

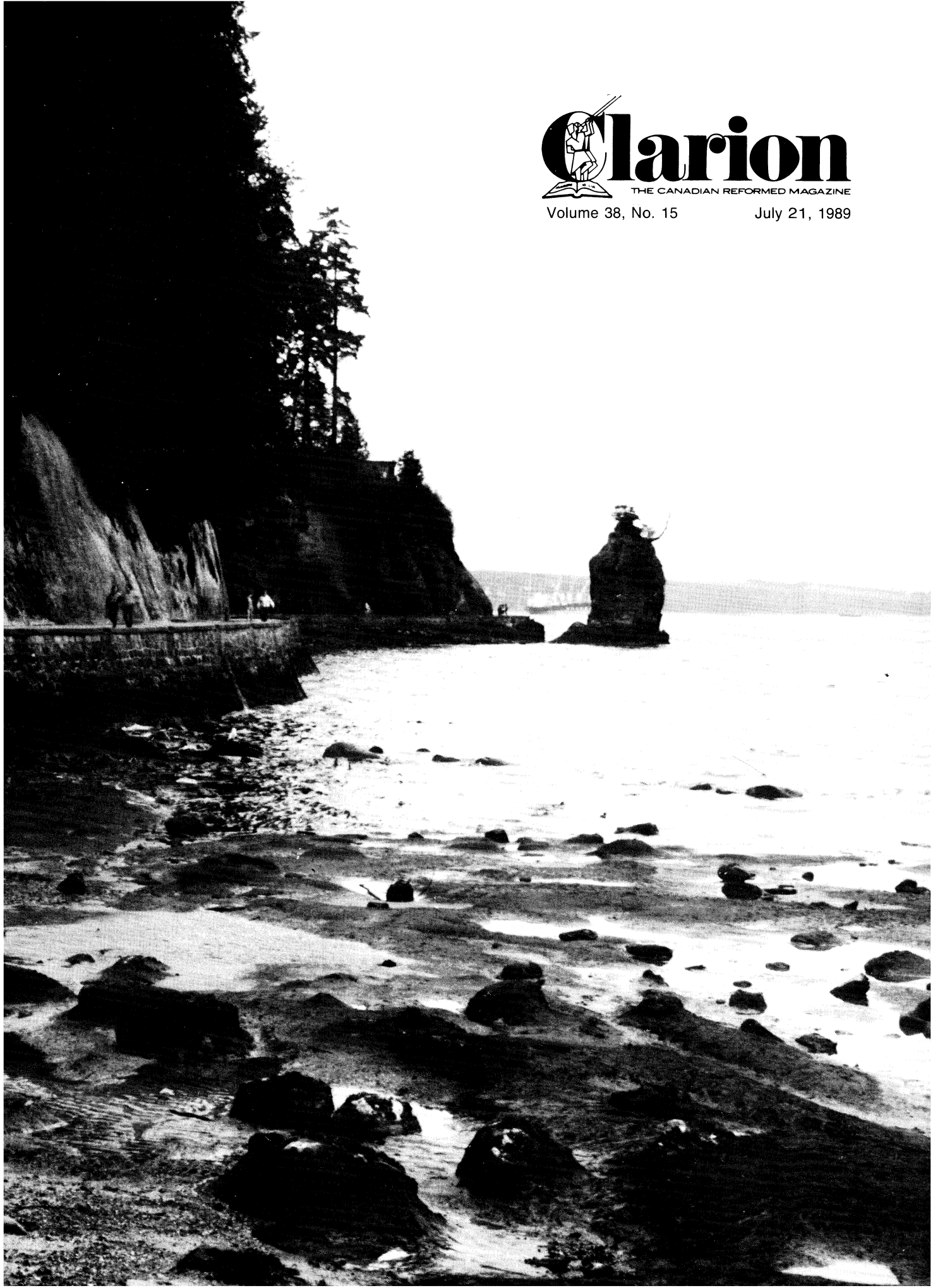


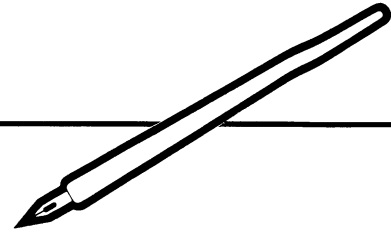
Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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God's worldwide church

International Conference of Reformed Churches

When this issue of *Clarion* reaches our homes, the International Conference of Reformed Churches held in Langley, B.C., is behind us and belongs to recent church history. We hope to be able to present a report of this conference in our magazine. The Conference made a decision to publish all the speeches in a book, together with a report of the decisions. The speakers were, in chronological order, Prof. C. Graham of Scotland ("Nehemia the Reformer"), Prof. Dr. J. van Bruggen ("Baptism with the Holy Spirit"), Prof. D. Macleod of Scotland ("Christology"), Prof. Dr. J. Douma of The Netherlands ("Apartheid"), Prof. Dr. K. Deddens ("Contextualization in Mission"), Prof. Dr. Ho Jin Jun of Korea ("Tangum Myth and Christian Radical Movements in the Korean Church"), Prof. Dr. C. Van Dam ("The Elder as Preserver of Life in the Covenant"). I take these data from the *Fraser Valley Church News* of June 11.

In this organization we have to do with Reformed churches which adhere to Reformed Confessional Standards and are mostly born from reformation movements or Reformed mission work, worldwide. We could also speak of Reformed and Presbyterian churches. The name "Presbyterian" is originally a distinction that set churches with a presbyterian church government, a government by (ruling) elders or presbyters, apart from churches with an episcopal government, a government by bishops, as the Anglican and the Roman Church. Therefore, actually, all Reformed churches, being ruled by elders (presbyters), have a presbyterian church government, following the teaching of the Reformer, John Calvin. In this sense, Presbyterian and Reformed are synonyms.

However, the adjective 'presbyterian' is hardly used among us in this original sense of the word. For us 'presbyterian' has been replaced by 'Presbyterian' (with a capital) to distinguish between Presbyterian (Reformed of British origin) and Reformed (originally from the European continent: mainly French, German, Dutch and Hungarian). This distinction still refers especially to church government: session, presbytery, general assembly as opposed to consistory, classis, synod. Besides this, we use the distinction with regard to the confessional standards: the Westminster standards of Presbyterian churches in distinction from the Three Forms of Unity of our Reformed churches with their roots in the Netherlands.

That they all may be one

In connection with the above we publish the translation of another article of the late Prof. Dr. K. Schilder by Mr. R. Koat of Langley (with thanks to the translator). The heading above this part of our Editorial is the title of a book (published in two volumes and written by "Rudolf van Reest," a pseudonym for K.C. van Spronsen, a friend of K.S.). It describes the life and

work of Prof. Schilder as a struggle for the unity of the church, the unity of all true believers, a unity based in the truth of the Scriptures as confessed in the Reformed confessions.

The article shows this struggle. Schilder saw this unity as a divine calling according to what we confess in Art. 28 of the Belgic Confession; a unity which is based on God's work of calling "through the gospel," while He has "the Spirit unite Himself to the Word." It is just because God works unity that we have to do the same, whereby we are bound to the norms revealed to us in the Scriptures and confessed by us, in accordance with them, in Art. 29 B.C. It is in this light that we place the ICRC.

Prof. K. Schilder has often been accused a schismatic in connection with his leadership in the Liberation in 1944. However, the schismatic action was on the side of the synods of the (synodical) Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in those years, 1942 to 1945, through their decisions to bind the members to their doctrine of presupposed regeneration as the ground for the baptism of the children of the church, and through deposing from office many of those who opposed this doctrine. This binding above Scripture and Confession and the abuse of church discipline was a yoke placed on the churches which was not the yoke of Christ. Therefore, by these actions those synods, with those who supported and followed them, were not gathering the sheep with Christ but scattering them. Such actions made these churches illegitimate.

Fighting against a binding above Scripture was for Schilder a struggle of love for the unity of the church. In this struggle Schilder could be sharp; sharp in his formulations and definitions, and, therewith, also in pointing to right and wrong, obedience and disobedience to the Word of Christ. Faithfulness to Scripture and to the Reformed confession drove him. In an article in *De Reformatie* of November 8, 1935 (*De Kerk*, II, p. 259ff.) Schilder wrote about the dilemma "Purity or Legitimacy?" He begins with saying that, at that time, people became more and more used to see the church "especially as a matter of 'purity' or 'impurity,' even of 'more or less purity.'" Schilder then continues:

This is understandable, for also Reformed authors of previous centuries used, sometimes by way of an alternative, the term: 'pure church'. 'By way of an alternative' we said, for — and this is important for our so-much-needed return to the confession — they never disconnected this 'purity' of the church from the other marks as if it were a separate one. He who, e.g., reads Maresius [Reformed minister and professor in France and later on in the Netherlands who lived 1599-1673, J.G.] in his 'Foederatum Belgium' on art. 29 of the Belgic Confession, discovers immediately that he alternates the name 'true church' with the other name: 'LEGITIMATE bride of Christ'. He, too, speaks of the 'pure church'; but he means with it: 'the orthodox', which stands overagainst the impure

church. The pure orthodox church is known, in his opinion, by the truth of her doctrine, the impure church by the falsehood of her doctrine.

As long as one uses these and similar predicates *promiscuously*, as Maresius did, one can avoid the danger of scholasticism. However, as soon as one has *abstracted the one 'feature' of the church from the other*, for instance, the 'purity' from the 'legitimacy', the way is open for a variety of subtleties which obscure the seriousness of the question of the church.

When reading these and the following lines, the reader should keep in mind that Schilder wrote them in 1935, some nine years before the Liberation. He did so not in order to alienate others from him, although he went against commonly accepted con-



The late professors: Dr. S. Greijdanus, Dr. K. Schilder, B. Holwerda

cepts, but in order to discuss the questions concerning the church with the aim that those who belong together would bow together under the yoke of Christ, that is, under God's Word in adherence to the Reformed confession and, in that way, build the unity in faith in one church. Schilder wrote further about this abstracting the one feature of the church from the other:

This danger has already appeared as acute, also among ourselves. When, at a certain point, in the discourse of many about the church the question regarding her 'legitimacy' had been separated from her 'purity', the 'purity' of the church was determined from the point of the ministers who preach there in an orthodox manner, or not, and the members who are there and believe in an orthodox manner, or not. It was then said: 'pure' is that church which administers the Word rightly, and so the sacraments. Holding fast to this *purity*-stipulation, while closing the eyes to the question of legitimacy, the conclusion was then made: a church which has orthodox sermons and which keeps her thieves, her usurers, her gamblers, her robbers, her greedy members, and the like, from the Lord's Supper,

is a pure church (take note of this 'her'). Those who do things a little less orthodox, and a little less seriously, have a 'less pure church.'

That this is an incorrect reasoning, and that, as the consequence of this holding fast to the problem of the 'purity' while abandoning that of the 'legitimacy', this reasoning immediately deviates from the confession, is not hard to see.

For to have orthodox sermons *for those inside* [naar binnen orthodoxe preken houden], and to administer the sacraments according to firm regulations *for those inside*, is not yet a proof that one is preaching the Word in such a way and is administering the sacraments in such a way



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that also *for those outside* [naar buiten] the church appears legitimate. For the church, as art. 27 says, can be spread over the whole earth, but she is one in the spirit; and she means, as hastily as possible, to come to revelation of this unity. If, therefore, a somewhere established 'legitimate' and 'pure' [church] institute administers the Word of God, as well as the sacraments, rightly, then she does this in such a way that she admits those whom Christ admits, that she opens the door for those whom Christ calls and, instead of making a false exclusion, is, for her life's sake, afraid of doing this. The ministry of Word and sacrament is not a matter only for the *introvert* life of the church [het naar binnen gekeerde leven van de kerk]; only he who is not able to distinguish between 'church' and 'club' reasons in this way.

Schilder mentions as example the "Christelijke Gereformeerde" Church which "excludes thousands who, in our opinion, God does not exclude, and, — if one may believe her — keeps them from the Lord's Supper. Schilder, then continues

Therefore, God's Word is not being preached rightly there and the sacraments are not administered there according to Christ's institution.

If I understand Schilder well, he refers to the stress on the necessity of specific subjectivistic experiences of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart before a confessor of the truth can sit at the table of the Lord as also being a confessor of faith, the Lord's table being only for those experiential members (the church in the church). Schilder explains

For [there] the active ministry of the Word and of the sacraments is not taken up in the one, uninterrupted work-of-gathering which the living Christ is doing through his people [door zijn mensen]. These things become transparent as soon as one makes the 'legitimacy' and the 'purity' of the church into terms of the same problem.

However simple such truths may be, they are persistently lost out of sight by those who want to establish the 'purity' apart from and beside the 'legitimacy'. One will do well, therefore, never to give the title 'pure church' unless it is to the 'legitimate church'. A legitimate church — before the reformation — can be 'impure'; but an illegitimate circle [of like-minded people] cannot be a pure church.

What Schilder means can be best explained with a quotation from another article (*De Kerk*, II, p.126) where he answers a question with regard to this legitimacy of the church. Schilder had said that it was wrong to institute a second church if there is still one that "is bearable." The question was: which church was legitimate when, after the Doleantie in 1886, in many a place there were a Secession congregation and a Doleantie church. Schilder replies

In such cases both (church) institutes come "in a crisis situation". In order to remain legitimate, they must immediately desire to grow towards each other. The legitimacy depends on this desire and on the undertaking of efforts for its realization. Were it so that the newly instituted church (1886) was willing but not the one instituted in the past (1834), then the old one would cease to be legitimate.

Returning to the main article which we were rendering, we read there, close to the end, the following paragraph:

Maresius, mentioned above, discusses the expression of the confession, art. 29, according to which all kinds of sects claim the name of 'church.' He, then, quotes a word of Tertullian [a church father who lived appr. 200 A.D., J.G.]; also the wasps make honey combs; also the Marcionites [Marcion was a heretic who lived appr. 150 A.D., J.G.] make 'churches', but they do this in the same way as the apes which, as Cyprian [bishop of Carthage who died in 258 A.D., J.G.] says, are not people but imitate people.

Therefore, over against those sects, it must be discerned from the Word of God which is the true church, which means, the legitimate, and the therein pure.

Of course, Schilder has written much more about, and in connection with, the church. He worked for unity of all those whom Christ was gathering, and fought for it that this might happen in orderly, ecclesiastical ways. This means: in humble obedience of faith to God's Word, in faithful adherence to the confessions because they are in agreement with the Word, and also in a way in which the agreements made and adopted by the churches and put down in the Church Order were honoured.

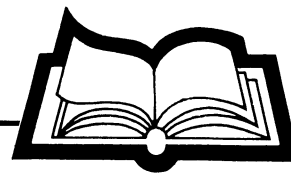
Why could Schilder be sharp? As said above, because he loved his Lord in heaven and therefore also the Lord's people on earth; and because his whole aim in life was that first of all he himself, but then also all others, in the unity of faith might obey Christ as Lord by submitting to His (in the written Word) revealed will as the norm for their life. This included for Schilder the revealed will as it regards the gathering, building, and preserving of the church. It was Schilder's conviction: Christ wants us to be one, not only in the same Spirit, in the same faith, but also in the same church institute.

This striving for unity in particular with the Christelijke Gereformeerden (here in Canada the Free Reformed), shown before the Liberation, was continued after 1945 with the same seriousness, and, therefore, sharpness, cf. *De Kerk*, III pp. 297-307. Schilder spoke of "the demand of the actual obedience with regard to the church institute" (den eis der actuele gehoorzaamheid inzake het kerkinstituut; *De Kerk*, II, p.152). Working toward institutional unity with the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken" Schilder wrote also (*De Kerk*, II, pp.354f, 1937)

The sharper the formulation of the difference, the more powerful can and will the love let itself be aroused to its work. Prof. M. Noordzij — *Bazuin*, 941, 5 Jan 1896 [about the controversy regarding the union in 1892 between the churches of the Secession and those of the Doleantie, which union the "Christelijke Gereformeerden" opposed and did not join, J.G.] — used the word "small schism-churches" (scheurkerkjes). Precisely such words, which are referring back to the confession, and which determine the climate on both sides in which each has to breathe before God ("I cannot do otherwise"), goad to ecclesiastical and thus also personal self-examination and call to unity through and in conversion. In contrast with this, the grinding away of the sharp points of *this* Kuyperian and confessionally faithful terminology kills the self-examination and paralyzes the wings of the church.

For Schilder there were two ways to practice unity: the wrong one, the one according to the pluriformity concept, which overlooks and ignores differences, accepts denominationalism, so that the hard road of obedience can be avoided; and the correct one which does not accept the easy theory of pluriformity and denominationalism, but seeks to go the road of obedience which leads to unity in faith and therefore also in one and the same church institute.

What counted, and still counts, in the Netherlands with regard to the calling of the Reformed Churches and the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken," counts in Canada with respect to the calling of the Canadian and the Free Reformed Churches, as well as the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches. And the same counts also with regard to other genuinely Reformed and Presbyterian Churches. The road to unity will, undoubtedly, be long and not easy. However, our Saviour and King, the Head of *His* church, calls us to continue on this road. And, in my opinion, it is still good to listen to Dr. K. Schilder and have him as one of our leaders on this road, since he was a faithful servant.



By J. De Jong

So then, I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Romans 7:25b.

Faith's Battle

Many find the concluding words of Paul's description of the Christian struggle to be out of place, and some have even suggested that they do not belong in the context. For Paul has expressed the hope and certainty of victory in Christ. But his final words appear inconclusive, as if he had a divided personality. He appears to be attempting to make the best out of an impossible situation by dividing himself between two masters: God and sin.

However, Paul's conclusion is not out of place in the context. Rather, it functions as a realistic appraisal of the Christian struggle in the world. The old nature is to be considered as dead, but that does not mean that its influence has faded. Indeed, it proves to be a constant well of impure thoughts, desires and affections. The struggle with the old nature never ends.

For the believer, this struggle may be carried forward in good hope! Although it endures, Christ assures him that he will find continued ammunition and zeal for the battle in the holy gospel. Paul recognizes the tremendous power exerted by his flesh. He finds it to be a law that he is made captive to the law of sin that lives in his members, vs. 23. However, powerful though this law of sin may be, it cannot capture his *will*. Repeatedly the apostle notes that sin, in capturing him, never captures his *will*, cf. vs. 15,16,18,19. Indeed, he finds sin's root in the fact that although he wills the good, he cannot do what he wills.

Here Paul expresses the sinful nature in the way Peter experienced it. It was given to Paul to describe in words the kind of experiences that we read of especially with regard to Peter. For this was the essential point of difference between Peter and Judas. Judas did not *want* to follow the Lord Jesus in suffering and death. But Peter spontaneously expressed the affections of his will: "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you," Mt. 26:35. When his flesh took over at the critical moment, he found himself in conflict with his will which had been gripped by the love of God revealed in Christ. Such is the frailty of human nature that even the slightest temptation is sufficient to cause one to fall. Broken in his spirit, Peter ran outside and wept bitterly.

Here sin has something baffling about it. Peter's actions completely conflicted with his will and desires. Later in his life he went through a similar experience. He knew that God had accepted the Gentiles who turned to Him in faith, and that there was no partiality with God, Acts 10:35. And he worked for the inclusion of the Gentiles, Acts 11:5ff. But at another critical moment the flesh took over; he drew back from the


Gentiles and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party, Gal. 2:11ff. Again, his actions conflicted with his will.

In this chapter, the one who was called to rebuke Peter admits that he was not any different. Sin for him has a mark of bewilderment. It's as if he asks himself, "How could I do such a thing?" And he says, "I do not understand my own actions." With heart, will, and mind, he loved the Lord, and this was firmly implanted in his being. Yet this brought a continuous struggle against the bewildering and ever-recurring power of sin.

Should not the apostle have been more positive with regard to this battle? Does he not appear indefinite? In fact, he is positive because in his heart and will he knows that he shares the free justification in Christ. He has received the forgiveness of sins out of mere grace! But he is also realistic and honest about himself. The human nature which in Christ has been broken still brings with it a constant battle.

Essentially one finds two reasons why Paul concludes the account of his own experiences in this way. He stresses the *duration* of the struggle. He confirms it as an enduring battle. He also reminds us of the *depth* of the struggle. Later he says, "We are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places," Eph. 6:12. Everyone should be watchful and constantly ready, armed for battle, and no one should be led astray by the deceitfulness of sin.

For Paul puts into words what he and Peter experienced. In giving us this united apostolic experience the Holy Spirit presents us with what is the experience of every true believer. We do not have a trifling or superficial enemy. And the Christian struggle is an enduring one. Indeed, the flesh will never win in this warfare. In principle it has been defeated through the cross of Christ, and its remaining power will be totally extinguished at the day of Christ. The flesh of sin is destined for the grave. Yet we must fight on until the day Christ comes.

And the grace of God is manifested in the way He works true sorrow for sin in our hearts. True sorrow acknowledges the bewildering power of sin and says, "How could I do such a thing?" And only with such sorrow can one find the true and lasting joy that rings forth in the words: Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! For what hope does anyone have outside of Him? 

Outside of it there is no salvation

Translated by R. Koat

The first part of Dr. K. Schilder's article on "Outside the church there is no salvation"¹ is concluded with the summary observation that a person has to preserve the unity of the church by joining himself to the true church. "This issue", he says, "is dealt with in article 28 of the Belgic Confession of Faith. There is no way of getting around this issue: it is *that church, it is said, outside of which there is no salvation at all.* [italics by K.S.] "How could that be the so-called invisible church? How can one *join* what is *invisible* in essence? The more so as we read, further on, that this church is upholding the *doctrine* and is administering *discipline*. One has never yet listened to a sermon from the *invisible* church and neither has the *invisible* church ever dispatched an excommunication bull to somebody's home. Here one is faced with the problem again. But he is certain about one thing: he *must* know what article 28 states in its few sentences."

At this juncture K. Schilder begins the second part of his exposition on "Outside the church there is no salvation." He writes: To understand the true intent of this well-known expression of article 28, we must first backtrack to article 27.

One of the most important clues that help us understand this brief sentence and that guide us back to article 27 is the expression in article 28 that "this holy congregation (= coetus) is an assembly of 'servandi'."² The Belgic Confession states here: "an assembly of those who are saved." But the proper translation would read: "of those who *must* be saved"; "of those who *are* destined for salvation" or "of the *candidates-for-salvation*".

This throws us right into the middle of the question. This interpretation shows us the church-gathering as God's work that is *still ongoing* and which only ends on the final day. According to His unchangeable purpose, God has chosen for Himself the elect for eternal life. To execute His decree He concentrates His power throughout the ages to have His call go forth through the Gospel, to have the Spirit unite Himself to the Word, so that successively all those who must be saved are

really congregating *because He brings them together.*

This kind of work is, therefore, happening in the present progressive tense. Only a fool would now suspect "Barthian" tendencies in this brief sentence. That Church is, indeed, "universal" (article 27); that is to say: God's action through which He draws unto Himself all His "servandi", is spread out over all the ages and is dispersed over all location, taking into account — of course — the different dispensations of the covenant.

That is why article 27 is able to say that this church-gathering work of God, throughout all the ages to the end of history, is bringing together ALL believers. [capitals by K.S.] Don't raise objections now by saying that, surely, there are many who are for some time foregoing all church assemblies here on earth, or those who are erring or are getting lost in all kinds of sects, or even those who are being held in the grip of the false church.

Because when they die God calls them home, does He not? If harlots and publicans can go into the kingdom before

others, then also those people who have lived in a strained relationship with the norms of the fourth commandment could go in ahead of others. Far from it that the church-gathering work should have nothing to do with the earth and the temporal society here below; on the other hand, it doesn't end up in them either. The Heidelberg Catechism says that those who believe shall immediately, after this life, *be taken up to Christ their Head.* (L.D. 22) Isn't this, too, *church-gathering work?* The deathbeds of God's children, also those of the "naughty" children (allow me to use this peculiar expression) are infallible, divine church-gathering activities. In one single moment everything comes right, even the matter of church membership.³ Before their deaths, the deceased may have resisted frequently and annoyingly, having been led astray by a tremendous lot of misunderstanding and sinful doctrine, yet their participation in and their relationship to God's universal church-building work was here below (like of everything else) merely a small beginning of the obedience that is still *required.* Yet, they are arriving home: God keeps an eye on His "servandi" and brings them to that large crowd, delivered — here above — from error and sin.

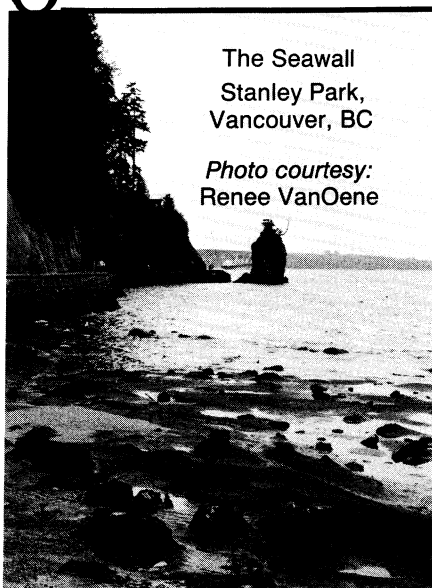
Indeed, they have been "sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit" (article 27). The method applied can vary a great deal, but the sanctifying and the sealing (that is: keeping them from ultimately falling away from God's church-gathering work) *will continue for certain.*

You have noticed that everything is as simple as it is miraculous. And I don't believe that there will be any among our readers who at this point still has trouble with the words that outside this gathering work (that is still under way) there is no salvation, no salvation at all.

So — the invisible church after all?

Not by any means — because now comes the "application" after our discovering this fact of God's action. BECAUSE God is acting *in this manner,* we have, therefore to do *our* part. Article 28 says: *Because* God infallibly gathers together into one body, THEREFORE must we as His subjects also start doing

OUR COVER



The Seawall
Stanley Park,
Vancouver, BC

Photo courtesy:
Renee VanOene

this. Infallibly we can't accomplish this, and we are daily making mistakes. Yet, we possess the revealed NORMS to which WE are bound in our church-gathering work. *It is here* that the next article (29) speaks about the MARKS (distinguishing characteristics) of the true and the false church. If the assembly of believers were a matter of *their* approval, of *their* taste, according to *their* preferences or "spiritual leanings", well, *then* the lid would be off! But since it is *God's* work, because He has said: there is no salvation at all outside My congregation, **THAT IS WHY you must do your utmost to banish (also with regard to your own contribution in the church-gathering work) all wilfulness and highhandedness.** Do you happen to be an Excellency, and your Excellency finds it barely so-so to join yourself to that 'bunch' which — oh well — is faithfully assembling according to the norm, but really isn't "worth writing home about"? Maybe so; but nobody — whatever his rank or dignity — may withdraw himself from the assembly which is taking place according to the norm, and thus continue being separate and contented with himself. This is what article 28 says. All are equally (*pariter*) bound to *join* themselves to that assembly which is faithful to the norms, and to let themselves *be united* with it. Now, *all of them* on their part will have to preserve the *unity* of the church, which does **EXIST AS FACT** (article 27), by means of and through *their* action here on earth, whether in the village or in the town where

they have been placed by God. All will have to accept, in submission, the doctrine and the discipline of the church *according to the revealed norms.* And all will have to join in edifying (building up) the brothers, and do this in accordance with the gifts entrusted to them. Woe betide the brainy chap who is loafing around in this area, or is following his whims.

This is, therefore, a far cry from asserting that in the church (that we ourselves belong to) the "servandi" have been infallibly brought together locally either by us or by the church community as *successful* conveners-under-God; and that it was done in such a way that we (so far) managed to be successful and daily *keep on being* successful. The truth is that, in the first place, we are not infallible; time and again we make mistakes. And those "servandi", in turn, are daily committing a lot of sins — just like us — also with regard to their own church-gathering work. Just like us they, too, are afflicted with a host of sins: obstinancy, sloth, imprudence; in short: by no means do they all let themselves be gathered according to the revealed norms.

But it's an equally far cry from having us say: look here, we don't succeed anyway, and *the others* don't want to do everything they're supposed to either; besides, also the harlots and the publicans can get into heaven, so . . . just let this church-gathering business remain secondary, *as long as you love Christ.* *This reasoning is precisely as ungodly as practising antinomianism* which says: you

don't make the grade in the matter of sanctification anyway, and the church will never succeed in formulating a rendition of God's norms, so let us leave the matter of sanctification for what it is, *as long as you love Jesus.* The sanctification should also be evidenced in the gathering work of the church (with fear and trembling) in faithful subjection to the (revealed) norms. Because precisely here lies the proof of this love for "Jesus": He is the Christ! **BECAUSE** God "succeeds", we (as His subjects) must *make it our* aim to succeed as well. Since outside His church-gathering work (already under way *here on earth*) there is no salvation at all, *that is why* God's word is ringing in our ears, also regarding that church-gathering work: *for the sake of your life, hurry!*

¹ K. Schilder, *De Kerk*, Vol. III, Goes, 1965, pp. 248-251. An attempt has been made to reproduce the stylistic effect of Schilder's use of capitals and italics for emphasis.

² Schilder writes here: "dat deze heilige bijeenkomst (coetus) en vergadering (congregatie) een bijeenkomst is van "servandi". In *Schriftverdenkingen* II, (p.369) he calls *coetus* the voluntary assembly, whereas *congregation* is to be seen as a multitude brought together by its supreme Shepherd.

³ The original expression reads: "ook het gaan wonen onder het kerkdak". A literal translation might cause some misunderstanding: "starting to live under the roof of the church included."



HYMN 10

Liangloffan *Habakkuk 3* Hymnal à Thonau, 1865

1. LORD, I have heard the tid - ings
Of Thee and of Thy might.
Thy deeds re-veal Thy great - ness:
I trem-ble in Thy sight.
LORD, come, Thy work re-new-ing,
A - mid the course of time.
In wrath re-mem-ber mer - cy:
Re-call that I am Thine.

2. From Teman and Mount Paran
Came God, the Holy One,
And all throughout the heavens
His radiant splendour shone;
The brightness of His glory
Filled all the earth with praise,
And from His hand the lightning
Flashed forth in blinding rays.
5. When with Thy mighty rivers
Thou all the earth didst cleave,
The mountain ranges saw Thee;
With fear they writhed and heaved.
Then were the rushing waters
In raging streams outpoured.
The waves their hands uplifted;
The voice of oceans roared.

A third native minister for the Gereja-gereja Reformasi Irian Jaya, Indonesia

By Bram Vegter

In a church service held on May 14, 1989 in Manggelum, evangelist Isai Dombon was ordained as minister of the Word. Rev. H. Versteeg led this joyful worship service, and preached God's Word from 2 Timothy 4:1-8 with the following theme:

Christ, the Head of the church charges His servants:

"Fulfill the call of your ministry."

Therefore: Preach the Word

1. in all situations
2. to the end of your life.

During the ordination Rev. Versteeg and Rev. O.S. Rumi as well as the four elders from Manggelum all laid their hands on brother Dombon's head.

After the service several persons spoke to the Rev. I. Dombon: Rev. Rumi on behalf of classis Digul/Kao, brother Bram Vegter on behalf of the mission, locally, and Rev. Versteeg on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Church of Toronto and her supporting churches.

Also a telegram (translated) from the church of Toronto and supporting churches was read, congratulating Rev. Dombon with his ordination, and congratulating the Manggelum congregation with the ordination of their shepherd and teacher.

Brother Dombon is the third native minister for the Gereja-gereja Reformasi in Irian Jaya. He is the first minister who received all his education in the area which is served by the Mission of the Reformed Churches ("ZGK").

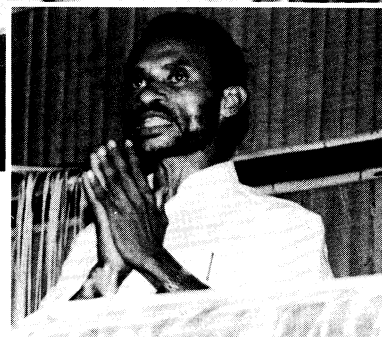
Isai Dombon was born close to Niop, a small village one day's journey from Manggelum. Having attended and completed the Elementary School in respectively Niop and Kawagit, he worked for two years for brother Henk Griffioen, the agriculturalist sent out by "Hulp aan Verre Naasten" (Help to Far Neighbours).

After this Isai decided to attend the SAP (Central Bible School), and this happened in 1978 and 1979.

In 1982 Isai started his theological training at the STM (Junior Theological College), and he graduated from his



Ordination of Rev. Isai Dombon



studies in 1986. In that same year brother Dombon was called by the congregation of Manggelum as evangelist. The offices were instituted there on September 27, 1987.

Brother Dombon passed his preparatory exam in July 1987, and his peremptory exam was done before the classis Digul in April 1989. At present there are ten other candidate-ministers as well, and we hope and pray that they may also be ordained in the coming years, the Lord willing.

In the afternoon service Rev. Dombon preached his inaugural sermon from 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 with the following theme:

All you Christians are one body in Jesus Christ. For the body the Lord has established in the midst of you:

1. special gifts
2. general gifts.

The congregation was exhorted to accept her leaders, for they are a gift of God. The individual talent and essential contribution of each individual to the congregation was emphasized.

Christ did not give the various gifts within the congregation to cause friction between the members, but to enhance fusion between one another, in order that we become truly one in Christ.

Our prayer is that Rev. I. Dombon will be a blessing for the churches, honouring the Good Shepherd and spreading His Name among the people of Irian Jaya; looking forward to the coming of God's kingdom.

C

Support Brotherhood Spain¹

Translated by George Hart

The January 1989 Newsletter *Steun Broederschap Spanje*, published by the Reformed Church of Bussum, the Netherlands contains a short overview of the Reformation movement in Spain. It may be informative for those of us who still have a slight interest in our Dutch background and who even might vaguely remember having heard of the struggle between the Low Countries and Spain. For that reason a fairly extensive part of the newsletter has been translated. The letter starts with a survey.

Survey

For the first time in history, as far as we know, a deputation of the Reformed Churches has made a visit to a federation of churches in Spain: two deputies for Relations with Foreign Churches (BBK = *Betrekkingen met Buitenlandse Kerken*) visited three of the four churches of the *Iglesia Reformada Presbiteriana (IRP)* in the beginning of November. The intention was to investigate the possibility of a sister-church relationship. The fact of this visit alone may be called a historical event. Throughout the centuries there have been various forms of contact, but little or no official church contact. With this fact in mind we give here a broad historical overview of the support to the churches in Spain from the Reformation on and we also provide an evaluation of the current state of affairs.

A church in oppression and dispersion

At the General Synod of Dordt in 1618-1619, delegates from many European countries were present, but there were none from Spain. The Reformation had indeed found acceptance in Spain, especially among the educated part of the population, even to such a degree that the Roman Church feared that Spain would become a Protestant nation. The infamous Inquisition thereupon smothered the Reformation in blood. The difference with the other countries where the Reformation was accepted lies in the fact that, in the sixteenth and seventeenth



The church in Madrid

century, nowhere in Spain, not even for a short period of time, freedom of religion existed. Everyone who merely expressed himself in a suspicious manner had to deal with the authorities and with the Roman Church. Only locally and secretly could the congregations be built up. Because of the continuing persecution they finally were dispersed and destroyed. Many believers fled the country, with the result that in several European cities also Spanish refugee congregations were formed. These offered help to the oppressed.

From Antwerp and London a tremendous amount of support was given. Antwerp, in those days, was the market of Europe and for many years enjoyed freedom. Spanish merchants funded the publication of many Protestant books and from this city it was possible to smuggle them into Spain.

In London, in 1559, a Spanish confession was drawn up. The refugee (and former) monk, Cassiodoro de Reyna, was

the minister of the Spanish congregation there at the time. The brothers, dispersed in other countries, gave it their approval. In seven years Cassiodoro translated the Bible. This translation was reviewed by Cypriano de Valera, who also had taken refuge in England. This version was published in Amsterdam in 1602 and, packed in herring casks, was smuggled into Spain by the thousands by our ancestors. De Valera translated very many Protestant works, including Calvin's Institutes and Catechism. The latter appeared in 1597; 3000 copies entered Spain. They must have brought about an unbelievable effect. We may assume, therefore, that not only Luther but also Calvin found strong acceptance in Spain.

The persecution, however, caused the destruction of the congregations, so that they were never able to build up a federation of churches.

(Source: Dr. Thomas McCrie: *History of the Reformation in Spain in the Sixteenth Century*, — translated into the Dutch by Munting, 1838).

In the sixties of the previous century a short period of freedom existed. Evangelism from foreign countries became possible again. This work of evangelism was done by a variety of societies, committees, etc., from several European countries. In the Netherlands the society "*Het Evangelie in Spanje*" was formed in 1871 by, among others, Capadose. The magazine *Het Evangelie in Spanje* has been published until the present. Under the Franco regime the Protestants endured hardship. But through influence from foreign countries freedom arrived very slowly.

Freedom of religion

Freedom of religion has officially existed only since 1967: from that date on, churches could publicly present themselves. Already since 1961 Bibles and Protestant literature could be sold publicly. A Spanish edition of Calvin's Institutes, reprinted in contemporary Spanish, was published by the *Gereformeerde Stichting Feliré*. This

society also published the Reformed Forms of Unity and a booklet of 42 rhymed psalms with the Genevan tunes. Almost everywhere in Spain "evangelical" (in Spain this term means: Protestant) churches were founded, of all winds of doctrine, as varied as the supporting foreign organizations. This is grist to the mill of the individualistic character of the Spaniard. But fortunately a few Reformed churches were founded as well.

Ecclesiastical assistance

The work in Spain that was started by the Reformed Churches more than twenty-five years ago, did not immediately have an ecclesiastical approach. The emphasis lay on the distribution of Bibles and literature, complemented with material and spiritual assistance to the needy.

Gradually it became clear that the work ought to be guided along ecclesiastical lines. This was realized in 1980 by giving a more precise and concrete form to the objective, namely, to help activate the study and the application and distribution of the Word of God through spiritual and material support, with the ultimate goal, wherever possible, to arrive at the institution of Reformed churches which subject themselves to the Word of God and to a Reformed confession, and to aim for a church confederation based thereon.

With the above 'Steun Broederschap Spanje' has given a clear outline of its policy, among others, over against the societies 'Feliré' and "Spaanse Evangelische Zending" (SEZ), which organize support from within the "Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken" and the "reformatrische kerken." The distribution of literature is the main goal of Feliré. The SEZ also is quite involved in the distribution of literature and employs one full-time and one part-time evangelist as well.

Our objective gives direction to the initiation of new contacts. It is not difficult to make multifarious contacts, but it is difficult to break off contacts. With our objectives we have imposed restrictions upon ourselves. We keep in view that a Reformed church should not support the maintenance of churches of all kinds of confessional persuasion, but we also know that it is a calling, now that Spain has been placed on our way, to support the development of a church federation which is faithful to the Scriptures, especially if we consider the fact that in history time and again this was made impossible and that an ecclesiastical tradition is therefore lacking in Spain. The first requirement is that of a confessional unity, or the willingness to work towards it. The motive for breaking off contact with

Rev. Ranero of Palma de Mallorca, and Rev. Rios of Malaga was the conviction we had arrived at the conclusion that the way to this goal with them was impassable.

This, however, did not mean that no work remained. The contact with Rev. de Segovia in Madrid remained undiminished. And before the sad events in 1985 mentioned above were concluded, a new possibility had presented itself. The Iglesia Reformada Presbiteriana requested contact with our committee. Because a federation of churches is involved here we, from the very beginning and in accordance with our statutes, have adopted the viewpoint that this is a task for the deputees for Relations with Foreign Churches (BBK). But a decision in a matter like this takes time. Deputees, of course, receive their instructions from general synods. With mutual consent it was agreed that SBS shall maintain contact and provide support in the interim. And therefore your material support also remains very necessary and is very much appreciated by us.

In addition the following deserves your consideration:

— From what was said before, it may be concluded that the churches in Spain did not have their own history of confessional and church federation formation. They indeed have adopted Reformed

confessions, but the struggle involved in their creation they do not know, either from their own history or from the literature in their own language. Therefore it will take more effort to combat errors which undoubtedly will rear their heads now that there is freedom. There also is a need for instruction regarding the proper place of the ecclesiastical offices of elder and deacon within the church federation. Much constructive work therefore is to be done. It certainly will cost the Spanish much self-denial to bow the neck under the yoke of Christ in accordance with art. 28 of the Belgic Confession.

— Also numerically the churches are very weak: fewer than 400 members, dispersed over great distances.

— In the course of time these churches were placed on our way.

— Scripture teaches us that the ecclesiastical bonds reach beyond the borders: the Acts and the letters of the apostles give many examples.

— Spain is the door to other countries where Spanish is spoken; in this way Protestant literature finds its way to many South American countries as well.

— Possibilities for support exist in all kinds of ways more than ever before.

The current situation

Madrid

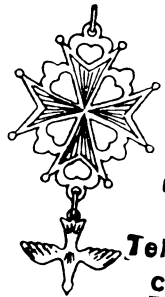
In July Rev. de Segovia was privileged to see his catechetical instruction crowned with the public profession of faith of br. Priscilo. He has yet other catechumens whom he teaches from the Heidelberg Catechism. In Madrid it still happens frequently that Roman Catholic relatives embitter the lives of these people. Several times we have been asked for information regarding church services, in Madrid as well as in Barcelona. We should appreciate it very much to be informed of visitors' impressions.

The IRP

The churches of Barcelona, Mataró, and Sevilla were visited by two deputies of the BBK. As is known, these churches have adopted the church order according to the Westminster standards. The functioning thereof is presently being considered. Decisions on this matter have not officially reached us as yet. The Bible course has been taken in use in the meantime. A reprint, especially for the IRP, now also is available. Rev. Cerni takes care of the correspondence with the South American contacts for Feliré.

So far the newsletter.

The letter closes with a call for continued support and promises to publish financial statements in the June issue.



**IGLESIA
CRISTIANA
REFORMADA**
Galería de Robles, 10
MADRID - 10
Teléf. 247 69 54

CULTOS:

Domingos	{	11 mañana
		7 tarde
Martes		8 tarde

Asistencia libre
Queda cordialmente invitado
"Y conoceréis la verdad, y la verdad os
liberará"
S. Juan 8: 32

Once again: how to sing Psalms

By P. Janson, B.Mus., M.A.

[Editor's note: The following article was sent to us. Since it does contain interesting historical information, we give it a place in our magazine. This does not mean that we, Dr. K. Deddens and I, agree with the suggestions to sing independently, without regard to the rest of the service. J. Geertsema]

It was with great interest that I read Dr. Dedden's article "Liturgy As Covenant Service" (XXXVII:12, June 10, 1988, pp. 250-3). I was particularly pleased to note that the author recommended that Psalms be sung in their entirety, if possible. This comes as a breath of fresh air. All too often, one finds that congregational singing of Psalms is restricted to selected stanzas only. Sometimes an artificial determinant is used to decide which stanzas are to be sung: odd- or even-numbered stanzas only, first and last, etc. Naturally, this does not do justice to the text.

Singing Psalms in their entirety would certainly ensure that we do not violate the literary unit, but it seems to me that this ideal will rarely be realized. When we consider Psalm 117, there should be no problem, neither should Psalm 1 present any difficulties. Singing four or more stanzas, however, will meet with some resistance, and as will easily be ascertained, our *Book of Praise* contains a considerable number of Psalms which have more than four stanzas.

In singing Psalms, I suggest that we consider the *literary unit*. This means that, if a Psalm is too long to be sung in its entirety, we should sing the required number of consecutive stanzas that will form one completed thought. This concept is very clearly illustrated if we were to sing Hymn 1B: to sing stanza 1 only would be absurd, since the Creed does not end there. The literary unity indicates that all stanzas of this hymn should be sung.

Something similar can be observed in the Psalms. For example, to sing stanzas one and two of Psalm 119 would not do justice to the literary context. Comparing the rhymed version in the *Book of Praise* with the Bible, we see that stanzas

1, 2, and 3 belong together. In fact, the verses 1 through 8 in the Bible comprise the segment under the Hebrew letter Aleph (as is well-known, Ps. 119 is divided into 22 sections, representing the entire Hebrew alphabet).

Singing in this manner, i.e., recognizing the literary unit, is nothing new. Some of us still remember how Dutch Psalters frequently placed the word "Pauze" between the stanzas of lengthy Psalms. It is regrettable that this practice is no longer

"The entire Book of Psalms was systematically sung in the worship services . . ."

current, for it would facilitate the recognition of groups of stanzas that express one completed thought.

Of course, one will ask: will this manner of Psalm singing take up too much time in the worship service — time which should be appropriated to the sermon? In order to address this question we will have to assess the need or importance of congregational singing. We need to consider how congregational singing fits into the four main elements of our worship service: (1) to hear the Word of God, (2) to use the sacraments, (3) to call publicly upon the LORD, (4) to give Christian offerings to the poor. If it belongs to one of these elements, congregational singing certainly deserves more importance in our worship services than it receives presently.

(1) The Word of God

The Calvinistic tradition of placing strong emphasis on Psalms differentiates us in an important aspect from other denominations that sing mainly hymns.

Unlike hymns, Psalms can rightly be regarded as the *Word of God*. They teach us God's laws and the doctrine of salvation.

To Calvin the Psalms showed in a clear way the gospel of God's grace and redemption. They taught the people how to live.

The Psalms contained in absolute validity a divine moral law that went beyond the value of counterbalancing interests.

God's Word spoke of a super-temporal law to which a man had to submit without any hesitation or objection. God's demands in the Psalms were clear-cut and unambiguous.¹

Psalm singing is hearing the Word of God, and more:

Be filled with the Spirit: Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:18b-20)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Colossians 3:16a)

Not only do we *hear* the Word of God and sing thanksgiving to Him, we also *address one another*.

(2) To use the sacraments

Is congregational singing using the sacraments? Of course not; but if we consider the *purpose* of using the sacraments it will be evident that it has the same goal as singing. What, then, is the primary function of the sacraments? The *Belgic Confession* (article 33) teaches us that they "nourish and sustain our faith," and the *Heidelberg Catechism* (Lord's Day 25) says that faith is strengthened by the use of sacraments. I submit that singing Psalms and Hymns also strengthens our faith, and I believe no elaboration is needed, for we know from experience that this is so.

(3) To call publicly upon the Lord

In his preface to the Genevan Psalter, Calvin has this to say about congregational singing:

As for the public prayers, these are of two kinds: some are offered by means of words alone, the other with song. And this is not a thing invented a little time ago, for it has existed since the first origin of the Church; this appears from the histories, and even St. Paul speaks not only of praying by mouth, but also of singing (1 Corinthians 14:15).²

Thus, according to Calvin, congregational singing belongs to our public prayers; in fact, public prayers were “also called ‘the Psalms’ because they had always been sung, and, perhaps, also because they consisted mainly of the Old Testament Psalter.”³

It is clear, then, that singing fulfills three important functions in the worship service: (1) We hear the Word of God, (2) It strengthens our faith as we sing and address one another in song, and (3) We call publicly upon the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving. If we are to *worship* God in our worship services, congregational singing should feature prominently.

Part of the reason for our current practice of singing only selected stanzas of Psalms and Hymns is that our tradition is to think of singing as being of secondary importance to what we do in our worship services, and make it dependent upon other elements. For example, after the reading of the Law, the “Psalm must have something to do with that constituting idea of God’s covenant,” as Dr. Deddens states on p. 252; after the sermon, the Psalm or Hymn “may not be an *arbitrary* Psalm or Hymn.” However, this practice does not recognize the autonomous role congregational singing should occupy in the worship service.

It may come as a surprise that this tradition was not the practice in Calvin’s time.

The idea of using Psalm verses as appropriate stanzas for a sermon was totally foreign to the practice of the French Reformation. The entire Book of Psalms was systematically sung in the worship services on a biannual basis, without leaving anything out.

This does not mean that every congregation in France and French-Switzerland sang the same Psalms on the same Sunday, but that in each congregation all 150 Psalms would have been sung at the end of a 25-week period. This was done according to a set table (see appendix).⁴

From this table it is evident that singing

PSALM 96

Geneva, 1562

1. Sing to the LORD with ex-ul-ta-tion.
O sing a new song, all cre-a-tion.
Sing to the LORD and bless His Name;
Day af-ter day with joy pro-claim
The won-drous deeds of His sal-va-tion.

4. *Glory and strength, O tribes and nations,
Ascribe to God with exultation,
And render to the LORD's great Name
The glory to which He lays claim.
Sing praise to Him with jubilation.*

occupied a prominent place in the worship service. It indicates firstly that Psalms were sung in specified parts, if they were too long to be sung in their entirety. The subsequent part(s) of the same Psalm was not sung in the *same* service, but at *another* service. Secondly, the table indicates that congregational singing was not related to other elements of the service (the Law, the sermon, etc.), but that it was done according to a predetermined schedule. Thirdly, it shows that the congregations of the French Reformation sang a great deal in one service (an average of *eighteen* stanzas in one service).

Like Dr. Deddens, I should like to consider the aspect of custom. Custom or tradition are indigenously rooted in habit, and habits are difficult to break — even in the light of convincing evidence that it would be to our advantage to do so. In the case of congregational singing, our custom is to sing relatively little in a service, a few stanzas here and there, as appropriate to other elements of the worship service. The evidence presented above shows that congregations of the French Reformation sang a *great deal*, the *entire Psalm* or significant portions of consecutive stanzas, and that the Psalm singing was *not* dependent upon any other element of the service.

We may not be able to sing through all 150 Psalms twice yearly, nor may we wish to restrict our congregational singing to two or three Psalms in one service, but we could establish a schedule that would

allow us to sing Psalms and Hymns in their literary context, and allow us to sing through the entire *Book of Praise* over the course of 52 weeks (150 Psalms and 64 Hymns).⁵ This would mean that over time we would be familiar with *all* Psalm and Hymn tunes in the *Book of Praise*. Each Psalm or Hymn would get sung at its scheduled time.

H. Hasper, *Calvijs Beginsel voor de Zang in de Eredienst* ('s-Gravenhage: Stichting Geestelijke Liederen Uit Den Schat van de Kerk der Eeuwen, 1976), I:710.

² O. Strunk, *Source Reading in Music History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1950), p. 346.

³ Hasper, o.c., I:769.

⁴ Hasper, o.c., II:55-56. The table might look a little confusing. Indications such as “Psalm 6:1 + 10” mean that the first ten stanzas of Psalm 6 were sung. This is clear not only if one compares the longer Psalms in this list (e.g. week 1, Psalm 18, listed for Sunday Evening, stanzas 1 through 7, and on Wednesday continuing with stanzas 8 through 15), but also from Dr. Hasper’s commentary on this table (cf. p. 56). He says, among other things, that the French Reformation congregations sang *nineteen* Psalm stanzas on Sunday morning in week 1, and *sixteen* on Sunday evening.

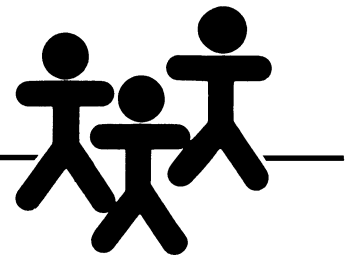
⁵ The Credo should not really be considered as a hymn since it is a recurring liturgical element of the service. Other such elements would be the singing of the ten commandments, the singing of the Kyrie, and the Gloria. These musical components of the service were used by Calvin, and should be referred to as liturgical music, rather than as hymns.

De cijfers in de eerste kolom geven de week aan, die echter niet altijd samenviel met de week van het kerkelijke of burgerlijke jaar

	ZONDAGMORGEN		ZONDAGAVOND		WOENSDAG (dag der gebeden)	
	na de tweede klokslag	vóór het begin van de preek en aan het einde van de dienst	na de tweede klokslag	vóór het begin van de preek en aan het einde van de dienst	na de tweede klokslag	vóór het begin van de preek en aan het einde van de dienst
1	Psalm 6:1+10	Psalm 7:1+9	Psalm 18:1+7	Psalm 1:1+4;15:1+5	Psalm 18:8+15	Psalm 3:1+4;4:1+4
2	21:1+13	11:1+4;12:1+3	22:1+7	2:1+7	22:8+16	5:1+12
3	29:1+6;31:1+8	16:1+6	31:9+19	8:1+9	35:1+8	9:1+10
4	35:9+13;37:1+5	17:1+8	37:6+14	19:1+7	37:15+20;38:1+5	9:11+20
5	38:6+16	25:1+10	38:17+22;44:1+4	14:1+7;24:1+5	44:5+14	10:1+9
6	45:1+8	26:1+9	48:1+6	23:1+3;47:1+5	52:1+7;53:1+6	13:1+5;43:1+5
7	55:1+14	27:1+7	57:1+7	49:1+7	58:1+8	32:1+6
8	60:1+7	28:1+6;36:1+3	63:1+7	46:1+6	66:1+10	42:1+7
9	67:1+3;68:1+3	30:1+8	68:4+10	50:1+9	68:11+17	51:1+10
10	69:1+9	33:1+6	69:8+14	33:7+11	70:1+3;71:1+9	41:1+7
11	71:10+18	34:1+7	72:1+11	34:8+11;64:1+10	74:1+21	56:1+6
12	75:1+6;78:1+8	39:1+8	78:8+20	62:1+8	78:21+23	59:1+10
13	78:34+36;80:1+5	40:1+8	80:6+11;81:1+11	84:1+6	81:12+17;82:1+4	64:1+10
14	83:1+10;89:1+8	73:1+9	89:9+12	73:10+14;98:1+4	89:13+20	77:1+11
15	96:1+9	90:1+9	99:1+8;100:1+4	91:1+8	104:1+9	79:1+7
16	104:10+18	102:1+9	105:1+12	102:10+16	105:13+24	86:1+9
17	106:1+7	103:1+11	106:8+15	92:1+5	106:16+26	88:1+11
18	107:1+11	118:1+7	107:12+20	118:8+14	108:1+7;109:1+6	94:1+12
19	109:7+18	116:1+11	111:1+6	105:1+9	112:1+6;114:1+4;117	85:1+4;120:1+4
20	119:1+8	145:1+7	119:9+16	97:1+6	119:17+24	123:1+2;124:1+4
21	119:25+32	101:1+8;54:1+4	119:33+40	87:1+5;110:1+7	119:41+48	125:1+4;129:1+6
22	119:49+56	20:1+5;126:1+3	119:57+64	113:1+5;137:1+5	119:65+72	142:1+7;95:1+7
23	119:72+80	127:1+5;128:1+3	119:81+88	146:1+8	131:1+4;132:1+12	143:1+12
24	133:1+3;134:1+3	130:1+4;138:1+4	135:1+8	147:1+10	136:1+26	144:1+7
25	139:1+14;140:1+13	121:1+4;122:1+3	141:1+11;148:1+5	76:1+7;93:1+4	149:1+5;150:1+3	65:1+9

SCHOOL CROSSING

By T.M.P. VanderVen



The end of another school year: thankfulness and responsibility

1. Thankfulness ...

Everyone is enjoying the pleasant spring weather. The faithfulness of our Creator is revealed all around us again as we see new life in plants and animals. As the growing season is showing its beginnings, the activities of the school begin to reflect the end of another school year.

From another school magazine:

Just recently it was mentioned yet in the staffroom that very few days were lost due to illness of a teacher in our school. This year too, not one teacher was prevented from teaching because he was sick. We believe and

confess that this is indeed not by chance. Our heavenly Father is taking care of His children.

We know from other school magazines that good health cannot be taken for granted. But also then, even in the case of serious illness, we may comfort each other with the promises of our LORD: He cares for us.

2. Responsibility

The various school magazines from around the country celebrate, each in its own way, the usual end-of-the-year rituals of the months of May and June. The sudden change from winter to summer — in-

deed, is there really spring in this country? — causes all kinds of changes in the chemistry of people, and our children provide excellent examples of this. But these changes also necessitate reminders of parental responsibilities.

We would like the parents of the elementary students to help us in enforcing a simple policy which we have: Students who take their bikes to school or walk to school should go home right after school and report to parents or guardians before they go and play. We as school are responsible for students until they are at home, but as may be realized, it is



very hard to monitor that all students go directly home. Please don't hesitate to call if your child is not home at the regular time.

Indeed, a simple, yet a most important policy, and the beautiful summer weather underlines the urgency of this request. PARENTS, DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR CHILDREN ARE? If this is a question asked in general by columnists in our papers, then so much the more our parents should, nay must exercise their responsibilities, supporting the school by ensuring that they know where their children are.

3. Responsibility ...

Another (undesirable!?) result of the fair weather is captured in the following clipping:

In the past week, students have been overreacting to the hot weather in taking off as much as they can get away with. May we remind parents that we as staff would like to see our students neatly dressed.

I hope that this is not only the concern of the staff of this school. We do operate parent-controlled schools, do we not? Dress codes are certainly part of that, and it is sad to hear staff plead for parental cooperation in this respect. Another clipping to illustrate this:

A small matter of dress code must yet be addressed. Our dress code (I suppose this refers to the school's dress code.) does not mention any specifics, but it does mention that students should dress in a way that shows one to be Christian. We have

therefore as staff (!) agreed that T-shirts which advertise rock groups or beers should not be worn in school. Likewise, students should not wear gym shorts (or indecently short shorts) during regular classes, and students should not wear skirts that expose the student's midriff. Parents and/or students, please remember that clothing does reflect a spirit or attitude.

Indeed, it does. Parents are encouraged not to take these matters of dress, particularly in the warmer months of the year, too lightheartedly, as if these things are no more than end-of-the-year antics of students. (I guess these become beginning-of-the-year antics come September!) I hope the teachers in our schools may look forward to that true cooperation between parents and school as implied by that beautiful phrase: COVENANTAL EDUCATION, which provides the norm for all of our life — including dress.

4. Thankfulness ...

I hasten to add some positive end-of-the-year comments, lest we forget! One principal sums up rather well:

... we acknowledge all the blessings we received from the Lord also, and perhaps even especially this year. We could experience the gift of the Holy Spirit in a willingness of staff and board to let themselves be guided by God's Word when seeking ways out of problem situations.

We thank the Lord for another year of freedom and peace which

allowed us parents and teachers to concentrate on the education of the children of the Church of Jesus Christ.

We thank the Lord for promises of increased funding and at the same time we pray for wisdom that the extra money may be spent wisely and not decrease our personal commitment to Biblical education for our covenant children.

Don't skip over this last comment too hastily: thankfulness and responsible stewardship are the hallmarks of Reformed management. Those of our schools without the obvious benefits of government subsidies also take note: do not only admonish your constituency, but also thank the Lord for faithfulness in contributing! This principal concluded:

I could go on for a while, but instead of all these words, let us express our thankfulness by continuing and possibly even increasing our support for the school of our children.

5. Responsibility

Let that increased support begin/continue with the little things of every day: the daily lunch box of your children, their dress, punctuality, care for their own possessions and those of others

But also help your board run the affairs of the school smoothly and efficiently. One treasurer educates his association as follows:

Do you know what the financial running of our school entails?

Do you know what we, as school-board, must do?

We must see to it that the bills are paid every month.

We must pay our teachers regularly.

We must budget and plan for expansion, as approved by the membership last fall.

We must meet all our commitments.

Do you realize what that means?

That means we need financial support to complete this task.

This support must come in on a regular and reliable basis.

This is possible if EVERYONE fulfils (his/her) commitments. We need the FULL support of the membership to fulfil our mandate as board.

We have received this school from God's Fatherly hand. Let us then not take this for granted, but support the school, both financially and spiritually, out of thankfulness to God and to His honour.

6. Thankfulness and responsibility

In a truly Reformed family, in a Reformed association, in a Reformed community, these two go hand in hand. C

By W.W.J. VanOene

These quotations were taken from our Confession and from the Form for Baptism to give the impression and to make it seem as if that Confession of our churches taught that we must hold the seed of the covenant to be regenerated and sanctified in Christ until. . . , but for this assertion they *do not offer any proof, however slight*. And thus this assertion is standing there at the beginning of that declaration as a mere assertion, all by itself, without any real proof or true argumentation.

When, therefore, this declaration says, after this quotation: "so that our Confessional Standards clearly teach that the sacrament of baptism signifies and seals the washing away of our sins by the blood and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that is, the justification and the renewal by the Holy Spirit as benefits which God has bestowed upon our seed," then this is a victory-crowning sally, but one which, in the present controversy, does not mean a thing. *For that is not the issue at all. Neither in 1905 nor in the present time is there any difference of opinion about that among us.* But the following was to be proved: *that our Confession pronounces that the seed of the covenant is to be held by us to be regenerated until . . .*

And that is now precisely something these quotations do not speak of, not even with one word. And thus this cry of victory is nothing but merely hollow sound, which is completely beside the point, and leaves the matter which is the issue here, the *realized* regeneration of the seed of the covenant just as unsubstantiated as it was put unsubstantiated in the beginning of this Conclusion.

By Virtue of the Promise

With what are the words "by virtue of the promise of God" to be connected?

Do these words belong to "to be held as" so that the meaning is that God has promised that we must hold them to be regenerated? But that is impossible, for if God says that we must hold them to be regenerated, this is not a promise, but an order, a precept, or a command, but we cannot call it a promise.

Does the expression "by virtue of the promise of God" then belong with "regenerated and sanctified in Christ" so that the meaning is that God has promised that He will regenerate this seed and sanctify it in Christ?

But then we must accept that in faith, and then it is not becoming for us to "hold it to be so until." That would show that we do not trust God upon His word but said: "Well, Lord, we are prepared to accept this for the time being, but always with the restriction that it is to be proved in the course of time that it is not untrue." But we are not allowed either to think or to speak in that vein. Thus this connection is not possible either.

A third connection would be possible: when we connect "by virtue of the promise of God" with all that follows, in this sense that God is thought to have promised that He will regenerate this seed and sanctify it in Christ until upon growing up they should manifest the contrary in their way of life or doctrine. But this is equally impossible, for then God would work the regeneration and the sanctification in Christ conditionally and for the permanence of this regeneration and sanctification be dependent upon the

behaviour of those provisionally regenerated persons. This, of course, is impossible as well.

But another connection of these words with another part of this declaration cannot be made, for there is no other part. From this we see that already linguistically this declaration does not make a reasonable acceptable sense.

It was, of course, the intention to say, but they did not dare to say that God promised to regenerate and sanctify in Christ *some* of that seed and that for that reason we are to hold *all* that seed to be regenerated and sanctified in Christ until. . . .

In the first place, that's not what it does say. And then there came, of course, also the demand for proof where the Lord is supposed to give such an unlogical precept and where our Confession was supposed to teach something so incorrect. In order to leave the real intention out of the picture, beautiful-sounding words were written down which can make a certain impression but upon further scrutiny do not contain a tenable meaning.

Seed of the Covenant

More is to be said regarding this first part of the declaration of Utrecht 1905.

It says that the seed of the covenant is to be held to be regenerated and sanctified in Christ until. . . . By this "seed of the covenant" therefore all the seed of the covenant is meant, also that seed of the covenant which is not saved. For here the provision is added: "until. . ." Therefore, although it may be and appears to be different, yet we are to hold also the seed that is not saved to be regenerated until. . . .

All the seed is mentioned now. But now the Lord teaches us by Israel and history teaches us throughout the centuries that part of that seed rejects the Lord, is therefore not elected, and therefore never was nor ever will be regenerated. *God clearly reveals this to us* in His Word and in the history of His church. In spite of this the Conclusion of Utrecht 1905 tells us that yet God is supposed to command us to hold to be regenerated *also those of whom He reveals to us* that they will never become partakers of the regeneration. As what is God here thus presented to us? As a God of "Yes" and "No" at the same time. Is He then no longer the Veracious One whose Word is the truth and who demands truth of us in all our thinking and actions?

Further, part of this seed will certainly be regenerated, but God has not revealed to us when He does this: before, during, or after baptism. At the end the Utrecht Conclusion itself states this. The time of regeneration of the elect part of the seed of the covenant is therefore unknown to us, uncertain to us. And then God is yet supposed to command us to assume that already has happened that about which He leaves us in uncertainty?

Also in this point the first part of the Conclusion of Utrecht 1905 is untenable, because it puts that God is supposed to charge us with holding true what He reveals to us as being partially not true, partially uncertain for us.

And in the third place: The regeneration of someone else is something that is hidden from us. God lets us know expressly in Deut. 29:29 that the revealed things are for

us, to do all the words of God's law, but that the hidden things are for Him. We are not to occupy ourselves with the latter. With its precept to hold to be regenerated until . . . this Conclusion of Utrecht comes directly into conflict with Holy Scripture.

The Preaching

The Conclusion says that we must hold the seed of the covenant to be regenerated until the opposite becomes evident from their doctrine or conduct.

It follows from this that a minister of the Word, speaking in his ministry among the congregation, is not allowed to say: "You must be born again," for thereby he would reveal that he did not hold them to be regenerated. Nor is he allowed to say to them: "If you do not repent, you will perish," for thus he would again show that he does not regard them as being regenerated. Those who are born again cannot again be born again. He is not allowed to say to the youth of the church that they are to pray to God for a new heart, for again this would show that he did not take for them for having been regenerated and thus already being in possession of a new heart.

All this is implied in the first part of this Conclusion of Utrecht.

Now it is said: "But this Conclusion says further very clearly 'so that in the proclamation of the Word always serious self-examination is to be urged upon the people, since only he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.'"

That's what the Utrecht Conclusion says indeed.

But that is squarely in conflict with the beginning of this Conclusion. To insist upon such self-examination in *the public preaching before the congregation* is an open denial of that holding to be regenerated until. . . . These two parts of the Conclusion of Utrecht do not fit together but are in conflict with one another.

Someone who abides by the first part of the Utrecht Conclusion of 1905 comes into conflict with the other part of this Conclusion. And whoever observes the other part acts contrary to the first part.

We see that in the declaration of 1905 they rashly wrote down a thing or two that sounded good and thereby could impress people, without asking themselves whether the one thing that was declared there was in accordance with the other thing that was inserted in the declaration, and whether perhaps there was not a sort of inner contradiction which was expressed therein.

Until

It is said: "to be regenerated until . . ."

When does that "until" start? When can it begin? Then the pubertal period must certainly be well behind a person, and thus, in general, it cannot be before the age of 25 or 30. And as long as someone still attends church, one cannot consider this "until" to have begun, for then this person still always comes under the proclamation of the Word, however irregularly it may be. Thus — as said before — in order not to come into conflict with the first part of the Conclusion of Utrecht 1905, it is not allowed to issue the call of the necessity of regeneration and conversion to the *assembled* congregation, with the declaration of everlasting perdition in case of refusal. This would be a denial of that "hold them to be regenerated until. . . ."

Ground of Baptism

The Utrecht Declaration of 1905 states further: "that it is, however, less correct to say that baptism is administered to the children of believers on the ground of their presumed regeneration, since the ground of baptism is found in the command and the promise of God."

Here it is stated: the administration of baptism to infants on the ground of presumed regeneration is less correct. Thus: it is actually correct, but less correct; not: incorrect, but: less correct. That disposes, of course, of the whole value of baptism unto comfort and warning both for parent and child *until they know*, in whatever way, that they are regenerated. *The value of baptism depends on some human presupposition*. Is that presupposition incorrect, then thereby lapses the right and value of the administration of baptism. Even though this human presupposition is only partially needed, "less correct," a house that partially rests on soft ground or on a dummy foundation is wholly shaky. When that part falls, the whole house collapses. Thus the right and value of the administration of baptism is here declared dependent upon fallible human presuppositions, be it not completely but only for a part, however small. What certainty can then a parent have for the baptism of his child? And what certainty can then one who has been baptized have regarding the right of his baptism?

Everything is up in the air here. All solid certainty falls thereby away as far as the administration of baptism is concerned.

But . . . it is also stated here: the ground of baptism is the command and the promise of God. Yes, *the* ground. This means: the only ground. But if this is so, the previous "less correct" is wrong. If this "less correct" is to apply as well, it cannot be said that God's command and promise are *the* ground of baptism; and the other way around: if that command and that promise are *the* ground for baptism, then the presupposed regeneration is no ground for baptism at all, and this "less correct" is totally wrong.

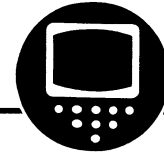
Once again we have here an inner contradiction in this Conclusion of Utrecht 1905. It appears that two lines of thought have been combined: the statement that only God's command and promise are the ground for baptism and the assertion that baptism is administered on the ground of presupposed regeneration. The one who drew up this Conclusion apparently neither could nor dared to maintain the latter assertion, yet sought for ways to hold on to it. And thus he wrote down this contradiction, in which it becomes obvious that Utrecht 1905 wanted to acknowledge only God's command and promise as the real ground for baptism, but thoughtlessly let itself be foiled to as yet declare also presumptive regeneration a ground for baptism.

This act of craftiness was of course also the reason why we got stuck with the pronouncement of the first part of the Conclusions of Utrecht 1905, a pronouncement which does not make sense.

Therein a cleverness is evident by which, however, the truth is not served.

Judgment of Charity

The Conclusion of Utrecht 1905 continues: "that furthermore, the judgment of charity with which the church regards the seed of the covenant as regenerated does not at all imply that each child is actually born again, seeing that God's Word teaches that they are not all Israel that are of Israel, and of Isaac it is said: 'In him shall your seed be called' (Rom. 9:6,7)." — *To be continued*



Classis Ontario South of June 14, 1989

The chairman of the convening church, Rev. P. Kingma of Grand Rapids, opens the meeting. He requests the singing of Psalm 42:1,7, reads Phil. 4:4-9 and leads in prayer.

The delegates of the church at Grand Rapids check the credentials. They report that all the churches are present and duly represented, except in the case of the church at Laurel which is represented by only one delegate.

Classis is constituted. The following officers are appointed: chairman, Rev. B.R. Hofford; vice-chairman, Rev. R. Aasman; clerk, Rev. D.G.J. Agema.

The chairman recalls some of the events which have taken place in the churches of this region. He remembers that Rev. R. Aasman declined the calls from the churches at Burlington-East, London, Smithville and Winnipeg; that Rev. M.H. VanLuik, the Lord willing, will soon be leaving for the church at Chilliwack, and Rev. G. Wieske for the church at Neerlandia; that Rev. P. Aasman was installed as minister of the church at Grand Valley; that Dr. N.H. Gootjes and Rev. J. De Jong accepted respectively their appointments to the positions of professor of Dogmatics and Diaconology at our Theological College; that the churches at Lincoln, London, Smithville and Watford are or soon will be without their own pastor and teacher; and that Rev. G. VanDooren has experienced heart trouble recently but is thankfully recovering at the present time. The chairman also welcomes brother and sister Hans Boersma and wishes our brother strength during his examination for permission to speak an edifying word.

An agenda is adopted.

1. Brother H. Boersma presents a sermon proposal. It is decided not to give him permission to speak an edifying word among the churches. The reasons are communicated to him by the moderator and the two deputies for examination.

2. Classis breaks for a warm meal at 12:30. The chairman reconvenes the meeting and asks that Ps. 66:4 be sung.

3. The churches at Chatham, Lincoln and London ask for and receive advice concerning private matters during a question period and Article 44 of the Church Order.

4. The church at Chatham asks how

Article 26 of the Church Order should be interpreted: should an elder or deacon who is to be ordained sign the form of subscription before or after he is ordained? Classis feels it is not necessary for Classis to make an interpretation of this article, but to leave the interpretation to the local churches.

5. The church at Grand Rapids asks for and receives advice on a private matter.


6. The church at London asks Classis to appoint the Rev. R. Aasman as its counsellor. Classis gives its approval for that. The church at London, which was appointed to convene the next Regional Synod, also asks for advice to set a date for the next Regional Synod. Classis recommends October 18, 1989.

7. An appeal against an action of the church at Blue Bell is declared inadmissible.

8. The Acts of Classis Contracta of Ontario South of March 31, 1989 and May 17, 1989 are received.

9. Classis grants Rev. M.H. VanLuik and Rev. G. Wieske release from their respective ministerial duties within the district of Classis Ontario South in accordance with Article 9 of the Church Order. The church at Watford asks for and receives the appointment of Rev. J. VanRietschoten as its counsellor. The church at Lincoln asks for and receives the appointment of Dr. K. Deddens as its counsellor.

10. The churches at London,


CHURCH NEWS

CALLED to Fergus, ON
REV. B.R. HOFFORD
of Laurel, Maryland, U.S.A.
* * *

DECLINED to London, ON
REV. P.K.A. DE BOER
of Carman, MB

Smithville and Watford request pulpit supply. Classis decides that although it was customary for Classis to grant pulpit supply to vacant churches, it is really not in the province of Classis to grant such pulpit supply. Classis recommends that vacant churches approach the sister churches directly for pulpit supply.

11. Classis breaks for a meal. The chairman reconvenes the meeting and asks that Psalm 48:1 be sung.

12. The church at Chatham requests that the number of copies of Acts of Classis sent to the churches be reduced to one, two or three in order to save high postage costs. This request is denied.

13. The church at Grand Rapids reports on the reasons for the cancellation of the Classis of March 8, 1989.

14. Reports are read of classical visits to the churches at Blue Bell, Hamilton and Smithville.

15. A financial report is gratefully received from brother P.L. Schuller, the treasurer of classical finances. His suggestion to assess the churches \$6.00 per communicant member for the year 1989 and \$5.00 per communicant member for the year 1990 is accepted. An auditing report shows that the books of the treasurer are in good order. Brother Schuller is thanked for his work and reappointed as treasurer of the classical finances.

16. The church at Chatham, which administers the Fund for Needy Students, presents a financial report and reports that the books of the Fund were properly audited. The suggestion to assess the church \$7.80 per communicant member for the College year 1989/1990 is accepted.

17. Appointments are made with respect to various committees, church visitors and examiners.

18. The next Classis is to be convened by the church at Hamilton on September 13, 1989 at London. Proposed officers are: chairman, Rev. P. Kingma, vice-chairman, Rev. D.G.J. Agema; clerk, Rev. B.R. Hofford.

19. Personal Question Period is held.

20. The Acts are read and adopted.

The Press Release is read and approved.

21. The chairman requests that Ps. 48:3 be sung and leads in prayer.

22. Classis is closed.

R. Aasman
vice-chairman, June 14, 1989



Hello Busy Beavers,
Time for our Summer Quiz Contest!
Did you know that every summer we have a Big Summer Quiz Contest?

And did you know that for many, many years we have had a Big Summer Quiz Contest?

Ask your Dad and Mom and your Aunts and Uncles.
Maybe they were some of the Busy Beavers who joined in our Summer Quiz Contest!

Now it's YOUR TURN to join in our big Contest.
There are even prizes!

Get out your pens and pencils and join in the fun!

Quiz -1 Tinker, Tailor ...

When God called the following people they were busy working at something. Match the person which what he or she did for a living.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Moses | a. farmer |
| 2. Gideon | b. seller of purple cloth |
| 3. Elisha | c. shepherd |
| 4. Lydia | d. judge |
| 5. Aquila and Priscilla | e. thresher |
| 6. Zaccheus | f. scribe |
| 7. Luke | g. queen |
| 8. Baruch | h. tentmakers |
| 9. Deborah | i. tax collector |
| 10. Esther | j. doctor |

Need some Help?

Busy Beaver, you may use your Bible, of course. Maybe you will find your STORY Bible very helpful.

A very happy August birthday to all the following Busy Beavers. We all join in wishing you the Lord's blessing in the year ahead and a very good day celebrating with your family and friends.

AUGUST

Joanne Visscher August	1	Neal Gelderman	16
Wayne Penninga	2	Jocelyn 't Hart	16
Adalia Dam	4	Christa Jansen	17
Mary-Anne Moes	5	Emily Moes	20
Heidi Siebenga	5	Netty Sikkema	21
Christine Lodder	6	Karen Boot	22
Mary Breukelman	7	Derek Bouwman	26
Linda Nap	9	Karin Van Hof	26
Felicia Teissen	10	Jocelyn Kamphuis	27
Kristi Van Popta	11	Wendy Vandergaag	28
Alice Van Woudenberg	13	Cindy Van Woudenberg	30
Alex Sikkema	14	Edie Alkema	31

Quiz -2 More Busy People

Match each person with what he did.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. named all the animals | a. Barnabas |
| 2. built an ark | b. Jesus |
| 3. prepared a meal for Jesus | c. David |
| 4. introduced Paul to the Jerusalem church | d. Adam |
| 5. was in business with her husband | e. Jehoiakim |
| 6. stilled a storm | f. Joseph |
| 7. walked on water | g. Pharaoh's daughter |
| 8. received a beautiful coat | h. Noah |
| 9. killed a giant | i. Peter |
| 10. found a baby in a basket | j. Priscilla |
| 11. burned Jeremiah's scroll | k. Martha |

Quiz -3 Years

One way to measure time is in years. Answer the questions with the number of years.

- _____ 1. How many years did it take Solomon to build the temple?
- _____ 2. How many years old was Jesus when he attended the Passover feast?
- _____ 3. How many years did the Israelites wander in the wilderness?
- _____ 4. How many years did Methuselah live?
- _____ 5. How many years did Abraham live before Isaac was born?
- _____ 6. How many years did the woman whom Jesus healed have a crooked back?
- _____ 7. How many years had Sarah lived when Isaac was born?
- _____ 8. How many years had the woman with "an issue of blood" been sick?
- _____ 9. How many years had Mahlon and Chilon lived in Moab?
- _____ 10. How many years did Eli judge Israel?
- _____ 11. How many years did it not rain on the Israelites when Elijah asked God to withhold the rain?
- _____ 12. How many years was Paul a house prisoner?
- _____ 13. How many years had Noah lived when Shem, Ham and Japheth were born?

Send your answers to:

Aunt Betty
c/o Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2J 3X5

Do you remember how Winnie the Pooh made up little songs about himself?

Busy Beaver *Robbie Blanken* has a little song about us!

Busy Beavers
Like to buzz around
While they work and play around
"Busy Beavers" is our name!

Bye for now.

Love to you all
from Aunt Betty