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Gisbertus Voetius

March 3, 1589 - November 1, 1676

Important theologian of the 17th century

By K. Deddens

After four centuries

This year it is four hundred years ago that the well-known theologian, minister, professor, author, polemist *Gisbertus Voetius* was born. We may say that he was one of the most noted men in the Reformed churches in the Netherlands of the 17th century. After four centuries it is still worthwhile to pay attention to him. I shall give a short outline of his many-sided and many coloured life. Hereby I shall point especially to one aspect of his significance; Voetius was actually the father of Reformed Church Polity. His church-political ideas are set forth in his extensive book of four volumes, *Politica Ecclesiastica* (1663-1676), in which he discusses many cases theoretically as well as practically, all of them related to church life. Often there is the claim from several, even opposite sides that one is in the line of Voetius. Therefore, it is interesting and worthwhile to delve into this subject. But first of all his life and work in general should have our attention.

Life

Gijsbert Voet (most of the time he is referred to by his Latin name Gisbertus Voetius) was born on the 3rd of March, 1589 in Heusden. His father was a knight, named Paul Voet. When Gijsbert was a boy of eight, his father was killed in the war against Spain. So his mother became a widow with four children, of whom the oldest one was just eleven years old. Her circumstances were very difficult, so that other families had to help her; they did, and made it also possible that the young Gijsbert could continue his studies.

At the age of fifteen he was sent to the State College of Leyden and afterwards to the university of that city. He distinguished himself by his industry and excellent memory, and profited greatly from the teachings of, among others, Gomarus and Arminius; especially the former had a great influence on the mind of young Gijsbert. At the early age of twenty-two he was already available for call and he accepted the call to Vlijmen, which congregation grew very quickly during his ministry. He declined the call to Rotterdam and accepted the one to his native town of Heusden in 1617.

Voetius preached in Heusden eight times a week. He also devoted himself to the study of Arabic and was private teacher in various branches of theology, in logic, physics, metaphysics, and in oriental languages. While only twenty-nine years old, he was delegated to the national synod of Dort 1618/1619, on behalf of the provincial synod of Zuid-Holland. He took an active part in the shaping of the formulations and decisions of the synod. In this fight against Arminianism he had had quite

some experience before hand in his native town, since Arminianism flourished there as well. He also helped other churches, such as Gouda, in 1619, and later on, the church of 's Hertogenbosch. When Prince Frederick Henry of Orange besieged the latter city in 1629, Voetius was sent there on behalf of the churches of the provincial synod of Zuid-Holland, while also the classis Gorinchem appointed him as chaplain. When the city fell into the hands of the Prince, Voetius was requested to settle the ecclesiastical affairs.

In 1634 Voetius accepted the professorship of theology and oriental languages at the illustrious school of Utrecht, where he spent the rest of his life. His inaugural speech was entitled *De pietate cum scientia conjungenda* (that piety is to be connected with science). Three years later he served also as minister of the church at Utrecht. Voetius became doctor of theology at Groningen in 1636, Gomarus being his promotor. When in the same year the illustrious school in Utrecht was raised to the level of an academy in the same year, Voetius was appointed the first rector. He opened the academy with an address on Luke 2:46, where we read about the Lord Jesus sitting among the teachers in the temple, listening to them and asking them questions.

Voetius was a very busy man. He often attended the consistory meetings, gave instruction to catechism classes, gave lectures, public and private, in Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac, as well as in theology. Furthermore, he held disputations concerning numerous questions in dogmatics, ethics, philosophy and church polity. Besides, he wrote numerous books. He was a very strict and pious man, of good health and of great diligence. He usually rose at four o'clock in the morning and began his studies right away; he was busy every day for at least sixteen hours. In 1643 he bought his own house in Utrecht, in the neighbourhood of the Dome (the cathedral church). Although he received a salary of two thousand Dutch guilders (a high salary for that time) he was never rich. There are two reasons for this: Voetius was in the first place a *helluo librorum* (a devourer of books), and in the second place he was very generous. He was able "to give alms to all the poor and to give away all his income." Fortunately, his wife was more down-to-earth and she took care of the wages of the domestics.

It was a severe blow to Voetius that some of his children passed away in their infancy. A great blow was also that in 1672 the French troops occupied Utrecht, so that rooms of the academy functioned as storage for army provisions; the same happened with some of the church buildings. The Dome, too, fell into the hands of the Roman Catholics, and a Roman Catholic procession even marched through the streets of the

city, for the first time in a hundred years. In November 1673 the French troops left Utrecht and Voetius, now 84 years of age, preached again for the first time in the Dome church on the text of Psalm 126.

Voetius became ill in 1676, and on the first of November he passed away, in the same year in which the greatest admiral of the Netherlands, Michael Adriaanszn de Ruyter died. In a certain sense Voetius, too, was an admiral. Strict and even hard on himself, he gave guidance and direction to the life of the churches. His enemies sometimes called him "Abbot Voetius," even "Pope Gisbertus" or "Papa Ultrajectinus" (Pope of Utrecht). It is true that he was not only hard on himself but also on others, being a healthy man, and very consistent, not in the least in the many controversies of his days.



Gisbertus Voetius

Controversies

Voetius was involved in many controversies during his long life. I have already mentioned the struggle against the Arminians. He considered Arminianism a deadly danger for the church, and his great ambition was the achievement of the overthrow of this heresy. He was of the opinion that the Arminian doctrines "grew rank as a cancer in the sound words of Christ."

Voetius also fought against another form of contemporary humanism, namely, the humanism of Erasmus, whom he called an Arian, Pelagian, and Socinian. And he fought against the Roman Catholics, for he saw in the Pope of Rome the anti-christ. Moreover, he directed a very violent campaign against the Cartesian philosophy, first against two professors of Utrecht, then also against René Descartes himself.

Another important point in the career of Voetius was his conflict with Coccejus and his foederal theology. The church-historian S.D. van Veen wrote with respect to this conflict, "The more liberal tendencies of Coccejus, combined with an exegesis of greater independence and a relative depreciation of practical Christianity, aroused the wrath of Voetius. The resulting controversy racked the Dutch Reformed Church till long after the death of the two protagonists."

Voetius must be considered in the framework and against the background of his time. This explains how he, on the one

hand, wrote his books in a scholastic way, and how he, on the other hand, propagated the pietistic revival ("nadere reformatie"). He felt much sympathy for the English and Scottish pietists and therefore he once travelled to England, in order to meet some of them. Also the pietist Anna Maria van Schuurman was among his friends. But when she went more and more in the direction of separation, together with Jean de Labadie, this friendship came to an end. Voetius then prepared a disputation concerning the separations and deviations from the churches ("Over de Scheydingen en afwijkingen van de kercken").

Voetius disputed also with Maresius, who was born in France and who became the successor of Gomarus in Groningen while he was also the minister of the Walloon church



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there. Maresius attacked Voetius' severe puritanism. This conflict ended in 1669 when both of them promised to defend the pure doctrine.

Voetius' disputations were numerous. Like the puritan ministers in Scotland, he strongly opposed the right of patronage. Patronage meant that someone who had built a church building or was the owner of it, had the right to appoint the office-bearers. He wrote also a disputation against Constantijn Huygens about the accompaniment of singing in the worship services by the organ. Huygens had defended the use of organs, but Voetius who was himself able to play the organ, called the playing of organs during the worship services "an iniquity."

Church polity

Voetius was of great importance, especially with respect to church polity. It is incomprehensible how one can write a biography about Voetius (as the Netherlands-Reformed Dr. C. Steenblok did in 1942, G. Voetius, *His life and works*), without saying a word about Voetius and Reformed Church Polity. To a certain extent we can call Voetius "the father of Reformed Church Polity," namely, in as far as he worked out the points which were accepted in the beginning of the confederation of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Voetius' church-political ideas are set forth in his extensive book of four volumes, *Politica Ecclesiastica*. He himself said that not only the articles of the Church Order of Dort, but also especially the liturgical writings formed the basis of his *Politica Ecclesiastica*. In the first volume Voetius wrote about the science of Church Polity as such, its nature, sources, divisions, and means. Then he describes the visible organized church, the authority and the government of the churches, but also the liturgical forms and the ceremonies, prayers, salutation and benediction, singing, reading, and preaching, baptism, Lord's Supper, Catechism teaching, and days of fasting and prayer.

The second volume (actually part two of volume 1), deals with engagement, marriage and divorce, as well as burials and so-called holy acts, freedom of conscience, church properties, etc. In both parts of volume 1 ecclesiastical *matters* are discussed, in the next volume ecclesiastical *persons* are dealt with: members of the congregation, martyrs of faith, women in the church, the office of the minister, his calling, the training for the ministry, the hierarchy in the church, and monasteries and monks. In the last volume church discipline is discussed, the confessions, ecclesiastical exams, archives, institution and planting of churches, separated and reunited churches, private and public disputes, reconciliation, and excommunication.

I have only mentioned here the main points. Sometimes Voetius appears to go in the direction of casuistry. Nevertheless, he produced impressive work and many practical questions are answered in a clear way.

Resource for others

It is no wonder that Voetius' *Politica Ecclesiastica* functioned as a resource for many generations after him. It is not strange either that the "father of the Doleantie Church Polity," F.L. Rutgers, together with P.J. Hoedemaker, edited selected treatises in two parts, published at Amsterdam in 1885/86. They were followed by A. Kuyper, who in 1891 edited and published the two volumes of Voetius' teaching on the Heidelberg Catechism. F.L. Rutgers very much stressed the freedom of the local church and the freedom of the believers over against what he called the second hierarchy (namely from the side of the synodical "board" of the Dutch State Church). In this regard let me mention four statements of Voetius which are very clear:

1. At the end of the first treatise, Voetius had warned that the principles of Reformed Church Polity had to be applied in

- such a way that everybody had to be on guard against the domination of either persons or of ecclesiastical bodies;
2. When the churches come together in major assemblies, the delegates are there not in their function as office-bearers, but only as delegates of the churches;
3. Synods make decisions, but they are preceding sentences ("antecessoria"), while the churches and the members of the churches must have the right of the succeeding sentence ("subsequente");
4. If ecclesiastical assemblies make decisions which are not in accordance with the Word of God, then not their execution ("executio") but a reformation ("reformatio") must follow.

Such examples can easily be multiplied, but these are sufficient to make clear why, for instance, F.L. Rutgers so often quoted Voetius when he gave his ecclesiastical advice.

Voetius misused

In 1937 the promotion of Dr. M. Bouwman took place at the Free University of Amsterdam with a dissertation, entitled *Voetius about the authority of synods*. It was the last dissertation that was submitted with Dr. H.H. Kuyper as promotor. In this dissertation Dr. M. Bouwman strongly defended the right of synods to suspend and depose office-bearers. He appealed to Voetius, who was said to have stated that the whole of synodically-connected churches was an instituted church, so that one could speak of national, regional and classical churches, of which the local churches are only parts or sections. Voetius was also said to have stated that office-bearers of this institution formed altogether a *corpus*, a corporative unity. He wrote: "According to Voetius the synod is the bigger consistory, while the local church is the smaller consistory. According to Voetius there is no essential difference between the authority of the consistory and that of the synod." The consequence of this thinking would be that also the synods have the right and authority of church discipline.

Right away Dr. M. Bouwman was attacked from several sides, among others, by Dr. S. Greijdanus, who discussed the matter extensively in a series of eight articles in *De Reformatie* of April-June 1938, entitled "The Essence of the Major Assemblies according to Voetius." It is no wonder that Dr. Greijdanus opposed Dr. Bouwman. Dr. Greijdanus was a disciple of Dr. Rutgers. He had also opposed the right of the synod of Assen 1926 to depose Dr. J.G. Geelkerken. Dr. S. Greijdanus proved that Dr. Bouwman understood and translated Voetius in a wrong way and made him in fact say the opposite of what he really said. He demonstrated this with many quotations of Voetius' *Politica Ecclesiastica*. Sometimes, Greijdanus said, Voetius is more or less in conflict with himself, but that is in cases in which he gives an elaboration or application of principles which are completely right. Then Voetius sometimes speaks about what is, perhaps, better or safer ("melius esse," "tutius esse"). However, his principles are very clear and Greijdanus agreed completely with Voetius' statements about the major assemblies. Greijdanus also reproached the promotor, Dr. H.H. Kuyper, for apparently not being as well acquainted with Voetius as he seemed to be, and that it was strange that he let this dissertation pass.

Conclusion

I conclude that Voetius was indeed an important theologian of the 17th century. We can still learn many things from him. Also what he, for instance, said about mission and the connection between mission and the church, and the planting of the church, is still relevant today, just as so many statements of his *Politica Ecclesiastica*. Of course, Voetius also had his weaknesses. Nevertheless, his works are still worth being studied!



Manoah Manor expands

By C.M. Van Vliet

The Canadian Reformed Senior Citizens Home Society currently operates and maintains a fifteen-unit apartment complex for tenants who are over 65 years of age. One suite is taken up by a resident caretaker who provides personal care for the residents of the complex, such as meals on request, medication control, laundry, and bathing assistance. The present suites are approximately 450 sq. ft. and consist of a livingroom, kitchen with fridge and stove, bathroom and bedroom. An emergency call system has been installed linking the resident caretaker suite to all other suites twenty-four hours a day.

The three-story apartment building is centrally located at 20265 54 A Avenue in Langley, B.C. close to shopping, library, post office, medical and dental offices, banks, and other services. All these amenities are within walking distance.

The present building has six units on the top floor, six on the second, and three on the main floor with a large lounge, library, solarium, laundry facilities, and an elevator. The residents spend much time together and have each other close at hand thereby minimizing the feelings of loneliness and insecurity which so often come with old age. It is indeed a real joy to live together with others who have a common faith, and as a result the home has been increasingly well-known and popular in its four years of existence.

The result has been that the present building is filled to capacity. The board has therefore been very busy planning another wing to the existing building. The main floor will consist of ten intermediate-care units complete with individual bathroom facilities. This floor will also contain the required support facilities such as a nursing station, office, diningroom, kit-

chen and lounge. The intermediate care unit will operate under the Community Care Facilities Act of the province of B.C. and as such will be properly staffed.

The two remaining floors will consist of four one-bedroom units and eight two-bedroom units for a total of twelve units. The size of the new units will be substantially larger than the present ones, with the one-bedroom approximately 600 sq. ft. and the two-bedroom approximately 800 sq. ft. The tenants of these units will have similar services available to them as those in the existing building. At the moment most of the suites in the expansion phase have been spoken for, however, some of our residents will be moving into the new wing, freeing up suites in the existing building. When the expansion is complete, units will be available to those who require intermediate care. The board urges those senior members of our com-



The residents of Manoah Manor, taken in the lounge. Front row (left to right): Mrs. E. Van Prattenburg, Mrs. H. Klos, Mr. G. Kleefman, Mrs. D. Kleefman, Mrs. S. VanderPol, Mrs. E. Shaw. Back row (left to right): Mr. M.J. VanPrattenburg, Mr. H. Idema, Mr. Jan Riemers, Mr. H. Klos, Mrs. C. Holwerda, Mrs. R. Vandersluis, Mrs. D. Sikma, Mrs. G.B. Wendt, Mrs. H. Brink, Mrs. G. Vandervelde, Mrs. J. Vriend, Mrs. E. Bruinsma (caretaker)

munity who require this type of care to give some serious consideration to signing up for these units. What appears to be happening far too often of late is that couples continue to live in their own homes, and when one spouse needs

care, a very difficult separation has to take place. In a setting such as Manoah Manor can now provide, the chances are that couples can stay together longer, and will be able to receive professional medical care.



The residents of Manoah Manor in the solarium



Inside view of one of the suites

A building committee has been set up, architectural plans have been prepared, and with the membership's approval we hope to proceed immediately with the construction, and have the building completed by the end of the year. Give it some serious consideration, and if you are interested contact the undersigned for further information. We trust that the Lord will further guide us in our endeavours. To Him only be the glory.

For further information contact:

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INTERNATIONAL



By W.W.J. VanOene

Canadian Anglicans and Lutherans will vote this summer on a proposal to open communion to each other and recognize each other's ministers.

Officials of the 550,000-member Anglican Church of Canada will meet in June, and officials of the 140,000-member Evangelical Lutheran Church will meet in July in Saskatoon.

The 70,000-member Lutheran Church-Canada is not included in the plan. (CC/TAN)

LONDON, England.

The Salvation Army's International headquarters in London, England, released the Army's 'positional statement' on homosexuality.

It says in part:

The Army believes that homosexuality can only be considered in the context of what the Bible says about it.

The creation account set out in Genesis reveals the following truths.

*That we are made in the image of God.

*That God created both male and female.

*That the difference in the sexes is part of the divine image in the human race.

*That the loneliness of Adam was remedied by God through the creation of a woman, not a second man.

*That sexual union leading to a one-flesh relationship is meant to be between male and female.

*That the union is meant to be inside of a permanent and publicly-acknowledged

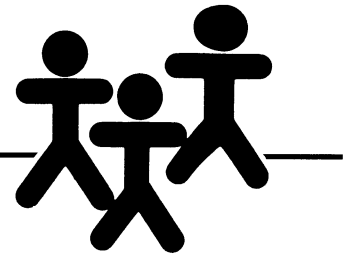
relationship forming the basis of a family unit.

The Bible thus teaches that God's intention for mankind is that society should be ordered on the basis of lifelong, heterosexual unions.

Such unions (marriage) lead to social units (families) — which are essential to human personal development, and therefore to the stability of the community.

Scripture opposes homosexual acts by direct comment in Leviticus, Romans, Corinthians, Timothy and by clearly-implied disapproval in Genesis, Judges, Peter and Jude.

Attempts to promote these relationships as alternatives to family life do not conform to God's will. (TAN)



Business and education

A. Moonlighting — a(n) (unfortunate) necessity or does it matter?

“Moonlighting” — to hold a second job — is a continuing issue of concern according to some discussions in the various school bulletins. For (high-school) students a maximum of 15 hours per week, during the school year, is suggested as a responsible maximum while for teachers no one appears willing to define what is best. Some teachers will be convincing in indicating that they have no choice in the matter, they need the money. Others state that the part-time activity can be a positive influence on their professional vocation. Some boards may discuss at length the merits of an activity such as “bus driving,” other boards may encourage the eager, aspiring teacher to be involved in extra work for wages including bus driving.

Everyone seems to agree that if possible especially teachers should be involved in congregational life to the fullest and/or take professional or academic tertiary level courses for personal and professional growth.

Meanwhile, curriculum-writing including the work accomplished under the auspices of CARE (Committee for the Advancement of Reformed Education) such as the development of new or revamped courses is not strictly speaking “moonlighting” but is certainly to be much encouraged part-time activity. Perhaps boards could consider to more liberally remunerate this kind of professional part-time activity so that “less professional” moonlighting could be phased out.

Recently in “Education Week” some interesting information was provided on moonlighting among public school teachers (U.S.). Indicated was that 26 percent of the 2 million full-time teachers in public elementary and secondary schools held a second job at some point during the year. By contrast only 5.4 percent of all employed workers were holding down a second job in 1985 according to Bureau of Labour Statistics (U.S. information cited by the report. The survey found that teachers were more likely to moonlight if they were male, under age 40, and had

less than 15 years experience in the field. The study also indicated that secondary school teachers were more apt to moonlight than were those working in elementary schools although the absolute number of moonlighting teachers at the lower salary and experience level was larger. The clear implication is that economic necessity is an unfortunate reality.

When reviewing these statistics and our own discussions one wonders if long-term professional growth is not sometimes jeopardized for short-term economic needs.

B. School and earnings

If anyone is contemplating the relationship between continuing in school and future earning potential, the following may be of interest. Based on U.S. figures from the Census Bureau there is evidence of a strong relationship between educational attainment and future earning potential. The bureau’s survey of 1987 family income found that annual income increased sharply with each additional level of schooling completed by the head of the household.

Median household income ranged from \$14,547.00 for those in which the chief earner had less than an 8th grade education, to \$54,491.00 for those headed by a person with a college degree and at least one year of graduate work.

Level of Education	Income
Less than 8 years	\$14,547
8 years	\$18,102
1-3 years high school	\$21,125
4 years high school	\$28,937
1-3 years college	\$36,322
4 years college	\$46,633
5 or more years college	\$54,491

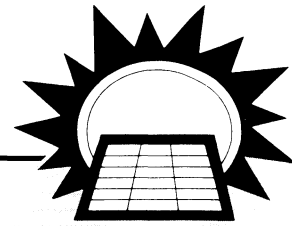
As Christians we realize that if we know how to “live,” we will “know how to make a living.” We have the assurance of Psalm 127 that God provides for His beloved. The impression that is sometimes given, however, that schooling and the pursuit of academic excellence is not financially rewarding is generally speaking, according to the figures quoted, not accurate. May this awareness also encourage and motivate those young students contemplating a three- or even a six-year post-secondary program. Further for Reformed youth, the added knowledge that we are to use our talents for the advantage of others is to be primary motivation.

C. “Business” into the classroom

A number of schools have during the past year again made an effort to bring the “world of business” into the school in order to encourage students to see the relevancy of their work. President Bush in commenting on education recently suggested that we go one step further and remove the barriers that can keep talented teachers out of the classroom. He was referring to the business acumen, the hands-on economic experience that is possessed by entrepreneurs and business managers. Their entry into teaching as a profession is seemingly barred in our country by the sometimes excessive requirements for certification-requirements that many of the brightest in business, could not meet. President Bush suggested that teachers by training aren’t the only ones who can teach. He was not saying you don’t need some education courses but he was wondering whether we can open up schools to those with a lifetime of experience outside the classroom, who are ready to share what they know with young people.

With the increase in the business acumen in our community, perhaps our school boards might consider a number of formal lesson presentations or part-time or even full-time contributions from those not previously trained as teachers. We all know that we need each other. The suggestion made might give substance to that reality!!

RAY OF SUNSHINE



By Mrs. J. Mulder

Let us consider to stir up one another to love and good works.
Hebrews 10:24

Dear brothers and sisters,

As members of Christ's church we are sanctified in Christ and share a heavenly calling.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us here of the fact that as church members we are not merely individuals, living beside each other, without any connection to each other. For we are members of the one body of which Christ Jesus is the Head. Since we all share Him and His benefits, we are related to each other as members of the Family of God. As such we need each other and we also have a responsibility to one another.

As Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have not need of you.'" (1 Corinthians 12:21)

As member of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ we have the obligation to serve one another out of love. Loving the Lord we will love one another, keep an eye on one another and try to assist one another in all things pertaining to this life and the life to come. We will do that not so much because we have to but because we love to do it. We do not do that as busybodies but as people of God who are concerned about the well-being of our brothers and sisters in the Lord. It is our calling to use our gifts readily and cheerfully for the benefit and well-being of other members.

The writer of this letter speaks here especially about our duty with respect to our own faith and life-style and that of our brothers and sisters. We are called to be imitators of God who has shown us His great love by giving His life in Jesus Christ. The love of God should control and direct our life and actions. As the Father has loved us, so we should love one another and show this towards one another in words and deeds.

On our own we would never be able to fulfill our heavenly calling.

We need the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We also need one another to stir up one another to this love and these good works.

Guided by the Holy Spirit and praying for His direction we will be able to encourage and stimulate one another to walk in love and good works until we all attain the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. (Ephesians 4:13)

Our Birthday Calendar for July:

(Sorry that in our previous "Ray of Sunshine" we again published the calendar for JUNE instead of the one for JULY. I hope you will still send a card or letter to the following two brothers although it may arrive after their birthday.)

Jim Buikema
"Anchor Home"

30 Rd., RR 2, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

Jim will turn 28 on July 4th.

Charlie Beintema

401 Park Street, Chatham, ON N7M 3S7

Charlie will be 14 on July 20th.

Birthday Calendar for August:

Philip Schuurman
"Anchor Home"

30 Rd. RR 2, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

Philip will be 30 years on August 5th. Last January he move to "Anchor Home", as it was his wish to live with fellow church members.

Rosa Malda

Oakland Centre, 53 Bond Street, Oakville, ON L6J 5B4

Rose celebrates her 28th birthday on August 9.

Fenny Kuik

38 Rizzuto Bay, Winnipeg, MB R2C 3Y8

Fenny hopes to celebrate her 37th birthday on August 18th.

(Do you remember from last year who celebrates her birthday on August 19th???? If you do, send her a card! She will appreciate it, I am sure!)

Jack Dieleman

307 Connaught Ave., Willowdale, ON M2R 2M1

Jack will reach the age of 18 years on August 23.

Congratulations to all of you!

Watch o'er Thy Church, O Lord, in mercy;
Save it from evil, guard it still.
Perfect it in Thy love, unite it,
Cleansed and conformed unto Thy will.

Hymn 46:2A

Greetings from

Mrs. J. Mulder
1225 Highway 5, R.R.-1
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

GENERAL
SYNOD WINNIPEG
1·9·8·9

April 18 to May 5, 1989

FIRST WEEK

Opening and constitution of Synod

On **Tuesday, April 18, 1989** the Rev. W. den Hollander, chairman of the convening church at Winnipeg, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He requested the brothers to sing Hymn 2:1, 3, read from Matthew 28:16-20, and led in prayer. In his words of welcome (which was published separately) he encouraged the brothers delegates to make ample use of the facilities which the convening church had to offer. He furthermore placed the task of the Synod which was to be constituted in the light of the mandate and the promise which the exalted Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, has given to His church in Matthew 28. With a view to the rather youthful appearance which this Synod was going to have, he reminded the brothers of the words spoken by the apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 4:12. After these opening words Hymn 2:4, 5 were sung.

The Credentials were checked with the assistance of the brs. J.F. de Leeuw and A. Poppe. From the attendance list it appeared that the brothers present were all *primi* delegates. From *Regional Synod East* were delegated as ministers: Rev. R. Aasman, Rev. D.G.J. Agema, Rev. J. De Jong and Rev. Cl. Stam; as elders: br. G.J. Nordeman, br. J. Schutten, br. A. Van Egmond, and br. A. Witten. From *Regional Synod West* were delegated as ministers: Rev. B.J. Berends, Rev. P.K.A. de Boer, Rev. W. den Hollander and Rev. M. VanderWel; as elders: br. J.F. de Leeuw, br. W. Gortemaker, br. A. Poppe and br. L. Stam.

The following officers were chosen: *chairman*: Rev. Cl. Stam; *vice-chairman*: Rev. M. VanderWel; *first clerk*: Rev. P.K.A. de Boer; *second clerk*: Rev. R. Aasman.

After this election Rev. W. den Hollander declared General Synod 1989 constituted and the officers took their seats.

Rev. Cl. Stam expressed his thanks for the confidence which the members of Synod had placed in the elected moderamen. In his opening words he stressed that it was incumbent on Synod to do its work as a unity, in continuity with respect to previous Synods, in faithfulness to God's Word and in accordance with the adopted Church Order. He thanked the con-

vening church for the preparations made and for its excellent reception of the delegates. The Rev. M. van Beveren received thanks for the inspiring and instructive words which he had spoken in his preaching on the evening before.

Letters had been received and were read from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia and from Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke van Suid Afrika, containing Christian greetings and prayers of blessing for the work this Synod had to do. Via the Rev. M. van Beveren fraternal greetings were also received from the Free Church of Scotland. The chairman further announced that during its second workweek Synod hoped to receive several honoured guests.

Arrangements

With respect to the task of Synod the following arrangements were made. The final date for incoming mail was set for Wednesday, April 19, 1989 at 12:00 p.m. Central Standard Time. A time schedule for the daily meetings was made. Each day the meeting would be opened and closed in plenary session with proper devotions. As guidelines for the procedures of Synod the rules would apply which have been adopted by General Synod Cloverdale 1983. The official Press Release of Synod would not be published until after Synod had been closed.

After the Agenda had been adopted the work load of Synod was divided over four Advisory Committees which were to make proposals on the Agenda items assigned to them.

As a matter of priority, Committee III was asked to serve Synod first with advisory reports on the feasibility of inviting professors to be present at Synod in an advisory capacity, and on the appointment of new professors for the Theological College. In connection with the upcoming retirement of Dr. J. Faber, as principal and professor of Dogmatology at our Theological College, it was decided to invite Prof. and Mrs. J. Faber to General Synod so that they might receive an official farewell on behalf of the churches.

The remainder of this first day of Synod was spent on committee work. In the morning session of **Wednesday, April 19**, Synod dealt with the proposal of the churches of Burlington-East and Lynden, to ask professors to attend Synod in an ad-

visory capacity and to change the existing Guidelines for Synod accordingly. Seeing that the Guidelines adopted in 1983 do not prevent professors from giving advice to advisory committees or plenary sessions whenever requested, Synod decided not to make any changes in the adopted Guidelines for Synod.

Appointment new professors

In the evening session of that same day a beginning was made with the discussion of a proposal of the Board of Governors of the Theological College with regard to the appointment of a professor in Dogmatology and a professor in Ecclesiology and Diaconology. After some more information was received, Synod decided in the afternoon session of **Thursday, April 20** to direct the Board of Governors to appoint Dr. N.H. Gootjes of Pusan, Republic of Korea, as professor of Dogmatology as per September 1, 1989 and Drs. J. De Jong of Burlington-South, ON, as professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconology as per May 1, 1990. The discussion of the proposal and the decision of Synod took place in closed restricted sessions and in the absence of Rev. J. De Jong. In the evening session the chairman publicly announced the appointments of Dr. N.H. Gootjes and Drs. J. De Jong. He addressed the latter with words of congratulation, to which Rev. J. De Jong replied. As is customary, the appointed brothers received ten days to consider their respective appointments.

Admissible and inadmissible

In the morning session of **Friday, April 21**, Synod dealt with a request of the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church at Chatham to register its objection against the fact that appeals of the brs. J. Werkman and H. DeJong had been declared admissible by General Synod Burlington 1986, even though they had withdrawn themselves from the church at Edmonton (*Acts*, Art. 186, 187). Synod took note of this objection, considering thereby

1. that the church at Chatham did not appeal decisions of General Synod 1986, but that it wished to "register" its objection to such practice;
 2. that members who withdraw themselves from the federation of the churches indeed disrupt the way of appeal as accepted in Art. 31, C.O., but that special circumstances may allow dealing with their appeal to a major assembly.
- After this, Synod adjourned for committee work. In view of the fact that on the next day the Tri-annual Meeting of the Foundation for Superannuation would be held, Synod dealt in the evening session with an overture of the Covenant Canadian Reformed Church at Lower Sackville, NS. This overture was supported by the church at Houston, BC. It asked Synod to study and, if necessary, change Article 13 C.O., because the church at Lower Sackville had several concerns with regard to the present method of providing for the needs of retiring ministers and their dependents.

Considering that it is a principle of Article 13 C.O. that a minister is bound to and supported by the church which he served last and, that Article 13 C.O. does not preclude that all churches could become involved in sharing the financial burden for retired ministers, Synod judged that any concerns or suggestions with regard to this matter should be forwarded to the Foundation for Superannuation.

A letter of Mr. R. Duker of Edmonton, AB, concerning decisions made by General Synod 1986 regarding the teachings of Rev. S. De Bruin (*Acts*, Art. 184 and 185) was declared inadmissible. Synod thought it to be inconsistent with the rule and spirit of Article 13 C.O. that one who withdraws from the churches appeals decisions of major assemblies.

Having come at the end of Synod's first week, the chairman wished all those who would be involved in the meeting of the Foundation for Superannuation on the next day, strength and wisdom in all their discussions and deliberations. Br. J. Schutten requested the delegates to sing Hymn 40:1, 5 and led in prayer. Synod was adjourned for the weekend.

SECOND WEEK

Appeals — Rev. S. De Bruin c.s., ORC Edmonton, br. J. DeVos

On **Monday April 24**, at 9:00 a.m. Synod was reopened. The chairman requested the delegates to sing Psalm 139:1, 4, read from Ezekiel 37:1-14, and led in prayer. On behalf of the moderamen a proposal was tabled to offer to Dr. and Mrs. J. Faber a trip to Australia to visit the sister churches there. This offer was meant to express the appreciation of the churches for the twenty-one years of faithful and dedicated service which Dr. Faber has rendered to our College. It furthermore might enhance the bond between the College and the Australian churches.

After a short discussion the proposal was adopted. Dr. and Mrs. J. Faber had been invited to visit General Synod during April 27 through 29, and to stay for the weekend.

While Synod was adjourned for committee work, in the course of the afternoon the Rev. J.J. Peterson, delegate from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, arrived. So did the Rev. S. Allison, minister of the Reformed Church of the United States, who had come to visit Synod as a personal observer. In the evening session Rev. J.J. Peterson was officially welcomed by the vice-chairman, while the Rev. S. Allison was welcomed as a guest.

A letter from Rev. S. De Bruin c.s. in which they appealed a decision made by General Synod 1986 (*Acts*, Art. 184) was declared inadmissible by Synod on the following grounds:

1. Article 31 C.O. implies that an appellant is a member of the churches against whose decision he appeals and that he maintains the bond with these churches during the time of appeal despite alleged wrong.
2. It is evident that the appellants have ceased to be members of the Canadian Reformed Churches and have joined the federation of the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches (July 1988).
3. It is incumbent upon the appellants to follow the accepted way of the Church Order according to Article 31 to seek justice and so to restore the relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches, but not to place the onus on General Synod to restore this unity.

Synod further dealt with a letter of appeal from the Orthodox Reformed Church at Edmonton against a decision of Regional Synod West 1987 (*Acts*, Art. 10, 15, and 16). Although Synod could declare also this letter of appeal inadmissible because the appellant severed the ties with the Canadian Reformed Churches, it decided to deal with it as an exceptional case, considering that this was an appeal against a decision of a Regional Synod, which had not been dealt with by a General Synod, and that the appellant alleged to have been judged "rashly and unheard." The ORC namely complained that Regional Synod West 1987 had not properly dealt with all the grounds presented in its appeal and therefore it requested from General Synod to carry out what Regional Synod West 1987 allegedly had failed to do. In response to this letter of appeal Synod decided not to accede to the requests of the Orthodox

Reformed Church at Edmonton, considering, among other things, that

1. Regional Synod West 1987, although not in a systematic way, did address the grounds which were adduced by the ORC in its first and second appeal;
2. a major assembly is not required to do what a minor assembly may have failed to do. It can at most make a statement about it.

In a letter of appeal br. J. DeVos asked Synod to declare a ruling of Regional Synod West 1987 invalid. This Synod had declared a submission of br. J. DeVos with respect to the matter of Classis Alberta-Manitoba, January 13-14, 1987, inadmissible on the grounds that the appellant had not been personally wronged by this Classis and that he should have addressed his concern to his own consistory. Considering that Article 31 C.O. does not necessarily restrict appeals to those who have been personally wronged (see *Acts*, General Synod Toronto 1974, Art. 123, Cons. 2), and that an appeal against a decision of a minor assembly may be directed to the major assembly, Synod decided that the appeal of br. J. DeVos to Regional Synod West had been denied on improper grounds.

Receiving guests

The morning session of **Tuesday, April 25**, was opened by the chairman in the usual manner. Noting that the auditorium was filled with students from both the Immanuel Christian School of Winnipeg and the Dufferin Christian School of Carman, he extended a word of welcome to all present. He then spoke a special word of welcome to Dr. and Mrs. N.H. Gootjes who, after a long and tiresome journey from Korea, had arrived safely in Winnipeg. He congratulated Dr. Gootjes with his appointment as professor of Dogmatology at our Theological College, and assured him and his wife, that if they decided to come to Canada, they would experience this in many ways as a homecoming. He further stressed the need of our churches to have qualified Reformed professors who can work in the training for the ministry of the Word and wished Dr. and Mrs. Gootjes the wisdom from the Lord so that they might come to a responsible decision. After these words, the chairman requested the assembly to rise and sing Psalm 134:1, 3. In response to this Dr. N.H. Gootjes addressed Synod, whereby he expressed his sincere appreciation for the appointment received. At that moment he was not sure what to do with the decision which had to be made. But he trusted that the Lord would give them guidance. After the singing of Psalm 100:2, 4, the assembly was soon adjourned for committee work.

In the evening session Rev. J.J. Peterson, delegate from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, received the opportunity to address Synod. In his address he pointed out that the OPC had passed through a traumatic time, referring thereby to its experience with the PCA and its struggle in the RES. These matters had absorbed much energy and time and had prevented its committee to work with us the way it should have. But he assured Synod that it was now ready to meet further with our committee and to continue the talks about the divergencies. The Rev. Peterson concluded his speech by reading the comforting words of Isaiah 62.

The Rev. R. Aasman, member of the Committee for Contact with the OPC, responded to the words of Rev. J.J. Peterson. In this response he expressed the gratitude of our churches for the faithful testimony of the OPC in the RES and for the consistency shown by its final withdrawal from the RES. He also spoke some words of appreciation for the sincerity in which the OPC wants to seek ecclesiastical union between two true

churches of Jesus Christ which exist alongside each other, as is shown in some way from its document "Biblical Principles on the Unity of the Church." At the same time he spoke a warning word with respect to the relationship which the OPC still has with the Christian Reformed Church and stressed the need for a frank and open discussion of the matters which have compelled the churches at Blue Bell and Laurel to leave the OPC.

After these words of response the assembly sang Hymn 2:4.



Rev. S. Allison (RCUS) and Rev. J.J. Peterson (OPC) feel quite at home

The Creeds, Theological College

Report 1 (Creeds) of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* was brought into discussion. With regard to this Report nine churches had sent in submissions, while the Standing Committee itself had also taken note of the decision of Synod 1987 of the Australian sister churches to delete the word "Christian" from Article IX of the Apostles' Creed. Having studied the Report of the Standing Committee and the submissions pertaining to it in the light of the mandate given to the committee by Synod 1986 (*Acts*, Art. 118), Synod expressed its appreciation for the great amount of work which had been done by the committee. Synod charged the Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*:

1. to include some changes in the Athanasian Creed and thus adopt this version in its entirety as final;
2. to add the proposed Scripture references to the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort and to the Liturgical Forms;
3. to update the Prefaces of the Confessions and Creeds;
4. to complete its mandate of Synod 1986 regarding the Nicene Creed (i.e., to see to its linguistic revision).

With respect to the Report of the Board of Governors of the Theological College and its supplementary Report, Synod decided to adopt the reports and their recommendations and to approve the actions of the Board of Governors and officers of the College as mentioned in these reports, thereby gratefully acknowledging:

- a. the promotion of Prof. C. Van Dam to Doctor Theologiae at the Theologische Hogeschool in Kampen;
- b. the faithful labour of Dr. J. Faber as professor of Dogmatology and principal at our Theological College since his appointment in 1968;
- c. the faithful work of Dr. K. Deddens as professor of Diaconology and Ecclesiology at our Theological College since his appointment in 1983;
- d. the work for our Theological College done by the Women's Savings Action, and especially that of our late sr. G. Selles.

From the Report of the Property and Finance Committee it appeared that all things are being done properly and in good order. The treasurer of the Board of Governors was relieved of all responsibilities for the years indicated. Synod gratefully acknowledged the annual donations of the Women's Savings Action and the anonymous gift of \$10,000.00 towards the building loan. It expressed its thankfulness to the Lord for the fact the College was able to function through the regular and faithful support of the churches in Canada and Australia.

More guests

In the morning session of **Wednesday, April 26**, Rev. B.J. Berends received the floor to welcome br. Jac. VanderKolk, delegate of the Gereformeerde Kerken (Vrijgem.) in Nederland. He expressed the hope that brother VanderKolk, during the days of his visit to Synod would feel at home among the delegates and that he would get the opportunity to acquaint himself with the weal and woe of the Canadian Reformed Churches.



*Brother Jac. VanderKolk
— a welcome guest*

Synod was then adjourned for committee work. Later on in the afternoon the brothers delegates received a guided tour through the premises of Premier Printing. On the evening of this day the members of Synod were invited to a "Spring Concert" held in the Winnipeg church building.

The next day, **Thursday, April 27**, was spent on preparing advisory reports. In the evening session the chairman extended a warm welcome to Dr. and Mrs. J. Faber who, meanwhile, had arrived in Winnipeg. He pointed out that Synod had invited them for a special reason, namely to bid farewell to Dr. Faber because of his upcoming retirement as professor and principal of our College, a position which he had held for twenty-one years. He noted that during the tenure of Dr. J. Faber, our College had grown into a recognized Reformed seminary with high academic standards and that under his able administration it had also received a legal status. On behalf of the churches he thanked Dr. Faber for all his labours and for the dedication he had shown to our College. Also Mrs. Faber received words of great appreciation for the help and support she had given to her husband through all these years. The chairman concluded his address with the trustful words of the apostle Paul in Philippians 4:19, 20.

After these words the assembly rose and sang Hymn 5. Dr. Faber then replied to the address of Rev. Cl. Stam. He expressed his gratitude for the opportunity and strength the Lord had given him to do his work at our Theological College and in the many committees of which he had been a member in the course of the years. He acknowledged thereby the faithful support of his spouse. Being thankful for the appointments

which Synod had made to fill the vacancies in the faculty, he further wished Synod the strength and wisdom of the Lord in the fulfilling of its task. After Dr. Faber's reply, Hymn 65:1 and 3 were sung. The remainder of this session was used for the discussion on our contact with the OPC.

On **Friday, April 28**, the Rev. J.J. Peterson had to leave Synod. Before the members went to their committee rooms, the chairman officially bid the delegate of the OPC farewell.

After the opening of the evening session, br. Jac. VanderKolk addressed Synod on behalf of the sister churches in the Netherlands. He conveyed to Synod their best Christian greetings. In his address he provided Synod with an update concerning the Theological College at Kampen and congratulated our College with the appointments of Prof. N.H. Gootjes and Drs. J. De Jong. He also gave an impression of the views our Dutch sister churches hold with respect to the various relationships which they have with churches abroad. He concluded his speech with a brotherly exhortation, using the words of Revelation 3:11.

The vice-chairman, Rev. M. VanderWel responded to br. VanderKolk's address. On behalf of Synod he expressed his gratitude for the flourishing position in which the now Theological "University" in Kampen finds itself. He also reflected on the fact that compared to the sister churches in the Netherlands our approach to contact with churches abroad looks rather conservative. In closing he asked br. VanderKolk to return our Christian greetings to the churches in Holland.

Archives, Bible translation, Address Church, OPC

On the same evening the following matters were dealt with:

Concerning the Report of the Church for the Archives, the church at Burlington-East, Synod noted with appreciation that since the last report much work had been done to make the Synodical Archives more accessible for use. The church at Burlington-West, which had inspected the Archives, reported that things were in good order. Nine documents were missing, but appeared to be readily obtainable from the originating sources. Both churches however recommended to Synod to discontinue the so-called General Archives. In the course of the years little material had been contributed by the churches. Synod decided:

1. to express its gratitude for the work done by the church at Burlington-East and its archivist, br. T. VandenBrink, and to discharge them for the period 1986-1989;
2. to thank the church at Burlington-West for inspecting the Synodical Archives and to discharge this church for the period 1986-1989;
3. to discontinue the efforts to establish a "General Archive";
4. to instruct the church at Burlington-East to include the documents of Synodical Committees in the Archives of General Synods, and to locate and file the documents which were reported to be missing.

With respect to the Report of the Committee on Bible Translations Synod noted that the committee met very infrequently. The churches of Smithville and Carman expressed both their concern about the intention of the RSV Bible Committee to "eliminate masculine-biased language pertaining to people, where such changes do not violate the sense of the original text." Although according to the RSV Bible Committee there will be substantial changes in the forthcoming edition of the RSV, Synod nevertheless considered that further scrutiny of the New RSV Bible appeared to be desirable. Synod decided therefore:

1. to thank the Committee on Bible Translations for its work done;

2. to continue the committee with the following mandate:
 - a. to scrutinize the New RSV Bible as soon as it becomes available with respect to faithfulness in translation, particularly in regard to the use of so-called inclusive language;
 - b. to provide information about its findings to the churches and report to the next General Synod.

Synod took note of the report of the church at Burlington-East as Address Church of the Canadian Reformed Churches. It thanked the church at Burlington-East for fulfilling its mandate. After having been discharged for the period 1986-1989, it was re-appointed in the same quality.

In the morning session of **Saturday, April 29**, Synod dealt with the Report of the Committee for Contact with the OPC. From four churches, respectively the churches at Attercliffe, Chilliwack, Smithville and Hamilton, submissions were received which evidenced a growing unease about the lack of progress in our contact with the OPC. In its considerations Synod noted with respect to the OPC several encouraging developments, as, e.g., its withdrawal from the RES (now REC), certain positive statements in its document "Biblical Principles on the Unity of the Church," and the plea for the continuation of Reformed support. But there were also disappointing aspects. From the Report of the Committee for Contact with the OPC it appeared that the committee had sent delegates to the 53rd and 54th General Assemblies, but apart from a number of exchanges by mail and telephone, the committee had met with the C.E.I.R. only once during the last three years. The result was that the discussion on the existing divergencies had not made much progress yet. With the discussion on, e.g., the matter of "fencing the Lord's Table," which was considered by Synod 1986 to be a major issue and of mutual concern, only a beginning was made. Although the latter may not have been the fault of our committee, Synod judged that the discussion of the issues between the OPC and us should have priority and needs to be intensified. Also the relationship which the OPC has with the Christian Reformed Church remains a matter of great concern.

In answer to the letter of the church at Attercliffe, Synod decided to take note of this communication in the formulation of its mandate to be given to the Committee for Contact with the OPC.

As Synod did not consider the argumentation of the church at Chilliwack to be conclusive for the discontinuation of "ecclesiastical contact" with the OPC, Synod decided not to accede to the proposal of the church at Chilliwack to return from "ecclesiastical contact" to "committee contact."

The church at Smithville asked Synod:

1. to formally evaluate the divergencies in doctrine and practice between the OPC and ourselves;
2. to mandate the Committee for Contact with the OPC to evaluate the doctrinal and church political statements which are binding in the OPC with a view to establishing whether these are an impediment to our stated desire to reach full correspondence with the OPC.

Synod decided not to accede to the requests of the church at Smithville, considering, among other things, that:

1. it was not in the province of General Synod 1989 to provide a detailed evaluation of the practical consequences of maintaining "ecclesiastical contact" with the OPC. The recognition of the OPC as a true church does not imply that our membership should act as if a sister church relationship exists with the OPC. Ecclesiastical contact, since it is not permanent, does not include pulpit exchange, inter-communion, joint action, etc. (*Acts*, Synod Smithville 1980, p. 70, Cons.3);

2. the matter of the divergencies, including the fundamental questions regarding the doctrinal and church political statements binding in the OPC formed already an integral part of the ongoing mandate of the Committee for Contact with the OPC.

The overture of the church at Hamilton to discontinue ecclesiastical contact with the OPC was denied by Synod, because the church at Hamilton had not proven that the OPC lacks the willingness to work towards full church unity.

In view of the committee report Synod decides:

1. to thank the committee for its work and to continue the temporary relationship of "ecclesiastical contact" in the understanding that encouraging indications for progress are present;
2. to acknowledge gratefully the Scriptural witness which the OPC delegates have given within the RES — especially with respect to the apostasy in the synodical Reformed churches in the Netherlands — and the clear way in which they have terminated the membership of the OPC;
3. to convey this acknowledgement to the ICRC and to recommend to the ICRC that before admitting the OPC for membership, if so requested, it evaluate the relationship of the OPC to the Christian Reformed Church;
4. to remind the Dutch sister churches to work in such a way that as sister churches in our contact with the OPC we may continue to present a unified testimony;
5. to continue the Committee for Contact with the OPC with the specific mandate:
 - a. to maintain the contact with the OPC, taking into account the rules for ecclesiastical contact, with the understanding that the temporary relationship of "ecclesiastical contact" is designed to come to a full sister church relationship in the unity of the true faith and is not intended to continue indefinitely, or become a relationship of permanent status;
 - b. to include in the "continued discussions" on "issues of mutual concern" (*Acts*, Synod 1977, p. 42) the statement on Biblical Principles of Church Unity;
 - c. to be diligent to continue the discussion on and evaluation of the divergencies, such as the doctrine of the covenant, visible and invisible church, the assurance of faith, the observance of the law, the fencing of the Lord's Table, confessional membership, church-political differences, and the contact with the CRC;
 - d. to coordinate the discussion of the divergencies with the discussion concerning the Biblical Principles on the Unity of the Church;
 - e. to serve the following General Synod with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months before the beginning of this Synod;
 - f. to keep the churches informed concerning its activities by means of interim reports and press releases.

Because it was the last day of Synod which Prof. and Mrs. J. Faber could attend, the chairman, at the close of this work-week, bid them farewell, thanking them for all the work they have done among the churches. In reply Prof. Faber expressed his gratitude to the churches for the trust they had shown him by past appointments to Standing Committees. He wished Synod the Lord's blessing when it would continue its work in the next week.

Br. A. Van Egmond closed Synod for the day, by requesting the assembly to sing Hymn 46:1, 2 and by leading in prayer of thanksgiving.

THIRD WEEK

Acceptance by Drs. J. De Jong; Churches Abroad

Synod was reopened on **Monday** morning, **May 1**. The chairman requested the delegates to sing Hymn 4:1, 4. He read Revelation 4 and led in prayer. The roll call showed that the brs. G.J. Nordeman, L. Stam and E. Van Egmond had not returned from their weekend trip yet. They had given due notice of their absence. The chairman, Rev. Cl. Stam, welcomed the brethren and noted that Rev. P. Aasman had accepted his call to the church at Grand Valley. The second clerk, Rev. R. Aasman, had received a call from the church at Smithville. The chairman wished him wisdom in the consideration of this call and extended, on behalf of Synod, congratulations to the Rev. and Mrs. C. Bosch with their 25th Wedding Anniversary. According to the custom of Synod, the first clerk, Rev. P.K.A. de Boer, read the Acts of the last-held sessions. After they had been adopted, Synod was adjourned for committee work.

At the reopening of the evening session the chairman requested the assembly to sing the revised adopted Apostles' Creed on the proposed melody of Mr. D. Zwart. With the help of the synodical organist, the Rev. B.J. Berends, who had himself thoroughly prepared for this occasion, the singing went reasonably well. The brs. G.J. Nordeman and A. Van Egmond had meanwhile arrived. Br. L. Stam would return the next morning.

Drs. J. De Jong received the floor to announce the acceptance of his appointment as professor of Diaconology and Ecclesiology at our Theological College. Acknowledging in this appointment the leading hand of the Lord, he expressed the hope that the Lord would also bless his decision and use it for the building of His church. As he was appointed to teach subjects outside of his immediate area of specialization, Rev. De Jong realized that he had to start as a beginner. But he trusted that he could count on the help and support of his fellow workers at the College and on the continuing prayers of the churches. With this knowledge he hoped to be able to be of service in the training of our future ministers.

The chairman responded to this announcement with a few words in which he expressed gratitude on behalf of Synod for Drs. De Jong's decision, and prayed that the Lord might make our brother a blessing for the churches.

The session was then continued by discussing the Report of the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad, whereby also attention would be given to a letter of the church at Carman regarding contact with the Free Church of Scotland and to a letter from the church at Hamilton regarding the ICRC.

From the first part of the report of the committee, which deals with our relations with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRC), the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Vrijgem.) (GKN[V]), and Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (VGK), Synod could gratefully conclude that these churches are faithful to the Word of God, the confessions, and the Church Order. Synod decided:

1. to thank the committee for the work done since 1986;
2. to continue the ecclesiastical fellowship with the FRC of Australia, the GKN(V) and the VGK in Suid-Afrika in accordance with the adopted rules;
3. to charge the committee to send an invitation to our sister churches abroad to attend the next General Synod as soon as its date has been established and published by the convening church, and to have our churches represented by a delegate to General Synods of such churches abroad if invited and when feasible;



Dr. Gootjes and Drs. De Jong congratulate each other

4. to renew the mandate of the committee as given by Synod 1986 concerning the following points:
 - a. to request the churches abroad that in the matter of relationship or contacts with third parties "there be consultation and coordination between sister churches";
 - b. to request the churches abroad that contacts in countries where sister churches are already established be made not independently but in consultation with these sister churches;
 - c. to continue to address the sister churches on the matter of church-relations, setting forth the decisions and concerns of the Canadian Reformed Churches, as outlined by the General Synods of Smithville (*Acts*, Art. 154 D, 1, 2) and Cloverdale (*Acts*, Art. 110, D, 1);
 - d. to evaluate the reactions of the sister churches in these matters with respect to a possible common approach;
 - e. to report to the next General Synod with suitable recommendations (*Acts* 1986, Art. 177 D, 2).

As far as our relationship with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-Pa or Kosin) is concerned, it appeared from the report of the committee that the lines of communication with the PCK are still very poor. Synod decided:

1. to thank the committee for the work done with regard to the PCK (Koryu-Pa);
2. to charge the committee to continue to be diligent regarding the matter of communication with the PCK, and to report to the next General Synod.

Appeal J. VanderMeulen; Board of Governors; letter Orangeville; Free Church of Scotland

The morning of **Tuesday, May 2** was mainly spent on committee work. In the afternoon Synod met in plenary session. The roll call showed that all delegates were present. Synod first dealt with an appeal from br. J. VanderMeulen who had asked Synod to change the words "I do with all my heart" in the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons into "I do." In reply to his appeal Synod decided not to accede to this request, considering that:

- a. the Scriptural references (Matthew 5:37; James 5:21) adduced by br. J. VanderMeulen are not directly applicable to the solemn vow made by office-bearers when they assume office in Christ's church;
- b. the addition "with all my heart" does not alter the meaning of the expression "I do," but articulates the total com-

mitment required for the execution of the office into which one is installed.

Synod then went in closed session to deal with the nominations for the Board of Governors of the Theological College as submitted by Regional Synod East — October 19, 1988 and Regional Synod West — November 8, 1988. Synod thereby took note of a valid point made by the church at Abbotsford, that when Regional Synods draw up their nominations, they should take into consideration that all classical resorts should be represented as equally as possible in the Board of Governors. Synod decided:

1. to appoint as Governors of the Theological College the following active ministers and their substitutes:
From *eastern* Canada: Revs. P. Kingma, Cl. Stam, J. Van Rietschoten. Substitutes: Revs. R. Aasman, G. Nederveen, P.G. Feenstra (in that order).
From *western* Canada: Revs. B.J. Berends, M. VanderWel, C. VanSpronsen. Substitutes: Rev. P.K.A. de Boer, J. Moesker, E.J. Tiggelaar (in that order).
2. to appoint as Governors of the Theological College the following brothers who are not ministers (according to the retirement schedule adopted by the Board of Governors):
A. Van Egmond of Smithville (9 years), C. Veldkamp of Toronto (9 years). (Substitutes: J. Boersema of Ancaster, R. Lodder of Fergus), H. Buist of Burlington-South (6 years), C.G. Heeringa of Ancaster (6 years), A.L. VanderHout of Hamilton (3 years);
3. to express our sincere gratitude to the Revs. J. Mulder, M. van Beveren, J. Visscher and the brs. C. Loopstra and H. Kampen for their many years of faithful service as Governors/Trustees of the Theological College.

Synod continued to meet in closed session to deal with a letter from the church at Orangeville in which it responded to a decision made by Regional Synod East of October 19, 1988 (*Acts*, Art. 5) regarding the release of its minister. It asked Synod to make a decision on "what to do: make a change in the Church Order to cover occurrences like this or deal with these kind of matters under the articles as they are presently in the Church Order." As the church at Orangeville did not appeal the decision of Regional Synod East 1988, nor proved that the Church Order (i.e., Art. 71, 72) could not have been used to deal adequately in the circumstances concerning the release of its minister, Synod decided that a change in the Church Order was not necessary.

In the evening session Synod continued its discussion on the Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad, this time focusing on our contact with the Free Church of Scotland (FCS). Synod noted that the committee has served the churches well by providing extensive information regarding the FCS and that also from the report of Dr. K. Deddens it appeared to be desirable to intensify the contact with the FCS. Synod therefore decided:

1. to thank the committee for the work done;
2. to renew its mandate given by Synod 1986 (*Acts*, Art. 178, Rec. 2, a, b), and to charge the committee to come to Synod 1992 with a report of its findings and recommendations;
3. to inform the FCS that it is our desire to do full justice to the Scriptural call for church unity by putting this unity to practice and be united in the same federation of churches with all the faithful congregations in Canada and the U.S.A.;
4. to keep the current sister churches informed of all progress made in this regard, and to work in cooperation with them;

5. to inform the churches concerning the affiliated churches of the FCS in Canada and the U.S.A.;
6. to keep the churches informed of progress made.

The church at Carman approached Synod with the request that in the renewed mandate of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad it be made clear that we desire to do full justice to the Scriptural call for church unity and how this should be put into practice. Having expressed this already in point 3 of the above-mentioned decision, Synod further decided in answer to Carman's letter:

that the Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad take into account in its discussions with the FCS the relationship of local Canadian Reformed Churches and local congregations of the FCS in Canada with respect to expressing full unity of the faith.

After this a beginning was made with the discussion on the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC). This discussion would be continued the next day.

Appeal C.J. Burger; ICRC; overture Hamilton

On the morning of **Wednesday, May 3**, Synod was reopened in the usual manner. Synod then went in closed session to deal with an appeal of br. C.J. Burger against a decision of Regional Synod, October 1987 concerning the matter of his discipline. Br. Burger disputed that the consistory of Grand Rapids had a valid reason to put him under censure. After having studied the appeal of br. Burger and some documents provided by the church at Grand Rapids, Synod judged:

- a. that br. C.J. Burger had not proven that Classis and Regional Synod have erred in this matter of his appeal;
- b. that br. C.J. Burger had not proven that the censure applied to him was unfounded and unnecessary.

In the afternoon session Synod continued its discussion of the Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad. Concerning the ICRC Synod learned that

1. preparations are underway for the Canadian Reformed Churches to host a meeting of the ICRC in Vancouver on June 19-29;
2. the following delegates have been appointed to represent our churches at this meeting:
Rev. Cl. Stam — voting delegate
Dr. J. Visscher — voting delegate
Dr. J. Faber — advisor
Dr. C. Van Dam — advisor
3. the committee has also proposed that the topic of inter-church relations be added to the agenda of the ICRC, and be dealt with in a workshop format.

Synod decided:

1. to thank the committee for the work done in regard to the ICRC;
2. that the committee overtures the ICRC to make discussion of the Constitution a matter of high priority;
3. that the mandate as expressed by Synod 1986 (*Acts*, Art. 175 D, 2, a, b, c) be maintained;
4. that the delegates keep the churches informed regarding the activities of the Conference by means of press releases.

The church at Hamilton overtured Synod about some matters concerning the ICRC, including some proposed changes to its Constitution. Synod decided, among other things:

1. not to accede to the request of the church at Hamilton regarding the proposed amendments to the Constitution;
2. not to accede to the request of Hamilton regarding Bible Translations.

Appeals against Article 184 and 185 of Acts General Synod 1986

The Rev. R. Boersema and the brs. J. and M. Kamphuis, R. Bosman, J. Hendriks and E.C. Baartman appealed the decision of General Synod 1986 recorded in Article 184 and 185 of its Acts. Because these appeals pertained to the same matter they were dealt with together. Their objections include that General Synod 1986 was guilty of a one-sided and too systematic and scholastic interpretation of Article 28 of the Belgic Confession. Having considered the appeals one by one Synod did not find the objections of the appellants convincing and decided to deny their requests.

Next item on the agenda for this session was a letter from the church at Calgary. This church observed that many office-bearers no longer have a working knowledge of the Dutch language and are unable to competently evaluate arguments which cite Dutch works without translation. It therefore requested Synod to amend the Guidelines for Synod (as adopted by Synod Cloverdale, 1983, Art. 45) by adding to Section I, C the following guideline:

"All material submitted to Synod, including Reports, Appeals, and Overtures which quote any foreign language source must provide in the text of the submission a full English translation and in a footnote the citation in the original language."



Immanuel students make their own observations

Synod decided to accede to the request of the church at Calgary and to amend the Guidelines for Synod accordingly.

With respect to the nominations for appointments of professors at the Theological College, the church at Hamilton asked whether these nominations cannot be made known before Synod starts, with proper information concerning the proposed professors, so that delegates to Synod can prepare themselves adequately for their work at General Synod. In answer to this request, Synod decided:

To instruct the Board of Governors that in the event of future appointments to the Faculty at the Theological College, the Board of Governors will make available to the delegates of General Synod the confidential report including curricula vitae of proposed new professors for an available faculty vacancy one month before the convening of General Synod.

Appeals Coaldale

In the evening session Synod dealt with three appeals from the church at Coaldale regarding Article 13 and 14 of the Acts of Regional Synod West, March 31-April 3, 1987. In its first appeal the church at Coaldale asked Synod to judge that Regional Synod Chilliwack 1987 erred when it judged that

1. "The convening church (of Carman [M.V.]) was correct in constituting classis (AB-MB Jan. '87 [M.V.]) as it did and placing as first item on the agenda a request to approve the decision it made re the credentials. As such, the chairman of the convening church and his consistory did not lord it over the churches in conflict with Article 74 C.O.
2. Classis was correct in approving the action of the church at Carman in constituting classis as it did."

In answer to this request Synod judged that

1. the judgment of Regional Synod West 1987 regarding the appeal of Coaldale against the decisions of Classis AB-MB January 1987 was based on a misunderstanding of the Classical Regulations of Classis AB-MB regarding as to how Classis is properly constituted. However, given the lack of a specified procedure in the Regulations, Coaldale's speaking of the "obvious meaning as Regulations" is an overstatement.
2. Regional Synod West 1987 should not have judged that the decision made by the church at Carman and Classis' approval of this decision was correct. While this procedure may rightly be questioned it is not evident, however, that there was any "lording it" of one church over the others. Classis did discuss and approve the decision of the church at Carman.

In its second appeal the church at Coaldale requested Synod to judge:

1. that Regional Synod Chilliwack 1987 did injustice to the church at Coaldale by suggesting in Regional Synod's Judgment 3 that Coaldale wanted the credentials judged by the convening church on the basis of various submissions placed on the agenda of Classis, while Coaldale's request to Regional Synod in fact was based on the consideration that no judgment on the validity of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton ought to have been made (by the meeting of the delegates, and even less by the consistory of the convening church) except by Classis, after Classis had dealt with the issue as it was placed on its agenda;
2. that Regional Synod Chilliwack 1987 itself in its Considerations 4 and 5 confirms Coaldale's complaint that the acceptance of the one credential as valid and the rejection of the other one as invalid, constitutes a judgment on the legitimacy of the suspension of the office-bearers and on the legitimacy of the delegating bodies, before Classis had dealt with these very matters which were placed on the agenda of Classis for judgment. Therefore Regional Synod should have judged that the church at Carman made itself guilty of prejudging, in conflict with the ninth commandment.

In answer to this appeal Synod judged:

1. Regional Synod West 1987 did not do injustice to Coaldale when it understood Coaldale's reasoning as connecting the judgment on the validity of the credentials with a decision on items placed on a provisional agenda;
2. in the complexity of the situation in which Classis AB-MB January '87 found itself a decision with respect to the validity of credentials on strict church-orderly grounds did not mean a prejudging of the suspension. The legality of this suspension and its consequences would be determined later by Classis (Acts, Art. 21 and 25).

In its third appeal the church at Coaldale requested Synod to judge that Regional Synod Chilliwack 1987 *erred* in judging that

1. Classis AB-MB January '87 was correct in stating that a "provisional release" was proper in the emergency situation that existed;
2. Classis AB-MB January '87 did not use a double standard with regard to Rev. S. De Bruin on the one hand and the council of the Immanuel Church on the other;
3. by directing both parties to the church-orderly way, Classis AB-MB January '87 did not fail in its Scriptural duty.

In reply to this request Synod judged:

1. Regional Synod West 1987 did not err when it concluded that there was an "emergency situation" which may have required a dismissal according to Article 11 C.O. The evidence shows that such a situation existed not after, but already before the "provisional release";
2. Regional Synod West 1987 was correct in directing the Rev. S. De Bruin to go the way of the Church Order (Art. 31) instead of withdrawing himself from the church at Edmonton. The Immanuel Church at Edmonton had properly placed the matter on the provisional agenda of Classis AB-MB January '87 (Art. 11 C.O.) and therefore no double standard was applied by this Classis;
3. Regional Synod West 1987 did err when it judged that Classis AB-MB January '87 had directed both parties in the way of the Church Order. The Immanuel Church did not need to be directed in this way, because it did go the way according to the Church Order (Art. 11).

Appeals: H. DeJong, H. Boersma; *Book of Praise*; Financial Report — General Synod 1986

The morning session of **Thursday, May 4**, was reopened by the singing of Hymn 31:1, 4. Remembering that it was Ascension Day the chairman then read Acts 1:4-11, and led in prayer. As on the evening of this day a church service would be held in Carman, Synod would not have a plenary session in the evening. Part of the morning session was again attended by students of the Immanuel Christian School of Winnipeg and their teachers.

Br. H. DeJong of Edmonton requested Synod:

- a. to revise Article 184 of *Acts*, General Synod 1986 in such a manner that it gives recognition to the fact that the calling away of the congregation from unfaithful office-bearers by elder J. Werkman was justified;
- b. to rewrite Article 187 of the *Acts*, General Synod 1986, section E, Rec. 2, in such a manner that it gives recognition to the fact that br. H. DeJong and others with him have correctly followed the call by elder J. Werkman.

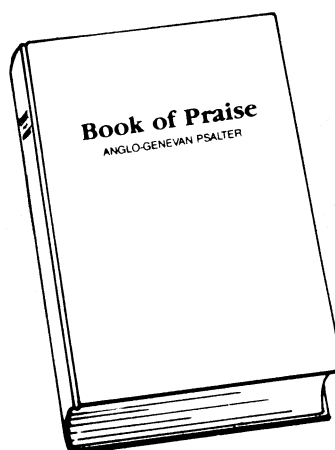
Synod declared request a. of br. DeJong's appeal inadmissible, considering that there were no new grounds advanced by br. H. DeJong to support his request for revision (Art. 33 C.O.).

With respect to request b. of br. H. DeJong's appeal, Synod decided not to accede to this request because br. DeJong withdrew before the process of appeal had been exhausted and therefore committed a schismatic act.

Br. H. Boersma appealed a decision of Regional Synod East, October 15, 1986, which denied his appeal to a decision of Classis Ontario-South, September 11 and 12, 1985 regarding the acceptance of the Blue Bell congregation into the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Br. Boersma found it inconsistent that, while the OPC is considered to be a true church by the Canadian Reformed Churches, the congregation of Blue Bell at its request to be admitted into our federation has not been instructed to remain united with the "true church" from which it had broken away. He also contended that the congregation of Blue Bell in its withdrawal has

not acted according to the Form of Government of the OPC. Synod denied the appeal of br. H. Boersma considering, among other things, that:

1. br. H. Boersma appears to confuse the recognition of the OPC as a true church with affirming a full sister church relationship with the OPC. Although the existing divergencies have not formed an impediment for "ecclesiastical contact," they may still form an impediment to a full sister relationship with the OPC;
2. in joining the Canadian Reformed Churches the congregation of Blue Bell did not demand that our churches for her sake break the "ecclesiastical contact" which they have with the OPC;



Book of Praise
— some more upgrading done

3. br. Boersma did not prove that the congregation of Blue Bell has acted contrary to its Form of Government;
4. br. Boersma did not prove that the congregation of Blue Bell has been negligent in seeking to maintain the unity of the church.

With respect to the Apostles' Creed in the *Book of Praise* Synod received a letter from the church at Chatham and a letter from the Rev. J. Van Rietschoten in which they respectively proposed

1. to insert in Article 1 of the Apostles' Creed the article "the" before the word "Almighty";
2. to change the title "Apostles' Creed" to "The Apostolic Creed."

In answer to these letters Synod decided

1. not to grant the request to include the article "the," considering that the present expression in Article 1 in the Apostles' Creed sufficiently denotes that the Father is Almighty, i.e., the Almighty One;
2. not to change the title of the Apostles' Creed, since the name "Apostles' Creed" is adequately explained in the text of the *Book of Praise* (p. 436).

Synod then dealt with Report 3 of the Standing Committee for the publication of the *Book of Praise* which deals with Publication and Distribution; Corporate Status and Financial Matters; and Hymn 1A.

With respect to Hymn 1A Synod received three letters, respectively from the church at Coaldale, AB, from the church at Cloverdale, BC, and from sr. D. Jansen of Langley, BC. The latter provided Synod with br. D. Zwart's alternate melody for Hymn 1A adapted to the "new text" (including the word "Christian," [M.V.]) so that this melody could be made available to the churches forthwith, and be taken up in the next edition of

the *Book of Praise*. The Standing Committee made known in its report, that the word "Christian" cannot be inserted without an alteration of the melody as composed by J. Schouten. As it found the proposed melody of D. Swart unsuitable and was not able to find a melody for the "new text," it proposed that Hymn 1A be left as it is, so that it remains within the freedom of the churches to use this text and melody. The Standing Committee was informed by the Free Reformed Churches in Australia that they favoured the text of Hymn 1A as it presently is. The church at Coaldale, however, regretted that the Standing Committee failed to give grounds for its judgment that the proposed melody was unsuitable, and stated that the present melody is not suitable, for it contains Gregorian elements. It noted that D. Zwart has adapted the proposed melody to the "new text." The church at Cloverdale had no great difficulty with the present Hymn 1A, but wondered whether the new melody for the new text could not have been published and tried in the churches?

Synod decided:

1. to thank the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* for its report and for the work done, and to reduce (on its recommendation [M.V.]) the number of members of the Standing Committee to four, while keeping in mind that continuity would be desirable;
2. that the Standing Committee be given the mandate:
 - a. to see to it that the *Book of Praise* remains available to the churches at a reasonable price;
 - b. to make the necessary arrangements with printers and others for the production and distribution of the *Book of Praise*;
 - c. to maintain its corporate status in order to be able to protect the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters concerning the *Book of Praise*;
 - d. to implement all Synod decisions regarding the contents of the *Book of Praise*;
 - e. to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* among others;
 - f. to stimulate the publication of a book of harmonizations of the melodies in the *Book of Praise* for use in the English-speaking world;
 - g. to serve as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed;
 - h. to complete the committee mandate of Synod 1986 concerning the Nicene Creed (i.e., to see to its linguistic revision);
 - i. to insert the final version of the Creeds, Confessions and Church Order, as adopted by this Synod and to add the proposed Scripture references to the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, and the Liturgical Forms;
 - j. to make the new melody with the "new text" by br. D. Zwart available to the churches and evaluate any response from the churches (see Gen. Synod 1986, Acts, Art. 189, Cons. 2);
 - k. to serve the following General Synod with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months before the beginning of Synod.

A letter was received from br. R. Dijkstra regarding the music notations for the *Book of Praise*. In answer to his letter Synod decided:

1. to grant br. Dijkstra's request to confirm that the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* is instructed to use the *Liedboek der Kerken* notation to be utilized for the purpose of achieving uniform notation and a suitable format in the *Book of Praise*;

2. to affirm that the above decision does not compel consistories, organists, and congregations of the Canadian Reformed Churches to change the traditional practice of singing certain psalms with the use of chromatically altered notes (Toevallige verhogingen of verlagingen) since it is not in the province of Synod to make such a decision.

The church at Burlington-East had audited the books of the Financial Committee of Synod 1986 and reported that they were found in good order. The total expenses of this Synod appeared to be \$17,009.90. Synod expressed its appreciation for the work done by the Financial Committee and the Auditing Church. They were discharged of their tasks. In the Financial Committee for General Synod 1989 were appointed: Rev. W. den Hollander, W. Gortemaker and A. Van Abbema, while the church at Carman was appointed as Auditing Church.

Seeing that this was the last session at which br. Jac. VanderKolk was present, the chairman bid him farewell, thanked him for his advice concerning the position of our Dutch sister churches with respect to the ICRC and Churches Abroad, and wished him a safe journey home.

Br. Jac. VanderKolk replied by saying that he was thankful for the hospitality and friendship which he had experienced during his visit at Synod. He claimed that in his ten-day stay he had learned more about our churches than in the entire three years of being a deputy for Churches Abroad. He wished Synod the strength of the Lord to complete its work.

The remainder of the day was used for committee work.

Appeals: G. Kruyswijk, L. VanZandwijk; General Fund; Book of Praise

After the morning session of **Friday, May 5**, was reopened in the usual manner, Synod first dealt with some appeals which were left on the agenda. During the discussion of these appeals Synod met in closed session.

Since br. G. Kruyswijk, though not a member of our churches anymore, appealed a decision of Regional Synod East, October 1987, Synod declared his appeal admissible. In his appeal br. G. Kruyswijk complained, among other things, that

1. Regional Synod East 1987 had erred in its judgment that his matter had not been finished in the minor assembly;
2. the consistory of Grand Rapids was not willing to release its statement made on September 14, 1986, which statement he needed to appeal his censure.

In answer to this appeal Synod judged

1. that br. Kruyswijk does not prove that Regional Synod has erred in its judgment that his matter had not been finished in the minor assembly;
2. that the consistory has expressed its willingness that it will release the statement made on September 14, 1986 upon official request of br. Kruyswijk for the purpose of appealing his censure.

Synod decided not to accede to br. Kruyswijk's requests.

Synod then dealt with a three-fold appeal of br. L. Van Zandwijk. His first appeal was regarding a motion mentioned at the outset of Acts, Article 101 of General Synod 1986. The appellant contends that the matter at hand should not have been dealt with in an open session, nor have been published in the (public) Acts of Synod.

Synod judged, that, since the matter pertaining to br. Van Zandwijk's submission involved his personal honour, General Synod 1986 should have judged on the nature of his submission in closed-restricted session. General Synod 1986 should have expressed the reason for this with greater discretion in its Acts. (See Guidelines for Synod IV, A, 2, Acts, Art. 45, Gen. Synod 1983.)

In his second appeal br. L. VanZandwijk requested Synod "to unequivocally reject the subordinationist elements contained in a statement of Dr. J. Faber and in a formula of Classis Ontario-South, March 1988. Having examined br. VanZandwijk's allegations and having noted that the divinity of Christ has never been denied by Dr. J. Faber nor by Classis Ontario-South, Synod decided not to accede to this request of br. L. VanZandwijk.

In his third appeal, pertaining to Article 159 of Acts, General Synod 1986, br. L. VanZandwijk requested Synod to reinstate the word "Christian" in the title of Article 27 of the Belgic Confession. Having observed the grounds adduced by br. VanZandwijk, Synod decided to reinstate the word "Christian" in the title of Article 27 B.C.

Synod then took note of the report of the church at Carman regarding the General Fund. It observed that

- a. all the churches had paid the requested assessments;
- b. the consistory had appointed br. G. VanderSluis as bookkeeper to take the place of H. Veldman;
- c. that the books had been audited twice and both times were found to be in good order.

Synod expressed gratitude for the work done by the church at Carman as well as by its bookkeepers, and discharged the church at Carman from its responsibility for the period 1986-May 25, 1989.

Before Synod adjourned for lunch, br. A. Van Egmond gave notice that he could not attend Synod any longer. As most of the matters on the agenda had been finished, Synod did not deem it necessary to call for his alternate.



In or out of the kitchen — always happy

Confessions, Creeds and Forms; Examination; Article 46 C.O.

In the afternoon session Synod dealt with the report of the Committee for the *Book of Praise* in as far as it addressed the linguistic revision of the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort. On this material submissions had been received from the churches at Hamilton, Ottawa, Cloverdale, Burlington-East, Chatham, Brampton, Burlington-West and Smithville, which proposed several changes and corrections.

With regard to the Belgic Confession Synod decided to accept the changes proposed by the committee. It did the same with respect to the Heidelberg Catechism, including thereby, however, the changes proposed by the churches at Burlington-East and Ottawa.

On the revised translation of the Canons of Dort as it was presented by the Standing Committee in its report, Synod received a great number of comments from the churches. After having scrutinized all of them, Synod adopted the emendations and amendments as proposed by the Advisory Committee.

The churches at Burlington-East, Surrey, Langley, and br. and sr. L. Moes requested Synod to restore the original formulation (i.e., "Articles of the Christian Faith") in the second question in the Form for Baptism and in the first question in the Form for Public Profession of Faith. The churches of Lower Sackville and Smithers, however, asked Synod to maintain the present formulation. Considering, among other things,

- a. that the historical character of the expression "summarized in the Articles of the Christian Faith" has been considered already by General Synod 1986, and that the appellants did not offer any new grounds on this point;
- b. the appellants have not demonstrated any compelling reasons to return to the original wording;

Synod decided not to accede to the requests of the churches of Burlington-East, Surrey, Langley, and br. and sr. L. Moes.

The churches at Langley, Orangeville, Brampton, Burlington-West, and Chatham appealed the inclusion of the word "Christian" in the Apostles' Creed (Acts, Gen. Synod 1086, Art. 101), while the church at Cloverdale requested that the inclusion be maintained.

Since all the grounds brought forward by the appealing churches had already been dealt with by previous Synods, and the word "Christian" can express "of the Christian" as well as "of Christ," Synod decided not to accede to the requests of the churches at Langley, Orangeville, Brampton, Burlington-West and Chatham.

Regional Synod East, October 1987 judged (Acts, Art. 6e, VI, 3) that also to ministers who come into the federation with their congregations, the rule applies of General Synod 1965 (Acts, Art. 39A, p. 16), that these ministers shall undergo the equivalent of a preparatory/peremptory examination. In connection with this the church at Brampton requested Synod to determine which of the two examinations should be used (preparatory or peremptory), so that one policy is used throughout the federation of our churches.

In answer to Brampton's request for clarification, Synod decided that ministers who come into the federation with their congregations should be examined at the level of a peremptory examination. Synod considered that the "peremptory" examination is more comprehensive and determines whether a candidate may serve in the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches as a minister.

In an overture Regional Synod West, November 8, 1988 proposed to Synod the following change to Article 46 C.O.: "At least every second year Classis shall authorize not less than two experienced and able ministers to visit the churches in those years." Considering, among other things, that

- a. annual Church Visitation is based on the agreement that in the federation of churches we are to supervise and assist one another on a regular basis;
- b. General Synod 1983 addressed the matter of distances already and judged that they are no longer relevant in this time.

Synod decided not to accede to the request of Regional Synod West 1988.

In closed session Synod then made the following appointments:

1. **Board of Governors:**

Ministers:

Western Canada: B.J. Berends, M. VanderWel, C. Van Spronsen. Alternates: P.K.A. de Boer, J. Moesker, and E.J. Tiggelaar (in that order).

Eastern Canada: P. Kingma, Cl. Stam, J. Van Rietschoten. Alternates: R. Aasman, G. Nederveen, P.G. Feenstra (in that order).

Non-ministers:

Brs. H. Buist (Burlington), C.G. Heeringa (Ancaster), A. Van Egmond (Smithville), A.L. VanderHout (Hamilton), C. Veldkamp (Toronto). Substitutes: Dr. J. Boersema (Ancaster and R. Lodder (Fergus).

2. **Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad:**

Revs. Cl. Stam, M. VanderWel, Dr. J. Visscher (convener), brs. H.A. Berends, C. Nap, Dr. J. VanderStoep.

3. **Committee for Contact with the OPC:**

Revs. R. Aasman, J. Mulder (convener), D.G.J. Agema, brs. G.J. Nordeman and T.M.P. VanderVen.

4. **Standing Committee for the Book of Praise:**

Rev. J. De Jong, Dr. W. Helder (convener), br. M. Kampen, br. J. VanHuisstede.

5. **Committee on Bible Translations:**

Revs. W. den Hollander, J. De Jong, Prof. J. Geertsema, Dr. C. Van Dam (convener), Rev. G. Nederveen.

6. **Churches for Days of Prayer:**

The churches at Burlington-West and Edmonton (Providence).

7. **Church for the Administration of the General Fund:**

The church at Carman.

8. **Church for the Archives of General Synod:**

The church at Burlington-East (Ebenezer).

9. **Church for the Inspection of the Archives of General Synod:**

The church at Burlington-West (Rehoboth).

10. **Church to Audit the Finances of the 1989 General Synod:**

The church at Carman.

11. **The Address Church for Canada:**

The church at Burlington-East.

For the U.S.A.:

The church at Grand Rapids.

12. **The Committee for the Printing of the Acts:**

The first and second clerks e.t. of General Synod 1989.

13. **The convening church for the next General Synod to be convened in the fall of 1992:**

The church at Lincoln, Ontario.

Synod decided that the committees shall have the right, in case a vacancy occurs, to bring their membership up to its original strength in order to fulfill their mandates.

Acceptance Dr. N.H. Gootjes; Church Order; closing of Synod

At the opening of the evening session of May 5, the chairman requested to sing Psalm 125:1, 4. With gratitude he announced to the assembly and to the audience that from Pusan the message was received that Dr. N.H. Gootjes had accepted his appointment as professor at our Theological College. He congratulated the members of Synod with this "crowning touch upon the work of Synod."

Committee 1 then reported on the linguistic revision of the Church Order. It had studied Report II and a Supplementary



From l-r: Elders L. Stam and J.F. De Leeuw; Drs. J. De Jong and Dr. N.H. Gootjes

Report of the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* and various proposals submitted by the churches at Edmonton (Immanuel), Attercliffe, Ottawa, Chilliwack, Brampton, Chatham, Smithville, Burlington-West, Orangeville, Grand Valley, Cloverdale, Burlington-East, Brampton, and Fergus, regarding the same or different articles of the Church Order. In its advisory report Committee 1 had taken over a good part of the changes proposed by the Standing Committee, although not all of them. With respect to Article 13, e.g., it advised to follow the proposal of the church at Burlington-East and to read Paragraph 1 of this article as follows: "If a minister of the Word retires because of age, or because he is rendered incapable of performing the duties of his office due to illness or physical or mental disability, he shall retain the honour and title of minister of the Word." After some time of discussion, Synod adopted the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

The Standing Committee for the publication of the *Book of Praise* received the mandate to apply also these adopted changes to the next edition of the *Book of Praise*. The chairman concluded that, except for the linguistic revision of the Nicene Creed and a possible inclusion of a "Hymn 1C," the *Book of Praise* was now finalized.

Having arrived at the last points of Synod's agenda, the chairman observed that none of the members of Synod was worthy of being censured according to Article 44 C.O. He thanked all the members of Synod for their good cooperation. A special word of thanks was addressed to Rev. P.K.A. de Boer, who as first clerk and computer-expert had served Synod in an excellent manner.

After a coffee break, held with the audience, the Articles 150-174 of the *Acts* were read, and adopted. The press release would be published after it had been scrutinized by the moderamen.

The chairman, Rev. Cl. Stam, delivered then his closing speech. He expressed his gratitude that Synod had been able to do its work in the time of three weeks. He again thanked Rev. W. den Hollander and the church at Winnipeg for the hospitality which Synod had experienced. The sisters Kuik, Schriemer, and Teitsma were each called to the fore to receive from the hands of Rev. R. Aasman a flower arrangement as a token of deep appreciation for the way they daily had provided the members of Synod with meals and refreshments.

On behalf of Synod the vice-chairman, Rev. M. VanderWel, thanked Rev. Cl. Stam for the capable and pleasant way in which he had given leadership to the meetings of Synod. He requested the assembly to sing Psalm 48:1 and 3, after which he led in thanksgiving.

General Synod Winnipeg 1989 was closed.

M. VANDERWEL
vice-chairman, e.t.



Dear Busy Beavers,

Here's wishing you a very happy and safe holiday this summer!

I hope you will really enjoy your time off from school.

No homework, no bus to catch!

Now you'll be able to do something DIFFERENT.

Will you go to a craft class, or Vacation Bible School, or a library club?

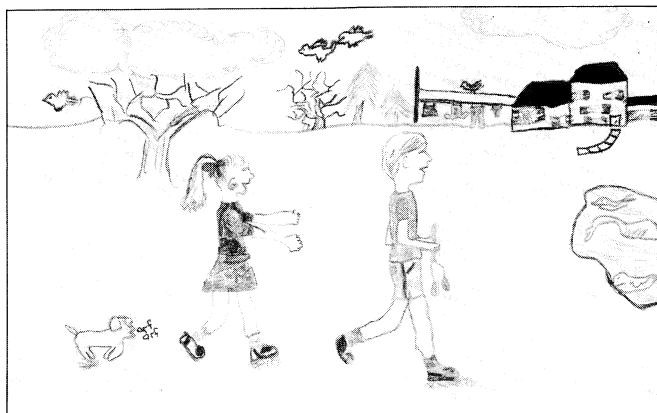
Maybe your family is planning a vacation?

Or maybe you are staying close to home to catch up, or fix up, or explore your own neighbourhood?

Whatever it is we do, let's remember to be thankful to our Heavenly Father. His good care is all around us, at home or away, at work or at play.

SUMMERTIME

by Busy Beaver *Shanna Bartels*



Watching the sunset over the lake is part of many Canadian holidays.

Here is a sunset poem for you to enjoy.

After Sunset

When the Buttercup nods
its weary head,
And the Daisy lies down
in its grassy bed,
And the Wind Woman passes through
as a breeze,
I like it to be as silent
as can be.

By Busy Beaver *Hannah Helder*



FROM THE MAILBOX

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Eric Brown*. We are happy to have you join us. I hope you have a very happy birthday this month. Will you share some of your pictures sometime, and send them in for the Busy Beavers to enjoy, Eric? I'm sure they would enjoy that.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Arlene Winkelaar*. What are you doing this summer, Arlene? Do you have chores to do on the farm? Bye for now. Write again soon.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Henrietta Breukelman*. How did you like your field trip? Where did you go? What are you planning to do this summer? Will you write and tell us? Bye for now, Henrietta.

Welcome to the Club, *Harold Winkelaar*. I hope you'll really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Thank you for the puzzle, Harold. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already! Keep up the good work!

I really enjoyed your long, chatty letter, *Anna DeVries*, and the poem, too. How did your Sports Day turn out? What good ideas you and your sister had for Mother's Day! I think she felt spoiled, right? And I'm happy for you your grandparents could come to visit again, Anna.

What a good April Fool's Trick you played on your Opa, *Andrea Feenstra*. How did your Talent Night go? And how did you enjoy the wedding? Did you "do" something? Be sure to write and tell! Bye for now, Andrea. I hope you have a very happy birthday this month.

You are lucky your Mom is such a good cook, *Maria Stel!* Maybe this summer you can help her cook and start to learn some of her secrets! Do you have some plans for this summer, Maria?

How do you like baseball, *Linda Stam*? And how did you do in the readathon? Has your new cat got used to your house? Thanks for the puzzles, Linda. It was good to hear from you again!

Have you received a letter from your pen pal already, *Rebecca Stel!* I hope you will have a great time going to Edmonton. Be sure to write and tell us about it, Rebecca. Thank you for the beautiful puzzle. Keep up the good work!

FAVOURITE HOLIDAYS

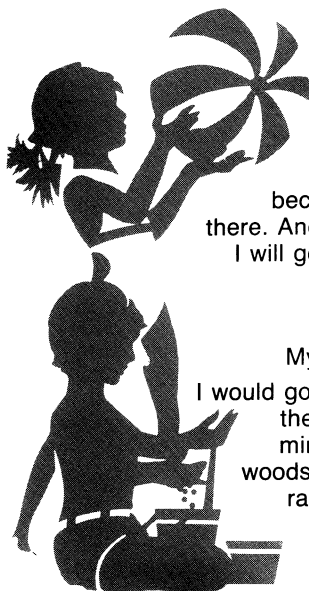
Do you know where I want to go on holidays? I want to go to P.E.I. because I and my family have relatives there. And do you know what I will do there? I will go and help with the pig and then I'll play with my brothers.

By Busy Beaver *Kerri-Ann Spoelstra*

My Best Holiday

I would go to the Elora Gorge Park and camp there. If it was a hot day, I'd go swimming. I would probably go through the woods on the paths! And go tubing in the rapids. I would have my own camper, cook my own food, and go to the camp store.

By Busy Beaver *Margaret De Witt*



Knock! Knock!

from Busy Beaver *Esther Bergsma*

Knock knock.
Who's there?
Disk.
Disk who?
Disk is a recorded message.

Knock knock.
Who's there?
Police.
Police who?
Police open the door.

Knock knock.
Who's there?
Scold.
Scold who?
Scold outside.

Knock knock.
Who's there?
Alaska.
Alaska who?
Alaska my mummy.

FOR YOU TO COLOUR

from Busy Beaver *Melanie Peters*



Quiz Time!

GOOD ADVICE

A code quiz by Busy Beaver *Sheila Wierenga*

A-1	D-4	G-7	L-12	P-16	T-19	W-22
B-2	E-5	H-8	N-14	R-17	U-20	X-23
C-3	F-6	I-9	O-15	S-18	V-21	Y-24

15 22 5 14 15 15 14 5 1 14 24 19 8 9 14 7

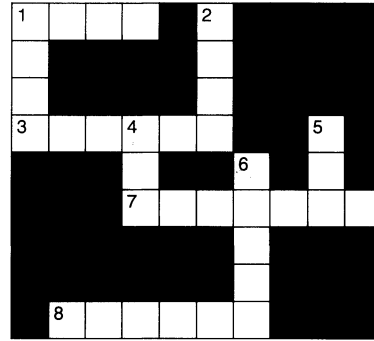
5 23 3 5 16 19 19 15 12 15 21 5 15 14 5

1 14 15 19 8 5 17 6 15 17 8 5 22 8 15

12 15 21 5 18 8 9 18 14 5 9 7 8 2 15 17

8 1 18 6 20 12 6 9 12 12 5 4 19 8 5 12 1 22

SPRING PUZZLE



by Busy Beaver
Anna DeVries

ACROSS

- A robin lays _____.
- Children like to explore and _____ the forests and marshes.
- Birds laying eggs and hatching them is called _____.
- What you do on horses.

DOWN

- When the corn is grown it will have many _____.
- Another word for along.
- Faster than jog.
- Rhymes with run.
- Got a bee _____?

(Answers below)

RHYMES

by Busy Beaver *Linda Stam*

In this puzzle 2 rhyming words give the meaning of the clue.

Example:

CLUE: a lengthy piece of music

ANSWER: long song

1. CLUE: a disobedient boy

ANSWER: _____

2. CLUE: an ill baby chicken

ANSWER: _____

3. CLUE: an overweight kitten

ANSWER: _____

4. CLUE: a water elk on the run

ANSWER: _____

5. CLUE: lots of chickens

ANSWER: _____ of _____

(Answers below)

ANSWERS

Rhymes:
1. bad lad; 2. sick chick; 3. fat cat; 4. loose moose; 5. tens of hens.

Spring puzzle:

ACROSS : 1. eggs; 3. search; 7. nesting; 8. riding;

DOWN : 1. ears; 2. with; 4. run; 5. fun; 6. sting;

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

Keep busy!

Love to you all,

Aunt Betty