

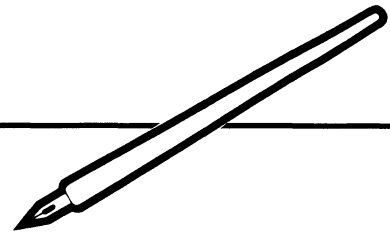


**Clarion**  
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 38, No. 11

May 26, 1989

By J. Geertsema



## An insert on Synod Winnipeg 1989

Synod Winnipeg 1989 is history. It belongs to the past. The delegates came home. Decisions have been made. We are glad that we can offer the readers of *Clarion* a special insert with this issue pertaining to the Synod, presenting an introduction, written by the Rev. Cl. Stam since he was the chairman, as well as the official Press Release, and the text of the various speeches. Before the appearance of the *Acts* we can now, provisionally, receive all the information regarding the decisions of the Synod of Winnipeg.

In the preceding issue we could read that the Synod worked hard. We appreciate that. As for the results and effects of the decisions, we shall have to wait. This is still in the future. There is one result to which I would like to pay attention. It is

that of the appointment of two new professors for our College: Dr. N.H. Gootjes, at this moment still lecturing in Pusan, Korea, and Drs. J. De Jong. We congratulate them and are thankful and happy that both have accepted the appointment. Dr. J. Faber has introduced both. Drs. De Jong is not a stranger to us, and I am sure that Dr. Gootjes will make himself known to us in the near future, first of all in the College community, but then also in the midst of the churches. To Dr. Faber we do not say farewell yet. He will stay on till the end of the year. All this "under the condition of James" (in Latin: "Sub conditione Jacobi") as Dr. Faber is used to say. You can find what he means in James 4:15.

## Further debate on the OPC

At the end of my previous editorial I wrote that I was going to continue the discussion about the OPC with the Rev. Agema. I shall do that here, encouraged by the remark I heard when walking into a consistory room on a Sunday morning (where it was, is unimportant): "It is good that there is an OPC, for now *Clarion* has something to write about." The future will, I am sure, bring even more discussion. The Rev. Agema wrote that there is unfairness because, e.g., only the pro-OPC side received a place in *Clarion* and because the timing was so that the other side could not defend itself before the Synod Winnipeg, which "certainly does not help to stimulate an open and honest discussion."

In the first place, reason for publication was the fact that the report of the OPC committee came out; the lateness of this appearance caused the lateness of the discussion. Besides, (further) discussion does not (have to) depend on the fact of the meeting of a synod. From Rev. Agema's article I quote also the following (*Family Post*, vol.33, no.14, April 2, 1989):

Prof. Geertsema also asks the question why some have difficulties with the OPC. His answer is because they are afraid that things which are allowed in the OPC will gradually enter the Can. Ref. Churches. And I agree with him that this is indeed a danger. Especially when it comes to discipline, which is one of the marks of the true church, and to the binding of the confession.

After this, the remarks about the divergencies follow. I dealt with that part already. Rev. Agema continues

But yet I also believe that there is a deeper reason why some

have difficulties with the OPC. Prof. Geertsema admits that within the OPC there are congregations which do not have confessional membership and have an open Lord's Supper. When we now have a relationship with the OPC and call them true church, may we close our eyes when such deviations from the faith are tolerated? No matter how many "sincere" congregations there may be in the OPC, by association they tolerate what is wrong. Paul says a little leaven leavens the whole lump (1 Cor. 5:6).

The way prof. Geertsema reasons we could also have relationship with the Christian Reformed Church. Who wants to deny that there are indeed congregations within the CRC which are very close to us? But we do not have a relationship with the CRC, because it tolerates unfaithfulness within its federation. And we say to them that every congregation is responsible for what happens within the federation. Does that not apply to the OPC? These so-called good congregations allow sin to continue. And what do we do? We justify it as well, by saying, Let us keep up the relationship. And we fail to call the OPC to repentance. That will affect us for then we play with the marks of the church. And this is why some have difficulties with the OPC.

In his analysis, the Rev. Agema calls the lack of confessional membership and the open Lord's Supper table "deviations from the faith." And he connects this, especially the matter of the open table with the matter of discipline which we confess to be the third mark of the true church.

It can be clear from previous discussions with Rev. Boersema in our magazine that I stand fully behind confes-

sional membership. I also see a "verbal fencing of the table" (cf. the letter to the editor from Mr. Stuart R. Jones in the next issue), certainly insufficient as means to keep the table of the Lord holy. It places the responsibility totally upon the visitor and neglects the calling of the consistory or rather, the session, the elders. "Verbal fencing" means the warning of the audience, including any visitors, from the pulpit to abstain from the table if they live in sin. I agree with the Rev. Agema that here a session (consistory) is lacking in the fulfilment of its calling to exercise discipline regarding the table in a proper way.

The question is, however, must we evaluate these matters as "deviations from the faith" which should (have) be(en) regarded as impediments that keep us from recognizing the OPC as "true church?"

In this expression "deviations from the faith," "faith" is not emphasized as the faith with which we believe, our believing, but it is more the faith which we believe, the contents of our faith, the confession of the truth of God's Word, the doctrine of the Scriptures. It is "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude:4) and of which we confess that it binds and holds the church together, since the Son of God "gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself, by His Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith, a church chosen to everlasting life" (Lord's Day 21, QA.54, of the Heid. Cat.). I use here the words "emphasize" and "more" since we should not separate what belongs together. When we speak about the faith which was delivered to the saints and which binds the church together we cannot exclude the faith with which we believe. Believers are bound together in the faith, not believers and unbelievers or hypocrites.

Now there is more that can be said about the points of confessional membership and the fencing of the Lord's table. These are not isolated points. They must be placed in the context of the Presbyterian confessional standards and history. But my question is, should we not speak here about weaknesses rather than about deviations from the faith?

I shall try to make clear what I mean. The Rev. Agema speaks about discipline in connection with the points raised, if I read him correctly, especially with regard to the open table. The reasoning can be so easily: An open table is a neglecting of discipline; discipline is the third mark of the true church; conclusion: the OPC misses the third mark of the true church of Christ. If we were to follow this reasoning, we conclude from one specific point to a general conclusion. But does the fact of a lack of discipline with regard to the table of the Lord mean that therefore in the OPC church discipline is lacking or even absent in every respect? Does it mean that there is no discipline at all in the OPC? Are sinners who harden themselves in their sins not disciplined in the OPC anymore? This should then show in an overall picture of deviating from God's Word, while, what I read about the actions of the OPC, for instance in leaving the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, shows faithfulness and the will to abide by the doctrine of God's Word and by the unity of the true faith, and, in a certain way, was an act related to discipline.

It is not my intention to make *Clarion* into "an OPC paper," neither do I want to defend an open table or throw out the need of confessional membership. But we should not overreact either. In this connection I place also a letter to the editor of Mr. Jones in our next magazine, but I invite the Rev. Hofford to react to it.

One more remark should be made. Rev. Agema writes that in my line of reasoning we could also have a relation with the Christian Reformed Church, since also there are local churches which are "very close to us." I agree on the point of the closeness. But while I am speaking about weaknesses in the OPC, I speak of "deviations from the faith" with respect to the general picture and direction, and synodical decisions in the CRC. In the CRC we find deviations from the doctrine of election and reprobation, from the doctrine regarding creation, from

the doctrine regarding the inerrancy of the Scriptures, and so forth. The CRC defends the synodical (once) Reformed churches in the Netherlands, since it follows in their footsteps; and our churches have to continue to warn the OPC against the relationship which they still have with the CRC (cf. the Acts of the Synod of New Westminster, pp. 43f. ("Synod further conclude," sub 4 and 5) and the Acts of Synod Coaldale, p. 43 "Recommendations" sub d). Cutting ties with the synodical churches in the Netherlands will have as consequence cutting the ties with the CRC if it continues in its present course. **■**



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**OUR COVER**

Vancouver's north shore  
as seen from Stanley Park

*Photo courtesy:*  
Renee VanOene  
Abbotsford, BC

By W.W.J. VanOene



Here we are again.

It is quite a few weeks ago that we met on this place, and many things have happened in the meantime.

Our magazine was filled with all sorts of other articles and communications, so that I considered it wiser to wait a while before sitting down to write another chat.

In some instances remarks which will be made hereafter may come as "mustard after the meal," as they say in Dutch, but I still have to make the points.

Once again I have to express my dismay at the lack of possibilities to discuss various points which were to be dealt with at our General Synod of Winnipeg.

Rev. Agema also complained about this in the bulletin of Attercliffe. He was referring specifically to the report of the Committee on Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

My concern regards the matter surrounding Art. 31 C.O. as well as proposals regarding Art. 13 C.O. Although, at least by the time these lines reach our readers, the Synod of Winnipeg 1989 hopefully has come to an end, and my remarks may be either superfluous or an introduction to further discussion, it will be good to make them anyway.

In the matter of Art. 31 C.O. we shall wait till there is an opportunity to go more in depth into it.

For the time being we confine ourselves to Art. 13 C.O. and the proposals which were mentioned in bulletins.

It is possible that the basic contents of the proposals are somewhat different from what I read in bulletins, but I have to go by what I read. And this is sufficient to raise a warning finger.

In the *Church Herald* of Fergus/Elora I read that the consistory proposed to insert "If, however, a minister of the Word desires to remain in active service beyond retirement age, he may do so with the agreement of the consistory with the deacons."

In other words: compulsory retirement at retirement age! It is only with the permission of the consistory with the deacons that a minister is allowed to continue beyond his 65th birthday.

Honestly, I think that the brothers did not realize the nature of this proposed insertion. And it is my sincere wish that the Synod of Winnipeg may have rejected this suggestion outrightly. It would basically be in conflict with the whole character of the calling for life. That a minister receives the right to ask to be relieved of his duties when reaching retirement age is quite different from a consistory having the right to say: "Now that you have reached your 65th birthday, we want you to go. We do not agree that you stay on."

More serious, however, I consider other changes which have been suggested.

The bulletin of the Immanuel Church in Edmonton informed us that a submission was received from the Church at Lower Sackville in which "they suggest that all the churches should share in the full cost incurred when a minister retires, and not just the last church he served."

From various bulletins I learned that the thought found some agreement with some consistories.

Abbotsford's consistory supported "a proposal to increase benefits to smaller congregations wishing to call a minister close to retirement."

Ottawa's consistory decided "to request the Foundation to initiate a discussion to examine the possibility to restructure the retirement provisions for our ministers."

Elora's consistory "has accepted a proposal from the finance committee to the Foundation for Superannuation to study the possibility that retired ministers' pension is fully paid from the Fund for Superannuation."

Perhaps I should have dedicated a whole article to this point instead of dealing with it in our medley, and I would have if there had been sufficient time before the convening of Synod. It still may be necessary to deal with it more extensively. Now a few remarks have to suffice.

In the first place: we provide specifically in Art. 13 C.O. that the church a minister served last should provide for his needs and should do so honourably.

We know no ministers in general service whose stipend is paid from a general fund. A minister is and remains the minister of the church which he serves, even when he is allowed to retire from his active duties.

And as the church is responsible for him while he is serving, so the church remains responsible for him when he retires. Upon retirement a minister does not, all of a sudden, become a "federal responsibility."

It is, for this reason, principally wrong to decide that the cost of supporting retired ministers should be borne by all churches. This violates the principle upon which the provisions are based which we find in Articles 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14, to mention these.

If a church cannot provide the necessary means to support its retired minister honourably, the way to follow is not: let him become the responsibility of *all* the churches, but then the way to follow is that the sister-churches help that church which has become a "needy church." Just as when a church wants to call a minister but cannot bring together all the funds needed, and goes to the sister-churches asking for support.

By the same token it is wrong to propose that retired ministers' stipends be fully paid by the Foundation for Superannuation.

In the first place: It is *not* the Foundation which pays the stipends of retired ministers.

In the second place: the Foundation is not an ecclesiastical institution, but is a mutual fund which the churches have established and from which *they* — and *NOT* the ministers! — may receive a certain amount to help them in the years when they will have to call another minister as their present minister retires.

The retired minister remains the first responsibility of the church. And it is the church itself that determines how much a minister will need.

While the ministers are serving, there is difference in the stipend which they receive. The needs of the one ministerial family are different from those of the other. Even when two ministers serve one church, they not necessarily receive the same stipend. It all depends on their needs.

The consistory with the deacons determines how much their retired minister will need. And in order to help them in bearing the additional cost of another minister, the churches have established a Fund. They receive a certain amount from this Fund when they have to take care of a retired minister. This amount is the same for each and every church that supports a retired minister.

It is *not* the amount *the minister* gets, but the amount the *church* gets. What the church "pays" its retired minister is that

church's business and responsibility. Retired ministers' pensions are *not* paid by the Foundation, as Elora seems to think.

At the moment the amount a church gets from the Foundation is in the neighbourhood of \$12,000.00 per year, if I am not mistaken. Let us say that the church adds \$4,000.00 per year, taking into account the Old Age Pension and the Canada Pension payments the minister receives.

This means that the retired minister "costs" the church only \$4,000.00 per year. If it cannot afford this, there is the way of asking the sister churches for support via the normal channels.

The Fund is not an ecclesiastical matter which could rightfully be dealt with at our broader assemblies. Help for needy churches is an ecclesiastical matter, and this is the way to be followed.

From the outset the Canadian Reformed Churches have refused to make the support of retired ministers a federal matter.

Let it remain like that.

It is time that we pay attention to what happened in the churches in a more orderly and regular fashion, but I had to say the above about things which are a concern to me.

For a change we go to our Australian sister churches first.

Some of this news is old, but I cannot help it when I receive the District Bulletins and *Una Sancta* of December in April of the next year.

The Australian Churches will have another synod this year. As date for its beginning November 7 is mentioned. The preparations are in full swing.

A new Yearbook has been issued for the Armadale area churches as well. Congratulations with this neat and functional booklet. If anyone among us needs an address in one of the four churches there, just give me a call.

Going alphabetically, we relate that in Armadale the Deacons' Report resulted in that "the matter of fund-raising for disasters such as Bangladesh is discussed. It is reported that the deacons have had discussions with certain members with a view to forming a 'World Relief' organization."

This is, what I call, stimulating the members of the church to show mercy.

Bedfordale provided us with more news.

From them we learned that "The West Tamar Church will have a membership of about 150, with approximately equal numbers of confessing and baptized members, leaving some 375 members with the Launceston Church."

(I would rather use the terms "communicant" and "non-communicant" members. Also the communicant members are baptized members, are they not?)

Now about Bedfordale itself.

At the congregational meeting the question was raised whether not "the consistory should reconsider the name 'Bedfordale,' since few of its members live there."

We may be complaining here and there about rising prices, they have the same problem around Armadale. The Bedfordale Church is looking for property, but it appears to be practically impossible to find something suitable *and* affordable within that church's "boundaries."

Now 7 acres of land were available close to the brickworks. "Although this location is well outside the church's boundaries, the scarcity of land within our area has forced us already long ago to widening the search. The money value mentioned was such that the consistory quickly came together to consider whether we should make an offer."

The consistory went ahead with the offer since one member guaranteed "to immediately purchase the property in case approval by the congregation was not obtained." In the meantime it is being tried to find other property as yet.

Byford comes next.

"Proposal for an annual classis from the ministers'

workshop was tabled and discussed. Points raised: it means less time for work in the congregation, more meetings and more preparation for meetings. What is the benefit? Have we done wrong the last twenty-five to thirty years? The consistory is not in favour at this point of time. The cost of having an annual classis meeting ("Classis," VO) is rather high. The proposal includes also to have General Synod once every three years. A point in favour is that the isolated churches receive more contact with the other churches."

For the benefit of those among our readers who may not be familiar with the Australian situation we mention that these churches have a general synod every two years, and this is the only broader assembly they have at the moment. Since the number of churches has grown during the last few years, and the possibility of institution in Rockingham WA and Hobart TAS may not be too far off, it is good that attention is paid to the point of having another major assembly between consistories and general synods so that the situation may become more "normal" as far as life within the federation is concerned.

This is not to say that the situation has been "wrong" until now but it was far from ideal as the brothers and sisters realize.

The Byford Committee of Management referred "to the possibility of looking into an organ. The proposal is accepted and the consistory also instructs them to report to the consistory on the possibilities of purchasing or building an organ for our church."

The Rev. Chr. Bosch and family appear to have received their visa, as we also learned from the Smithville bulletin, and they expect to leave Canada on May 29th or 30th.

In the meantime the manse was expected to be ready by the end of April. Excellent timing. The "consistory is pleased with the progress made and appreciates the fact that so many brothers provide voluntary labour."


Finally a few items about the mission work in Papua New Guinea.

First a happy piece of information. The "application of the Reformed Church of PNG for land was granted!" by the Government. A very happy tidings indeed. The Lord moved the hearts of those in authority to grant the request.

Now something which is less pleasant. Brother and Sister W. Buist were still there and Rev. and Mrs. Koelewijn and their family had already arrived in the manse when, "on Tuesday morning, at 2 a.m., six rascals (robbers) broke into the house, locked up the boys living below in the house and demanded money from the Rev. Koelewijn and family and Br. and Sr. Buist at knife-point. Br. Buist gave them his wallet and watch. They also took a radio belonging to Rev. Koelewijn and left in the dead of night.

"This was a very bad experience especially for the new family. We must thank God that no one was hurt, for it could have gone the other way. The family Koelewijn (Koelewijn family, VO) must always be in our prayers.

"Since the robbery the alarm on the fence has been repaired and all locks and doors checked. The boys living below were very upset and have begun a 24 hour watch, hopefully preventing further breakins."

We hope to return to Canada next time. 

## CHURCH NEWS

CALLED to Burlington (Ebenezer), ON, London, ON, and Winnipeg, MB

REV. R. AASMAN

of Ancaster, ON

# OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



## Dear Busy Beavers,

A little while ago I got a very interesting letter from Busy Beaver *Mark Timmerman*.

I think you will enjoy reading Mark's story too. Here it is.

"Last winter our family went for a trip to Brazil, to visit my grandparents. I enjoyed the bus trip a little and the plane trip the most! My grandparents and some uncles and aunts live together in a colony (a group of people that live close together) near a city called Unai. It is also near the capital city Brasilia. Most of the colonists are farmers; they grow huge fields of brown beans, soya beans, and corn. In Brazil there is a dry season and a wet season; and when we were there it rained often, but it was always warm.

The colonists have one building which they use for a church and school. They have a house congregation, because there are not enough members to institute a church. (About 70 members.) They don't have a minister, but the men take turns reading sermons in Dutch and Portuguese. Sometimes they read sermons from our missionaries in Sao Jose or the Dutch missionaries in Curitiba.

We stayed there for 5 weeks and I now know most of my relatives. I also learned some Portuguese words!"

Mark also included a Wordsearch for you.

## Places, Names, and Portuguese Words

F	B	E	R	A	Z	O	A	J	I	E	F	I
R	L	S	I	S	C	N	O	S	S	E	N	T
I	I	C	H	N	A	M	U	O	S	E	A	F
O	G	O	O	O	U	R	J	T	H	I	M	C
B	O	L	D	L	C	O	A	P	L	A	E	H
R	G	A	A	E	A	U	R	I	G	E	S	U
I	A	S	T	S	J	N	S	M	C	U	R	V
G	R	O	A	U	E	A	V	E	L	A	E	A
A	A	C	N	Z	R	I	N	Y	T	H	O	U
D	M	R	E	B	G	R	Y	E	I	C	B	G
O	N	O	R	D	I	A	T	R	I	T	H	A
E	R	W	O	A	B	I	T	I	R	U	C	
K	I	U	K	R	Z	L	D	O	C	R	O	P

- BRASILIA
- CURITIBA
- MARAGOGI
- RIO DE JANEIRO
- SAO JOSE
- UNAI
- BOERSEMA
- CNOSSEN
- GLAS
- KROEZE
- KUIK
- MEYER
- SOUMAN
- AGUA (water)
- ARROZ (rice)
- CASA (house)
- CHUVA (rain)
- DIA (day)
- ESCOLA (school)
- FEIJAO (brown beans)
- FRIO (cold)
- IGREJA (church)
- OBRIGADO (thank-you)
- PAO (bread)
- PORCO (pig)
- SUCO (juice)
- TCHAU (good-bye)
- VELA (candle)

The letters that are left over from a sentence



## June

Now it is time to wish all the Busy Beavers celebrating a June birthday many happy returns of a great day! Here's hoping you have a good time with your family and friends. May the Lord, our heavenly Father keep you in His care and guide you through the year ahead.

Leona Dehaas	2	Joni Buikema	12
Tanya Hansma	5	Amy Hofsink	14
Lisa Dehaas	6	Jeannette Jansen	16
Laura Bol	7	Hanneke Nap	16
Esther Hordyk	7	Marnie Stam	20
Vanessa Aikema	10	Kent Van Vliet	20
Paula Grit	10	Jamie Harsevoort	21
Alice Plug	10	Esther Leyenhorst	21
Helena Van Es	10	Gwenda Penninga	21
Mark Alkema	11	Gary Penninga	25
Esther Bergsma	11	Billy Dekker	29
Melanie Krabbendam	11	Kristen Jagt	29
Maria Stel	11	Marc Schouten	30



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Joni Schulenberg*. We are happy to have you join us! I see you are a real Busy Beaver already, sending us a puzzle to do! Will you write and tell us about your family and yourself, Joni?

You are a good puzzler, *Diana Flokstra*. And thank you for sending the lovely spring poem. How about you writing a spring poem for us? The owl should look very beautiful stuffed, don't you think, Diana?

Hello *Christine Lodder*. It was good to hear from you again. How do you feel about your new house, Christine? Write again soon. Bye for now.

Thank you for your puzzles, *Sarah Vanderzwaag*. Sounds as if your little sister loves to do things with her *big* sister, right? I hope you'll really enjoy your new home in Manitoba, Sarah. Be sure to send me your new address as soon as you get there!

Hello, *Wendy Jansen*. It was good to hear from you again. I see you are a good puzzler, too, Wendy. What's your favourite time of year, Wendy? Right now everybody loves spring, don't you think?

I'm glad you had such a good time at your brother's wedding, *Jeanette Jansen*. It was fun seeing your niece again too, right? Be sure to write and tell us about your new school, Jeanette. Bye for now.

GENERAL  
**S**YNOD WINNIPEG **G**  
1989  
CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES



Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
April 18 to May 5, 1989



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## INTRODUCTION

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BY CL. STAM

In this issue of *Clarion* you will find a special insert giving extensive information with respect to Synod Winnipeg 1989. The fact that the members of Synod had access to computers and that Premier Printing was this time close to "the action" makes it possible to come relatively soon after the closing of Synod with this special edition. I sincerely hope that this insert will be read and preserved by all as a suitable memory of the Synod of 1989.

The material in this insert speaks for itself, and so I can be brief in this introductory word. You will be able to read especially the speeches and responses which were delivered at General Synod. Some of these speeches should have been heard by all; for they were very moving and made a deep impression on Synod members and audience alike. I refer here especially to the ones delivered by Dr. J. Faber and the Rev. J.J. Peterson (OPC). Anyway, you will be able to read and judge for yourselves as to the accuracy and propriety of the many remarks made.

Although these speeches etc. will be printed also in the *Acts* of Synod, these acts are not easily accessible or widely read. In the Netherlands, for example, a simplified version of the acts of Synod is published for a more general readership. This insert may function somewhat as what is called in Dutch the "pro-acta." The Dutch have a way with words, no doubt.

Having been chairman of this Synod, I am in the position to make some first-hand observations. This was a Synod which was in the main very much united and of the same mind. Certainly not in a partisan spirit, but with the intention to continue carefully in the line of previous Synods and to offer constructive criticism where deemed necessary. The harmonious and brotherly atmosphere prevailed to the very end, even when during the final plenary sessions, difference of opinion and in understanding came more to the foreground.

What impressed me very much is that even at the airport, as we said "good-bye" to one another — as delegates from east and west — there was an excellent atmosphere and an upbeat mood. The brothers continued to intermingle freely with each other, and some spirited but appreciative exchanges took place just



prior to boarding. Truly, in these past three weeks some new and strong bonds were forged! Some pre-conceived notions about one another had fortunately fallen by the wayside and we were more aware of the various gifts which the Lord has bestowed on one another. Truly He apportions to each one as He sees fit, for the benefit of all!

With these observations I do not suggest in any way that previous Synods (and I was a member of the last four)



*Rev. and Mrs. M. van Beveren were guests on the first day of Synod*

were so terribly divided and that the brothers who were members of those Synods acted in an acrimonious and abrasive manner. I did observe, however, that there were on this Synod less tensions than on some previous ones. This is partly due to the fact that this Synod did not have to deal with really divisive issues or extensive revisions. No one came to Synod with a particular axe to grind; instead the members together put their own noses to the grindstone. Of course, this is a very personal point of view which may not be shared by all those who worked at this Synod or witnessed it as audience.

Someone might conclude, after studying the decisions of this Synod, that not much work was done. Indeed, no spectacular decisions were taken, except perhaps for some long-term appointments with respect to our Theological College. But closer examination of the decisions of Synod 1989 will determine, I'm sure, that this Synod carefully considered every piece submitted and that much work was put into the decision-making process. Hopefully some long-standing, constantly returning points will now have been put to rest. Some of the same matters were before a General Synod for the third or fourth time without really any new argumentation being brought to the fore. There has to come an end sometime to the appeal processes, or not?

As far as its duration is concerned, this was not a long Synod. In fact, it may have been one of the shortest of the past decade. In itself this is no commendation, but I do believe that this fact does somewhat characterize this Synod. There was no undue haste, but Synod 1989 certainly demonstrated a brisk pace with a clear vision concerning the course to be taken. This is to be appreciated especially because most of the members of this Synod were from the "second generation" of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The "old timers" may sometimes criticize the work of their successors, rightly or wrongly, but the work does go on also with a new generation. This is a gift of God's grace.

May you enjoy this special commemorative issue and may the Lord bless the work of this Synod for many years to come. ■



## WELCOME BY THE CONVENING CHURCH

*On behalf of the convening Church at Winnipeg, the Rev. W. den Hollander calls the meeting to order. He requests the singing of Hymn 2:1,3, reads Matthew 28:16-20 and leads in prayer.*

*He welcomes the delegates with the following words:*

Esteemed Brothers in the Lord;

As fellow-elder in the service of our Master Jesus Christ, and minister of the convening Church, I welcome you most heartily to General Synod Winnipeg 1989. I speak on behalf of the Consistory and congregation of the Church at Winnipeg when I say that we have looked forward to this day in eager anticipation and in busy preparation. It is our sincere hope that as convening Church we may be good hosts to you, brothers delegates, and that you make ample use of our offer to facilitate the work of General Synod to the utmost of our abilities.

General Synod Winnipeg 1989 begins on this 18th day of April, i.e., during that time of the year in which we remember the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension and the outpouring of His Spirit. The words of the Scripture passage we read were spoken at a time when our Lord had finished His work of reconciliation on the cross and had received all authority in heaven and on earth. We find our passage at the end of the gospel according to Matthew which began with our Lord's genealogy as son of David and as son of Abraham. In the gift of all authority the promises to David are fulfilled in that our Lord became King of kings and the Lord of lords, while in the universality of His authority the promise given to Abraham is fulfilled in that He becomes a blessing to the nations. Before His ascent to the throne He gives His mandate to His disciples to proclaim this blessing to the nations and to recruit the peoples in the coming of His kingdom. Charging His office-bearers to use the Word and promising them that with His Word and Spirit He would be at no time absent from them, the exalted Lord continues His Church-gathering work among the nations in the world. In that work our Lord and Saviour in heaven has made steady progress, reaching even the ends of the earth.

Brothers, delegates, ministers and elders, it is in that framework of His



*The chairman of the convening church:  
Rev. W. den Hollander*

mandate that I would like to place your task. Together we are here as stewards of Jesus Christ, whom we confess "the only universal Bishop and the only Head of the Church" (Art. 31 B.C.) He governs His Church by His Spirit and Word. Your work as Synod is a task assigned to you by the Churches, but in service to Jesus Christ and in submission to His Word. That is your mandate. But the Lord never gives a command without a promise at the same time. We recognize Him as our covenant LORD in that. We may see Mt. 28:16-20 as a renewed covenant-making of our Lord in which the words "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me" is the prologue, on par with the prologue to the Ten Words of the



*Synod met in Winnipeg's church*

Covenant, and the command to His disciples for initial teaching and continued instruction serves to establish the people in the covenant with God. Likewise, we may be assured of His covenant promise; "Lo, I am with you always to the close of the age." Thus we receive here not only a mandate to serve our Lord for the edification of the Churches, but we also receive a promise of the blessing, His support, His presence in carrying out our mandate.

And the matters on the agenda for General Synod, brothers, are very much in line with the mandate of our Lord in this text. The baptismal formula, which we find in our text, is directly connected with the Apostolic Creed, a baptismal confession, which in turn is the basis in the covenant of grace for the continued teaching which our Lord put in the charge of the Church. The doctrine as contained in the Old and New Testament is the doctrine to which we must hold according to the apostolic instruction (2 Thess. 2:15) which we have summarized in the confessions of the Great Reformation for the preservation of this mandate of our Lord. These confessions will play a major role in our discussions. By the grace of God this true doctrine of salvation was preserved in our midst and passed on from one generation of office-bearers to another. As General Synod we will be called as well to entrust the instruction in this doctrine to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Tim 2:2). Our exalted Lord instructed His Church to continue in this teaching: "to observe all that He has commanded us." This includes as well the faithful worship of His Name among the true gathering of His people, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the tradition which you were taught by us," the Apostle Paul exhorts us in 2 Thess. 2:15. Obedience to the Lord's will in His Church-gathering work will be a fruit of thankfulness by which we may here serve the upbuilding of the Churches. In both, appeals concerning such obedience and in reports pursuing it with a view to the OPC and our contacts with Churches abroad, we will be given the task to show our faithfulness to doctrine and confession. However, as General Synod we are called as well to heed the apostolic admonition "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you

keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us (2 Thess. 3:6). Thus we find ourselves involved in an assignment of our Lord Jesus Christ which requires the utmost obedience and dedication to His authority and the total dependence on His promised presence and power.

Brothers, when the names of the delegates to General Synod Winnipeg 1989 became known, the Synod was soon labeled "the synod of baby boomers." May this expression denote in one way the youthfulness of most of the delegates, on the other hand it also

reflects the faithfulness of our Lord who continues to provide and recruit a new generation of servants called to the preservation, defense and increase of His Church. "Let no one despise your youth," says the Apostle Paul, "but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." (1 Tim. 4:12) And that the Churches have not despised our youth is clearly evident from the fact that since the delegation by both Regional Synods the Churches have placed on our table many serious and heavy matters, trusting that with the help of the Lord we will be able to serve the Churches. Synod Winnipeg 1989 has also

been called the "appeals synod", which expresses also a certain amount of confidence in the integrity and sincerity of its members to deal with the appeals in a manner which is in accordance with our mandate from our Lord Jesus Christ! Brothers, may all things be done here decently and in good order, for the peace of Jerusalem, for the upbuilding of the gathering of Christ's disciples, and to the greater glory of our Lord and Saviour, who wants to use our work for the day on which He will put all things in subjection to the Father.

He requests the singing of Hymn 2:4,5. ■

## CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

*The chairman of the convening Church, Rev. W. den Hollander, declares Synod constituted. He invites the officers to take their seats. The chairman, Rev. Cl. Stam addresses Synod with the following words.*

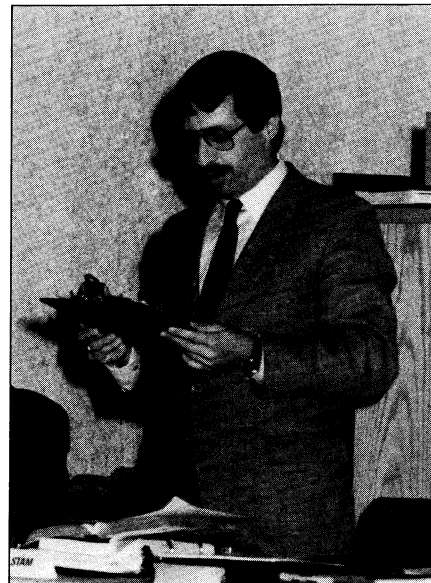
Esteemed brothers, members of General Synod 1989:

First of all, let me express gratitude to you, members of Synod, for the confidence which you have placed in us as members of the moderamen to serve Synod as its officers. With your help, and above all God's blessing, we hope to do a good job. I am grateful for the good spirit which so far has manifested itself among us and I trust that it will continue fully.

This Synod has been referred to by Rev. den Hollander as a Synod of "baby boomers". Well, fortunately I have beside me in Rev. M. VanderWel one of the "baby boosters", and we look to his maturity and wisdom for help and support.

This Synod has been billed as one of inexperience. Some also feel that this is a very "conservative" Synod, whatever that means. I believe that we must be a faithful Synod — faithful to the Word of God, as we have it summarized also in our Reformed confessions. We must do everything in a proper fashion, according to our adopted Church Order. Sometimes some inexperience may show, but this doesn't matter. As long as our faithfulness is evident, we will do okay.

I will not deliver a long speech here. There is something, however, which I now as your chairman feel I must stress.



*Addressing Synod as chairman . . .*

Ecclesiastical assemblies never stand on their own, by themselves, isolated as it were, also not Synods! Each General Synod is an assembly on its own, yes, but still it stands in a historical line, in a continuity. Many items on the agenda of this Synod have served in some way on the agenda's of previous Synods. Many appeals are those against decisions of previous assemblies. Our Synod 1989 must reckon with this aspect of continuity. We should not break radically with the past nor chart out new, unexpected and controversial courses, but we must stress unity in continuity.

"Bad" Synods are those which make rash decisions which have not been properly prepared and are not at all expected in the churches. I could give you some example, but I will not. Let us pray that we do not make rash judgments but carefully weigh all the aspects of every matter to come to responsible and balanced decisions. Remember to listen carefully to each other, to see the value of the argumentation of the other, even if you do not agree with it. Treat every submission and appeal with respect without consideration of persons. Be impartial and let justice prevail. Then we will have a good Synod and may be proud —in a humble sense— of the work which we have done.

I want to thank the convening church for all the preparations made and for the excellent reception which we have received until now: it holds great promise!

At this time I may also express gratitude to the Rev. M. van Beveren who conducted the prayer service for the work of Synod. Rev. M. van Beveren showed that although he is retired, he can still be very active and alive on the pulpit. In response to the preaching we express the hope that in all our "observations" we may do justice to all the facts, that in all our "considerations" we follow the only norm, and so indeed may decide what is pleasing to the Lord. We thank you for your words, for the preaching of the Word, and we solicit from all your outgoing prayers. ■

## ANNOUNCEMENT: NEW PROFESSORS OF THEOLOGY

*The chairman publicly announces the appointments of Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes as professor of dogmatology and the Rev. Drs. J. De Jong as professor of ecclesiology and diaconiology. He addresses Rev. Drs. J. De Jong with the following words:*

Esteemed Drs. J. De Jong,

It is a sincere pleasure for me as chairman of General Synod 1989 to congratulate you publicly with the fact that you have been appointed as professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconiology per May 1, 1990, in the forthcoming vacancy of Dr. K. Deddens. It is a pleasure for me personally, for our acquaintance of one another goes back very far to our early youth. We grew up in the same town, attended the same church, and went through the same schools. It is even more a pleasure for me to address you on behalf of Synod, for we have found in you a dedicated academician, a sincere office-bearer, and a qualified teacher.

We had some discussion on the fact that with this appointment you would have to switch in your field of expertise from dogmatology to diaconiology — from what is perceived to be more theoretical to what is seen as being more practical— but we expressed confidence that you will be able to do this and may grow into this new field more and more. The Lord willing, many years still lie ahead of you, and we hope and pray that you may serve the churches as professor for many years to come. You have in your studies made a solid beginning, and we wish you the Lord's blessing also as you prepare the final text of your dissertation and its defense in Kampen. You know, as we all do, that doctrine and life are one, "theory" and "praxis" are in our lives never to be separated. Your studies in dogmatics and in the history of dogma may help you greatly in ecclesiology and lead you into a further understanding of the diaconological disciplines.

Diaconiology has been called "the crown of the theological study". May you enthusiastically seek to place this crown, the finishing touch as it were, on the preparation of many students in their training for the ministry.

I say these things perhaps somewhat presumptuously, so it may sound as if you have already accepted this appointment. You have, of course, the right to

consider it —and we expect your reply within ten days— but we trust and we hope that the answer will be positive. What may sound presumptuous on our part today is only our expression of joy and meant as encouragement to you.

We congratulate also your wife, your parents —whom I also know personally— and your parents-in-law. It will be a great joy for them to hear of this appointment, I'm sure. I may assure you that the Facul-

*Rev. Drs. J. De Jong replies with the following words:*

Esteemed Brothers:

Although I have had some discussion with faculty and board officials about this appointment, I realize that it only becomes effective with your decision here today. I am honoured by this appointment and I express my gratitude to the churches for the confidence that



*The two professors-elect, Dr. N.H. Gootjes and Rev. Drs. J. De Jong*

ty of our College and the Board of Governors are delighted with this decision of Synod.

We hope, Rev. De Jong, that your many "professorial" deliberations will not make your "synodical" deliberations impossible, but should you seem somewhat absentminded in the next few days, we will forgive you.

May the Lord guide you with His wisdom and enable you to come to a definite decision which we may hear in due time.

Thank you.

they have shown towards me in judging me worthy for this task. At the present time it still seems for me quite a formidable one; yet the LORD promises His help and guidance in all things. I promise that I shall give your decision due consideration, and I pray for God's help and wisdom in this consideration. I also solicit your prayers, that this, too, may serve the wellbeing of the churches, and the coming of God's kingdom.

Thank you.

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## WELCOME REV. J.J. PETERSON

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*The Rev. M. VanderWel welcomes the Rev. J.J. Peterson of San Antonio, Texas, as a delegate from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the following words:*

Esteemed Rev. Peterson:

As I remarked earlier this afternoon, it is my pleasure to bid you a hearty welcome as a delegate of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church on General Synod 1989 of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

The fact that you have met with several of us before, also within the official framework of a General Synod,

must give you the feeling, I trust, that you are not a stranger anymore in our midst. So, at least, it is felt from our side! After General Synod Cloverdale in 1983 had been closed, I still remember, that some of my colleagues spoke of their meeting with "Texas Jack". That may sound rather disrespectful, but please, take it as an indication of the free and friendly communication which we were allowed to have with you personally at that time.

But Rev. Peterson, also in your quality of being a representative of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, you may feel "related" to us. As we both know, the

relationship between our churches has not yet developed into a full sister-church relationship. There are still the so-called "divergencies". It is not my task to go into that now. This is just a word of welcome. But the relationship which we do have is of such a character that there is a mutual appreciation for each other's endeavour to work for and maintain the Reformed and Scriptural distinctiveness in the life of our Churches.

Br. Peterson, we wish you a pleasant stay in our midst and may also this contact lead to a further growing together in the service of the LORD!

Thank you. ■

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## WELCOME REV. S. ALLISON

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*The chairman extends a special welcome to the Rev. S. Allison, a minister of the Reformed Church in the United States who is visiting Synod:*

I want to mention that we have a special guest in our audience, the Rev. S. Allison of the Hosmer Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) of Eureka, South Dakota. Rev. S. Allison is pastor in the RCUS formerly known as the

"Eureka Classis". This Church which is generally of German origin has the Heidelberg Catechism as its confessional standard. Some of our ministers have visited this Classis or these Churches in the past. We now welcome a visitor from among them in return. Rev. Allison is here as a private visitor and he can not officially address us. There are, as yet, no official contacts between us and the

RCUS. We extend a hearty welcome to Rev. S. Allison and welcome him to visit all the open sessions of synod and the committees which may invite him. We hope that in this way he may receive a proper view of our Churches and perhaps these visits will lead towards the establishment of official contacts and the full expression of the unity of faith. ■

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## WELCOME DR. AND MRS. GOOTJES

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*The chairman welcomes Prof. Dr. and Mrs. N.H. Gootjes with the following words:*

Esteemed Dr. and Mrs. Gootjes:

On behalf of Synod, let me first of all express our gratefulness that you could arrive safely in Winnipeg after what has surely been a long and tiresome journey from Pusan, Korea. We are happy that the Lord has protected you on your way and granted you to be in our midst here at General Synod. We hope that in the short time allotted us together we may be able to get to know each other somewhat and especially that you may get a good impression of what lives

among us as members of Synod and in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

We congratulate you sincerely with your appointment as professor of dogmatology at our Theological College in the forthcoming vacancy due to the retirement of Dr. J. Faber. You knew that we would be discussing your possible appointment, and now it has become a reality. Our discussions of your nomination centered largely on the fact that for most of us you are unknown, and we wanted to avail ourselves of as much information as we could manage to gather. But all the information received before and during Synod increased the confidence that we have in your person and

ability. And so it is with great happiness and full confidence that Synod has accepted the nomination of the Board of Governors and directed them officially to appoint you to this position. I understand that today you have received the official letter of appointment from the Board of Governors, and we inform you that we look forward to your definite answer within ten days of the receipt of this letter.

Although the other members of Synod did not know you personally, I do have the honour and privilege of having studied in Kampen also when you arrived there as student. We were together members of the same "Dispuut", whose

name I shall not mention here but whose electrifying effect has certainly manifested itself in both our lives. I must say that I recall a somewhat shy and quiet young man, whom I never would have placed in the bustle of Pusan, South Korea, but that was due perhaps to my own youthful brashness at that time. I do remember that all your peers already then regarded you as a gifted and meticulous student, and this has shown to be true in your subsequent studies and work.

We admire your courage and that of your wife to have gone as a young family to South Korea to take up the difficult and, we presume, sometimes exasperating life in an oriental nation with its different attitudes and customs. You must at times have felt very lonely and isolated there, even though the Batteau family was also working with you in the same city. Also the work at the Theological Seminary there will not have been easy. You are a "continental European" Reformed theologian who had to work in an oriental surrounding geared towards American Presbyterianism. In the Canadian Reformed Churches which have also come out of the Dutch Reformed tradition, we have some serious concerns about aspects of the Presbyterian way of thinking—I refer here to our well-known list of divergencies between the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards, between the Church Order of Dort and the Presbyterian Form of Government as it is generally applied. While we recognize the Presbyterian confessions to be of Reformed character, still we feel that on some key matters further discussion is required for the well-being and the future of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since you, Dr. Gootjes, are well-acquainted with both "worlds", we trust that you as a committed Reformed theologian will be able to give wise and solid direction in these matters.

Should you come to Canada, you will experience it in many ways as a home-coming. Canada is not the Netherlands—and we know that you were looking forward to repatriation—but Canada (and especially—the locals will forgive me now—southern Ontario!) is the next best thing to being there! We are sure, sr. Gootjes, that you and your children will soon feel at home in the midst of our churches and in the congregation where you would be living. By God's grace we have also in the Hamilton area excellent schools with a dedicated Reformed staff, and you will discover that living among us has many

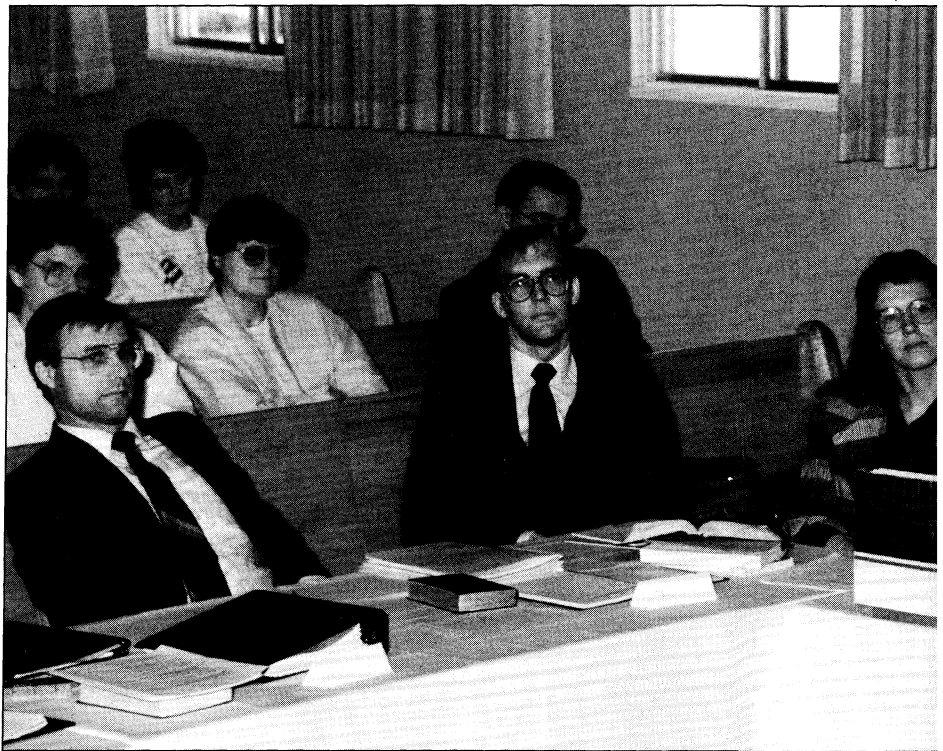
attractive elements. Immigration to Canada—though initially difficult perhaps—has led for all of us here to great blessings! Also Dr. and Mrs. Faber and their family will attest to this!

Most of all, our churches need and seek qualified Reformed professors who can work in the training for the ministry of the Word. Our College, established in 1968, has been a great blessing for us. All but two of our ministers at Synod graduated from the Theological College at Hamilton and in our federation there are 26 graduates of Hamilton working as active ministers. Also the Free Reformed Churches of Australia have received three

we can and that we will provide honourably for your needs as is befitting for a minister of the Word. We expect from you that you will teach the true and full doctrine of the Word of God to our students and in our churches and will vigorously defend and promote the Reformed confession in our midst and beyond, and so we trust that our mutual association will be a blessing for all of us, for the churches, for the college, and for you.

May the Lord give you and your wife wisdom in your deliberations, unity in your conclusions, and peace of mind in your decisions.

Thank you.



*Drs. J. De Jong, Dr. N.H. Gootjes and Mrs. Gootjes: hearing the address of the chairman*

of Hamilton's graduates as their ministers. The College in Hamilton has since 1968 gained much respect in other circles as well. I think here especially of the Free Reformed Churches in Canada. There lies in Hamilton, Dr. Gootjes, an important and exciting task for a Reformed theologian, and we ask you to come and help to strengthen the ranks of those already working there!

So on behalf of Synod, as I welcome you in our midst, I appeal to you to consider this appointment with serious consideration, and I express the wish that your answer may be positive for us. We pledge that we will assist you in every way

*He requests the assembly to rise and sing Psalm 134:1,3.*

*Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes addresses Synod with the following words:*

*Esteemed Chairman, Beloved Brothers in the Lord and Guests:*

I am grateful for the appointment that you have made. I am grateful for the trust you have shown in me. I feel it to be an honour. As a student (freshman), I remember when Dr. J. Faber was appointed as professor of dogmatology in the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches and had never

thought that I might be appointed to become his successor.

It was when our second son Albert had just been born that I received the call to be sent as missionary professor to Pusan, Korea. It was a difficult decision because in a way the work of a minister is more rewarding than that of a professor. A minister may serve the LORD more directly among His people. It was, however, decided that we should serve the Lord in Pusan, Korea to help them in the ministry of the Word. While there I became well-acquainted with the Westminster Standards and viewed them as one who has grown up and been taught in the Reformed Confessions of the Continent. I will not go further into that now because it will mean a lecture. We had a good time in Korea and



Dr. Gootjes responds

thought that some day we would return back to the Netherlands and serve one of the congregations as a minister of the Word. This appointment interrupts what we thought would happen.

At this time I am not yet sure what I will do yet. On the one hand I would like to serve as a minister in a local congregation and on the other hand as a professor one receives more opportunities to study which I really enjoy. I trust that the Lord will give guidance to come to a decision. Pray for us, keeping in mind what is good for the churches, for our family that the work of God may progress until Christ returns.

Thank you.

The chairman requests the assembly to sing Psalm 100:2,4.

## ADDRESS REV. J.J. PETERSON

*The chairman gives Rev. J.J. Peterson who is delegated to Synod from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the opportunity to address Synod. Rev. J.J. Peterson addresses Synod with the following words:*

Brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

It is a great pleasure to be with you again. The welcome of Brother Vander-Wel to "Texas Jack," last night made me feel even more at home; I certainly experienced the fellowship of the saints from the moment I saw Brother den Hollander at the airport; and again when I renewed acquaintances on arrival here and also met those of you whom I had not met before; but "Texas Jack" that was, as we say, was great!

I had the privilege of being at Cloverdale in 1983. I have also met with your committee on Contact several times, which included being at the installation of Dr. Faber. I also had the privilege of being in Edinburgh in 1985 as an observer of the ICRC and am looking forward to the meeting in Vancouver in June.

It seems I almost see more of you than the OPC! Those have been and continue to be enriching experiences in my life. There is a growing number of us in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the OPC, who share with you the redemptive-historical understanding of the Word of God. I am preaching right now on Ahab and Elijah and find Van't Veer an invaluable help. We have rejoiced in the publishing of De Graaf, Promise

and Deliverance. We are enriched in our study of the passion of our Mediator by Schilder's trilogy. That group is seeking through word and example to spread that way of reading the Scriptures. And you and your churches are a tremendous aid and encouragement to us.

We haven't converted everyone yet to that understanding! And the OPC is in many ways a mixed group in their approach. We all confess the Reformed faith in its fullness. And yet there are those who love the approach of the Puritans. Others are theonomic. Some you would classify as scholastic and exemplarish.

In saying that I am trying to be honest with you, to show you how we are; and yet plead with you to help and support us.

We as a church have just passed through a traumatic time lasting since around 1980. I have reference to our experience with the PCA and the so-called J and R method; that is, join and be received just as you are and just like we are. The method kept us from "speaking the truth in love" to each other. It kept us from facing the issues of our separate existence. It is my personal conviction that the PCA is more broadly evangelical than Reformed. They are dominated in their approach to starting new churches by the "church growth" methodology. Some in our church were enamored by that too, and when the J and R was finally defeated recently, they left the OPC and united with the PCA. The question of the

Unity of the church, pursued with a bad method has resulted in division.

In 1986 we celebrated our 50th anniversary of our separated existence as a church; or, if I may borrow a word, of our liberation from the unbelief of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. During the General Assembly that year we spent a day reflecting on where we had come from, on where we were and on what's ahead. We thought of the grace of God in bringing us through a half century. We started as a very small group of churches and men who were united in their opposition to modernism, but not understanding what the Gospel of the Reformed faith really meant. We owe a great deal to the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary for they taught us what it meant to be Reformed; men like J. Gresham Machen and John Murray, Cornelius Van Til and Ned Stonehouse (translated Steenhuis), Oswald T. Allis and later Joe Young, R. B. Kuiper, Paul Woolley. You recognize many of those names; giants of the Reformed faith. Among them were representatives of the Dutch Reformed, continental Reformed understanding of the faith. Even John Murray, Scot though he was, was deeply influenced by Geerhardus Vos. Dr. Machen consciously sought to meld together the Scottish Presbyterian and the continental Reformed.

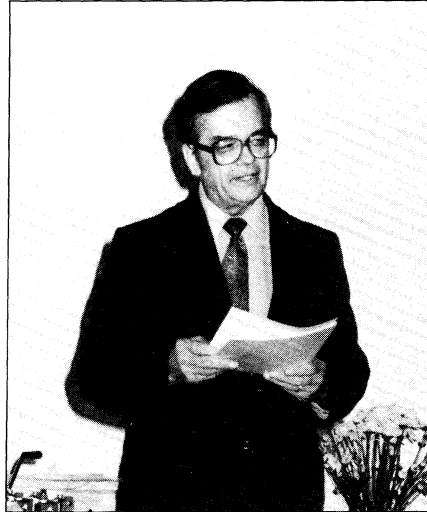
As a church we were plunged into theological controversy early in our history. In 1937 the struggle over fundamen-

talism, dispensationalism and premillennialism. In 1947, over the incomprehensibility of God, though the real issue was: shall we take the rough edges off of the Reformed faith so that we may grow faster as a church. In the fifties the issue was pietism and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Each time, by the grace of God, the issue was resolved according to the Scriptures, the gospel of the Reformed Faith. And now, in 1986, we were faced with the question, and of course this is how I personally understand the history, shall we leave all of that behind and cease our existence and our history, and join the Presbyterian Church in America, the PCA. Will the unity of the church be served best by joining them or by staying apart? Will the gospel of Christ, the Reformed faith in its fullness be advanced or not? And that General Assembly answered, we stay apart.

And some have left us to join the PCA; so far five congregations and several ministers, and that hurts. And now, once again we must sit back and ask where are we as a church, where are we going, and where should we go. There are several different agendas; the redemptive-historical, the more scholastic, the puritan, the theonomic, the church growth, to name a few. Perhaps that's not a very pretty picture. It does make us unattractive to many. But that's the OPC; warts and all!

One other factor through the years has been our involvement in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (the RES) over the degeneration of the Synodical GKN. We began our witness against them 25 years ago. You know the issues: membership in the World Council of Churches, ordination of women to teaching and ruling office, the heresies of Kuitert and Wiersinga and the consequent lack of adequate discipline, the 1979 so-called pastoral advice allowing those whom they judged to be Christians who were also practicing homosexuals to remain members of the church in good standing, to partake of the Lord's Supper and to hold office in the church, and the theological backing of that in *God Met Ons* and the relational concept of truth. And finally the reunion with the Hervormde Kerk. One aside on that, in speaking with one or two from the Gereformeerde Bond, they oppose the reunion because the GKN is too liberal for the state church! How times have changed. And we become the weeping brothers in a new way. We have sought to be faithful to our Lord and the Reformed faith in opposing such blatant and growing unbelief. The struggle has been hard and time-consuming. And

finally at RES Harare 1988 we severed our ties with the RES, now the REC. In that forum we witnessed to the gospel of the Reformed faith and for our Lord. And our message was rejected.



Rev. J.J. Peterson (OPC delegate)

In the midst of all this we have tried to meet with you too; we just have not had the time or energy to work with you as we should; but we're ready now. We had a delightful and helpful meeting in January with your Committee on Contact which is reflected on in their report to you. And, if you renew their mandate, we have tentatively set February 1990 for another meeting to discuss those 'divergencies'. We have had the same problem with the RPCNA (the Covenanters); we postponed talks with them while the PCA took stage center and now we have started discussions with them too.

I hope it won't disappoint you if I do not interact with those divergencies: the fencing of the table, confessional church membership, the so-called invisible church, the covenant. I feel that that mandate belongs to the two committees and not to me as a delegated observer. The committee understands that mandate and is not only willing but also ready to talk with you.

With respect to the ICRC: we are cautious. We have questions: two especially I want to mention, because they are of concern to us:

1. Are we, the OPC, acceptable to the ICRC? Can the Presbyterians of Scottish history coexist with the continental Reformed? The same question we face together, and

2. What is the vision of the ICRC? What is its reason for existence? Its *raison d'être*? Let me say this: to give you a feel for what I mean.

The Reformed faith in this world is concentrated in central and southern Africa! Good, solid Reformed churches in Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa.

The oldest continually existent Reformed church is in Sri Lanka, founded in 1642! And they stood solidly with the OPC in Nimes in 1980, in Chicago in 1984 and in Harare in 1988!

We need the fellowship of these churches and they need us, too. That's why we stayed in the RES as we did. We want an international organization of Reformed churches which will have a vision to embrace the truly Reformed on every continent in this world, the nations we are commissioned to disciple.

After all that, I still do not despair. It is the Lord's church.

I often turn to Isaiah 62 for encouragement, and I close with this:

"For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give Him no rest till He establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth. The LORD has sworn by His right hand and by His mighty arm: 'Never again will I give your grain as food for your enemies, and never again will foreigners drink the new wine for which you have toiled; but those who harvest it will eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather the grapes will drink it in the courts of My sanctuary.' Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. Raise a banner for the nations. The LORD has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: 'Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your Saviour comes! See, His reward is with Him, and His recompense accompanies Him.' " They will be called

the Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD; and you will be called Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted.

Thank you for your very gracious hospitality and the Lord's blessing continue with you.

*Rev. R. Aasman responds to Rev. J.J. Peterson with the following words:*

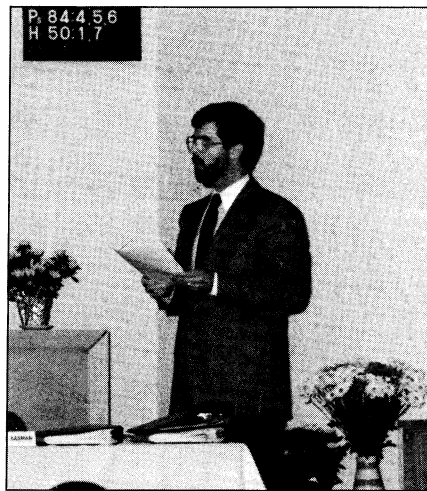
On behalf of the 1989 General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, I would like to respond to the words of Rev. J.J. Peterson from San Antonio, Texas, our fraternal delegate from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

I first met Rev. Peterson in 1987 at the 54th General Assembly of the OPC in Grand Rapids, and again in a meeting between the Committee for Contact with the OPC and the Committee for Ecumenicity and Inter-church Relations, in January 24, 1989 in Philadelphia. Our meeting at General Synod Winnipeg is now the third time that our paths are allowed to cross. Each meeting has impressed upon me that rich, deep southern character and flavour of our brother which has led many in this assembly to address him affectionately as "Texas Jack". However the most memorable moment in my meetings with Rev. Peterson is from 1987 when our brother pleaded that the Canadian Reformed Churches pray for the OPC in connection with the RES and the meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe (1988). Indeed in Acts of Synod 1986 it was indicated that in general we should pray for our OPC brothers and sisters. We trust that such prayer for each other was and is mutual.

The Canadian Reformed Churches wish to express their gratitude that already in 1987 the General Assembly of the OPC commissioned the Committee on RES matters to demand the termination of the GKN in the RES, and failing such a termination, to withdraw the OPC from the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. We are thankful that this was not a hollow and therefore worthless threat. From our reading of the "Statement of Resignation of the OPC from RES, June 21, 1988" we also see that the withdrawal from the RES was not executed in a schismatic fashion, filled with pride and bitterness, but with a call and exhortation to the RES to recognize the enormity and seriousness of maintaining the GKN within the RES, demonstrating that the GKN harbors positions which are known to be out of accord with the Scriptures. These un-Scriptural positions are known to all of us and have just been mentioned by you, Rev. Peterson: women in office,

ordaining of practicing homosexuals, a new hermeneutic, etc.

Appreciation for some elements of "Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church" may also be expressed, especially for the fact that the OPC does not want to take the easy way out with respect to the church's ecumenical task by fleeing into fantasies about an "invisible church." Instead the OPC shows in this document that she seeks ecclesiastical union between two true churches of Jesus Christ who exist alongside each other on the basis of the unity of faith! It is our hope and prayer that the OPC is truly responsible with respect to her ecumen-



*Rev. R. Aasman responds to Rev. Peterson*

ical task and is cautious in whatever contacts she may have or be entertaining. This is said especially with a view to the relations between the OPC and the PCA, for the very reasons which you, my brother, have just stated.

However, we also like to call the attention of Rev. Peterson, and through him the attention of the entire OPC, to the relationship between the OPC and the CRC. We appreciate what CEIR has revealed to us about this matter. Indeed we see a parallel in the relationship of the OPC and the CRC to the discussions which the Canadian Reformed Churches had with the CRC some years ago. We had warned and exhorted the CRC on a number of issues, only to be confronted by indifference. Now we learn that the OPC is also warning and exhorting the CRC on a number of issues, only to be confronted with indifference. On this point we wish to give the OPC brotherly exhortation: be careful! Understand that in some ways the CRC is taking a parallel course to the GKN, and there-

fore, the good stand taken by the OPC with respect to the GKN must be seriously entertained with respect to the CRC. You know, brother Peterson, the OPC's relationship with the CRC is not some formal or vague ecclesiastical relationship at a higher level, but it has a day-to-day application among the members so that the members of the OPC mingle freely with members of the CRC. The result may be that what you have pushed out the front door in the international scene via the RES, may slip right back in through the rear door in the domestic scene via relations with the CRC. If only for the sake of your children, please stand on guard!

We appreciate hearing also, both from the report of the Committee for Contact with the OPC and from you, Rev. Peterson, that the OPC's relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches is being taken more seriously and enthusiastically. Let us have more contact in the future, that our discussions, exhortations, admonitions and observations may be mutually edifying.

At the same time we cannot and should not overlook what happened with respect to the Churches at Blue Bell and Laurel. These Churches felt compelled because of conscience and obedience to God's Word to leave the OPC. When I addressed the General Assembly of the OPC in 1987, I exhorted the OPC to have a frank and open dialogue on matters such as the fencing of the Lord's Supper. Really, during the last three years we have only touched upon this—to the dissatisfaction and concern of many in our churches who desire a deeper and more essential discussion on the divergencies between our Three Forms of Unity and your Westminster Standards.

Rev. Peterson, if there is to be real growth and blessing in the relationship between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, then we cannot continue simply with sending observers to each other's assemblies and have general discussions with each other. We will have to get to the essence of some differences between us. This is not said haughtily or with any hint of scepticism and pessimism. On some non-essential things there may be differences between us, especially taking into consideration our diverse backgrounds. But on essential things we must be one if we are to grow and advance in our contact together. May the Lord bless us in this for the glory of His own Name and the unity of His Church.

Thank you. ■



## WELCOME BR. J. VANDERKOLK

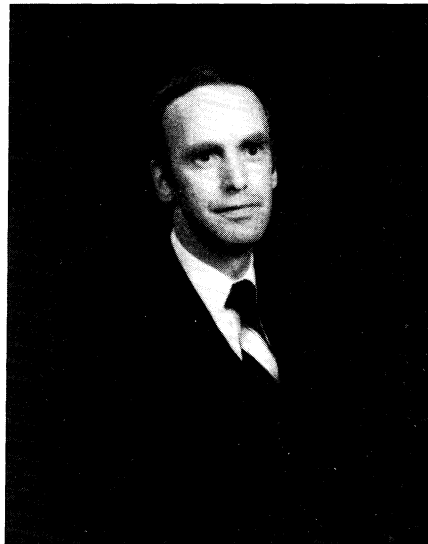
*The chairman gives Rev. B.J. Berends the floor to express a word of welcome to Br. J. VanderKolk on behalf of Synod. He does so by the following words:*

Mr. Chairman, fellow-delegates, it is my privilege to introduce to you Br. Jac. VanderKolk from the Netherlands, and to welcome him in our midst on your behalf. It is a great pleasure for me to do so. I am sure that the moderamen, when it charged me with this task, was not aware that I know br. VanderKolk. I have met him no less than three times in the Netherlands, the first of which was in connection with the establishment of our well-beloved magazine *Reformed Perspective*, the second time after conducting a church service in his hometown Ermelo, and the third time "op de Hogeschooldag" in the city of Kampen. It is then a real pleasure to meet him once again and to welcome him on behalf of Synod Winnipeg, 1989.

Br. VanderKolk, namens deze synode dan heet ik u van harte welkom. Wij zijn de Heere dankbaar dat Hij u veilig en wel bij ons heeft gebracht. We spreken de wens uit dat u zich onder ons thuis zal voelen in de komende dagen en ook dat u zich zal kunnen oriënteren aangaande het wel en wee van de Canadese Gereformeerde Kerken via haar afgevaardigden van deze Synode. (That as far as my Dutch is concerned. Perhaps you detected some Cana-

dianisms in my Dutch, just as we might detect in your Canadian some Dutchisms, something with which some of us have problems as well.)

Br. VanderKolk, without a doubt there is a very special relationship between the Churches you represent and our churches. In fact, I was wondering whether I should express that special relationship by addressing you as "mother", in view of our origin, or as "sister", in view of our ecclesiastical fellowship, but I suppose I can also sim-



*Rev. B.J. Berends welcomes  
br. Jac. VanderKolk*

ply welcome you as a brother . . . from a "sister". Anyway, one thing is certain, we are happy to welcome and meet you as a representative of our beloved sister churches in the Netherlands.

We take note of the fact that those sister churches continue to provide us with capable men, apt to teach, either as ministers or as professors. We express the hope that Dr. N.H. Gootjes will be yet another one of such men. We further take note that our sister churches in the Netherlands have many globetrotters, you yourself not being the least among them. As a result we are being introduced to many churches/denominations around the world, as page 7 and 8 of our Report on Churches Abroad clearly reveals. Although we may have some questions about the future relationships with all those churches, it does make clear that the Church-gathering work of our Lord and Saviour is indeed worldwide. We take note with gratitude that in all those contacts you show the desire to keep the heritage entrusted to you by remaining faithful to God's infallible Word as we also mutually confess it in the Three Forms of Unity.

Br. VanderKolk, may your presence and participation at this Synod express that unity of faith we share . . . the unity of faith in our only Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Head of that worldwide Holy Catholic Christian Church.

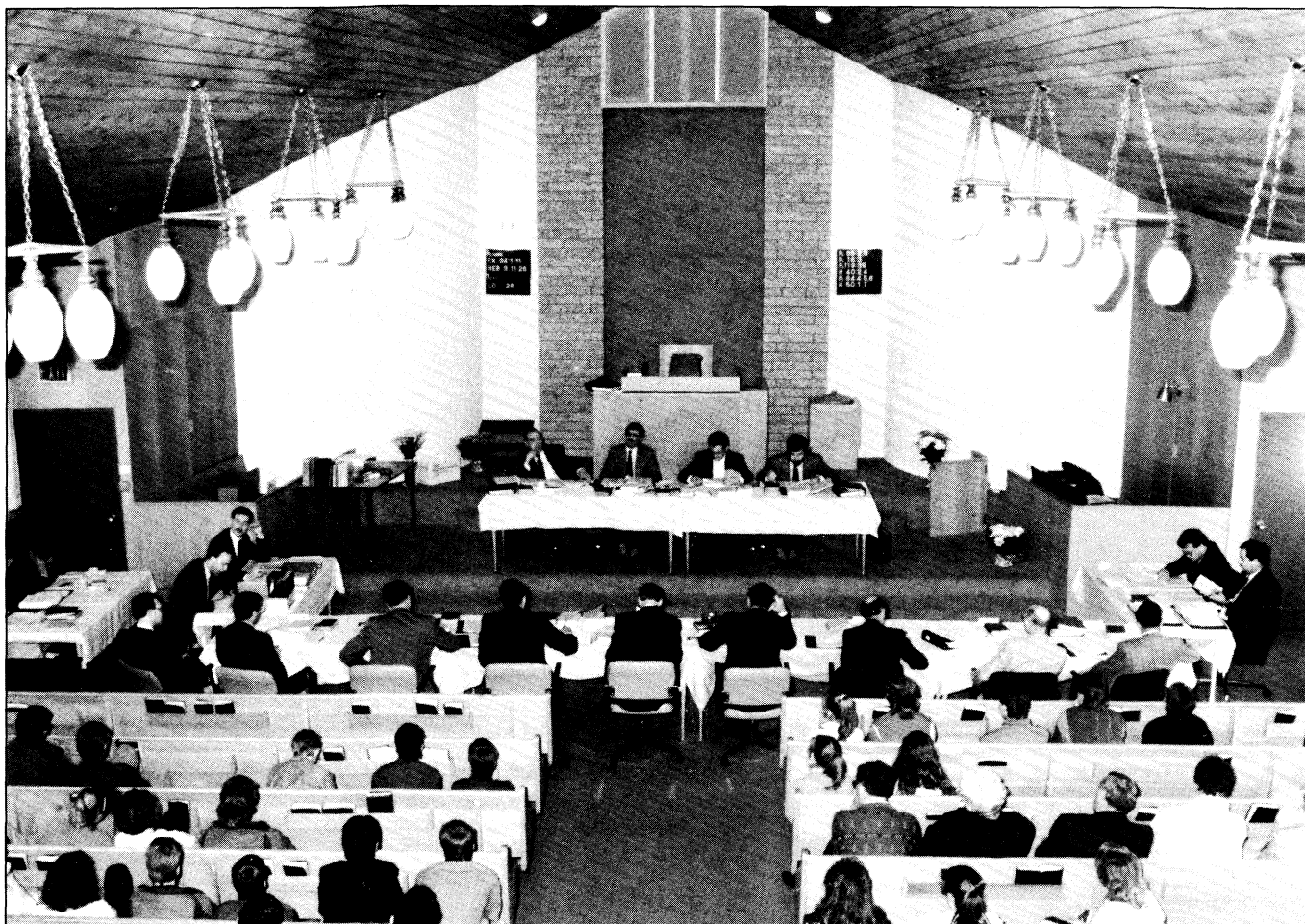
Thank you. ■



*Committee 3: left to right, Rev. R. Aasman,  
A. Witten, Rev. P.K.A. de Boer, L. Stam*



*Committee 1: left to right, W. Gortemaker,  
Rev. M. VanderWel, G.J. Nordeman, Rev. J. De Jong*



*Synod in action*



## WELCOME AND ADDRESS DR. AND MRS. J. FABER

*The chairman welcomes Prof. Dr. and Mrs. J. Faber with the following words:*

Esteemed Dr. and Mrs. Faber:

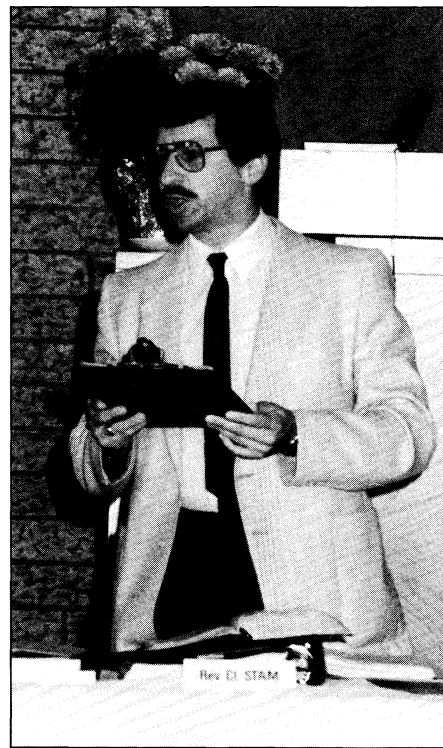
It is for me a great pleasure and privilege to welcome you together to this important session of General Synod 1989 here in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Your presence here has a very special reason and purpose, for—as you may well know—we generally in our churches do not invite professors to our major assemblies, much less their wives. But today you both are extremely welcome, today and for the duration of your stay in Winnipeg, which we hope will be as

ments. At this Synod, however, it is somewhat different.

Here we had to appoint two professors at one time, and this already made our decisions of greater magnitude and consequence. But this Synod also had to face the fact that our Principal of twenty-one years-of-service and our long-standing professor of Dogmatology was going to retire. This is something which no Canadian Reformed Synod has ever had to digest! We must face the fact that we are to bid farewell to you, Dr. Faber, as active professor and principal of our College. Therefore we decided unanimously to invite you and sr. Faber to visit

oured. We can fully appreciate your reasons for requesting this retirement, and so we acquiesce in the decision of the Board of Governors to grant you this and we agree that it be given in the most honourable fashion.

We are extremely blessed in the fact that we could appoint in Dr. N.H. Gootjes a suitable and able successor, a man who according to the information which



*Dr. and Mrs. J. Faber listen to the chairman's address*

joyous and memorable for you as it will be for us. We are grateful that the Lord has protected you during your journey and brought you safely to us. We express the wish that you may fully experience and enjoy the fellowship with the members of Synod and with the brothers and sisters in this area.

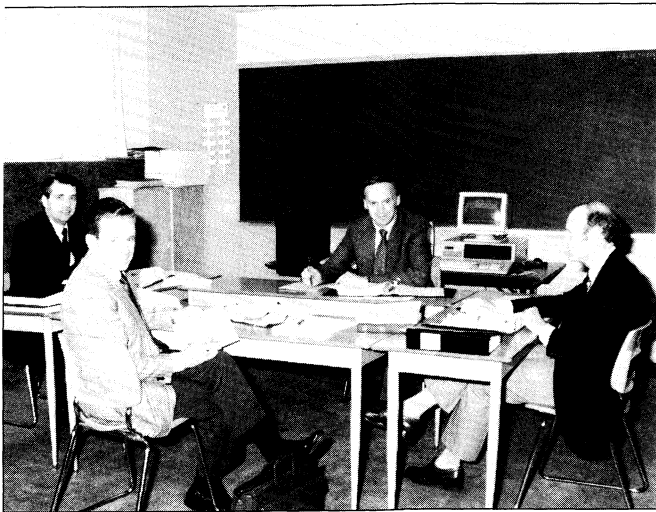
This Synod was placed before the task of appointing professors at our Theological College. In itself that is nothing unusual. Synods 1980, 1983 and 1986 (three consecutive Synods no less!) had to deal with appointments of professors in the Old Testament, Diacological, and New Testament depart-

us so that we may properly mark this historic changing of the guard and take our leave of you as Synod, representing the churches, in a proper manner.

Making appointments is always an exciting work, although sometimes not easy. Still we would rather not have made an appointment at all in the department of Dogmatology, for we have been very fortunate in having you as professor in this department for so many years. We thought that you were still doing an excellent job and we would not have objected at all if you had decided to continue on for some more years. But your request for retirement had to be hon-

we have received will be able to teach in a sound and fitting manner at our College in the department of Dogmatology. I know that you are very pleased with his appointment and with the appointment also of our own Rev. Drs. J. De Jong as professor of Ecclesiology and Diacology. It must make your retirement even sweeter to know that capable men come after you to take in positions at the College which has been so much a part of your main work in life.

Your retirement will lead to some more noteworthy changes. Often when a capable person—who has become somewhat of an institution—leaves, his work



*Committee 2: left to right, Rev. W. den Hollander, A. van Egmond, Rev. B.J. Berends, A. Poppe*



*Committee 4: left to right, Rev. D.G.J. Agema, J.F. de Leeuw, Rev. Cl. Stam, J. Schutten*

is taken over by not one but more persons. So it is here as well. You were for the duration of your tenure as active professor also Principal of our College—a permanent fixture in this respect. Since the principalship will now become a matter of rotation among the professors, Dr. Gootjes will not have to take upon himself immediately or permanently this added burden. This makes it easier for the members of the Senate. But this also means indeed the end of an era.

Dr. Faber, I echo the sentiments of all present when I say that you have been an excellent principal, an able administrator whose concern was always to seek and find the best for the College—for its status as a recognized Reformed seminary and an acclaimed academic institution. In this way you sought to promote also the honour of Christ and to enhance the reputation of the churches who support this College. You took proper pride in the high standards set and maintained at our College, and this is reflected in the curriculum of our College.

You have also done much work with respect to the Theological College Act passed in the Ontario Legislative Assembly and adopted also at General Synod 1980 which gave our institution legal status to confer various degrees. This has been a major achievement in which you played a key role. Our College has gone from simple and obscure beginnings to being a reputable and recognized institution of learning which has instructed students from far and near, also from outside of our churches. I think here

especially of the interest from the side of the Free Reformed Churches. Our College has in the first twenty years of its existence delivered far above twenty candidates—more than one per year—in fact all but two of the ministers here are graduates of our College, and so has proven to be a great blessing for our churches and for others.

We recognize in all this first the Lord's providential care and grace, for all that we have comes from Him and anything good which we do is through Him. At the same time we fully acknowledge that the Lord uses committed and qualified men to carry out His work. In you, Dr. Faber, we were given such a man, and we thank the Lord for your dedication and effort.

When you were appointed by General Synod 1968, first for the position of professor of Old Testament, it was apparent that the churches had great confidence in your expertise in the Bibliological field and in the original languages in which the Word of God is given to us. After the Rev. J.T. van Popta passed away, Synod decided to appoint you as professor of Dogmatology in his place. This shows that the churches knew from the start your depth as academician. You have fully responded to that trust, in keeping up with all the disciplines of theology at the College and keeping a good eye on the whole of the training there.

If there is any disappointment which may have been uttered about your work, it is the fact that we have seen no extensive publications from your hand, as yet.

The material which we did see, in magazine articles, was well-received, and through the years we looked forward to more. There is so little Reformed material available in English in the field of Dogmatics. By all accounts your lectures were always systematic and thorough, lively and well-presented—you have among your students the reputation of being a skillful and engaging lecturer—and we would like to see this reflected in books which may be used by present and future generations. This, too, will enhance the reputation of our College and advance its curriculum even more. So we ask you to lay aside even the slightest fear of publication and to let us share further in a broader circle in the fruits of your labours! These remarks are not made to be critical but to be sympathetic and encouraging. After all, we want to prevent any boredom which sometimes creeps into retirement.

Also we wish to express our gratitude to you, Mrs. Faber, for the way in which you have supported our professor and principal in the years here in Canada. We know that you have been to him indeed a help in every way. You have also found a well-respected place in the church at Hamilton and in our churches. For you it must be a pleasure to be able, the Lord willing, in the new year to have your husband more for yourself and to receive some time together in retirement. Your coming to Canada in 1968 has also in many ways been a blessing for your children, who have found a good place in

our Canadian society. I am sure that looking back, you together see the guiding and preserving hand of the Lord. He gave strength also in times of trial and disappointments, which there have been in your lives as there are in every life.

We pray that our heavenly Father will continue to surround you both and your family with His love and care, that you may go on in His strength in the time that He gives you still under the sun. May you continue to contribute, as long as He gives life, to the propagation of the Gospel and the upbuilding of the churches of Jesus Christ. May it be said of you, when this earthly course is run, what will be said of all faithful servants, "Enter into the glory of your Lord".

Dr. Faber, you will still serve until the end of this year, the Lord willing. The Board of Governors will undoubtedly, in a fitting manner, mark a true end of your tenure as professor. But this is the last General Synod that gathers in the time that you are still in active service. Therefore we extend to you and to your wife on behalf of our Canadian Reformed Churches our sincere gratitude and our best wishes. May I close with expressing the confidence of the apostle Paul who spoke by the Spirit of God in the letter to the Philippians, "[Our] God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Philippians 4: 19, 20).

After having spoken these words, he requested the assembly to stand and sing Hymn 5: 1, 2, 3, 4.

*Prof. Dr. J. Faber replies by addressing Synod as follows:*

Delegates of the General Synod of Winnipeg 1989, brothers and sisters of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Brothers and sisters,

Let me immediately speak from the heart in answer to the remarks of the chairman, the esteemed Reverend Clarence Stam.

When the General Synod of Orangeville 1968 decided to appoint me professor of Old Testament, and the Reverend Mulder, on behalf of Synod, phoned me in Rotterdam, I did not even know that a Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches was being held at that moment. Those of you who remember the situation of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands in the fall of 1968 understand that our thoughts were quite introvert. We were busy with the difficulties within our own Dutch Churches.

When I phoned my mother in order to tell her the news, she said to me, "Jonge, ze hebben je hard nodig, ga maar gauw". ("Son, they need you, go as soon as possible.") I will not tell you the reaction of my beloved wife. But I tell you this secret that, before I flew to the Synod



*Dr. Faber replies to Synod*

of Orangeville, I promised her that if it would be an appointment as Professor of Old Testament, I would decline. For I knew that the late Reverend F. Kouwenhoven had obtained a master of theology degree in Old Testament at John Knox College of Toronto and I had decided never to take the place of a person who was more qualified for a particular academic position. I am still thankful for that decision that I also made known to the General Synod of Orangeville 1968.

The chairman reminded us of the fact that during this Synod the Reverend van Popta was taken away from this life. By our discussions in that Synod the way was opened for the appointment of the late Reverend Kouwenhoven as professor of Old Testament and I was directed to the department of dogmatology. There was a remarkable act of the God of life, the God of providence. When my wife heard from a journalist in the Netherlands that the situation had changed, she

knew that it would have a great impact upon our life and that of our children but she wholeheartedly supported me in accepting the challenge of establishing a Reformed Theological Seminary in Canada.

Brothers and sisters, when I was very young, the LORD God gave me the desire to be a minister of the Word. Although it seemed impossible, I never wanted to become something else but a servant of the gospel of God. I grew up in a very poor situation. If someone knows the situation in the thirties and the slums of Amsterdam, he knows where I grew up. I was a student in an elementary school of which never a boy had gone to a *gymnasium*. In the entire history of that school I was the first one for whom this way was opened. God Himself opened for me the way to study in Amsterdam and Kampen. How I loved the study of the Word of God, the doctrine of the Church, the creeds and the Reformed Confessions!

When after seventeen years in the Netherlands, the Canadian appointment came, I thought about the way in which the Lord God had led my life. I thought of the way the Reverend S.G. de Graaf taught me in "Het Gereformeerd Gymnasium" in Amsterdam the *Hoofddlijnen in de dogmatiek*. I thought of my beloved teacher Dr. Marinus Burcht van't, Veer under whose ministry I went to catechism class and made profession of faith. When I thought of the esteemed Professor Dr. Klaas Schilder whose publications I began to read as a young lad and when I thought about the way in which I prepared myself by special studies in dogmatology, then I saw clearly that God directed my way to the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Synod of Orangeville showed how important the elders are in our Reformed Church life. In that Synod it was especially the elders who even over against the anxieties of some ministers said, "Indeed we need our own training for the ministry." I completely agreed with that idea. If there are churches that form a federation and together have the possibility of establishing a seminary, they themselves have to take care of the training of their own ministers. It is a blessing of the LORD God to the Canadian Reformed Churches that in 1968 they received one institution to prepare young men to become ministers of the Word.

There had been young men — as our chairman knows — who had to go to

the Netherlands for theological study. There were young men who went to Philadelphia to Westminster Theological Seminary. There were young men who tried to find a way of becoming preachers of the gospel by seeking help of ministers. If there had not come one institution, the unity of the Canadian Reformed Churches, I am afraid, would have been broken. In these two decades the Theological College has always maintained an important place within the life of the churches also with respect to the binding together of the churches in the unity of the true faith.

The chairman rightly mentioned that as far as the curriculum of our Theological College is concerned, we wanted to go our own way. You will never find in any Acts of the Canadian Reformed Churches that I have been appointed principal and academic dean of the Theological College. Without official appointment during that Synod, the brothers in Orangeville took it for granted that I would become principal and set up a curriculum for the theological training. If you study this curriculum and compare it with the course of studies in other theological schools, you will find a stress upon Biblical languages. Since the Lord God gave us the Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek, our students should study that Hebrew and that Greek. Just last week I heard from a report from a young man — not Canadian Reformed — who studied only one year in our Theological College. He is now studying in another institution. He visited us in Hamilton, and said "I come here to tell you that I received the highest grade in Hebrew of our whole seminary and I thank you again for your instruction." We were glad with that message, for we think that the continuous study of the Biblical languages and also of Latin, the language of the church for many ages, is an important aspect of our Reformed training.

In our curriculum we combine with this specific emphasis a stress upon the study of the ecumenical creeds and the three Forms of Unity of our Reformed Churches. The confessional character of our training for the ministry should be very strongly stressed and should be very strongly maintained.

This curriculum gives our small institution a specific place within the North American context. We should never give up our special academic requirements for the sake of a false American ideal that big



*Hard work builds up an appetite*

is beautiful and that we therefore need many students.

If I may continue this reminiscence of those first years of our college, it comes to my mind how right at the beginning God led us through a very difficult time from 1969 to 1971. Our college was only a few weeks in operation, when the Lord God took away the Reverend Kouwenhoven. Since there was no synod coming up and no money to have an extra one, and the Synod of Orangeville had appointed me originally as professor of Old Testament, I took up teaching exegesis Old Testament. In the same period our lecturer in ecclesiology, the late Reverend Scholten, became very ill. Because we did not have other possibilities, I taught also church history besides my own disciplines as dogmatics, symbolics, philosophy, etc., disciplines for which in our understaffed institution in Kampen there are at least three professors. In those years of 1969 to 1971, the first three years of college, my very esteemed colleague L. Selles and I were the only two full-timers who with the help of lecturer G. Van Dooren, had to train men like Professor Cornelius Van Dam, now professor at at our College and the Reverend Wietze Huizinga, now in Australia. Those first years were very difficult, but nevertheless beautiful years.

At the same time we had to set up our theological library with all the ins and outs of ordering and cataloguing setting up a library. We did not have any administrative assistance. It took up until 1975 before we received our first official administrative assistant. I may mention here now with great thankfulness that during those first six years of our college my wife did volunteer work and the administration of our library was at that time in her capable hands.

We as first faculty, coming from the Netherlands, needed all our time for

research and teaching, for administration and library, for standing committees of all General Synods since 1969, for necessary labours in church and schools at Hamilton and for editorship of Clarion. We were compelled to leave preparation of solid scholarly publications in the English language to a following generation at our Theological College.

Brothers, let us think for a moment about the future of our Theological College. It will be very important that, besides the stress upon the Biblical languages and the confessional character of our training, we in appointing professors maintain those high academic standards which — as the chairman in his well-spoken words rightly noticed — I always strongly defended.

Just yesterday I wrote a letter to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities of the province of Ontario. Since the Theological College Act 1981 of the Ontario legislature granted us, we received, last summer, a visit of a task force of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. This task force consists of three professors who inquired about our way of operating our Theological College. Recently they brought out a report to the Minister and I had to respond to this report and to defend the independent character of a private institution as our Theological College. But let me now only say this: the task force proposes that for obtaining the status of granting the degree of master of theology, at least 75% of the faculty of a theological college must be in possession of an earned degree of doctor of theology. I completely agree with this requirement which at the moment is met by our College. If there would be no possibility of maintaining this level, we should have to accept that and even have to jeopardize our degree-granting status. But if we operate an academic institution, we should never forget that after confessional integrity academic qualifications of the faculty are very important. You should not misunderstand me: I would rather have a confessionally Reformed man without a degree than a doctor of theology who deviates from the Holy Scriptures and the Reformed Confessions. But if we set up an academic institution, we should have a qualified staff. Therefore I am so thankful that your General Synod appointed Dr. N.H. Gootjes and further Drs. J. De Jong whom we hope to meet in our college as professor and then to call our Doctor De Jong. Again at least 75% of our teaching staff will have a degree of

doctor of theology. This will be of importance for our official position as a degree-granting institution within the province of Ontario.

Brother chairman, I will not take too much of your time. I thank the brothers for this reception and for the generous gift. Let me conclude by saying this: If I think about the Reformed theology and about our institution for training for the ministry as a Reformed institution, I see that we have a wonderful task and a beautiful obligation. The Reformed Confession is the expression of the Reformed religion. It is this religion that speaks deeply of man's depravity as a sinner. Also tonight we do not forget that we are

nothing but miserable sinners. Our Lord Jesus Christ said that if a servant has done all that is commanded him, he must say, "I am an unworthy servant; I have only done what was my duty." There will not be any place for meritorious works within the kingdom of the God of sovereign grace. In His sovereign grace the triune God has elected us before the foundation of the world and He gathers His Church according to His eternal decree of election. This sovereign grace of God became manifest in the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. It is this Christ Whom we love without having seen Him; though we do not now see Him we believe in Him and rejoice

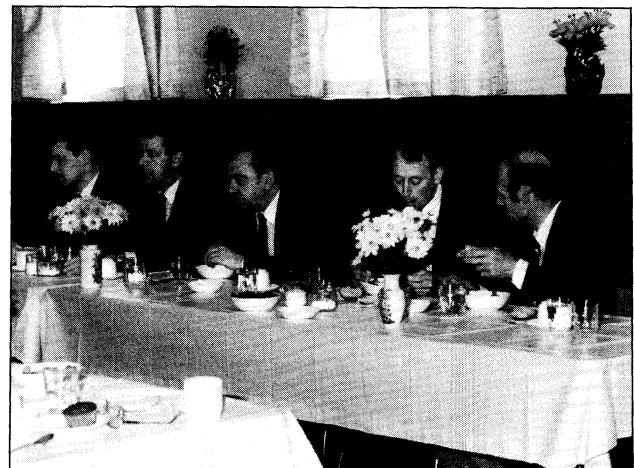
with unutterable and exalted joy, looking forward to seeing Him. It is my deep desire that this gospel of God's sovereign grace in our Lord Jesus Christ may be expounded and defended in an academic manner. It is my prayer that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all mercy, will maintain the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches as a good instrument in His Fatherly hands.

Thank you.

*After these words, the chairman requests the assembly to sing Hymn 65:1,3*



*Enjoying the prairie hospitality*



## FAREWELL REV. PETERSON

*Because Rev. J.J. Peterson must leave, the chairman bids him farewell on behalf of Synod with the following words:*

Esteemed brother Peterson:

You have again been with us for a week, and we have been privileged to have you in our midst. Your sense of humour, infectious laugh, and agreeable nature are always very pleasant to experience. Yet we do not misjudge you: you are no pushover. We have detected in you also deep strength; agreeable, yes, but not to yield to what goes against God's Word. Patient, yes, but insistent

and consistent against what is perceived to be wrong.

You have been at our synods before. You know some of the issues from your last visit in 1983 (Synod Cloverdale). Since then you haven't gotten much farther with us; we haven't gotten much farther with you; perhaps we haven't gotten that much farther with ourselves!

Still, there is progress. We have hope that we may grow together. Sometimes you may wonder: what do you, Canadian Reformed Churches, want? It may seem as if we want too much and understand too little. But we seek only one thing: unity in the Truth, to be together

simply Reformed in every respect. This is our striving; this is also our struggle.

Please pass on to the OPC our concerns as you have understood them in a brotherly spirit. Urge the OPC to tackle the issues which we present. Come in the direction of the true covenantal way of thinking!

May the Lord bless you personally, on your way as you leave today. May He be also with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and guide it in its proper direction, which is pleasing to Him.

God bless you. ■

## ADDRESS J. VANDERKOLK

*The chairman gives Br. J. VanderKolk who is at Synod as a delegate of the Gereformeerde Kerken (Vrijgemaakt) the floor to address Synod. Br. VanderKolk addresses Synod with the following words:*

Brother chairman, esteemed brothers,

Thank you very much indeed for the opportunity given to me, to address this synod of our Canadian sister churches.

A few months ago, our Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad, of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, appointed its member, brother D.J. van Wijnen as the first delegate to your synod in Winnipeg. I myself was appointed as second delegate. Unfortunately brother van Wijnen is unable to travel because of illness. So his knowledge, particularly his know-how with respect to the I.C.R.C., will not be available.

It was also impossible to delegate one of the ministers belonging to our Committee. Consequently, Mr. Chairman, your meeting will have to make do with me, the second delegate.

At your Synod of Burlington-West 1986, no representative of our churches in Holland was present. Our Committee wrote to your Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad, that it had been decided to send a deputation to every second synod. We will deviate from that

rule whenever our presence is expressly required. I may mention in this connection that our Committee was represented during the last three synods of our sister churches, the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa, as this was considered to be strictly necessary.

Our Committee instructed me to convey its Christian regards to your meeting, on behalf of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. We pray that the Lord our God may bestow upon your meeting the wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your discussions and in making your decisions.

### Kampen Theological University

Brothers, your synod takes place in between our Spakenburg-North 1987 Synod and the Leeuwarden 1990 Synod. In Spakenburg-North important decisions were made in connection with the training of our future ministers. The name of our Theological Seminary was changed into Theological University. This is a consequence of changes in the legislation in the Netherlands with respect to higher education.

Further, and that was even more important, a number of vacancies were filled, and on top of that, several new university teachers were appointed. These appointments were necessary for two reasons:

1. a gratifying growth in the number of

students, both from at home and abroad. No fewer than 147 students were enrolled this year;

2. our ministers have to face an increasing number of urgent questions from our society, for example:

- the total ignoring of God in public life
- attacks on the reliability of God's Word
- the permeation of ungodly individualism
- questions concerning life and death, sexuality, marriage and divorce, and so on
- attacks on our youth (and adults too!) by the modern mass media.

The greater part of the problems which I just mentioned are dealt with in the Netherlands in a secular and horizontal way. To us the task to give answers based on Holy Scripture and on our Reformed confession.

We are thankful that the Lord gives us possibilities to prepare our future ministers in such a way that they will be well-armed and that they shall not be ashamed when they have to speak with the enemies in the gate in the last decade of this twentieth century and also in their ministry in the twenty-first century.

Brothers, the time in which we live is called 'post-Christian'. But you in Canada, and we in the Netherlands, believe that the Christian era has not



come to an end. For it is and will remain the time of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of His church, the Lord of the world. Anno Domini! The time is His!

Our churches in Holland are therefore glad and grateful for the reinforcement of our Theological University in Kampen.

### Hamilton Theological College

Your agenda also features items concerning your Theological College in Hamilton, including appointments. You appointed Professor Gootjes and Drs. De Jong.

Professor Gootjes is well-known to us. I may say that he did a lot of good confessionally-Reformed work at the Theological Seminary at Pusan (Korea). I congratulate your College with his appointment. And we pray that Professor Gootjes will give a positive answer. May he, together with the other professors of the Hamilton College, contribute to the reinforcement of the training for the ministry, to the edification of the church of our Lord in Canada and so to the glory of God.

And may the training at the Hamilton College result in a strong confessional preparation of your future ministers and also be for the benefit of the already active ministers in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

### Churches abroad

Besides matters dealing with the Theological University, our Spakenburg-North Synod occupied itself extensively with contacts with churches abroad.

It was a pleasure that the decision could be taken to continue the ecclesiastical fellowship with the Canadian Reformed Churches because your churches continued to be faithful to the Reformed confession in doctrine, worship, church government, and discipline. (Article 121 of the Acts)

With respect to our Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad, the Acts of Spakenburg-North mention in Art. 151:

- 14 general instructions to deputies
- 31 special instructions and
- 18 authorizations.

Of these contacts, mentioned in the Acts of our Spakenburg-North Synod and summarized in your report of Churches Abroad, some are of recent date, other ones are of longer standing, some are superficial, other contacts are more profound.

Of course, we too sometimes have

our questions about the development of these contacts. But in our opinion you have to make contacts first before you can investigate the possibilities seriously. After that, you have to come to a decision: intensify or break off.



*Br. Jac. VanderKolk, Dutch delegate . . .*

As Dutch churches we have to watch out that we do not give the impression of the schoolmaster with the raised finger, as if only we from Holland are able to tell the other churches in the world how they have to live according to the will of God, and how they should organize their church life. Holland has the name of being pedantic, and not in the ecclesiastical field only.

Furthermore, it will be clear to you that with such an extensive field of action, the rules governing ecclesiastical contacts are extremely important. Therefore our synod instructed our Committee to go more deeply into the various problems connected with these rules. Because of the great number of contacts (often very different from each other) we do not, at this moment, have a clear picture yet of the rules that have to be applied.

The number of churches that we meet is increasing, not in the last place as a consequence of the increasing 'mobility' of our church members, more extensive traveling, and better communications.

Although these contacts do not often lead to sister-church relations, yet we discover churches which want to live in accordance with the Word of our Lord. And then we find ourselves confronted with many questions like:

- which relationship should be entered into with these churches?

- how can we help these churches? and
- how can we do that in a responsible manner?

I will give you a few examples by mentioning the various countries where these churches are located: Zaire (Central Africa), the Philippine Islands, Sri Lanka and Singapore (all three in Asia), and Spain (Europe). These examples can easily be multiplied.

### From all over the world

Christ our Lord gathers His church all over the world. He uses to that end people of different tongues, cultures, customs, and, last but not least, different histories. And yet, people who are all inspired by His Word.

That applies to you here in Canada and also to us across the Atlantic Ocean, in the Netherlands. In that way we have to let ourselves be engaged in the worldwide work of gathering the church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We have to do so with all the means that we have received from Him. And we have to do this being aware of the own cultural, historical, and ecclesiastical development of all these churches.

### Conclusion

For the rest I can be short. You were able to take note of the words which were exchanged between Dr. Hendriks, chairman of our latest synod, and your delegate Professor K. Deddens, who visited the Synod Spakenburg-North 1987, together with your brother Berends. (Pro-Acta, Art. 36)

That was plain language! Not a word of French. Not a word of English. And not even a word of 'double Dutch'!

Brother Chairman, Rev. Stam,

I humbly request you to excuse me for any deficiencies in the English of my address. I take comfort in the thought that many members of this synod as 'Mannen van Neerlands stam' were able to understand what I wanted to say.

Dear brothers,

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the kind and brotherly words spoken by Rev. Berends on behalf of your general synod.

From my side I wish you the indispensable blessing of the Lord upon your work as synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

'Hold fast what you have, that no one may seize your crown!'  
(Revelation 3:11)

Thank you!

*Rev. M. VanderWel responds to Br. J. VanderKolk with the following words:*

Esteemed Brother VanderKolk

After the chairman gave me the assignment to welcome the Rev. Jack Peterson of the OPC, I have now been asked to address you, Br. Jac. VanderKolk. That makes me, I guess, a "Jack of all trades." Yet this is not the case. I am not even a member of the Standing Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad. So if my words betray a certain ignorance with respect to the latest developments in the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, please forgive me. Nevertheless it is a special pleasure for me, as a minister who has received his theological education in Kampen and could start his ministry in one of the Dutch provinces, to respond to the well-chosen words you have spoken on behalf of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. The old ties with the mother country may in the course of the years perhaps lose some of their color, but they will never go lost. As an example of such a strong attachment, I could mention the fact that quite some years after the establishment of the Reformed Churches in Canada, one could hear people still speak about "our" General Synod in Hoogeveen!

But Br. VanderKolk, let me first of all thank you for the Christian greetings which you have conveyed to us on behalf of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and also for your prayer that our assembly in its discussions and decisions may be led by the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit. As you may have noticed from our agenda, General Synod 1989 has to deal with several important issues regarding our internal Church life, as well as with respect to our relationships with Churches abroad and with respect to our ecclesiastical contact with the OPC. In addition to this we also have to give attention to a number of ap-

peals. To go about these matters in a responsible way requires indeed wisdom from above.

We have taken note with gladness of the flourishing condition in which your Theological Institution in Kampen finds itself at the moment. The fact that four new professors could be appointed, six docents could be added to its faculty, and that no less than 147 students were enrolled this year makes us almost jealous. Yet we should not complain. The "change of the guard" which is to take place at our College in Hamilton reminds us anew of the share which we were allowed and still are allowed to have in the treasures of Kampen. In the solid Reformed teaching of Dr. J. Faber, for whose retirement this Synod has now made the necessary preparations and in the new appointments which Synod could make, we may thankfully acknowledge the fruits which we as Canadian Reformed Churches are allowed to reap from Kampen's Theological education. That "The School of the Churches" has now become a Theological University is something to which we still have to get used. The beloved "School-day" which is held annually has now become a "University day," I suppose. It is our sincere wish, that in spite of this name change, your Theological University in Kampen may continue to keep that warm spot which it always has had in the hearts of the Churches, and that the Lord may continue to make it a blessing for the Reformed Faith at home and abroad.

The latest report of our Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad has given us indeed an impressive list of the International Relations in which you as Churches in the Netherlands are involved. In this aspect you are far ahead of us. Meanwhile we can understand it, when you state that because of the variety of contacts, at this moment you do not have a common and clear picture of

the rules that have to be applied in each and every case. It could very well be that it is in this area, that we as Canadian Reformed Churches are having difficulties in keeping step with you. Over against the progressiveness of the Flying Dutchmen, we may look rather conservative. From the correspondence with our Deputies, as well as from our current discussions at this Synod you may have noticed, that in the midst of our Churches there are indeed concerns when it comes, for example, to a further formulation of the basis of the ICRC, and when it comes to a further realization of the ecclesiastical contact which we have with the OPC. As far as your contact with the OPC is concerned, the willingness of your committee on Relations with Churches Abroad, to work in close deliberation with our Churches, is then also greatly appreciated. May there also grow a better understanding of each other's point of view as far as our participation in the ICRC is concerned, and may the upcoming Conference in Cloverdale, B.C. contribute to that. As a characterization of our approach, one can say, that as Canadian Churches we are aware of our ecumenical task towards other faithful Churches in this world in making them share in our Reformed heritage. But we like at the same time to be mindful of the fitting exhortation with which you have concluded your brotherly address to us: "hold fast what you have that no one may seize your crown." We realize that this crown is a crown of grace, and that we therefore have to follow our Master in steadfastness and humility.

Br. VanderKolk, it was a pleasure to have you in our midst. May your visit to us be instrumental in the further strengthening of the bond which we may have with our sister Churches in Holland. Please convey in return our Christian greetings to them. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

Thank you. ■

## FAREWELL FABERS

*Because it is the last day of Synod at which Prof. Dr. and Mrs. J. Faber can be present, on behalf of Synod the chairman bids them farewell, extending Synod's gratitude for all the work that they have done among the Churches. In reply Prof. Dr. J. Faber expresses gratitude to the Churches for the trust they have shown in him by past appointments to standing Committees. He wishes Synod the Lord's blessing when it continues its work next week.*

*Our celebrity guests: Dr. and Mrs. J. Faber*



## ANNOUNCEMENT DRS. J. DE JONG

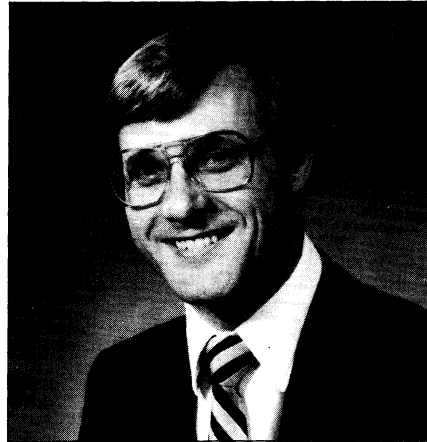
*Rev. Drs. J. De Jong requests the floor of Synod to make an announcement. He speaks the following words.*

Mr. Chairman:

It was eleven days ago that I received from you the official communication from the Board of Governors concerning my appointment as professor of diacnology and ecclesiology. I was asked to make known to you my decision regarding this appointment in ten days. Yesterday being Sunday, this is the first opportunity I have of informing you concerning my decision.

In regard to this decision I can say that, in view of the way in which my life has been led by the LORD, I consider it my duty to accept the appointment that has been given me, in the hope that the LORD will also bless this decision and use it for the building of His Church. With respect to the ministry I can also say that I have always enjoyed serving as a minister in the churches, and I am immensely grateful that the Lord has counted me worthy to be one of the many ambassadors labouring in His vineyard. I think I will always miss the work of a minister.

At the same time, I realize that the inclination to further studies has always been with me, and that from the beginning of my work as a minister, my consistories have always encouraged further study and also made allowances for it. In my first congregation I was somewhat



*Drs. J. De Jong*

hesitant about completing the graduate program I began in Holland, and even when I first arrived in my second congregation I did not see this as a high priority. However, when through a number of events the way was opened for a more concentrated plan of further study, I gratefully took the opportunity, and I must say that both academically and personally this was a very meaningful experience; indeed, it affected us deeply as a family, and we are extremely grateful for the opportunity afforded us to live in Holland so that the program of study could be resumed again.

By now most if not all the brothers of Synod know that I have been appointed to teach subjects outside of my immediate area of specialization. Once again I must become the beginner. But I

think that in any field of academic study, and especially in the rich and variegated world of theology, one is always a 'beginner'! I hardly know what awaits me, but I rely on the help of the God who promises that He will equip those whom He calls. I am also confident that I may count on the help and support of fellow workers in the College and the continuing prayers of the Churches. With this knowledge I hope that I may be of service in training our future ministers concerning the rudiments of preaching and teaching, and the history and polity of the church of God.

Once again I wish to thank the churches for the confidence they have placed in me and I hope and pray that this decision may serve the building of the church, the coming of God's kingdom, and the glory of His holy Name.

Thank you.

*The chairman replies to Rev. Drs. J. De Jong with the following words:*

I do not need to say much. On behalf of Synod I express gratitude, also to the Lord, that you have come to this decision. Although we did not expect otherwise, we understand that the congregation of Burlington-South has also weighed heavily. We appreciate how you have expressed concern for this congregation.

You said that in the subjects you will teach you are a beginner, we pray that the Lord will bless this beginning so that you may be a blessing for the Churches.

Thank you. ■

## FAREWELL BR. VANDERKOLK

*Seeing that it is the last session of Synod at which Br. Jac VanderKolk is present, the chairman bids him farewell with the following words:*

Br. VanderKolk, we were honoured to have you with us as a delegate from our sister Churches in the Netherlands. We thank you for the words you spoke addressing Synod and when you advised Synod about the position of our "Dutch sister" regarding Churches abroad and in particular the ICRC. You must have

noticed some difference of opinion on this matter. However, rest assured that we are united in the same faith and under the same Head, Christ Jesus. We wish you a safe journey home and the Lord's blessing for the Churches in the Netherlands and for you personally.

*Br. Jac VanderKolk replies by saying:*

I am thankful that I could be here among you. I enjoyed and am grateful for the hospitality which has been shown. I think I have learned more about the

Canadian Reformed Churches during my ten-day stay than in the entire three years I have been a deputy for Churches Abroad of our Churches. Ten days ago when I came here, I met sixteen brothers, now I am leaving sixteen friends. Brothers, I hope that the Lord will strengthen you to complete your work. You may rest assured that you and your Churches will be remembered in our prayers. Also remember us in your prayers. ■

## CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING WORDS

*In closing the chairman speaks the following words:*

Esteemed brothers:

We have come to the close of this twelfth General Synod of our churches. Soon we will be —as Synod— history. We have worked together for 16 work-days, a time even shorter than our predecessor, General Synod Burlington, 1986. Our agenda was not one with a great abundance of items, although the pile of documents with appendices was alarmingly thick, but most of these items were of great importance.

I believe that we have treated each submission from committees, churches, members —and even some non-members— with due respect. We tried to read carefully and critically, but above all sincerely and honestly. In all this we tried to preserve "unity in continuity" —to refer to my opening words, which is the unity of faith. Now there are no items left on the agenda, except for the concluding acts, and therefore our reason to meet no longer exists.

Brothers, we have been very involved with all this material, and we will not judge our work. It is the task of the churches to judge what we have done. It is ultimately the judgment of the Lord who must approve or disprove of our efforts. May He be merciful to us, also with respect to this work.

We all know how things went: we are individually more pleased with some decisions than with others. On the whole,

however, we may say that this has been a very united Synod. There was usually great consensus on the decisions which were made. We knew where we wanted to go, although we sometimes differed on the best way to get there. Yes, we had one purpose, and the mutual respect in speaking and debating was always evident. For this we may be extremely grateful, for not every General Synod experiences such a blessing.

There were some truly unforgettable moments which will be passed on in the private anecdotes of the members of Synod. There have also been a number of public highlights, of which I mention only a few: meeting Dr. and Mrs. Gootjes, having Dr. and Mrs. Faber as celebrity guests in our midst, hearing the words of delegates from afar, the Rev. J.J. Peterson of the OPC and br. Jac. VanderKolk from our sister churches in the Netherlands. It was also a solemn moment when we heard our fellow member of Synod, the Rev. J. De Jong, state his acceptance of the appointment as professor at our Theological College. Yes, this Synod had many important visitors who were all joyfully received.

I may thank you, brothers, for the support which you have given the moderamen and me as chairman. Please forgive any remark or ruling by which you were hurt or even offended, for it was never my intention to be personalistic. Together we have sought to serve the Lord, each with his own talents and gifts,

and may He forgive us any self-seeking moments which have plagued us. Let me say that I have great admiration and appreciation for each of you personally and for the honourable way in which you have always conducted yourselves. We came as brothers and we may depart as brothers with even greater appreciation of one another than before.

I may also speak a word of gratitude to the hosting church here in Winnipeg. We have been made to feel very much at home in this building, in this congregation. The meals were delicious, appealing, and well-balanced, in fact so well-balanced that many members of Synod ate well and still lost weight. The dietary insight of the hospitality committee is truly remarkable. It is never really fair to single out persons, but may I specifically mention those in charge: sr. Alice Kuik, Grace Schriemer and Annie Teitsma. Your many hours of work and service will always be gratefully remembered.

This was in many ways a "Yuppie" Synod —as we heard more than once. Designer track suits, Reebok running shoes, striped cravates and all! A Synod fully computerized, who would have dreamed of such a thing? Last minute info by fax, you saw it here at Synod '89. Truly a new era has arrived in synodical efficiency. Various "Yuppie" expressions such as "I can live with it" or "Let's just tighten this wording up a little" or "with your indulgence, Mr. Chairman" became



*The moderamen of Synod '89: left to right, Rev. M. VanderWel (vice-chairman), Rev. Cl. Stam (chairman), Rev. P.K.A. de Boer (first clerk), Rev. R. Aasman (second clerk)*

standard items in the new synodical jargon. How things have changed since 1968 when Dr. J. Faber was appointed.

We are grateful, Rev. den Hollander, consistory and congregation of Winnipeg, for your excellent hospitality. If we did not have families and work elsewhere, we might have been persuaded to stay longer.

ed to stay longer. But now the agenda's done and the planes are waiting to lift us off to where we belong.

We are grateful to the Lord for all that He has given to us together as members of General Synod, as churches in this land, with our sister churches in this world.

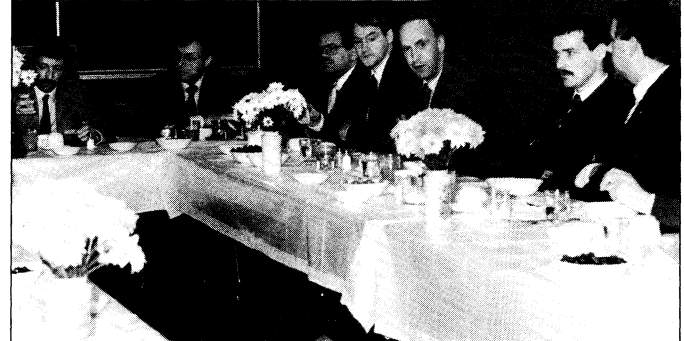
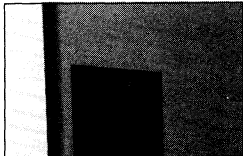
May you all have a good trip home, receive health and happiness also in the future, and above all experience peace with God through Jesus Christ in the only comfort which remains both in life and in death.

*He requests the delegates and guests to sing Psalm 125.* ■

No complaints about food or service



Srs. Alice Kuik, Grace Schriemer and Annie Teitsma receive a well-earned applause



From left to right: Rev. J. De Jong, Rev. M. VanderWel, Rev. Cl. Stam, Rev. P.K.A. de Boer, Rev. R. Aasman, Dr. N.H. Gootjes. Standing: J.F. de Leeuw, L. Stam, A. Witten, Rev. J.J. Peterson, Rev. B.J. Berends, A. Poppe, G.J. Nordeman, A. Van Egmond, Rev. D.G.J. Agema, J. Schutten, W. Gortemaker, Rev. W. den Hollander

## VICE-CHAIRMAN'S WORDS OF APPRECIATION

On behalf of Synod the second clerk expresses gratitude to the Sisters who have served Synod with copious and delicious meals. He presents the three ladies who have organized it all with tokens of appreciation.

The vice-chairman requests the floor and addresses Synod with the following words:

Allow me at the count-down of this General Synod to speak a few words to you, Mr. Chairman. Soon we will be confronted with the sad, but nevertheless, Reformed rule of Article 35 of the Church Order, which reads: "In major assemblies the office of president shall cease when the assembly is ended." As we are used to in this Synod, Mr. Chairman, to "undergird" our statements with appropriate references, for the deep meaning of this rule of Article 35 I may refer to John Janssen, *Korte Verklaring van de Kerkenordening* who in his turn refers to a certain Plantinus, who is believed to have said in his *Politica Ecclesiastica*,

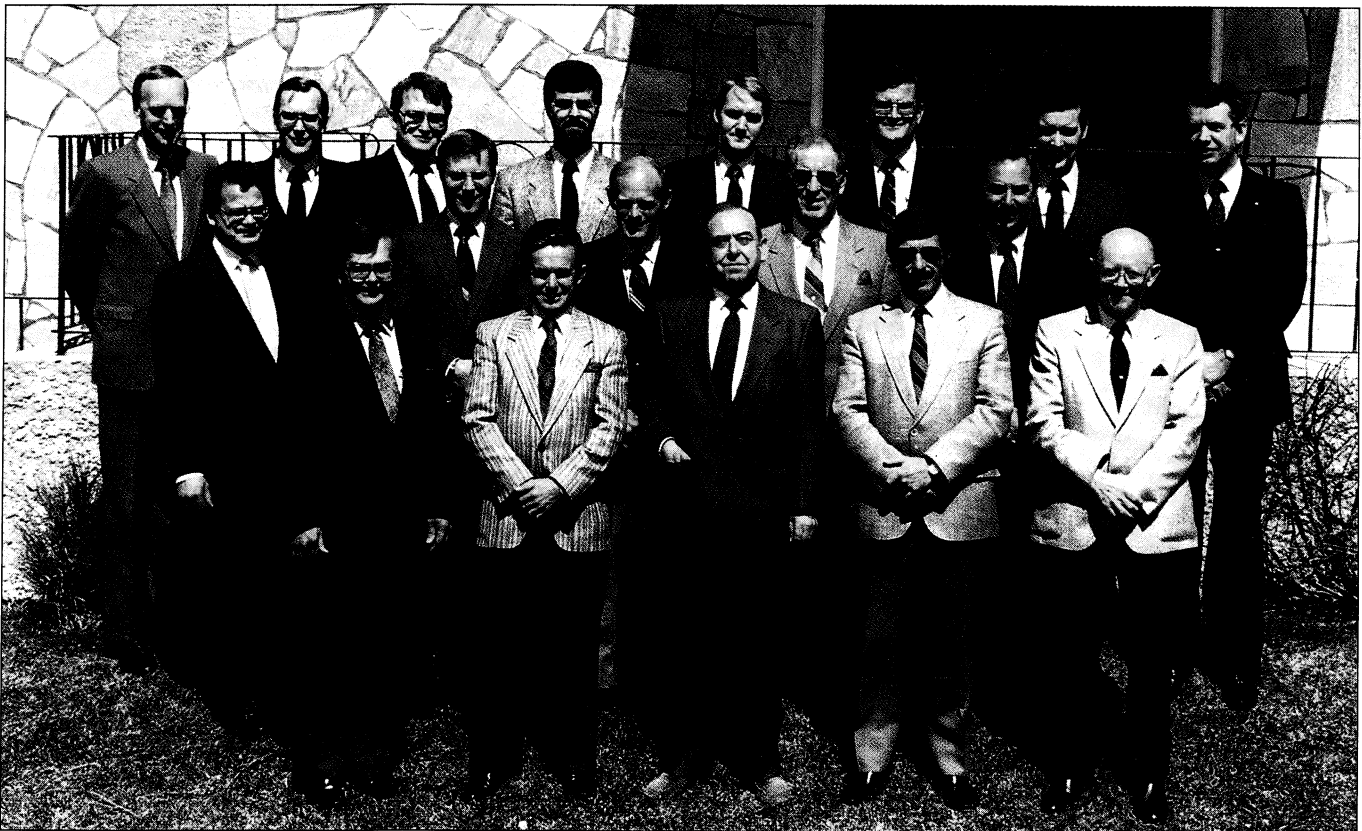


Rev. M. VanderWel closes Synod

Volume IV, page 201: "De vlam is wel het naast aan de rook, nochtans kan door den rook niets verbrand worden, maar door de vlam wel." We are thankful for these enlightening words of Plantinus and we may conclude from them, that soon, Rev. Stam, your chairmanship will evaporate in smoke. Being confronted

with this sad reality, we like to thank you for the work you have done as chairman of this Synod. As vice-chairman I had no reason to complain. Except for a few urgent escapades which you had to make, you did not bother your neighbour too much even when you were a little "under the weather." On behalf of all members of Synod, I like to express our appreciation for the way you knew how to usher us "through" all divergencies, and we are also appreciative for the benevolence in which you have let us "use" and sometimes "abuse," your indulgences, witty and cheerful manner in which you have put the matters of our extensive Agenda before us has contributed much to the pleasant and brotherly atmosphere in which the work of this Synod could be done. In short, Rev. Stam, we thank you for the firm and able leadership which you have given to General Synod Winnipeg, 1989.

Rev. M. VanderWel leads in closing prayer. ■



Synod Winnipeg is now history . . .