We do not know where this was done and where it was not done.

Would, however, even if none of the congregations had been informed and/or consulted by any consistory, this have been a valid reason for abstaining from a merger and for breaking away from it?

One could blame only a local consistory for agreeing to a merger without informing their own congregation, but to say that the fact that the *members* were not offered an opportunity to express themselves is pointing to a non-Reformed, even un-Reformed practice.

Besides, an as great as possible openness had been displayed by the ecclesiastical assemblies as well as by the deputies involved. Practically everyone could follow the course of events. Thus the members had ample time to lodge their objections with their consistories, so that the members themselves are to blame as well, if they considered the matter to be that serious and did not use the time available to convince their consistory that the Church was not permitted by the Lord to proceed towards a merger.

The congregation — which in the Christian Reformed parlance of 1869 meant the local Churches — were most certainly consulted and this objection must be denied as well.

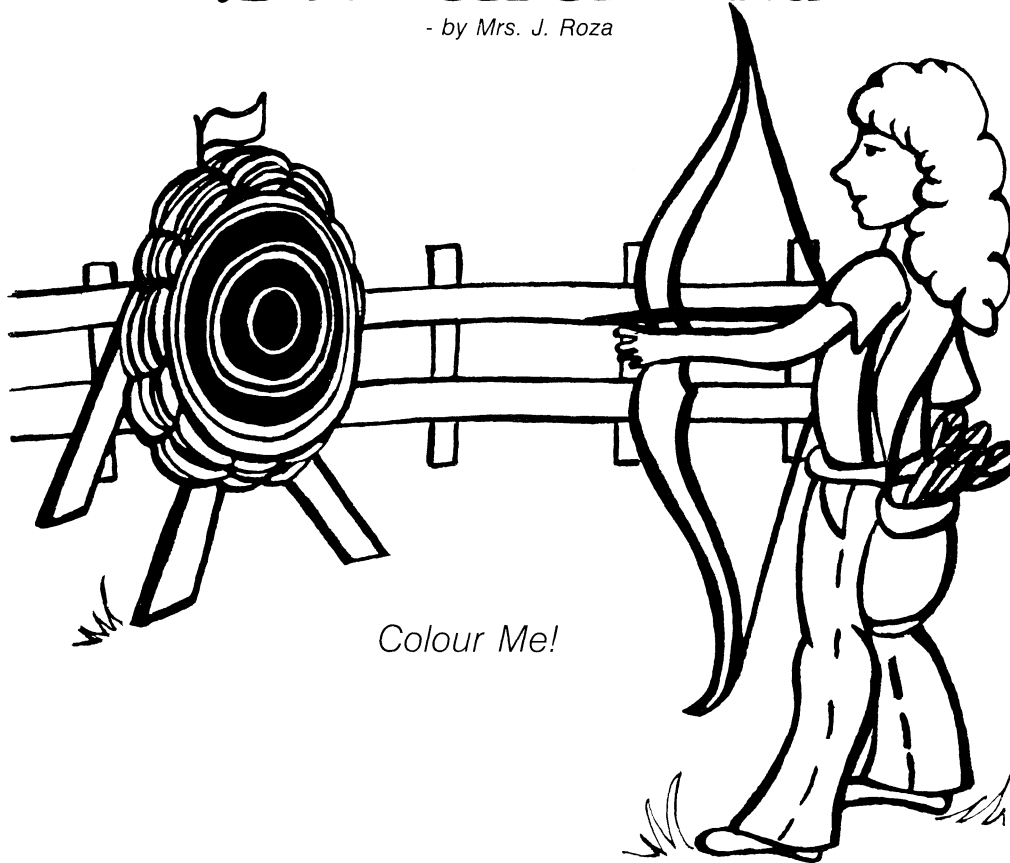
The Last Objection

The last objection which was raised — afterwards, that is — against the union was the question of the so-called presumptive regeneration. It has to be stated that neither in the negotiations about the merger nor in the decision or even in the discussions at the Christian Reformed Synods this point played any part. It was raised in the objections submitted by Church members at the last held Synod, where the decision to unite was taken, but this was all.

— *To be continued*

Search & Find

- by Mrs. J. Roza



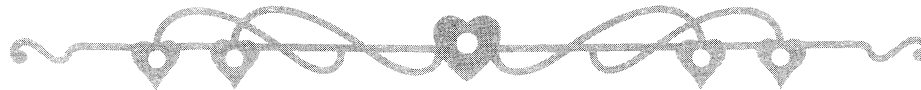
Colour Me!

THIS MONTHS CATEGORY:

Athletics

ARCHERY is not an easy sport. To be good at it you must do a great deal of practice. The equipment that you need is a target with a bullseye fitted onto a round thick mat of woven grass or straw called a butt. You'll also need a bow, arrows, and a quiver to hold your arrows. You also must practice safety and make sure that no one steps into the path of your arrow.

In Biblical times there were also archers. It was also means for getting food and protecting oneself. There also once was a young man who lived in a desert and became an archer. He lived with his mother in the desert of Paran. He was the son of Abraham. Do you know who he was?



TEXT: 1 Corinthians 9:25, *Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.*



Dear Busy Beavers,

A day full of surprises that first Pentecost!
First there were those wonderful signs of the sound of wind,
and tongues as of fire on the disciples' heads.

But look at those *disciples!*

How they have *changed!*

You remember how those same disciples had run away
that terrible night when their Master was captured by the band
of soldiers.

You remember them hiding in grief and fear on Easter
morning.

Even when their Lord was ready to ascend to heavenly
glory, they still did not understand about Jesus' kingdom.

But this time they did remember what their Lord told them
about staying in Jerusalem to wait for the outpouring of the
Holy Spirit.

And now that Pentecost morning is here, look at those
same disciples!

They are no longer fearful and shy.

There they are telling and persuading all who will listen
of the mighty works of God!

Why so different all of a sudden?

Well, you know the answer.

Christ had poured out His Holy Spirit on them.

Now that the Holy Spirit lives in their hearts they speak
out boldly. They are a "new creation."

They are Christ's witnesses first in Jerusalem, then Sa-
maria, and then to all the world.

We, too, remember how the Lord ascended into heaven
and poured out His Spirit on His church.

We, too, have that same wonderful promise that the Holy
Spirit will live in our hearts and help us, too, to live a life that
pleases the Lord.

"If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit,"
Galatians 5:25.



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Derek Bouwman*. Thank you for the riddles and also for the colour-
ful picture! I see you are a real Busy Beaver already.
Keep up the good work!

Of course you may join the Club, *Barbara Kobes*. For a
list of people who would like a pen pal, just look in *Our Little
Magazine* in the March 4/88 issue of *Clarion*. Lots of success,
Barbara. Let me hear when you get a letter from your pen pal,
all right?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Sara Plantinga*. We are
happy to have you join us. Will you write and tell us about your
family and what you like to do in your free time?

You really were spoiled on your birthday, *Jodie Bouwman!*
And what lovely plans you have for the summer. Thank you
for the pretty picture and the lovely calligraphy. Keep up the
good work, Jodie!

I see you are a good puzzler with a sharp eye, *Amy Hof-
sink*. That's great. And I see you have plans for the summer,
too. Be sure to write and tell us how you enjoy your trip!

How is Pax doing, *Jacoba Harlaar*? Is he a well-behaved
dog? Have the bantam eggs hatched, *Jacoba*? I see you're
doing well at school — that's great! Keep up the good work.
And be sure to let us in on the fun you're planning for your
sister's big day!

Hello, *Jessica Beintema*. It was good to hear from you
again! Thank you very much for your interesting story. We'll
save it for another time since this time we had a "story" about
Ascension and Pentecost. Is that all right with you? Bye for
now, *Jessica*.

I see you are keeping very busy, *Peter John Sikkema*. I
really am curious how your projects for *Fine Arts* turn out. Did
you find the research for your wheat farming project interesting,
Peter John?

How did you like the skating, *Laura Aasman*? I'm glad you
enjoyed your spring break. And now with spring here are you
looking forward to summer holidays? Thank you for the puzzle,
Laura.

Hello, *Mark Timmerman*. It was nice to hear from you
again. You like to help keep those Busy Beavers busy, right?
Keep up the good work, *Mark*! Bye for now.

That was a good idea you had for a puzzle, *Carolyn Van
Andel*. I'm glad you had such a good time with your friend. Keep
busy, *Carolyn*. And I hope to hear from you again soon.

PICTURE

By Busy Beaver *Richard Feenstra*



CHUCKLES

Riddles from Busy Beavers
Derek Bouwman and *Mark Timmerman*

1. What has more legs, one horse or no horse?
2. Why can't you trick a snake?
3. What did the salad dressing say to the fridge?
4. Why did the chicken cross the road?
5. Why did the chicken cross the playground?
6. If you gave one friend 15¢ and another 10¢, what time would it be?
7. Where is the center of gravity?
8. What did the bald man say when he got a comb for his birthday?
9. Why are flowers lazy?

(See answers)