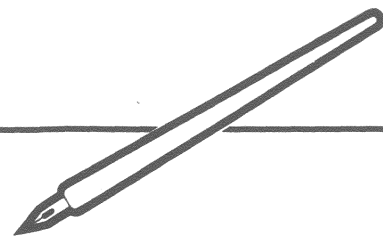




Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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The College

A College issue

This issue of *Clarion* is devoted to the College. The reader will find a report of the Convocation and Anniversary Meeting, the report of the principal of the College, Dr. J. Faber, and the first part of his address on "The Catholic Character of the Church." In this issue we also place information about a two-year program of study at the College, possible, e.g., for Mission Aid workers or teachers or others who would like to build up their knowledge.

That we have our own Theological College is a reason for great thankfulness. Our Reformed principle is that the training of ministers for the churches should be done at a theological institution of learning which is owned and governed by the churches. In North America often colleges and seminaries are ruled by a private society or board. We base our principle, among other things, on II Timothy 2:2, where the apostle Paul says to Timothy, "what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." The professors teach students, who, in turn, will teach others that which the Lord entrusted to His apostles, and which we have in the apostolic writings, besides the prophetic scriptures.

All this is set in the frame of "for the church, by the church." Through the grace of God, we have now had, for nineteen years, our own Canadian Reformed Theological College, set up and supported by our Canadian Reformed Churches, for the training of our Canadian Reformed students to become minister of God's Word in one of our Canadian Reformed congregations. This is and remains the reason for having the College.

Development and sharing

At the same time, there is a natural development through which the Canadian Reformed and the Australian Free Reformed sister churches have come to a closer cooperation. I shall not elaborate on this point since it is dealt with in the principal's report.

But this is not all. There is more. Since our gracious God grants us so much in our own College, it is also His grace that we are allowed to share what we have received with others and that our College can be of help for theological students from outside our Canadian and Australian Reformed Churches who come to us for a Reformed theological training.

One could frown somewhat on this development. But must we not reason in this way: that it is typical for a Christian that he is willing to share with others the grace of God which he received as a gift? What we have is not really our own. It is the Lord's. What we have is entrusted to us to serve God with it and also to serve the neighbour in sharing it with him. I am not talking here about the financial aspects, only about the Reformed instruction.

Besides, although we do not seek it, it is, nevertheless,



an honour when other churches, such as the Free Reformed Churches, or individual students from elsewhere, choose our College. There is the recognition by Reformed churches and students that our College is a Reformed institution, which is what they seek. Sharing God's gifts does not make one poor; it enriches.

Nevertheless, the College remains first of all there for students from the Canadian and Australian Reformed Churches. If all goes according to plan, and under the condition of James, in the coming years the number of students from our own churches will increase. But the time that they will finish their studies will take another six or more years. By that time the number of retired ministers will increase, and with it the number of vacancies. This means: the College is there and has to produce candidates. However, the congregations have to provide these students. Out of their midst they have to come. Let us pay attention to this need in our families and congregations, while praying that God, through His Spirit, may work in the hearts of young men and plant there the desire to serve the Lord in the office of minister of His Word and shepherd over His flock.

J. GEERTSEMA

The annual *Clarion* meeting

The day after the College evening, the editorial staff of *Clarion* held its annual meeting. This time we had to meet without a representative of Premier Printing. We managed. I write about this in connection with the fact that one member resigned: the Rev. Cl. Stam. He asked to be released from the editorial staff of *Clarion* because of his being the chief editor of *Reformed Perspective*. We could accept both the reason and the request. We thank the Rev. Stam for his input throughout the years in which he was involved and wish him the grace and strength of our God with his work for *Reformed Perspective*. Others will be approached. In due time the result will be published.

J. GEERTSEMA

The College evening

On Friday, September 9, 1988, our Theological College had its Sixteenth Convocation and Nineteenth Anniversary Meeting. The reader may remember that the different numbers stem from the fact that a convocation is an academic event in which the graduation of students takes place, which does not happen every year, while the occasion was the nineteenth anniversary evening of the College. The College started in 1969, after the Synod of Orangeville, 1968, had decided to establish it.

The College evening started with the singing of Psalm 46:1,2. The Rev. J. Mulder, chairman of the Board of Governors, continued the opening of the evening with the reading of Revelation 7:9-17 and prayer. Everyone was welcomed, including the deputies of the Committee for the Training of Students for the Ministry in the Free Reformed Church in North America, and other members of these churches, since two of their students were graduating. Rev. Mulder expressed the wish that the fact that our College was chosen by the Free Reformed Churches may result in closer cooperation and may lead to giving each other "the full brother-hand in the same church."

Rev. Mulder also mentioned the fact that Dr. J. Faber was having the main address of the evening in connection with his retirement at the end of next year. The chairman did not want to say much at this moment since Dr. Faber is still teaching for more than a year. Dr. Faber's inaugural address in 1969 had as title "The Catholic Character of the Belgic Confession"; this night he hoped to speak about "The Catholic Character of the Church."

The principal's report was the next point on the program. Dr. J. Faber read it, thus, in a summary, giving all the noteworthy information about what happened in this issue. After we had sung Psalm 87:1,2,5, we could listen to Dr. Faber's interesting and instructive address on "The Catholic Character of the Church." It was again a solidly Reformed speech. Dr. Faber first took us through the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament pointing at many places where God's Word speaks about the catholicity of the

church. Then he spoke about a few church fathers, telling us about the development in the meaning and contents of the term "catholic." His third point contained five considerations regarding the catholicity of the church, in which also attention was given to modern (systematic) theologians or dogmaticians. Not everyone present grasped the whole address. We are thankful, therefore, that *Clarion* received a copy of the speech, so that we can all read, or, perhaps, study it.

After the address we sang Hymn 40:1, 2, about the catholic church. It was followed by the conferring of the degree of Master of Theology upon the four graduating students. I take over here the names as presented on the program: Mr. Hendrik Anne Bergsma, B.A.; Mr. John Gerrit Reyer Kroeze, B.A.; Mr. Laurens Roth, B.A.; and Mr. Willem Barend Slomp, B.A., B.S.W. Mr. Bergsma and Mr. Roth are the Free Reformed students.

The students were introduced by professor J. Geertsema, who mentioned a few facts of the life and the course of study of each of them and presented them to the Principal, who conferred the degree upon them. For the four students it was the crown on their studies at the College. This goal of a graduation was reached through the grace of God. It had meant hard work: a job and a half, if not more. The fact that all four were married and had a family, did not make their studies any easier timewise. This part of the ceremony was concluded with the singing of Psalm 124:1,3.

The girls choir of the Guido de Brès High School, directed by Mrs. L. Snow, and accompanied on the Redeemer Col-

lege organ by Mr. J. Knegt, took care of the "Musical Interlude." The choir sang three pieces: "Alleluia" by J.S. Bach, "Come Again Sweet Love" by John Doland, and "Ode to Joy" by Ludwig von Beethoven. Sitting right in front of the organ and behind the choir was the cause that, as members of the Board of Governors and professors, we heard the organ very well, but hardly the choir.

The usual collection was held. We sang Hymn 2:1,2, after which the Rev. M. Vanderwel closed the evening with thanksgiving and prayer and we sang Psalm 122:3. It was a nice evening. However, an important part of the evening still was to follow: the unofficial, social part. There was the opportunity to congratulate the graduating students and their relatives, and we could meet friends and acquaintances whom we had not seen in a longer or shorter period. We were together once again as a big family.

The Lord willing, at next year's anniversary meeting (there will not be a graduation) there will be changes. By then, hopefully, we shall see one other professor, and five different Board members. You can read more about this in the last point of the principal's report. The replacement of the Board members is required by the College Act. Especially the members of the Finance and Property Committee, part of the Board, meet regularly. Much work has been done, also by the retiring members. Much work is often done quietly. Often not many are aware of the many hours spent in the kingdom of God. The reward will be that our work, done in the service of the Lord, will not be in vain.

J. GEERTSEMA



Principal's report 1988

1. College evening

On Friday, September 11, 1987, the Theological College held its Fifteenth Convocation and Eighteenth Anniversary Meeting.

Professor J. Geertsema gave his inaugural address, entitled "The gospel brings to light what in your heart you hide." It was a new beginning and at the same time a continuation of the work of our emeritus professor L. Selles.

The Master of Divinity degree was conferred on four graduates. Mr. Paul Aasman is now missionary of Hamilton for the work in Brazil; Mr. Michael Kellie Marren works among Indians in Smithers, BC; Mr. Robert Allan Schouten entered into the ministry in Calgary; and Mr. George Philip van Popta became the minister of the church in Ottawa.

Although we missed the female voice of a representative of the Women's Savings Action, the library was not forgotten. The departure of Mrs. Janet Marren, our Associate Librarian, was a good occasion to pay attention to the work accomplished in and for our library.

Singing by the mixed choir "Soli Deo Gloria" of Burlington, under the able direction of Mr. G. Smink, enhanced the College evening.

2. Students

Besides one part-time student, four full-time Freshmen enrolled, namely, Mr. R. Dean Anderson, B.Music, B.A., coming from the Silverstream Reformed Church in New Zealand, Mr. Cornelis Herfst, B.A., member of the Free Reformed Church in Dundas, Mr. James Pot, B. Christian Studies, member of the Christian Reformed Church in Smithville, and Mr. Wilhelmus M. Wielenga, B.A., member of the Canadian Reformed Church in Coaldale. All Freshmen successfully completed the first year. Mr. Pot will now continue his studies in Grand Rapids.

Mr. J. Boersma registered for his sophomore year and the other four students were seniors. These gentlemen, H.A. Bergsma, J.G.R. Kroeze, L. Roth, and W.B. Slomp, fulfilled the requirements

for the Master of Divinity degree. Therefore, at the 1988 Convocation both the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Free Reformed Church of North America will receive two graduates.

The Rev. P. Aasman followed the newly instituted Advanced Missiology course.

3. Programmes and lectures

Besides this Advanced Missiology course we now have in place a two-year programme leading to a Diploma in Theological Studies. It is geared to those who do not enter the ministry but want to labour in fields related to the pastorate (education, mission aid). Knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin is not required but there is a prerequisite, namely, one year of successfully completed University studies, preferably in the humanities, or a Teacher's College certificate, or an equivalent. Diploma students will receive, together with the M. Div. students, two years of instruction in each of the five departments — Old and New Testament, Ecclesiology, Dogmatology and Diaconiology — but courses in Hebrew, Greek, Exegesis, and Homiletics, are replaced by such Freshman courses as Philosophy, Geography of the Bible Lands, New Testament History, and Public Speaking.

During the academic year 1987-1988 the lectures were those of the Freshman and the Junior Year. On one Friday morning they became somewhat special through the presence of Mr. Arie Hordijk. We are used to regular visits on behalf of the Board of Governors but this ex-governor had the luminous idea to make a visit in order to produce a half-hour video tape about the daily life of our College. Churches that want to show this tape — e.g. after the intermission during a congregational meeting — may contact our administration.

On October 29, 1987, the College community celebrated an Abraham Kuyper morning. The occasion was the 150th anniversary of his birthday, and the professor of dogmatology spoke about "Kuyper and America." Some treasures of our library — e.g. the 1937 Kuyper anni-

versary editions of *De Standaard* and *De Reformatie* — were put on display.

Dr. C. Van Dam and Prof. J. Geertsema delivered this year's special lectures for the general public. The former gave four lessons, "Studies in Genesis I and II," the latter lectured about "Reading the New Testament in Context." Attendance and attention were good.

4. Extra-curricular activities

Some of our professors traveled extensively throughout the year. Our professors of Old and New Testament functioned as leaders of an Israel trip. The professor of diaconiology attended a mission conference in Curitiba, Brazil, and one in Grand Rapids, U.S.A. He further received an invitation of the University of Potchefstroom, Republic of South Africa, to lecture for a few weeks. Some of his lectures in our College are to be found in his book *Dient Hem met vreugde! Deel I: Opstellen over de dienst van de ambtsdragers* (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1988). Dr. C. Van Dam contributed to *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Volume Four (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), an article entitled "Urim and Thummim," in which he summarized his doctoral thesis. During six winter evenings the professor of dogmatology, invited by the church of Burlington-West, gave a course, entitled "Studies on the Covenant."

5. Library

A principal's report would not be complete without some remarks about the library. Foremost, I have the joyful task of reading to you the following communication of the Women's Savings Action:

"The trustees of the Women's Savings Action [to whom is now added Mrs. J. Mulder of Burlington-West, J.F.] gratefully and happily inform you that in view of the excellent results of the Action over the financial year 1987-May 1988 the contribution of the Women's Savings Action towards books and subscriptions for this new financial year will be increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000. With thanks to the

Lord, for the Savings Action, G.R. Selles, Secretary.”

The College itself bought two oak and glass book cabinets, skillfully crafted by Mr. Bill Wieske, in order to give our growing sixteenth and seventeenth century book collection a fitting abode. We received as a gift a 1637 first edition of the *Statenvertaling* and on permanent loan an old Geneva edition of Calvin's *Institutio*.

At the entrance of the library we installed a display case containing the Acts of and some books about the Synod of Dordt.

Miss Marian Van Til, our Associate Librarian, Miss Catherine Mechelse, our Assistant Librarian, the ladies Flach, Smouter and Walinga, our volunteers, Miss Joanne Bartels, our part-timer, and Miss Hilda Bruinsma, our summer help, faithfully performed the important duties of cataloguing, labeling, filing and shelving.

As far as the physical facilities of the library are concerned, Gerry Bosscher's Construction did an excellent job in sealing up the windows and providing us with good lighting. As we experienced the sweltering heat of the summer, we eagerly expect the placing of an air-conditioning unit.

Our entire building was enhanced by new thermal pane windows in the lecture rooms and in the lounge.

6. Australia

The 1987 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia unanimously instructed the Deputies for the Training for the Ministry to assess the churches \$30.00 per communicant member per year for the maintenance of the Theological College in Hamilton. It goes without saying that we welcomed this decision with great thankfulness. In the course of the years we have already received moneys collected by Australian brothers and sisters. Now this financial support has been formalized in a generous manner. But more important than the financial help is the fact that in the last decades the sister relationship between the Free Reformed Churches of Australia and our Canadian Reformed Churches has been strengthened. Not only has the use of our common English language increased but also the mutual confessional trust. The Australian churches use our *Book of Praise*, they sent students to the Theological College and they call alumni of Hamilton for their ministers. The Reformed elementary and secondary school systems in the two countries are becoming intertwined and the Hamilton Teacher's College with its formerly Australian principal serves both of them. I mention these facts because of the decision of the 1987 Australian synod regarding the Theological

College. This year's graduation of a student from Tasmania testifies to this happy development.

7. Contacts

The Senate was represented at the opening of the new church building in Attercliffe and at the inauguration of Dr. John Boersema as full professor at Redeemer College. The Senate received a visit of two deputies of the Free Reformed Church of North America who inquired about the progress of their pupils.

8. A new era


Our Theological College is entering a new era. A general synod is convened for April next year and one of its most important agenda items will be the appointment of two new professors, one of Ecclesiology and Diaconiology and one of Dogmatology. That is a replacement of half our Faculty, and the new professors will, under the condition of the letter of James, serve for decades to come. We will not speak about this further tonight. The LORD willing, there will be an opportunity to do so next year.

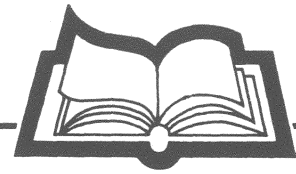
We should, however, mention the fact that this upcoming general synod also will replace almost half of the Board of Governors. Since they will not be present as Governors anymore at the following convocation, I mention first their names and their functions: the Rev. J. Mulder, chairman; the Rev. J. Visscher, vice-chairman; the Rev. M. van Beveren, until recently secretary; Mr. C.M. Loopstra, LL.B., chair-

man of the Finance and Property Committee; and Mr. H. Kampen, treasurer. The mention of these brothers and of their functions underlines my remark about a new era. The Rev. Mulder, our warm pastoral chairman, and the Rev. van Beveren, our accurate secretary, have served the Theological College for about twenty years. The Rev. Visscher, the first student of our College to become Governor, used his acute organizational talents. Mr. Loopstra was our juridical adviser and as such prepared the Ontario Legislature Act that gave our College its legal recognition. Mr. Kampen was a hardworking treasurer who freed our administrative assistant from many tedious and time-consuming tasks. Brothers, we know that you wanted to be servants of the LORD. We praise and thank Him for your gifts, for your willingness and readiness to employ them for the well-being of God's church. May at His time and by His grace our Lord Jesus Christ Himself say to you: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your Master," (Matthew 25:21).

Coming to a conclusion we humble ourselves before the LORD God for our sins and shortcomings in this academic year, plead with Him for His gracious forgiveness in Jesus Christ our Lord, thank Him for His bountiful blessings and pray that through the Holy Spirit, the *doctor ecclesiae*, the work of our College may be fruitful for His catholic church.

J. FABER

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“Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink, but I hope to come to see you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.”

II John 12

“I hope to see you soon, and we will talk together face to face. . . . The friends greet you. Greet the friends, every one of them.”

III John 14, 15

Face to Face

At the end of the shorter letters of John we find a common Hebrew expression, one which gives his letters a certain warmth, despite their brevity. The apostle states that he prefers not to write with pen and ink, but to visit and discuss remaining matters “face to face.” Quite literally the text says: “mouth to mouth,” a Hebrew expression which indicates that all emphasis falls on the spoken word. In the apostle’s view, living communication is better than a written letter.

Indeed, so it remains today. In all our relationships speaking face to face far surpasses written communication. Particularly in the bonds of love and marriage, written communication over a great distance is a poor substitute for being able to see and speak directly with each other. After all, communication is more than words. By seeing the person with whom you are speaking, you can judge sincerity, and also clear away misunderstandings if they arise.

The Old Testament, too, shows how the speaking “face to face” surpasses any indirect or written form of communication. Of Moses God says, “With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly and not in dark speech; and he beholds the form of the LORD,” Numbers 12:8. God spoke with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend, Exodus 33:11. Indeed, this special way of speaking marked Moses off from any other prophet. As the mediator of the Old Testament, he received a special insight into God’s ways and purposes. And he saw many heavenly things which were hidden from others, Exodus 33:17ff. The LORD never spoke to another prophet so directly as He spoke with Moses, Deuteronomy 34:10.

We know that Moses’ office is fulfilled in Jesus Christ! He is the great Mediator to which Moses pointed, the true prophet that was coming! He is the image of the invisible God, and in Him we all may behold the form of God. And He dwelt among us, and so calls us friends. “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from the Father I have made known to you,” John 15: 15. Here John is the apostle who writes of the new bond of fellowship which the Lord creates with His own on the basis of His completed work. It is a bond of friendship in which the full will of God is disclosed!

This new bond of fellowship is accentuated in the closing words of John’s last letter. His is not a group or club spirit, by which he wishes to isolate those whom he and his friends do not like. Rather, he writes to the elect

lady, one of the churches he knew and was familiar with. And he writes to Gaius, a leading figure in the church. And the content of his letters indicate that the basis of the new fellowship of friends is a love for the commandments of God based on the completed work of Christ. And the heart of these commandments is love — the love of God and the neighbour.

This is the bond of fellowship that yearns for the communication that is “mouth to mouth,” and “face to face.” And does this not represent the love that Christ has for His church? This is the way the Lord wants to address His people. His is a living voice! As the Bridegroom, He longs to see the Bride, and speak directly with her!

But the apostle is aware of and accepts the constraints of this dispensation. He passes on the necessary things by letter. The fellowship — rich as it is — is still not complete. There is still distance. His letters deal with those things which remain hindrances to full fellowship. The evil one sends his false deceivers, through which the fellowship is damaged. Those who present themselves as Christian workers must be tested in their doctrine. And the fellowship is also attacked from within. There are those who, like Diotrophes, put themselves first and so block the avenues of communication. The evil one still does much damage in the vineyard of the Lord.

So the apostle Paul also says that “we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face,” I Corinthians 13:12. The path of prophecy is still imperfect, beset with strife and struggle. And the imperfect must give way for perfection. The Lord addresses us face to face, and has given us all we need. He speaks to us today in a living way in Word and sacrament. But the distance is still there. As the bridegroom works to bring that distance to an end, so we may look forward to a richer communication that is coming.

So the conclusions to these letters typify the hope of the church. Our life in Christ is one in which we strain forward in the earnest expectation of a communication that is “mouth to mouth” and “face to face.” That is the day when, as John says, “our joy will be complete.” For then faith gives way to sight, and the fullness of communication as the Lord Himself has desired it will be established. Then we shall know even as we are known, and then we may rejoice fully in the fellowship that never ends.

J. DE JONG

The catholic character of the church¹

Introduction²

Credo sanctam ecclesiam catholicam. I believe in the holy catholic church. Thus reads a familiar clause in the received text of the Apostles' Creed. We find the adjective "catholic" also in the Nicene Creed: We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.³

The Greek word for "catholic" is composed of two words, *kata* and *holon*, and means "according to the whole," "general" or "universal." It always refers to the totality or the entirety, and this entirety can be related to time, space, culture, or truth. When we speak about the catholicity of the church related to time, we refer to the church of all ages. This is the *historical* catholicity. If we relate the catholic church to space, we think of the assembly of God's people throughout the whole world. It is the *ecumenical* or *geographical* catholicity. In Lord's Day 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism we confess that the Son of God gathers a church out of the whole human race. It is the *cultural* catholicity. Last but not least, this church is gathered in the unity of the true faith. It adheres to the entirety of the truth. In this respect we often speak of the *qualitative* catholicity, while the historical, geographical and cultural catholicity together are somewhat loosely described as the *quantitative* catholicity of the church.

After this introduction I would like to deal with three points. I will first survey some scriptural data, then make some remarks about the history of the doctrine of catholicity, and conclude with some dogmatic observations.

I. Scriptural data

The doctrine of the catholic character of the church is based on Holy Scripture. We believe one holy, catholic and apostolic church, and our faith is based on God's infallible revelation in Old and New Testament. In distinction from Roman Catholicism, the Reformed confessions stress that the church is not only foreshadowed but really gathered from the beginning of the world. It is, to use an ex-

pression of Augustine, *ecclesia ab Abel*, the church that has existed since the days of Abel. Therefore, the first question is: What does the LORD reveal in the Old Testament concerning the catholicity of the church?

The Old Testament begins with the revelation of God's creation of the world. There is a universal aspect to God's revelation in the Old Dispensation. Even when the particular period in the history of the Old Testament church begins with the calling of Abram, there is the notion of catholicity: Abram receives the promise that by him all the families of the earth shall bless themselves. His name is changed to Abraham, since God made him the father of a multitude of nations, Genesis 12:3, 17:5.

Throughout the entire Old Testament prophecy there is a missionary perspective of catholicity. If we only take the prophecy of Isaiah, e.g., we read that in the latter days all the nations shall flow to the mountain of the house of the LORD, Isaiah 2:2,3. The LORD gives His Servant as a light to the nations, that His salvation may reach to the end of the earth, 49:5,6. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea, 11:9. In Isaiah's prophecy of the glory of Zion after the exile there is a perspective to the church of the New Testament: Your sons shall come from far and your daughters shall be carried in the arms, 60:4. Catholicity belongs to Zion's future glory.

Not only the law and the prophets but also the psalms proclaim the worldwide reign of the coming Messiah. The decree of the LORD is to make the nations His heritage and the ends of the earth His possession, Psalm 2:8. The glorious things spoken of the city of God in Psalm 87 are certainly the things of her geographical and cultural catholicity.

Coming to the New Testament we take the first gospel, that according to Matthew. The covenantal promises to Abraham and David are fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ. Many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of

heaven, 8:11. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come, 24:14. Matthew's gospel ends with Christ's truly ecumenical commission: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, 28:19, or as Mark has it: Go into all the world (*oikoumene*) and preach the gospel to the whole creation, Mark 16:15. All nations, all the world, the whole creation, all that I have commanded you, always, to the close of the age — these are expressions at the end of the gospels that are constitutive for the catholicity of the New Testament church.

In the book of Acts the commission to be witnesses to the end of the earth is repeated, 1:8, and in the second chapter we see the small church of Pentecost manifesting its catholic character in the converts from the Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia. These and all those other languages and cultures mentioned in that list in which the names of Jews and proselytes, Judeans and Arabians are placed together, indicate the ecumenical work of the Holy Spirit, 2:8-11. God now commands all men everywhere to repent, 17:30.

Paul in his letter to the Romans speaks of all the world, 1:8, and knows himself under obligation to barbarians, 1:14. Psalm 19 is fulfilled in the universal preachers of Christ, whose voice has gone out to all the earth and their words to the end of the world, 10:18. Paul writes to the church of God at Corinth, those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who *in every place* call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours, 1:2. When in his letter to the Galatians the apostle of the Gentiles fights against Judaism, he defends the universality of gospel and church. The Ephesians are reminded of the mystery of Christ, who has made us both — Jews and Gentiles — one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, 2:14. The Gentiles are fellow heirs and members of the same body, 4:6, which body is the church, the fulness of Him who fills all in all, 1:23.

Paul could assure the Colossians that the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven and was bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, 1:6,23.

The New Testament ends with those wonderful hymns of the church ransomed by the blood of the Lamb from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 5:9. There is the vision of the great multitude, which no man can number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, 7:9.

If we drink in these words of Holy Scripture about the catholicity of the church, we understand why one hundred years ago, in 1888, the young Herman Bavinck in his principal's address *The Catholicity of Christendom and Church* spoke of its captivating beauty ("aangrijpende schoonheid"). One who isolates himself within the narrow circle of a small congregation or conventicle does not know the true catholicity and will never experience its power and consolation in his own life. He who by faith knows himself one with the church, gathered out of the whole human race from the beginning of the world to its end, cannot be narrow of heart or mind with respect to God's people.⁴

II. History of doctrine

When in the second place we cast a quick look at the history of this doctrine, we begin with the so-called Apostolic Fathers in the period immediately after the apostles themselves. While the adjective "catholic" is not found in the New Testament, it is for the first time used in connection with the church by Ignatius, about the year 110 A.D. Ignatius wrote to the church at Smyrna the following admonition: "Where the bishop (or overseer, JF) is present, there let the congregation gather, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church" (*Smyrn.* 8.2).⁵

First of all, let us note that Ignatius does not say "Where the Catholic Church is, there is Jesus Christ," but vice versa: Christ is the Head of His body. Further, scholars agree that the word "catholic" here does not indicate the distinction between the true church and the sects but between the universal church and the local congregation. It is the whole church, the entire church, the all-embracing church. Its theological and geographical universality is indicated first of all. Also *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* speaks of the "whole world-wide catholic church."⁶

In the following century Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, wrote a compelling treatise about the unity of the catholic church, and his concern is taken up in the later struggle against the Donatists. The word "catholic" is then used over against

schismatics and heretics, and it receives an almost numerical flavour. The "catholic church" is the large church over against the sects, which are smaller in numbers and located only in a part of the inhabited earth.⁷

In the Eastern church of the fourth century there was an interesting exposition by Cyril of Jerusalem in his *Catechetical Lectures* of the year 350: "The Church, then, is called Catholic because it is spread throughout the whole world, from one end of the earth to the other, and because it never stops teaching in all its fulness every doctrine that men ought to be brought to know: and that regarding things visible and invisible, in heaven and on earth. It is called Catholic also because it brings into religious obedience every sort of men, rulers and ruled, learned and simple, and because it is a universal treatment and cure for every kind of sin whether perpetrated by soul or body, and possesses within it every form of virtue that is named, whether it expresses itself in deeds or words or in spiritual graces of every description."⁸ Remarkable in this description is that there is not only no region that the catholic church does not reach, no class of persons that it does not contain, no evil for which it has no remedy, no virtue that it does not inculcate, but also no necessary doctrine that it does not teach: the catholic church teaches the entire truth.⁹

In the Latin-speaking church of the West, however, the concept of catholicity became more and more formalized and was claimed for the triumphalistic large body of medieval christianity.

We see this development in an early stage in Vincent of Lerins and his famous definition of "catholic" of the year 434: Catholic is that which has been believed *everywhere, always, and by all*. Universality, antiquity and consent are the three criteria for the catholic faith. Vincent states clearly: "For that is truly and in the strictest sense 'catholic,' which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally. This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity, consent. We shall follow universality if we confess that one faith to be true, which the whole church throughout the world confesses; antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is manifest were notoriously held by our holy ancestors and fathers; consent, in like manner, if in antiquity itself we adhere to the consentient definitions and determinations of all, or at the least of almost all priests and doctors."¹⁰

We now come to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. It is clear that the Reformers did not deny the significance of those words *ubique, semper, ab om-*

nibus of Vincent of Lerins. Only, they added what I call *e sacra scriptura*, that is, according to Holy Scripture. Catholic is the faith that has been believed everywhere, always, by all, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures. God's Word is the supreme rule of true catholicity. The Reformation did not start a new church. It believed the indefectibility of the church on the basis of God's covenantal faithfulness and therefore it stressed the continuity of the church throughout all ages.¹¹

Calvin maintained the doctrine of the catholicity of the church certainly as strongly as Luther. One of the most recent essays, the last by Richard Stauffer, even bears the surprising title, "Calvin, Advocate of Evangelical Catholicity."¹²

Let us pay some attention to Reformed confessions of the sixteenth century.

Article 27 of our Belgic Confession is a beautiful statement of this catholicity of the church: We believe and profess one catholic or universal church, which is a holy congregation and assembly of the true Christian believers. This church has existed from the beginning of the world and will be to the end. Moreover, this holy church is not confined or limited to one particular place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed throughout the entire world.

Our Heidelberg Catechism (Lord's Day 21) speaks of the Son of God gathering His church out of the whole human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, in unity of the true faith. It is a well-phrased formulation of the cultural, temporal and qualitative universality of the church.

Especially the Second Helvetic Confession (1566), of which Heinrich Bullinger was the author, has a broad chapter (XVII) about the catholic and holy church of God. There are headings like "The Church Has Always Existed and It Will Always Exist," "Only One Church for All Times." "We, therefore call this Church catholic — so Bullinger confessed — because it is universal, scattered through all parts of the world, and extended unto all times, and is not limited to any times or places." It is remarkable that he adds: "Therefore, we condemn the Donatists who confined the Church to I know not what corners of Africa. Nor do we approve of the Roman clergy who have recently passed off only the Roman church as catholic."¹³

I hear in this statement not only a reference to Augustine in his struggle against the sectarians of the third and the fourth century but also an ironic rebuttal of the Romish theologians who accused the Reformers of being in the line of the Donatists. Rome itself lacks the universality of the true catholic church.

This may be a good moment to terminate our short and selective survey of the history of the catholicity of the church and to conclude with some dogmatic observations.

III. Dogmatic observations

Let me make six observations.

1. Our first remark concerns the *term* "catholic." Since the eighteenth century one notices in Protestant circles an embarrassment with respect to this adjective.¹⁴ Often Protestants abandon the word "catholic" and replace it e.g. by "universal." They leave the word "catholic" to Romanists and forget that *Roman* Catholicism, already in terminology, is everything but catholic. The true catholic church is not bound to a certain place or certain persons (Article 27 Belgic Confession). Also the expression "evangelical catholicity" restricts and limits the concept of catholicity.

The latest attack on the word "catholic" is found in a 1988 CRC publication by Leonard Verduin, entitled *Honour Your Mother*. He asserts that until the middle of the fourth century Christianity carefully guarded the emphasis on the individual, but that under Constantine the Christian faith became "catholic." A look at that word's root meaning will tell us a lot about what happened to the Christian faith at that time. Catholic originally meant "as to the entirety." In other words, Verduin says, it speaks of a faith geared to the group.¹⁵

This exposition assumes an untenable contrast of personal believer and communion of saints. Its individualism is more spiritualist than Reformed. Moreover, we saw that the word "catholic" in Christian usage is much older than the fourth century, and in the Roman empire was used precisely by martyrs such as Ignatius and Polycarp. The word had more and other nuances than Verduin admits. Since it is such an ancient and multifaceted term, it should not lightly — or, rather, should never — be abandoned. The word "catholic" itself has the mark of historical catholicity.¹⁶

2. My second observation regards the *foundation* of the catholicity of the church. We should approach the doctrine of the church and also its characteristics or dimensions in a theocentric, trinitarian manner. The church is the assembly of the people of the Father, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Also the catholicity of the church is grounded in the work of God the Father, in His work of creation — the unity of the human race — and in His work of re-creation. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). Can there be a stronger motive for

the catholicity of the church than this worldwide love of God? God will be everything to every one, all in all (I Corinthians 15:28). Is there a more-embracing aim for the catholic church?

The Son of God is, according to Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, the one who fills all in all (1:23). We find a parallel in the first chapter of his letter to the Colossians. In the Son all things were created and in Him all things hold together, for in Him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell. The concept of "catholicity" may have no direct connection with the New Testament term "fulness"; nevertheless, there is an intrinsic relation between the fulness of Christ and the catholicity of the church. Christ is indeed the Saviour of the world (John 4:42, I John 4:14) and He is an eternal King who can not be without subjects. Article 27 of the Belgic Confession rightly bases also the temporal catholicity of the church on the kingship of Christ, her Head.

spiritual graces, he basically spoke of the work of God the Holy Spirit, the Creator, Teacher and Physician of the church.

Let this suffice as an argument for the trinitarian foundation of its catholicity.

3. When we now in the third place begin to ask what the catholic dimension of the church does *not* mean, we could join such theologians as Karl Barth and Hans Kueng and state the following.

Spatial extent alone does not make a church catholic: catholicity is not primarily a geographical concept. Numerical quantity or cultural variety alone does not make a church catholic either. Catholicity is not primarily a statistical or sociological concept. Also, temporal continuity alone does not suffice for catholicity, for it is also not in the first place a historical concept.¹⁷

The Scottish Confession of 1560 expresses this truth powerfully in this manner: It speaks about the notes, signs and assured tokens whereby the spotless bride of Christ is known from the horri-



The faculty and graduates: (front row, l to r) Prof. J. Geertsema, Prof. Dr. K. Deddens, Prof. Dr. J. Faber, Prof. L. Selles (emeritus), Prof. Dr. C. Van Dam. (Back row, l to r) J.G.R. Kroeze, W.B. Slomp, L. Roth, H.A. Bergsma.

The Holy Spirit brings to life and completion and fulfillment not only in creation but also in re-creation. He leads Christ's disciples into all the truth (John 16:13) and makes the congregation grow into the fulness of Christ. He is the Spirit of communion and fellowship and of the entirety of gifts. When Cyril of Jerusalem spoke of the teaching in all its fulness of every necessary doctrine, the religious obedience of every sort of men, the universal cure of every kind of sin and the possession of every form of virtue and all

ble harlot, the false Kirk. Then it states that these notes "are neither antiquity, usurped title, lineal succession, appointed place, nor the numbers of men approving an error." This reminds us of Article 7 of our Belgic Confession. But then follows: "For Cain was before Abel and Seth in age and title; . . . and greater numbers followed the scribes, pharisees, and priests, than unfeignedly believed and followed Jesus and His doctrine . . . and yet no man of judgment, we suppose, will hold that any of the forenamed were the

kirk of God.”¹⁸ I think that our Scottish brothers gave an excellent refutation of a superficial concept of catholicity.

One could express this observation also thus: Catholicity is a dimension or characteristic of the church in the same manner as unity, holiness and apostolicity. But no one may divorce the one dimension from the other. I may not separate, e.g., catholicity and apostolicity; for only that church is catholic which is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20).

One could also say: I may not identify the dimensions of the church and its marks. We believe it to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic. These characteristics tell me *what* the church is, but the marks show me *where* this church is to be found. Catholicity may not be a normless claim. Catholicity is a privilege and an obligation; it is God’s gift and our responsibility. Catholicity is a covenantal promise to the church and a covenantal demand of the church. Catholicity has been granted and at the same time it must be realized. The catholic church must always become catholic.

When over against the Reformation Rome triumphantly claimed antiquity and boasted of its numbers and cultural diversity, it made the dimensions of temporal, statistical and ethnic catholicity into marks of the church. It forgot God’s covenant. Let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall (I Corinthians 10:12).

4. A fourth remark basically also deals with what catholicity is not. It is not primarily a dimension of the invisible church as distinct from the visible church or of the church as an organism distinct from the church as an institution. Even such respectable Reformed theologians as Calvin and Louis Berkhof err in this respect.

In his *Institutes* IV.1.2. Calvin says that we must leave to God alone the knowledge of His church, whose foundation is His secret election. “The church is called “catholic,” or “universal,” because there could not be two or three churches unless Christ be torn asunder — which cannot happen! But all the elect are so united in Christ that as they are dependent on one Head, they also grow together into one body” The following section begins then with the words: “This article of the Creed also applies to some extent (*aliquatenus*) to the outward church” and Calvin continues then to speak about the communion of saints and states in the beginning of section 4 that it is now his intention to discuss the visible church. Calvin is not completely clear but the reader receives two impressions. The first is that catholicity is almost identified with unity. “Catholic” is for Calvin: unity in plurality. The second im-

pression is that he ascribes the dimension of catholicity, at least primarily, to the invisible church, the communion of God’s elect over all the earth.¹⁹

Louis Berkhof states that the attributes of the church are ascribed primarily to the church as an invisible organism, and only secondarily to the church as an external institution. According to Berkhof the doctrine of a catholic visible church presents many difficult problems, which still call for solution.²⁰

My objection against the approach by Calvin and Louis Berkhof is the following: Although we may appreciate their rebuttal of the Romish triumphalist concept of catholicity and their attempt to maintain the unicity of the church, their distinctions of invisible and visible church and of the church as organism and institution are not found in Holy Scripture. These distinctions obscure more than they enlighten. We cannot deal now with all the problems involved, but as far as the characteristic of “catholic” is concerned, we should remember that already in the early church it is applied to a concrete, local congregation. The church of God that sojourns at Smyrna writes, e.g., to the church of God that sojourns at Philomelium, and to all those of the holy and catholic church who sojourn in every place. In the letter called *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* we read about Polycarp as the bishop (or overseer) of the catholic church in Smyrna.²¹

A local congregation may not be *the* entire church but if it shows the marks of a true church, by faith I may acknowledge it to be *an* entire church, the catholic church at that place, called to realize and exercise its catholicity. We should not rob a local church of its God-given dimensions, its privileges and responsibilities. Well-meant but confusing distinctions such as invisible and visible church, church as organism and as institution, put asunder what God has joined together.

5. Still thinking about what the catholicity of the church is not, I make the observation that universality does not mean universalism. Especially in contemporary theology there is a strong tendency towards universalism.

In Roman Catholic twentieth-century theology there is, under the influence of theologians such as Hans Kueng, opposition against the ancient axiom that outside the church there is no salvation.²²

In history a syncretist tendency always accompanied Roman Catholic exclusivism but in the age of the global village there is a strengthening of this syncretism. The stress on ethnic and cultural diversity by Roman Catholic authors such as Yves Congar was a stage in this development.²³

As far as the World Council of Church-

es is concerned, in 1985 a research pamphlet was published about newer confessions from the period 1963-1980. It shows that “catholicity” and “unity” are now often explained in a sense that is critical of modern society. “Catholicity” is especially seen as bridging the contrasts of classes and races, “unity” concerns not only the church but the entire mankind. This is universalism. The catholicity of the church is then nothing but a first stage or an experimental farm, so to speak, for the catholicity of humanity.²⁴

I further remind you of the very recent discussion in the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches about the question whether representatives of other world religions should be officially invited to the following general assembly.

Now what shall we say about this development of universality into universalism?

First of all, no one can deny that the confession of the catholic character of the church has implications for the Christian attitude and action over against discrimination of fellow Christians of another class or ethnic community. One can only be thankful that in 1980 J.A. Heyns, professor of systematic theology in Pretoria and moderator of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk stated: “In the South African context, if separate Churches were in principle closed to members of Churches associated with other nations, they could not make a valid claim to catholicity.”²⁵

Having said this, I strongly state over against modern syncretism that the universality of the church has nothing to do with universalism. We speak of the catholicity of the *ekklesia* and this church is in Holy Scripture distinct from the world. The Head of the church did and does not pray for the world but for those whom the Father has given Him. Christ’s disciples are sent *into* the world, but they are not *of* the world (John 17:9, 16). There is a close connection between church and election. The Heidelberg Catechism rightly speaks of “ein *auszerwelte* gemein,” a church *chosen* to everlasting life. The end of the gathering of the catholic church will be the congregation of the *elect* in life eternal (Form of Baptism). The church is chosen out of the *whole* human race and therefore it is universal; it is chosen *out* of the whole human race and therefore it is not universalist.

6. Now in attempting to define or describe the catholic character of the church positively, I would like to take as my starting point the definitions of Karl Barth and Hans Kueng. What does it mean, “I believe in the catholic church?”

Barth says: “I believe that the Christian community is one and the same in essence in all places, in all ages, within

all societies, and in relation to all its members."²⁶

Kueng formulates as follows: "The catholicity of the Church . . . consists in a notion of entirety, based on identity and resulting in universality."²⁷ Entirety in Kueng's definition refers to the whole, all-embracing church in distinction from the particular or local churches. Universality indicates especially the world-wide character of the church, its geographic ecumenicity. But what about the concept of identity?

The similarity in Barth's and Kueng's concise definitions is precisely the emphasis on identity. Barth makes it the main element in the concept — the church is one and the same in four aspects: places, ages, societies and members — while in Kueng identity is the basis of catholicity.

My objection to the emphasis on identity in these definitions is twofold. First, stressing identity easily leads to obscuring the dynamics of the gathering of the church of God. My esteemed professor of dogmatics, Klaas Schilder, always emphasized that the church is not only *in facto* but also *in fieri*, that means, the one church is not only in a state of *being*, but is also in the process of *becoming*.²⁸

In the second place, we may ask: What is this concept of identity? Following Barth, Hans Kueng describes it as follows: "The most international, the largest, the most varied, the oldest Church can in fact become a stranger to itself, can become something different, can lose touch with its innermost nature, can deviate from its true and original course." Kueng speaks of "the unchanging essence of the Church" and says that it is an all-embracing *identity* which at bottom makes a church catholic.²⁹

But I remark that the "unalterable essence" (Barth) or "innermost nature" (Kueng) of the church is not autonomous. The church of God is *creatura verbi*; she is born out of God's Word and exists in obedience to that Word and, by the grace of God, will thus continue. The Son of God gathers in an ongoing process by His Spirit and Word a congregation in the unity of true faith. Faith is the response of trust and obedience to the infallible gospel and law of Holy Scripture. Kueng, who remains Roman Catholic, speaks of the unchanging essence of the church. It has to be credibly preserved and confirmed and activated anew "always and everywhere and by all men." We hear the formulation of Vincent of Lerins and remember that the Reformation added "in accordance with Holy Scripture." If I may change Kueng's formulation in a simple but decisive manner, I would take out the word "identity," replace it by "continual



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obedience to Holy Scripture" and admit that the catholicity of the church consists in an entirety, based on continual obedience to Holy Scripture and resulting in universality.³⁰

Now for the last time we ask the question: What is the catholic character of the church? May I by way of conclusion give this answer?

The catholicity of God's church is based on the all-embracing work of the triune God in creation and redemption. It characterizes the church in her total adherence to the entire truth, revealed in Holy Scripture, and in her universal gathering throughout all times, from all places, and out of all nations.

Credo ecclesiam catholicam. Laus Deo.

Praise be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

J. FABER

¹Address at the Sixteenth Convocation and Nineteenth Anniversary Meeting of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches on Friday, September 9, 1988.

²Extensive bibliographies are to be found in Wolfgang Beinert, *Um das dritte Kirchenattribut. Die Katholizität der Kirche im Verstaendnis der evangelisch-lutherischen und roemisch-katholischen Theologie der Gegenwart I-II* (Essen: Koinonia, 1964) and in Ulrich Valeske, *Votum Ecclesiae* (Muenchen: Claudius Verlag, 1962) I 105-108, II 107-110.

³The first appearance of the Greek word "catholic" as modifying "church" in Christian literature is in Ignatius' letter to the Smyrnaeans (circa 110 A.D.). It occurred in early Eastern creeds, such as the creed of Nicaea (325) and that of Jerusalem used by Cyril in 350. However, it was in the second half of the fourth century that "catholic" first appeared in declara-

tory Western creeds (Nicetas of Remesiana in present-day Yugoslavia). Probably via Spain and Gaul it was taken up into the text of the old Roman creed. See J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 1972), 298, 385ff.

⁴H. Bavinck, *De Katholiceit van Christendom en Kerk* (Kampen: Zalsman, 1888), 16. A reprint was introduced by G. Puchinger (Kampen: Kok, 1968).

⁵C.C. Richardson (ed.), *Early Christian Fathers*, LCC Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 115. J.B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 84, translates: "Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be; even as where Jesus may be, there is the universal Church." Hans Kueng, *The Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), 297, wrongly inserts the word "his" with reference to the bishop: "Wherever the bishop is, there his people should be . . ." For the original Greek see Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers I*, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 260.

⁶"Catholic church" occurs in *Inscriptio*; 8.1; 16.2; and 19.2, although the text in 16.2 is not quite certain. See J.A. Kleist, *Ancient Christian Writers VI* (New York: Newman, 1948), 202.

⁷See for Cyprian, Optatus, and Augustine my *Vestigium Ecclesiae* (Goes: Oosterbaan, 1969), ch. I, II, and III.

⁸William Telfer (ed.), *Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius of Emesa*, LCC IV (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1955), 186. See also R.P. Moroziuk, "Some thoughts on the meaning *Katholike* in the eighteenth catechetical lecture of Cyril of Jerusalem," *Studia Patristica XVIII*, volume I (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1986) 169-178.

⁹H. Berkhof rightly states that Cyril's exposition is remarkable, because it encompasses all these nuances at the same time. He is of the opinion that Cyril's approach found no earlier recognition than in the twentieth century, *De katholiceit der kerk* (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1962), 12-14.

¹⁰The *Tractatus pro catholicae fidei antiquitate et universitate adversus profanas omnium haeticorum novitates* is generally known as the *Commonitorium*. I used the Latin edition published by Parker (Oxford, 1886) and the translation in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second series, Vol. XI, 132. For newer text editions and translations see Angelo Di Berardino, *Patrology IV* (Westminster, Md: Christian Classics, 1986), 550. The famous axiom reads: "in ipsa item catholica ecclesia magnopere curandum est, ut id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est." (c.2) J. Kamphuis, *In dienst van de vrede* (Groningen: De Vuurbaak, 1980), 12, 14, still adheres to the idea that Vincent was Semi-Pelagian. More recent studies by E. Griffie and O'Connor dispute this point. See Angelo Di Berardino, o.c., 546ff. This issue is important for the discussion of the authorship of the Athanasian Creed with its repeated reference to "the catholic faith."

¹¹Wolfgang Hoehne, *Luthers Anschauungen ueber die Kontinuitaet der Kirche* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1963). H. Berkhof, o.c., 14, states that Calvin did not share Luther's aversion of the word "catholic." He speaks of Luther's "afkeer van het woord 'katholiek' en de vervanging door het niet adequate en weinig zeggende 'christelijk'" (14). Although it is true that the French- and English-speaking Reformed confessors maintained the word "catholic" better than the German-speaking Lutherans, I wonder whether Luther's position is not simply an indication of his conservatism, by which he did not break with a late-medieval development. See J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, "Credo sanctam ecclesiam catholicam" in *Ecclesia II* ('s Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1966), 262-295.

¹²Richard Stauffer, *The Quest for Church Unity. From John Calvin to Isaac d'Huisseau* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick), 1986, 1-24. Stauffer remarks (p.4) that contrary to the Protestants

who in the 18th century began to find the adjective "catholic" embarrassing, Calvin lays claim to the notion of catholicity.

For the Calvinist stress upon catholicity see also J.J. Von Allmen, "The continuity of the church according to Reformed teaching," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* Vol. 1, 1964, 424-444; A.C. Cochrane, "The mystery of the continuity of the Church: A study in Reformed symbolics," *ibid.*, Vol. II, 1965, 81-96; Benno Gassmann, *Ecclesia Reformata. Die Kirche in den reformierten Bekenntnisschriften* (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), esp. 347-352; and my essay "The doctrine of the church in Reformed confessions," *Clarion*, Vol. 35 (1986), Nos. 2-4.

¹³Arthur C. Cochrane, *Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1966), 261ff.

¹⁴Philip Schaff, *Reformed and Catholic*, edited by Ch. Yrigoyen, Jr. and G.H. Bricker (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1979), 82, wrote in 1846 that the word "catholic" was brought into discredit by Thomasius, "who applied it to every ecclesiastical regulation that did not happen to suit its taste. It became in Germany a proverb even to denote a desperate business, of any sort: 'That is to become catholic.' With this bug-bear many a wound has since been inflicted on the Lord's body." For a similar development in France see J. Courvoisier, *De la Reforme au protestantisme. Essai d'ecclésiologie reformée* (Paris, 1977), 190, quoted in R. Stauffer, l.c.

¹⁵Leonard Verduin, *Honor Your Mother. Christian Reformed Church Roots in the 1834 Separation* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1988), 44.

¹⁶Classis British Columbia Northwest overtured Synod 1986 of the Christian Reformed Church to provide a new translation of the ecumenical creeds and gave as one of the grounds: "Even our own members refer to Christians of the Roman Catholic Church as 'Catholics.' Hence to confess to believe 'a holy catholic church' is ambiguous and confusing." *Agenda for*

Synod 1986, 479. The ambiguity and confusion, however, should be overcome by consistent and clear teaching rather than by abandoning the catholic word "catholic."

¹⁷Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV/1* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1956), 701-712; Hans Kueng, o.c., 300ff.; J.A. Heyns, *The Church* (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 134ff.

¹⁸A.C. Cochrane, o.c., 176.

¹⁹I used the J.T. McNeill — F.L. Battles edition of *Calvin: Institutes* in LCC Vol. XXI (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1013ff. H. Berkhof is too forceful when he states that Calvin ascribes this attribute to the invisible church, o.c., 15. Calvin always speaks about the one church "bifariam," in two ways (IV. 1.7).

²⁰L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 572, 575.

²¹I followed the translation of C.C. Richardson, o.c., 149, 151, 155. J.B. Lightfoot, o.c., 114, reads in 16.2 "holy" instead of "catholic": the holy church which is in Smyrna. See for the text-critical question J.A. Kleist, o.c., 202.

²²Hans Kueng, "Anmerkungen zum Axiom 'Extra ecclesiam nulla salus'" *Ex Auditu Verbi* (Festschrift G.C. Berkouwer; Kampen: Kok, 1965), 80-88; *The Church*, 313-319.

²³See H. Berkhof, o.c., 25ff. about Congar. I think especially of sections in A. Retif, S.J., *Catholiciteit* (Amsterdam-Antwerpen: Standard-Boekhandel, 1960, 46ff. (The church as universal means of salvation) and 78ff. (The universal adaptation — "aanpassing" — of Catholicism). Retif, p. 48, states that the church will always be present to any man coming into the world. "Daardoor was en is de Kerk naamloos tegenwoordig aan iedere mens en iedere mens kan zonder het te weten in aanleek reeel tot de Kerk behoren." It reminds us of the "anonymous christianity" of Karl Rahner. One of the latest Roman Catholic publications is A. Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).

²⁴Piet Hoogeveen (ed.), *Belijden in context I & II. Nieuwere geloofsbelijdenissen 1963-1980*. II MO Research Pamphlet. No. 12 and No. 13 (Leiden-Utrecht, 1985).

²⁵J.A. Heyns, o.c., 135. Each ethnic church should reflect the total church; otherwise ethnic distribution might well be an obstacle to the church's catholicity.

²⁶Karl Barth, o.c., 707. In the German original *Kirchliche Dogmatik IV/1* (Zollikon-Zuerich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1953), 790.

²⁷Hans Kueng, *The Church*, 303.

²⁸K. Schilder, *De Kerk I-III* (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre: 1960, 1962, 1965). His well-known "Stellingen inzake de Kerk" (II, 245-250) have been translated by R.F. Boersema and introduced by the present writer in *Canadian Reformed Magazine*, Vol. 21, No. 17 ("Theses Concerning the Church").

²⁹Hans Kueng, o.c., 301ff.; cf. Karl Barth, *CD IV/1*, 702 (*KD IV/1*, 784).

³⁰In the line of H. Berkhof, a.o., J.A. Heyns, o.c., 136, proceeds from the basic idea of "fulness." He speaks of the fullness of God, time, the world, truth, and obedience. Cf. his *Dogmatiek* (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1978), 381ff. Since it is questionable whether "catholicity" is directly related to the New Testament concept of "fulness" and the expression "the fullness of time" certainly has another connotation, I prefer "universality," "totality" or "entirety."



The graduates: (l to r) J.G.R. Kroeze, B.A., M.Div., W.B. Slomp, B.A., B.S.W., M.Div., L. Roth, B.A., M.Div., H.A. Bergsma, B.A., M.Div.

A new program

Introduction

Our Theological College in Hamilton most often grants the degree of Master of Divinity. This degree is given to a student who comes to our institution with a B.A. degree and completes four years of study there. If someone is not in possession of a Bachelor of Arts degree, he will not receive the degree of Master of Divinity of our Theological College. This degree opens the way to ecclesiastical examinations and thus to eligibility for receiving a call for the ministry.

During the last decade several theological seminaries and colleges have broadened their outreach by offering some other programs besides the familiar course of studies that leads up to a Master of Divinity degree and to the ministry.

Our Theological College has been reluctant in following the trend of broadening the range of programs at a seminary; e.g., we did not as yet institute a Master of Religious Education program. This is in other institutions the most popular program for those who have a B.A. degree but do not plan to enter the ministry. It would require a change in the Theological College Act of the Ontario Legislature if we would not employ the terms Bachelor of Theology or Bachelor of Divinity (which are mentioned in our Act) but use the nomenclature of Master of Religious Education.

But besides these degree programs there are sometimes also diploma courses. Often they are called diploma courses in the case of those who do not have the training prerequisite for the study of theology. They are not in possession of a Bachelor of Arts degree but want to undertake some theological studies. One may think of mission aid workers or elementary school teachers.

A diploma of theological studies can more readily be given. Such a diploma may be granted to a person who, although he is not in possession of a B.A. degree, has studied a number of theological courses.

Synod 1986 of the Canadian Reformed Churches decided "to approve the establishing of a two-year program leading to a diploma in theological studies."

Bylaw Number 5.13.2 of our Theological College states the following: "The Diploma of Theological Studies is granted

The library of the College



to those who have successfully completed the two (2) years of study for this diploma."

Handbook 1986, p. 14, mentions under the heading *Diploma Studies* the following: "Besides the Master of Divinity program the Theological College offers a two-year program that leads to the Diploma of Theological Studies. Knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin is not required.

The program is geared to those who do not plan to enter the ministry of the Word but want to labour in fields related to the pastorate (education, mission)."

Upon a proposal of the Senate of the Theological College, the Board of Governors now accepted the following program for the Diploma of Theological Studies.

Continued on page 426

	Units
Old Testament	
1102 Geography of the Bible Lands	3
2102 History and Institutions of Old Testament Times	15
3102 Old Testament Canonics	15
4103 History of Revelation in the Old Testament	15
New Testament	
1206 New Testament History	2
1207 Hermeneutics	2
2205 New Testament Background	15
3205 New Testament Canonics	15
4103 History of Revelation in the New Testament	15
Ecclesiology	
2307 Church History 100 - 1520 A.D.	15
2308 Church Polity (Introduction)	6
3307 Church History 1520 - 1800 A.D.	15
3308 Church Polity (Church Order I)	6
4308 Church History 1800 - present	15
4309 Church Polity (Church Order II)	6
Dogmatology	
1409 Philosophy and Theology	6
2409 Prolegomena; Revelation; Inspiration; God; Decrees	20
2410 Symbolics II	8
3409 Creation; Man; Sin; Christ	20
3410 Ethics	8
4410 Ecclesiology; Soteriology; Eschatology	20
4411 Contemporary Theology	8
Diaconology	
1512 Public Speaking	3
1513 Introduction to Diaconology	4
2512 History of Religions	3
2513 Evangelistics	4
3512 Liturgics	4
3513 Catechetics	4
4514 Missiology	4

Diploma of Theological Studies program

Prerequisite

One year of successfully completed University studies, preferably in the humanities, or a Teacher's College Diploma, or an equivalent, is required for admission to the courses for the Diploma of Theological Studies.

Course of studies

During their two years students enrolled in the Diploma of Theological Stud-

ies program follow key nonbiblical-language or nonbiblical-language related theological courses, either completely or partly. In each of the five departments no less than 26 units of credit should be obtained. The students in this program are to assemble a total of credits for at least 220 units. Taking these requirements into consideration a student may select from the courses listed in the chart.

Since the sophomore, junior, and senior theological courses are most often given in a three-year cycle, the Diploma of Theological Studies program will basically consist of courses starting with the digits 2 and 3, or 3 and 4, or 4 and 2. The

Diploma students will follow Freshman courses (starting with the digit 1) during the hours when the M. Div. students have lectures in Advanced Hebrew, Advanced Greek, Exegesis O.T., Exegesis N.T., Homiletics, or Poimenics.

Conclusion

The Board of Governors and the Senate hope that this new program may make our Theological College function even better for the edification of the churches and the coming of God's glorious kingdom.

J. FABER

PRESS REVIEW



RES Harare 1988 and the GKN

Delegates from the thirty-three member churches of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES) gathered in Harare, Zimbabwe from May 24 to June 10, 1988. An item of great concern was how this body would now deal with the status of the GKN (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland [synodical]) which tolerates the sin of homosexuality, but remains a member of the RES (which has now become REC — Reformed Ecumenical Council).

"The most difficult issue confronting the delegates to Harare was the status of a member church, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN). Four other member churches had protested that the GKN no longer qualified for membership in the RES because of its positions on biblical interpretation and on the church membership of practicing homosexuals. The delegates from these churches came to Harare with a hope that a clear resolution of the GKN membership question would take place.

The RES had in 1980 and in 1984 made principal statements that all homosexual practice is sin. They requested the GKN to accept this as advice. However, the GKN protested that the RES had never made a study of the biblical passages involved, nor had the RES engaged the GKN in any serious dialogue about its position.

In 1984 the RES decided to appoint a committee which was to meet with the GKN to convey the RES position. However, since the RES had itself not undertaken a study, the GKN

saw no reason to meet with the proposed committee. The Interim Committee then requested a study of the ethical and biblical questions surrounding homosexuality, which was completed in late 1987 (RES Report 9). The GKN quickly submitted a reply, and these two reports, together with earlier GKN documents, became the materials for the delegates to debate.

The advisory committee on this issue was divided, and issued a majority report and a minority report to the synod.

Both reports argued that there was no reason to change the decisions of 1980 and 1984 that homosexual practice is sin. The RES study report no. 9 on homosexuality confirmed this point of view. Both reports also expressed dissatisfaction with the position on scriptural hermeneutics expressed in the *Sequel to God with Us*. Both reports requested or urged the GKN to withdraw or rescind their pastoral advice on homosexuals. But on the question of what action to take on membership, the reports differed.

The majority report asserted that the GKN was not qualified for membership, and that it should be asked to resign.

... The minority report took the direction that further dialogue with the GKN was necessary and that a thorough study of hermeneutics and ethics should be undertaken.

... After a lengthy debate of nearly a full day a vote was taken. By a vote of 34 to 22, the delegates decided to

follow the direction of the minority report."

As a result, "Delegates from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of the USA announced that their church was immediately terminating membership in the RES. Delegates from the Reformed Churches in South Africa and the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands announced that they were suspending membership until a discussion in their own church synods could be held and final decision made. A delegate from the Reformed Church in New Zealand also indicated that his church might decide to withdraw."

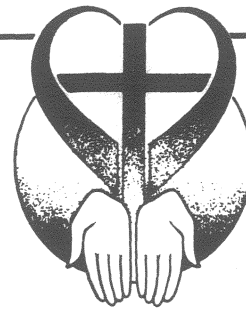
(*REC News Exchange*, June-July 1988)

In 1981, the Free Church of Scotland had already left the RES on account of the same issue. It is small wonder that concerned churches are leaving the RES, for according to its own constitution, membership is for those churches "which profess and maintain the Reformed Faith," (Art. 4). That rule has been violated.

The Rev. G.I. Williamson rightly concluded in *Christian Renewal* (July 18, 1988): "The RES is no longer an ecumenical fellowship of churches that profess and maintain the Reformed faith. Those who still want that kind of fellowship will have to seek it elsewhere" (p. 5).

The churches associated with the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) want to be that kind of a fellowship. Will we be able to find each other there?

C. VAN DAM



Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund

Thanksgiving. It's a holiday time for most of us, an event brightened by the presence of family and good food. It's a time to reflect on our good fortune and to realize anew how truly blessed we are.

But "Thanksgiving" is a word that carries little meaning for most people in developing countries. For them Thanksgiving will mean no day off to relax and reflect, no table laden with holiday fare — for hunger takes no holiday.

And much as we would at times prefer not to be reminded, starvation is still very prevalent on our globe. Millions today know the pangs of hunger. Millions more are plagued by disease brought on by malnutrition or by the lack of safe drinking water.

Examples abound. To mention only a few from the continent of Africa:

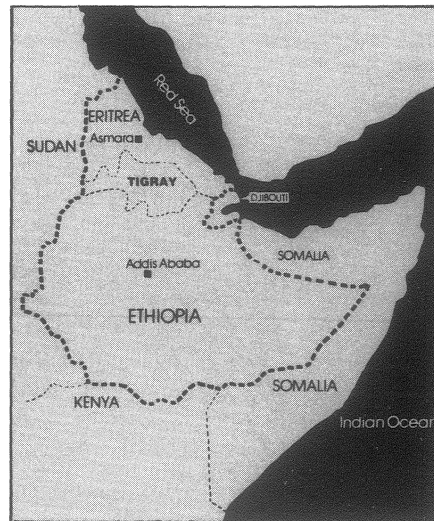
Civil war in north Somalia has claimed 15,000 lives and over 120,000 refugees have now fled to southeast Ethiopia.* There they are surviving with very inadequate food, water, medicine, and shelter in hostile desert conditions. Since June, these refugees have been flooding in at a rate of 2,000 - 3,000 a day, escaping fierce fighting between Somalia government troops and SMI rebels. Eyewitnesses describe the unusual situation of middle-class refugees in suits and other dressy clothes begging for water, eating underground maize, and speaking of war atrocities — a difficult situation, for these are city people not used to eking out an existence in marginal areas.

There is no on-site water, so water tankers are struggling to deliver adequate water to the camps. However, the amount (80,000 litres) falls well short of the need (1,000,000 litres). Bore holes will be drilled, but for now, the trucks must suffice. Shelter is also critical since most refugees are simply sleeping in the open at the mercy of the cold and strong winds.

Emaciated refugees from Sudan are also pouring over Ethiopia's borders, seeking relief from hunger and the civil strife which has erupted there also. Well over

a quarter of a million refugees have entered southwest Ethiopia, some after walking for weeks to reach the camps, barely surviving on a diet of leaves and roots. They continue to pour into four camps in southwest Ethiopia at a rate of about 400 per day.

This explosion of refugees in Ethiopia has aggravated an already serious situation there. Ethiopia is in no position to meet the needs of her own people, let alone the needs of others. Its people suffered starvation three years ago and Ethiopia was the focus of a massive media campaign then. Late last year, due to re-



curing drought and civil war, hunger again swept this African nation. This time, thanks to the existence of an early warning system and in-place structures for dealing with the problem, the results have not been so devastating. The goal has been to avoid the scenario of huge refugee camps by opening feeding centres near the villages, allowing people to stay in their homes and plant crops again as soon as it becomes feasible. This has been, in large measure, successful, though the crisis is not yet over.

Even the callous actions of the Ethiopian government in April of this year have not brought the return of famine as feared. The government of President Mengistu Haile Mariam at that time, without warning, expelled all foreign relief agencies from the hard-hit northern provinces of Eritrea and Tigray. The motives, basically, were to cause added hardship to the "rebels" and to avoid western scrutiny of government bombing and other stepped-up tactics. This after word that Eritrean forces were making major gains in their fight for independence. (According to the *New York Times*, the President acknowledged government setbacks in the north in a recent speech given to the Workers Party of Ethiopia, thus conceding publicly for the first time that the armed conflicts in Eritrea and Tigray exist.)

Fortunately, the much protested government action, while causing additional hardship, has not led to major calamity. The shifting of boundaries between Ethiopian government forces and opposing movements is having devastating effects on rural populations and there has been a slowdown in moving food aid from warehouses to remote regions where it is needed. However, since many relief workers, for example, those working with World Vision and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFB) are for the most part nationals rather than expatriates, the expulsion order has not affected them and the work goes on. Sudan has also permitted shipments of aid to pass through its territory, and since much of Eritrea is in Eritrean hands, the food convoys do trickle through.

Still, both CFB and World Vision personnel point out that more food is needed if people are to get back on their feet again, if the haunting scenes the media presented us with three years ago are to remain but a memory.

CRWRF has designated this need as the focus of its special Thanksgiving collection and is asking you to help us either via special Thanksgiving collections (if your church holds one) or by sending us

your gift directly (see address below). The money will be sent through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to whom we have already donated \$15,000 this year. As usual, whatever you give will be tripled by the Canadian government so that its effect will be far greater.

CFB officials are confident that their grain is getting through in spite of the risks that exist when shipping into a conflict area. In contrast with many international agencies, they distribute food through a farflung network of local Ethiopian churches and are assured that over 95 per cent of the aid is getting through with some delays.

CFB shipments are also used to support rehabilitation work through development and food-for-work projects in the south including road building and much-needed reforestation programs. World Vision likewise focuses on this problem (desertification is a major hindrance to Ethiopia's agricultural survival) and has planted five million trees to combat this crisis. Some areas in the south that were formerly dry and unproductive are now green with crops. Community development that has largely grown out of a response to the last famine has definite success stories here.

Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan — these, as you know, are but a few of the needy areas in Africa. Think only of the strife and devastation in Mozambique, the recent slaughter in Burundi . . . and more . . . Yet we focus on Ethiopia for now because

we can only meet one need at a time and because there is hunger there which we can help vanquish.

This Thanksgiving, let us sit down in peace to our family dinners and enjoy God's good gifts of food and fellowship,



A Somali refugee receives life-saving milk. World Vision has donated 100 metric tons of milk powder to refugees entering eastern Ethiopia, running from war and hunger.

but let us also remember to give something from the abundance with which God has blessed us to those who are caught in the vice of drought and civil strife. While enjoying a day off and sampling the harvest our God has once again granted, let us not forget that elsewhere in our small world — hunger takes no holiday.

*The area where the Madanys work is still peaceful but basic foodstuffs are now scarce.

N.B.

CRWRF will also be pleased to accept any special gifts to help the homeless and hungry left in the wake of Bangladesh's recent terrible flooding. Though flooding is an annual problem causing loss of life and homes, this year is the worst ever with an estimated twenty-five million now homeless. Designate your gift for this specific need if you so desire. We will ensure that it is wisely used and report details of same to you.

Gifts for the work of CRWRF may be directed to:

CRWRF
PO BOX 793
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y3

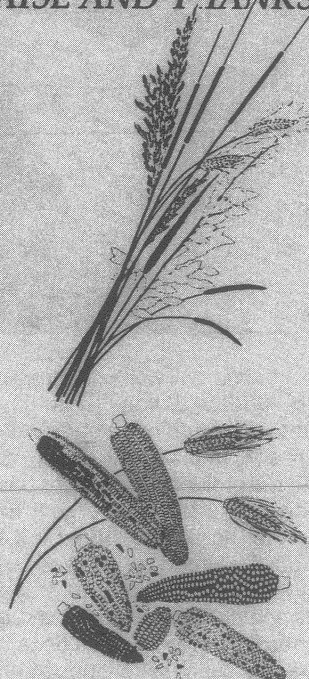
All gifts are gladly received. Donations of \$10.00 or more will be issued a receipt for tax deduction.

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

*I sing the mighty power of God
That made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad,
And built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained
The sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at His command,
And all the stars obey.*

*I sing the goodness of the Lord,
That filled the earth with food;
He formed the creatures with His word,
And then pronounced them good.
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed,
Where'er I turn my eye:
If I survey the ground I tread,
Or gaze upon the sky!*



*There's not a plant or flower below,
But makes Thy glories known;
And clouds arise, and tempests blow,
By order from Thy throne,
While all that borrows life from Thee
Is ever in Thy care,
And everywhere that man can be,
Thou God, art present there.*

Isaac Watts

A Heart to Praise Thee

*Thou hast given so much to me,
Give one thing more—a grateful heart:
Not thankful when it pleaseth me,
As if Thy blessings had spare days,
But such a heart whose Pulse may be
Thy Praise.*

George Herbert



Re: Further reflections on Synodical practices, etc., (Vol. 37, no. 4 and 11)

I have been reading with great interest the exchange between the brothers B. Moes, P. Roukema, P. Schon, and the Rev. Cl. Stam regarding the changes made by Synod 1983 in the Forms for Baptism and for the Public Profession of Faith ("articles of the Christian faith" changed to "confessions"). Perhaps, as Rev. Stam also points out, it would be good, for *historical* reasons, to go back to the older terminology.

However, when I read that the confessions "... should never be raised to the level of norm and used as a *prerequisite* for church membership" (p. 78), then it seems that we are also divorcing ourselves from history.

The church has always been willing to give a carefully worded and responsible account of its faith. In fact, it has always been called to do so (1 Peter 3:15). We should note that it is *the church* which is called to do so, not only the office-bearers of the church.

One of the tasks of the church is to defend the Word of God against attacks

of heresy. How does the church do this? It does so by means of formulating confessions and binding itself to them. It is "... the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). As Dr. H. Bavinck wrote, "[T]he church is called to preserve [the] Word of God, to explain it, to preach it, apply it, translate it, spread it abroad, recommend it, and defend it When the church neglects and forgets this, the church is remiss in its duty and undermines its own existence." By means of its confessions, the church guards the Word of God against every wind of doctrine. If the church allows people who hold to various doctrines to become members of the church, then it is undermining its existence. Then it no longer functions as the pillar and bulwark of the truth.

This is not a confessionalist approach to the confessions. This is not placing the confessions above Scriptures. However, neither is it opposing Scripture and confessions. The confessions are nothing but the church saying with one voice, "This is what Scriptures say." Without repeating what Rev. Stam has said about the relationship between Scripture and confessions, let me only point out that the confessions point to Scripture and say, "*Sola Scriptura!*" The confessions, by means of

which the church repeats Scripture, keep the church on the scriptural track.

Let us learn from history. The Anabaptists who were strong in the Netherlands in the early days of the Reformation quickly splintered into some 50 groups while the Calvinists remained strong and united for many years. Why? Because the Anabaptists wanted "No Creed but Christ!", and went off in their own directions proclaiming what they thought that meant while the Reformed people rallied around "forms of unity" by means of which they together proclaimed what Scripture says.

If we are going to throw out confessional membership, as the three brothers *seem* to want to do, then we had better be prepared to allow every wind of doctrine into the church. Then we had better be prepared to allow Arminians, Pelagians and whoever else feel so inclined to become members. If we are going to go the way of allowing people to become communicant members simply by confessing a thumbnail gospel, then there will not be much of a unity of faith for very long.

Let us together, by means of our common confession, continue to say, "Only the Word!"

G.PH. VAN POPTA

Consulaat-Generaal Der Nederlanden CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

One Dundas Street West
Box 2, Suite 2106
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z3
Phone: (416) 598-2520

OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

VAN IERLAND, J., geboren op 20 juli 1923, laatste woonplaats in Nederland: 's Gravenhage, datum van vertrek naar Canada is onbekend.

KLOES, Johannes Wilhelmus, geboren op 9 januari 1927, laatste woonplaats in Nederland: Haarlem, naar Canada vertrokken op 23 februari 1954.

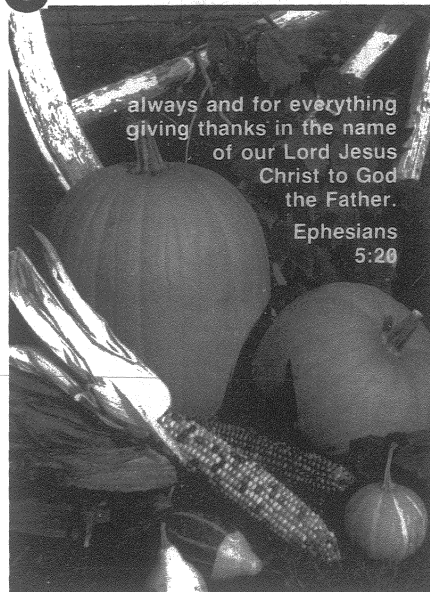
SCHRIJVER, Willi, geboren te Amsterdam op 6 oktober 1939, laatst bekende adres in Nederland: Julianastraat 3, Geertruidenberg, naar Canada vertrokken op 8 mei 1952.

VAN HET ZAND, Peter John, geboren op 29 maart 1933 te Zandvoort, laatst bekende adres in Nederland: vanBrakelplein 36, Groningen. Naar Canada vertrokken op 8 mei 1957.

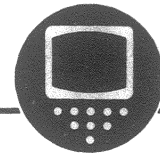
VAN ZANTEN, Marleen, geboren op 4 december 1960 te 's Gravenzande, laatst bekende adres in Nederland: Mr. Schokkingstraat 19, 's Gravenzande. Naar Canada vertrokken op 21 september 1987.

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

OUR COVER



always and for everything
giving thanks in the name
of our Lord Jesus
Christ to God
the Father.
Ephesians
5:20



Classis Ontario North, September 16th, 1988 at Burlington, ON

1. *Opening:* After Christian opening, the credentials are examined and found in good order.

Classis is constituted with Rev. C. Stam as chairman, Rev. G. Nederveen as clerk and Rev. J. Mulder as vice-chairman.

The chairman welcomes the brothers. He mentions the calls the Rev. W. Den Hollander received from the church at Fergus, Grand Valley and Orangeville. He also informs classis that the LORD has taken unto Himself sr. Geraldine Selles early this morning and he offers Prof. Selles and family the condolences of classis.

The agenda is established.

2. Reports:

a. The church at Orangeville reports that the books of the Fund for Needy Churches has been audited and found in good order.

b. The committee for needy churches reports that the bank balance per September 7, 1988 is \$13,327.12. Churches are contributing regularly. Lower Sackville will be supported when a minister has accepted a call. The support of the church at Ottawa is continued.

c. A report of the church visitation in the church at Brampton is read.

d. Classis thankfully takes note of these reports.

3. *Question Period according to Art. 44 C.O.:* This question period does not result in any discussion.

4. Proposals and Instructions:

a. The church at Fergus requests a classical certificate of release for the Rev. C. Stam, since he accepted a second call to the church at Hamilton. After the pertinent documents have been examined, the release is granted. The Rev. Stam is addressed by the vice-chairman, thanking him for his work within Classis Ontario North.

b. Upon request of the church at Fergus the Rev. P. Feenstra is appointed as counsellor of this church.

c. Upon request of the church at Orangeville the Rev. G. Nederveen is appointed as counsellor, provided his consistory approves.

d. The churches at Fergus, Elora and Lower Sackville ask for classical appointments. After some discussion these requests are granted.

Elora: The Revs. Feenstra - Oct. 23, 1988;

Nederveen - Nov. 27, 1988; G. van Popta - Dec. 18, 1988; J. De Jong - Jan. 22, 1989.

Fergus: The Revs. D. DeJong - Oct. 23; R. Gleason - Nov. 27, 1988; J. Mulder - Dec. 18, 1988; G. Nederveen — Jan. 22, 1989.

L. Sackville: Rev. G. van Popta - Oct. 1988; Rev. D. DeJong — Dec. 1988.

5. Correspondence:

a. The church at Guelph requests classis to act in harmony with Art. 46 of the Church Order when appointing church visitors, namely, to appoint "the more experienced and able ministers." Classis decides that indeed the practice of Art. 46 should be maintained when these appointments are made.

b. A copy of a letter sent by the church at Burlington-East to the Regional Synod East of Oct. 1988, is declared inadmissible.

6. Appointments:

a. Preparation next classis: convening church, Brampton. Suggested officers: G. van Popta, chairman; D. DeJong, clerk; G. Nederveen, vice-chairman. Date: Friday, December 9, 1988. Place: Burlington-West.

b. Committees and deputies are appointed.

As church visitors are elected: the Revs. D. DeJong, J. De Jong, R.N. Gleason, J. Mulder, G. Nederveen.

A schedule for the visitation is approved: Brampton — J. DeJong and J. Mulder; Burlington-East — R. Gleason and G. Nederveen; Burlington-South — D. DeJong and G. Nederveen; Burlington-West — J. De Jong and R. Gleason; Elora — D. DeJong and J. Mulder; Fergus — R. Gleason and J. Mulder; Grand Valley — D. DeJong and G. Nederveen; Guelph — J. De Jong and R. Gleason; Lower Sackville — D. DeJong and G. Nederveen; Orangeville — J. De Jong and J. Mulder; Ottawa — J. De Jong and R. Gleason; Toronto — D. DeJong and G. Nederveen.

c. The church at Burlington-West is appointed to audit the books of the classical treasurer, br. J.J. Poort.

d. Delegates to Regional Synod East of October 19, 1988 are elected:

Ministers: the Revs. D. DeJong, J. De Jong, P. Feenstra, J. Mulder. Alternates: the Revs. G. Nederveen, R.N. Gleason, G.Ph. van Popta, in that order.

Elders: the brothers H. Faber, H.J. Moes, G.J. Nordeman, S. Wildeboer. Alternates: the brothers F.C. Ludwig, B.H.

[Harry] Harsevoort, J. Kamphuis, W.F. Horsman, in that order.

7. *Question Period:* The question is raised whether a uniform policy re remuneration of ministers serving a church on classical appointment should be adopted. Since there is no proposal of any church re this matter, classis takes note of this question.

8. *Censure according to Art. 44 C.O.* Censure is not necessary.

9. *Closing:* Before closing the Acts are read and adopted; the Press Release is read and approved.

The chairman speaks words of farewell, wishing the churches the guidance of the Lord. He states that it was not because of Fergus, neither because of classis that he is leaving this classical district to be installed in Hamilton, Deo Volente.

He requests the singing of Hymn 49:2 and closes classis with prayer and thanksgiving.

On behalf of Classis Ontario North
J. MULDER, vice-chairman e.t.

Classis Contracta Ontario South, August 26, 1988

1. *Opening.* On behalf of the convening church at Hamilton br. A. Witten calls the meeting to order. He requests the delegates to sing Psalm 119:1. He then reads Romans 10:5-21 and leads in prayer. He welcomes the delegates and mentions that cand. J. Kroeze accepted the call extended by the church at Hamilton for missionary work in Brazil.

2. *Examination of Credentials:* The credentials are examined by the delegates of the church at Hamilton and are found to be in good order. The following brothers are present:

Ancaster: Rev. R. Aasman, elder B. Bartels

Attercliffe: Rev. D.G.J. Agema, elder P. Oosterhoff

Hamilton: Elder A. Witten, elder T. Zietsma; Rev. P. Aasman in advisory capacity.

3. *Appointment of Officers:* Classis is constituted with the following officers: Rev. R. Aasman, chairman; Rev. D.G.J. Agema, clerk/assessor.

4. *Adoption of the Agenda:* After some minor changes the agenda is adopted.

5. *Approval for Extending a Second Call as per Art. 4C, C.O.*

a. A letter of Rev. Cl. Stam, dated July 18, 1988, is read. In this letter he concludes that the way was open for the church at Hamilton to extend a second call.

b. Classis takes note of the fact that the announcement in *Clarion* vol. 37, no. 17 (August 19, 1988) page 345 was improper, since the Rev. Stam had at that moment not yet received a second call from the church of Hamilton. The dele-

gates of Hamilton inform Classis that the consistory at Hamilton takes no responsibility for this improper premature announcement in *Clarion* (vol. 37, no. 17, page 345).

c. Classis concludes that there are no objections for the church at Hamilton to extend a second call to Rev. Cl. Stam.

The chairman congratulates the delegates of Hamilton in well-chosen words and expresses the hope that the church

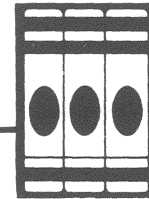
at Hamilton will soon receive a pastor and teacher.

6. *Acts and Press Release*: The Acts are read and adopted and the Press Release is read and approved.

7. *Closing*: The chairman leads in prayer of thanksgiving and closes the meeting.

For the Classis,
D.G.J. AGEMA, clerk e.t.

BOOK REVIEW



J. DeHaas, *And Replenish the Earth* (New Westminster: Covenant Publishing, 1987) 108 pp. \$8.75.

This is a simple, endearing autobiographical account of one of the workers of the first hour in the Canadian Reformed Churches. John DeHaas, already well-known for his interest in Dutch church history of the nineteenth and twentieth century and his encyclopedic knowledge of the life stories of numerous Reformed ministers, now tells the story of the most important part of his own life.

We read about his marriage in The Hague in the Netherlands in April 1940 just before the German occupation, about the underground movement and the struggle in the Reformed Churches which led to the Liberation ("Vrijmaking") of 1944. Then the emigration bug struck. Many people in the Netherlands had felt cooped up during those five seemingly endless war years. In the case of Reformed people, especially those who had learned from Dr. Klaas Schilder what the cultural mandate is all about, the promise and demand of Gen. 1:28 weighed heavily: Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it. In this booklet typical family pictures show the young DeHaas family — four young children included — in September 1947 on their way to the little town of Burdett in Alberta. It is as if we hear the author tell about life on the prairie and his move to Lethbridge-Coaldale.

Then the story becomes more than the well-known tale about the hardships of the first years for strangers in a foreign country. It takes on church historical significance. DeHaas tells uninhibitedly of the friendliness and help of Christian Reformed brothers and sisters: honour to whom honour is due. But when DeHaas in the house congregation in Lethbridge read a sermon of the (liberated) series

Waarheid en Recht instead of the synodical series *Menigerlei Genade*, first the consistory of Nobleford and then a Classis Pacific and lastly the 1949 General Synod of the Christian Reformed Church made it clear that the Christian Reformed community had chosen for the synodical churches in the Netherlands. A "liberated" sermon could not be read even in a house congregation. Official publications stated that the "liberated churches" were regarded as a new group with which the Christian Reformed Church had no fellowship. We read the sad conclusion on p. 70: "John and Helen had received a lot of friendship in the Christian Reformed Church, especially in Burdett, and they had hoped that they could remain with this church. They had already experienced the church struggle of the Liberation in the Netherlands and were certainly not anxious to do so again in Canada. Yet they had to. They could not remain now that the Synod had rejected their appeal and left the true Reformed Church in the cold."

The following chapters tell of the work of John DeHaas as fieldman for newly arrived immigrants. We meet other workers of the first hour: Barendregt, Geusebroek, VanderGugten, VanderVegte. We hear of the attempt to establish contact with the Protestant Reformed Church and how again speculative doctrinal statements about God's covenant kept God's children divided. It was Barendregt one day who suggested, "Why don't we organize a Reformed Church ourselves?" On the sixteenth day of April 1950 in a classroom of Crystal Lake Public School a total of forty-eight people, including ten confessing brothers, constituted the first Canadian Reformed Church. In the afternoon service Barendregt, as the eldest of the three brothers chosen as officials, read the form for the installation of office-bearers and installed

the others, after which VanderGugten read the questions and installed Barendregt. "No one felt pompous that they had achieved this milestone; they were simply extremely grateful that the Lord had used them, and continued to use them, as tools for bringing people of the same house together."

This unadorned story tells us of some trials and tribulations of the young congregation. We hear of their mistakes — also with respect to the Christian Reformed community — and of their internal difficulties. But more important, we see how God's grace broke stubborn hearts and restored the unity of faith within the small congregation. On November 15, 1950, a classis met, comprising the churches of Edmonton, Georgetown, Lethbridge and Neerlandia and in July 1951 the Rev. J.T. Van Popta became the first immigrated "liberated" minister. The story ends with the moving of the DeHaas family to British Columbia in November 1951.

If I may make some slightly critical remarks, I would like to point out that the deposition of Dr. Klaas Schilder took place on August 3, 1944 (not in July, as stated on p. 17) and that the name of the Dutch theologian is not "A. Brakel" (p. 66) but "Willem (or Wilhelmus) à Brakel." Further, since I have emphasized the church historical aspects of this immigrant story, I would have wished that, e.g., in an appendix the author had published his original correspondence with consistory, classis and synod. For those who are interested I mention that the library of the Theological College in Hamilton has photocopies of this correspondence.

This recommendable booklet may be obtained from Covenant Publishing, 41-8th Avenue, New Westminster, BC, V3L 1X6.

J. FABER