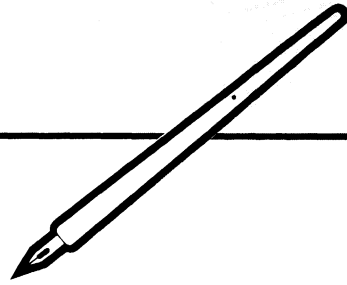




**Clarion**  
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE  
YEAR END ISSUE 1990



## Schilder – The Birth of Jesus Christ – Office

### Introduction

This issue of *Clarion* is devoted to Dr. K. Schilder because on December 19 it is a century ago that K.S. was born, and because we ought to thank the Lord LORD (the Lord Jahweh, the sovereign Creator and Master of heaven and earth, who is the faithful covenant God of His people in Christ Jesus) for His servant, Klaas Schilder, who, during his life, before the face of his God who gave him a special task in and for His Kingdom and church in the second part of the first half of the twentieth century, so faithfully fulfilled his office of believer, also in his special office, in true obedience to the norms of the revealed Word of his God and in true and faithful love and compassion for the LORD's covenant people – people first of all in the Netherlands, but then also worldwide; and, yes, because it would be very unthankful and, therefore, disobedient to our gracious God, to forget what He gave us as an inheritance (a gift and obligation) from this modern [time-wise, not theology-wise] church father.

### Necessary remark:

Dear reader, I sure hope I did not scare you away from further reading with this long, long sentence. It is on purpose that I formulated my thoughts in this way. Through it you get an idea how K.S. sometimes could formulate the ideas he wanted to bring across to his readers.

This issue is also the so-called Year-end issue, in which we give attention to the birth of our Lord and Saviour. Therefore, you find here one of Schilder's Christmas meditations. It was written in 1945. The combination of these two elements, Schilder and the birth of Christ, will further come out in the lines written here. But we have added a third element, as is indicated in the title, namely, that of "office." Meant is not the special office of minister or elder, but that of all believers and the office of Christ. The concept of office played a very important role in the thinking and teaching of Schilder.

### Office

In *De Reformatie* (vol. 17, p. 365) Schilder wrote about the human nature of Christ in reaction to statements of Dr. V. Hepp. Schilder said:

If I want to perceive the mystery of the "man" [Jesus Christ, J.G.], brought into the world by God, then I begin

with "office" and not with "nature;" because every "nature" has been created with regard to the charge belonging to the office, as this was already determined in God's counsel and would be given after creation. In this way I come further. In this way I can see the Saviour in His social position, His geographical circumstances, His...suffering.

Schilder wanted to say that Christ Jesus was what He was, true God and true man, in connection with the task He had to fulfill, His office.

---

**"Everything we read in  
the Gospels about Christ Jesus  
has to do with the fulfillment  
of His office."**

---

In *Christ and Culture* (e.g. pp.29ff), Schilder wrote also about the office of Christ. He takes as clarifying example the question why Christ was not married. We read:

His office was to suffer and die. His office consisted of a struggle against God and Satan at the turning point of the ages. His office was: to be the second Adam: that is, to establish a community of men, this time not of one blood, as a living soul, but out of one spirit, as life-giving pneuma [Spirit, 1 Cor. 15:45, J.G.]. It [this office] commissions Him to rule over a large nation...on the judicial ground of that totally unique sacrifice of the blood that flowed forth only from His broken body.

Who does not immediately sense that herewith, in principle, everything has been said about the question of Jesus' being married-or-not? Who does not sense that

He would not even have been able to restore marriage, also as an element of culture, if He, as Servant of the LORD, had not taken His yoke upon Himself, without receiving, either in the natural way or through adoption, "children given to Him" according to the law of flesh and blood? "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself, likewise, partook of the same" (Hebr. 2:14). For He is not ashamed to be called "the Brother of us all." This is His office. But He would have been ashamed to be called the (physical) father of some of us. FOR THAT IS NOT HIS OFFICE.

Everything which we read in the Gospels about Christ Jesus has to do with the fulfillment of His office. Thus, Christ Jesus was born at the right moment, at the right place, and under the right circumstances, in the history of mankind, also in the history of God's people, and in the history of God's redeeming and judging governing of all things. He was born then and there, according to the prophetic Word, in order to fulfill His office of being Redeemer in the service of God for those whom the Father had given Him; and also to fulfill His office of being Judge ("to judge the living and the dead").

When the Lord Jesus let Himself be baptized, this was an act of obedience (Matt. 3:15) in which He accepted His office. He knew about this office from the Scriptures, from what was written. With all other human officebearers in the service of God, there is first God's sovereign calling and appointing. In answer to this preceding act of God, man has to accept in obedience. God called and appointed Moses at the burning bush. Moses, in obedient response, had to accept. But with God's servant Jesus, it was different. He had to fulfill all righteousness in the place of His people, as their Mediator. That is why He first had to accept his office, before He could be appointed, officially, by His God and Father. Thus, in response to this act of obedient acceptance of His office (about which He knew from the Scriptures), the Father anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and appointed Him with these words: "This is

My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). Only within this framework of His office, we can say that in His baptism Christ declared His solidarity with His people.

Schilder did not restrict the concept of office to Christ Jesus. In *Heidelbergsche Catechismus* (vol. II, pp. 51ff), he speaks about man's office in connection with his creation in the image of God. Man "is, in the order of God's house, the first and highest creature, image of God, charged with the office-of-representing-God [belast met het ambt-van-God-af-beelden]. Man was the only creature who received this office. To be God's representative, behold, that is his office." This idea of office has everything to do with Schilder's speaking about man's cultural mandate, and with God's covenant with man, in which Christ is the redeeming and restoring Mediator.

### History of redemption and judgment

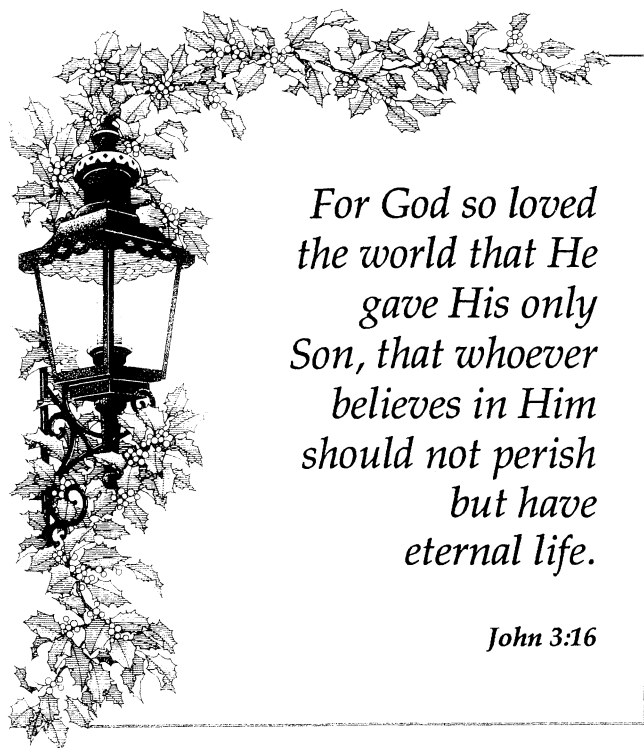
Man with his office is placed in God's history. The history of heaven and earth is in God's hand. He rules and "makes" it according to His eternal plan. This history begins with creation and will conclude with the "parousia," the return of Christ. Thus, our history is the history of our triune God, of the Father (and our creation), of the Son (and our redemption), and of the Holy Spirit (and our sanctification and glorification). In our triune God, the history of heaven and earth, the history of redemption and judgment, has its unity.

After the fall in sin, this history has become one of enmity, of the spiritual antithesis, set and since then maintained by God (Gen. 3:15). And in this history from paradise to the consummation, God gives to each man and woman and child his or her office and mandate. We may see this office in the light of creation and redemption. It is in the light of the Son through whom God created all things and through whom He worked redemption. In this history, Adam and Eve, and Enoch and Noah, and Abraham and Sarah, and Rebecca, and Moses, and Joshua, and Deborah, and Samuel, and David, had their own place and task, their own office. In this on-going history of God, working toward the coming of His kingdom in glory, each of us, too, has received his or her office.

What is now the important thing for officebearers, for those who are restored in the office of believer and representative (image) of God? It is to be faithful; faithful to God; faithful to the neighbour. God wants us to be faithful in our office, in our service to Him and for each other, each in their own geographical place and the own point in time of God's history of redemption and judgment, according to His plan, as He predestined it.

Schilder's name is important in connection with redemptive-historical preaching. Sometimes the complaint is heard that in this redemptive-historical method of exegesis and preaching, man does not receive the attention he needs. However, this complaint should not be directed to the method itself, as such. If reason for this complaint has been given, then the cause is not the method, but the lacking individual application of this method.

We must combine the concept of office and the concept of redemptive history. Both, in combination, are of such a great significance in the teaching of Schilder. And if we take the two together, the redemptive-historical method will always give the proper attention to man, namely as a servant of God, and not in the center. Then we see how, for instance, Abraham or David, or whoever, had an office, a special place and task, in that on-going work of God, as servant of the LORD. It is on this point that a line can be drawn to today. We are at a different point in that still on-going work of God. We live in a different time period, with different circumstances. But it is the same history. And in it we, too, each of us, have our own office, our own task and calling from God, to serve Him and the coming



*For God so loved  
the world that He  
gave His only  
Son, that whoever  
believes in Him  
should not perish  
but have  
eternal life.*

*John 3:16*

of His kingdom, which, according to Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. 48, includes the preservation and further gathering of His church.

This task can be in health or in sickness, in riches or in poverty, in freedom or in persecution, married or unmarried, parent or without children, young or old, male or female. Whatever the circumstances, and whatever, accordingly, the special task, our calling is, just as with David and Solomon, to be faithful, to work under Christ and with Him, in new obedience of faith, for God, in His service, for His kingdom and church. I may refer here also to the work of students of Schilder: B. Holwerda, especially in his speech *Begonnen hebbende van Moses...* (Kampen, 1974, 2nd paragraph, cf. pp.90ff) and M.B.

“...this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3:17

van 't Veer in his exegetical work on Elijah (*My God is Yahweh*, English translation by Dr. T. Plantinga, St. Catharines: Paideia Press, 1980).

### Coldness and one-sidedness?

Does this combination of the redemptive-historical method of interpreting Scripture, especially in its historical parts, and the application of the concept of office make the preaching one-sided and cold? In my opinion, it does not. When God gives a task to Joshua or to king Ahaz, to mention only these two here now, there is more than just a task. God is more than just a Taskmaster. He is also the gracious heavenly Father and great Helper. He helps Abraham; He leads and guides him. He encourages this “father of all the believers” on his way of faith. He also forgives Abraham when he fails and falls short in his faith, in his faithful fulfillment of his office (Gen. 12-25:11). God deals with His servants in this way constantly. Now it is also true that God comes with his covenant threat and punishment, for instance, when, in spite of encouragement and the offer of help, a man as king Ahaz refuses to be helped because he does not want to acknowledge God and the office he received from Him (Isaiah 7).

Schilder received his own place in God's on-going work in the history of heaven and earth. He received a leading position. He guided the Reformed churches back to the Word of God in a fresh and new listening to the Scriptures. In his work, in preaching and teaching, including his writing, he not only himself obeyed God in his speaking, he also confronted others with that same Word, urging them to listen and obey in faith. In this way he was a faithful instrument of God in God's on-going work. That is why we honour him in thankfulness to the LORD. It will be our continuing task to preserve the inheritance of Schilder, not in a slavish following of this leader, as his epigones, but in humble acceptance of our office in the service of God, today. This means: in humble listening to God's written Word with the response of obedient faith on our way from creation and fall in sin, via the coming of Christ Jesus into this world, to His return.

If we go in this faith, although often with so many shortcomings, we may rest assured that in Him who became Man to suffer in our place, we have a compassionate and faithful High-priest, who fulfilled His office for us in our place. He is, therefore, also able and willing to help those who keep their eyes fixed on Him, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.



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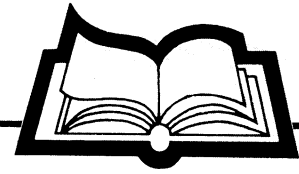
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## A New Shoot!

It is a dark and gloomy picture which Isaiah sees as he is called to announce the time of God's judgment. What he sees on earth stands in sharp contrast to the heavenly vision which precedes his mandate. One of the angels said, The whole earth is full of His glory! But Isaiah knew that this glory was not visible in Israel. In fact, by their sins, the people of the Lord had profaned His Name.

Yet there is a ray of hope at the end of the picture of doom given in the words, The holy seed is its stump. This mysterious expression has the character of a proverb, or riddle-saying. In effect, it serves to repulse the unwilling, but to draw in the curious and believing – a motif directly related to Isaiah's special task in this chapter. And the heart of this expression lies in the term *seed*. That term includes an allusion to the mother-promise of Genesis 3:15. The line of the seed will continue!

With the use of the image of a tree Isaiah explains how this will take place. The tree of Israel, having been cut down, will be as a stump cut off. Even the remnant will be so tried by fire that only a bare stump remains. In fact, the text gives the impression of a complete break in the holy line. It will be a clean cut, and it will strike to the very root of the tree! Yet, as is sometimes the case with actual stumps, this stump will retain deep within it a *seed*. A new seed will germinate, a seed unlike the old tree, and a new shoot will spring forth. Through this new beginning the old tree will be saved. By way of a radical recreation what is old will come to life again.

How true this prophecy turned out to be! In fact, the line of the kings of Judah was totally cut off, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah 22, 24ff. We know from Scripture that the holy line did continue, but this was not a smooth or a direct line. It is possible and even likely that a levirate marriage was needed to keep this line going. Zedekiah, the king after Jehoiachin, witnessed Nebuchadnezzar putting all his sons to death, 2 Kings 25:7. The tree was completely cut down! It is almost as if matters are brought to the barest minimum possible within the context of the mother promise. Indeed, it is shown to be solely God's grace and favour by which this promise continues.

And the ultimate fulfilment of this prophecy rests in Christ. Indeed, He is born as the seed of the woman, out of the line of David. But He does not share the sin and corruption of this line. He is a new shoot! Just as the springing to life of a new shoot in a stump cut off is miraculous, so the coming of this Child is the glorious


wonder of God's salvation! This is God's way to fulfil His covenant promise. The holy line is brought to completion, but only by the miraculous and all-powerful saving hand of God who wills to bring redemption to His people.

And what kind of a shoot was this Child? Later Isaiah says: "For he grew up before him like a tender plant, and like a root out of dry ground; and he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him." Isaiah 53:2. The rule for this shoot was: humility before honour. "He was despised and rejected by men." Isaiah 53:3. This was precisely the opposite of the way chosen by Uzziah, the king in whose reign this vision came to Isaiah. For Uzziah the rule was: pride before the fall. But in the new shoot and new kingdom, the order is reversed: humility before honour.

This is the way the Lord Jesus takes for us. And Isaiah immediately prophesies His victory. In fact, this proverb is really the prelude to the great hymns to the Messiah which come in the chapters 7, 9 and 11. The shoot from the stump of Jesse will be exalted! (11:1) He will become the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace! How was he exalted? Through His perfect obedience and through His willingness to suffer to death – even the death on the cross.

With His coming and victory, that which was a small seed and a tiny shoot begins to grow. Paul turns to the image of the tree in Romans 11:25,26. Here it is no longer a small shoot but a large tree. Many new branches have been grafted in with the remnant. The Gentiles may be fellow-heirs of the promise, partakers of the good news in Christ.

As the people of God we may again remember the onset of the fullness of the Kingdom of God in the glorious birth of Christ. The angels sang about the glory of God descending to earth. This glory became a daily reality in the work of Christ on earth and remains a daily reality in His work from heaven. Today already we see: the whole earth is filled with His glory. He has moved beyond Isaiah's day.

Yet for all who wish to see and share this glory the rule is still the same. We must follow the kingdom's founder. For the lawless the rule holds: pride comes before the fall. But the humble may know what awaits them if they continue in true faith and obedience: the whole earth will be full of His glory! 

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# Herod, the Wise Men, and the King

## Prophecies fulfilled in Matthew 2

By R. Faber

### Introduction

As we celebrate Christmas we read and sing of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. The gospels provide us with accounts of the annunciation of Christ's coming, the nativity in Bethlehem, and the adoration of the magi. One of these accounts tells of Herod, the malevolent king of Judaea. In the second chapter of his gospel Matthew tells of the arrival in Jerusalem of wise men from the East. These wise men ask king Herod to see and worship the "king of the Jews." Upon hearing of the birth of this king, Herod plots to destroy the child, and in the ensuing narrative Joseph, Mary, and the child flee to Egypt, in order to avoid the persecution of Herod. Only after the death of the king do they return to Israel.

In order to understand the full meaning of the second chapter of Matthew, it is beneficial to know the historical circumstances of the birth of Jesus Christ. Therefore we will consider briefly the life of king Herod, whose actions had such effect on the family of Joseph and Mary. More important, however, is the role which this king plays in Matthew's account. For there is a much deeper meaning to the actions of Herod. Matthew shows that the *true* king is Jesus Christ, whose coming fulfills the Scripture. Indeed, the actions of Herod merely reveal that the Old Testament prophecies are being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Saviour who became incarnate in order to free His people from sin. Thus Matthew's second chapter emphasizes the significance of Christ's coming in the history of revelation and redemption.

### Herod "the Great"

Herod the Great was born *circa* 73 B.C. to an Edomite father, Antipater, and Arab mother, Cyprus. By their influence, and by his own skill and ambition, Herod quickly became a powerful figure

in Israel. At the age of twenty-five he had already been appointed governor of the Roman frontier province, Galilee.<sup>1</sup> Not much time passed before Herod became the king of all Judaea. For Hyroanus, the previous ruler of the region,



Flavius Josephus

had been captured by Parthian invaders in 40 B.C., and Maro Antony installed Herod as client ruler. In the year 37 the Roman army captured the city of Jerusalem, thus consolidating Herod's position. As a client king of Rome, Herod's task was to defend the frontiers of the empire, to provide stability in the fertile regions which supplied Italy with resources, and to administer Roman rule without aggravating the sensitive Jews.

Herod proved himself an able administrator and financier. He established the bustling port of Caesarea, thereby increasing the prosperity and reputation of the region under his jurisdiction. He

fortified several cities, and strengthened his strategically important province. Numerous building projects were intended to increase his wealth and popularity. Taxation of the populace decreased, while his contribution to the Roman coffers remained substantial. In short, Herod strove to be appreciated by his Jewish subjects and his Roman superiors.

Herod attempted, though unsuccessfully, to endear himself to his subjects through lavish gifts. One such gift was the construction of a glorious temple in Jerusalem, a temple which outshone the splendour of Solomon's. Herod's goal in undertaking such a munificent project was, to use the words of the ancient historian Josephus, for "future remembrance or present reputation" (*Antiquities* 16.153)<sup>2</sup> This same historian, who was aware of the sensitivity of the Jewish people, also states that many of Herod's benefactions in fact violated Jewish law and custom (*Antiquities* 15.274ff). Thus Herod's attempts to win the hearts of the Jewish people were not always successful.

Indeed, it was Herod's own personality which caused him to become despicable to the Jews. For the "king of Judaea" was a proud Hellenist, actively promoting Greek culture and convention in Israel. Herod employed numerous Greek terms for official functions, introduced the imperial cult to his province, built theatres and amphitheatres, and arranged a Greek education for his sons. His detractors soon called Herod "half-Jew" and "friend of Caesar." Most offensive to the orthodox Jews was Herod's introduction of the Actian games into Jerusalem in the year 28 B.C. The games, based on the festivals so popular elsewhere in the Hellenistic world, were to include horse-races, musical competitions, and athletic contests. Three large buildings were erected in Jerusalem for

the games, which were to be celebrated every four years. But the Jewish populace considered gymnastics and wrestling as symbols of pagan Hellenism, and took offence. In fact, an attempt was made to assassinate Herod in a theatre which he had recently constructed for use in the Actian games.

It should not surprise us, therefore, that Herod's subjects became increasingly dissatisfied with their semi-foreign ruler, and the Pharisees, who had previously supported Herod, turned to open opposition. Yet Herod, who had a large mercenary army, secret police, and a powerful bureaucracy, ruthlessly maintained his position as client king of Rome. Opponents were cruelly punished, and stories of Herod's savagery abounded. Indeed, it was only Herod's steadfast allegiance to his superiors in Rome that kept him in power.

What eventually caused Herod's downfall was his private conduct. The savage treatment of his extensive family, his quelling of intrigue, the murder of his favorite wife Marianne the 1st, in 29 B.C., and that of her two sons in 7 B.C., not to mention the murder of his eldest son in 4 B.C., produced such a struggle for familial power that Herod's control weakened. The stories of the domestic strife reached the ears of Augustus in Rome, and the emperor's support for his vassal lessened. After a reportedly terrible illness, Herod died, probably in the year 4 B.C.<sup>3</sup> Upon Herod's death his realm was divided among his three sons, Philip, Herod Antipas, and Archelaus.<sup>4</sup> The conclusion of Josephus' study (*Antiquities* 16.151) of Herod's character is that, while the man was a great benefactor to his province, his punishments and wrongdoings lead one to think that he was "bestial" and lacking in moderation.

### The "Massacre of the Innocents"

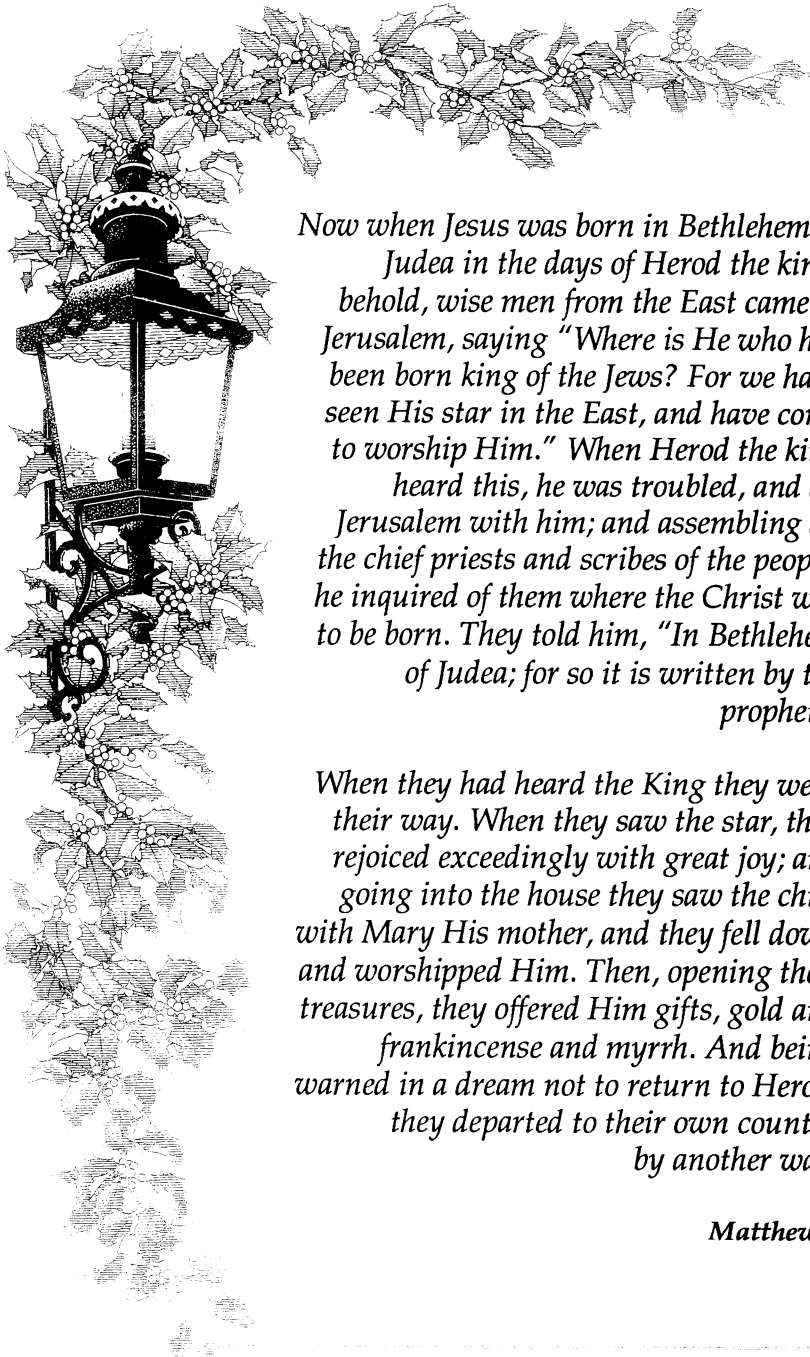
Of the gospel writers it is Matthew who recounts Herod's involvement in the nativity of Jesus Christ, and it is worthwhile to consider not only the disciple's portrayal of Herod but also the function which the king performs in the gospel. It is especially in the second chapter, which chronicles the visit of the magi, the flight of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to Egypt, and their subsequent journey to Nazareth, that Herod plays a prominent role.<sup>5</sup>

Matthew paints a picture of Herod as a king intent on removing every threat to his position. Such a portrayal matches the depiction of Herod which we have already seen. When he hears from the wise men that they have come to worship the "king of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2ff), Herod is troubled, and requests the Jewish religious leaders to inform

him of the place where the king was to be born. When told that the child was to be born in Bethlehem, Herod, under the pretence of wishing to do obeisance, "secretly" summons the wise men to ascertain in what time the star appeared (2:7), and orders them to seek out the child "diligently," so that he too, "might come and worship him" (2:8). For the malevolent and now faltering ruler of Judaea, these attempts to find what he sees as a pretender to his throne, are quite fitting.

When he discovers that the wise men had been informed of his ruse in a

dream, Herod reacts with inhuman cruelty. He "sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men" (2:16). The story of the massacre of the innocents would from that time forth be known as Herod's most infamous deed. Yet, whereas the motives behind Herod's actions are perhaps explicable in light of the despot's own life, Matthew demonstrates the divine providence and control in every event of the infancy of Jesus Christ. Indeed, the actions of



*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judaea; for so it is written by the prophet."*

*When they had heard the King they went their way. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.*

**Matthew 2**

Herod which so vehemently uprooted the family of Joseph are to be seen as deeds in the history of salvation. From the moment of Christ's birth His role as the King of His people is integral to Matthew's gospel.

### **"To fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet"**

While the role of the malevolent king Herod is a major topic of the second chapter, it is clear that Matthew's main purpose there is to demonstrate that the birth of our Lord Jesus, His "persecution" by Herod, and His journey first to Egypt and then to Bethlehem, are fulfillments of Old Testament prophecy. Just as the genealogy of the first chapter shows the continuity in the history of redemption, so too does the narrative of the second chapter reveal the link between the announcements of the coming Messiah in the old dispensation and His incarnation which commences the new.

One of the hallmarks of Matthew's gospel is the expression, "all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet."<sup>6</sup> The significance of this recurring statement in the opening chapters of Matthew's gospel is that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the one who Scripture said would one day come to save His people. Therefore, at the birth of Jesus, the disciple cites (2:22ff.) Isaiah's prophecy that "a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isaiah 7:11), which means "God with us." Jesus Christ is the true God who was born of woman and became incarnate. In effect, suggests Matthew, Jesus Christ is not merely *called* Emmanuel, He is Emmanuel!

In the second chapter Matthew shows by the "fulfilment citations" that not merely the fact of Jesus' birth, but His entire life on earth - including His infancy - is a completion of the will of God as revealed to the forefathers. Indeed, all the events surrounding the infant Jesus, Matthew shows in the citations, occurred to perfect the providential will of God.

Herod assembled the chief priests and scribes to learn the place in which the "king of the Jews" was to be born. In chapter 2:5 we read that his advisers told Herod that Bethlehem was the city of the future ruler's birth. For according to the prophecy of Micah the ruler of Israel would one day come from Bethlehem: "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah . . . from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days" (Micah 5:2). It is the Old Testament Scripture which reveals the birthplace of the King! No doubt it would have shocked Herod to hear the prophecy of a ruler to govern

the people of Israel. Little did Herod know that Micah announced the coming of a King whose kingdom was much greater than that of the state of Israel.

The visit of the wise men to Bethlehem and their adoration of the Christ-child as recounted in verses 7-12 of the second chapter complete other predictions of the old dispensation. A psalm of Solomon, Psalm 72, celebrated the worship of the king of Israel, and we read there (72:10-11), "May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute, may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!" Though Matthew does not quote these lines, it is possible that he had them in mind when he wrote of the magi who "fell down and worshipped him [Jesus Christ]. Then,

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**Think not that  
I have come to abolish the  
law and the prophets; I  
have come not to abolish  
them but to fulfill them.**

Matthew 5:17

---

opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold, and frankincense and myrrh" (Matt. 2:11). Isaiah also had written of this worship, in chapter 60:6, "They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord." In narrating the adoration of the magi the disciple aims to show that the true king of Israel is not Herod, but Jesus Christ.

Matthew's narrative of the flight into Egypt also is linked to Old Testament prophecies. In Hosea chapter 11 the Lord reminds His people of His faithfulness and care in days of old. He said: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." Matthew applies this expression to the infant Jesus, the Son of God the Father. Through His angel God instructed Joseph to take Mary and the child to Egypt (Matt. 2:13), since Herod was plotting to seek out the child and kill it. Again we may note that Herod's machinations had been willed by God to complete a prophecy of the Old Testament. Matthew writes (2:15) that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus remained in Egypt until Herod's death, "to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." In short, the flight into Egypt produced the fulfilment of Hosea's prophecy. In this passage one

might see, as Smitt does, the humiliation of Jesus Christ, who must suffer in the land of Israel's bondage, en route to the suffering and death which was to release His people from their sins.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, let us return to the account of Herod's murder of the infants, and consider briefly the quotation of Jeremiah 31:15 and in Matthew 2:17-18. We read that when Herod learned that the wise men did not return to him, in fury he ordered the death of all the male children under two years of age in Bethlehem and the surrounding region (2:16). Thereupon Matthew writes that "Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled because they were no more" (2:17-18). Even Herod's murder of the innocent children of Bethlehem, Matthew points out, took place to fulfill the prophecy of Jeremiah.

The meaning of this quotation and Matthew's use of it is not easily grasped. Some have suggested that Rachel, whose burial place Ephrathah may have been associated with Bethlehem, is mentioned as representative of the mothers of that city who mourned the loss of their infants.<sup>8</sup> However, the context of the lines in Jeremiah 31 argue for a deeper meaning. The message of God through the prophet is that the people of Israel ought not to cry, for the children will come back from the land of the enemy (Jeremiah 31:16-17). The words of Jeremiah form a message of hope, in spite of the present sorrow: Israel would one day return from the land of exile. When applied to the situation in the days of Herod, the quotation gains redemptive-historical meaning. The death of the innocents is a necessary event which leads to the death of the Innocent, Jesus Christ. The people of Bethlehem should take heart, Matthew implies, for the child who was born in Bethlehem came down to earth to save also the children and mothers of Bethlehem.<sup>9</sup>

### **Conclusion**

At Christmas we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ, and remember the incarnation of the Son of God. While remembering the fact of Christ's birth, we do not forget the *reason*. The account of Matthew chapter 2 should be read in light of the history of revelation and in light of the history of redemption. Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled not only in the birth of Jesus, but also in His entire life on earth, and especially in His suffering, death, and resurrection. Indeed, from the beginning to the end of His life upon earth, Jesus completed what was

prophesied in the old dispensation. We conclude with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, who in the Sermon on the Mount, at the commencement of His ministry, says, "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them" (Matt. 5:17). And when, as the hour of Christ's death approaches, Judas has betrayed the Lord Jesus, we are reminded by Him, "All this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled" (Matt. 26:56).

<sup>1</sup> The main ancient source for the life of Herod is Josephus, whose *Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities* provide an extensive account.

<sup>2</sup> Recently D.M. Jacobson, "King Herod's Heroic Public Image," *Revue Biblique* CXV, 1988, 386-403, has argued that

Herod's extensive building projects were intended to display the king as a pious, heroic, and Hellenistic benefactor.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the date of Herod's death, see J. van Bruggen, "The Year of the Death of Herod the Great," in *Miscellanea Neotestamentica*, vol. 2, eds. T. Baarda, A.F.J. Klein, W.C. van Unnik (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 1-15; cf. T.D. Barnes, "The Date of Herod's Death," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 19, 1968, 204-108.

<sup>4</sup> For further reading of Herod's life and career, I mention two English books, S. Perowne's *The Life and Times of Herod the Great* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1956), and M. Grant's *Herod the Great* (London: M. Grant Publications Ltd., 1971). The current status of scholarship is given by H. Merkel and D. Korol, "Herodes der Grosse," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, XIV, 1988, 815-849.

<sup>5</sup> Of the numerous books and articles dedicated to the narratives of the nativity, I men-

tion only R.E. Brown's *The Birth of the Messiah* (Garden City: Image Books, 1979). J. van Bruggen, *Christus op Aarde* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1987), 78-82, and 95-100, shows that the birth of Jesus Christ took place *circa* 5 B.C., and that the account of Matthew 2 covers a period of approximately one year.

<sup>6</sup> The so-called "formula or fulfilment citations" have received much attention; R.H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), treats formal and allusive quotations in a linguistic fashion. J.W. Smitt, *Opdat Vervuld zou Worden* (Groningen: De Vuurbaak, 1975), discusses the differences in Matthew's use of the citations.

<sup>7</sup> *Opdat Vervuld zou Worden*, 90ff.

<sup>8</sup> Thus Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 205.

<sup>9</sup> F.W. Grosheide, *Kommentaar op het Nieuwe Testament*. Mattheus (Amsterdam: H.A. van Bottenburg, 1922), 18. C

## PSALM 72:1, 10

O God, give to the king Thy justice,  
His son Thy righteousness.  
Thou art the God in whom our trust is;  
Thy hand alone can bless.  
May he, the royal son, be reigning  
With judgments true and sure,  
To all Thy people right ordaining  
And justice to Thy poor.

The king, whose name we are professing,  
Shall like the sun endure.  
In him all nations find their blessing;  
Make Thou his throne secure!  
Blest be the LORD, for He so glorious  
Alone does wondrous things.  
O God, in all the earth our chorus  
With "Amen, Amen" rings.

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# The Sixth Meeting of the Christian Reformed Alliance

By C. Van Dam

From November 13 to 15, concerned members of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) came together as Christian Reformed Alliance (CRA) in Lynwood, Illinois, near Chicago. Their next meeting had originally been scheduled for the spring of 1991, but the far-reaching decision of this summer's synod to admit women to the offices of elder, minister and evangelist in the CRC made an earlier meeting of the CRA necessary. As could be expected, the agenda was very much dominated by this decision.

For the first time, unofficial observers from the Canadian Reformed Churches, (namely the Rev. J. Mulder and undersigned), were in attendance. Our presence was the result of an invitation received. Along with other guests we were heartily welcomed and well received. The purpose of this article is to pass on the major decisions that were taken. Not everything that is reported here could be witnessed by us, since we had to leave an hour or so before the official closing time.

## Opening evening

The meeting commenced on Tuesday evening. Thirty-nine churches sent delegates and twenty others were represented by observers. Many personal observers also attended. After Christian opening which included the reading of 1 Timothy 4, the delegates listened to the Form of Subscription and rose to give their assent to it. The chairman, Mr. P. Moen, noted, among other things, that there were now ninety-seven churches on the mailing list of the CRA. As far as the attendance at this meeting is concerned, the local pastor estimated about three hundred.

Guests were given an opportunity to address the assembly. Mr. Mark Zylstra of the Concerned Members stressed that the CRC is hemorrhaging and losing many members. The CRA had to act decisively in this meeting. He pleaded for charity so that those who are further in

deciding to leave not pass judgment on those who are not that far yet.

Dr. Cornel Venema of Mid-America Reformed Seminary informed the gathering that the work of Mid-America was growing and that nineteen students were now enrolled. The future of Mid-America is wedded to the future of the CRC as represented in the CRA. Besides Dr. Venema, Prof. N. Kloosterman was also present from Mid-America.

The Rev. Scott Clark of the Reformed Church in the United States briefly recounted the history of this church and indicated that he and his fellow observer delegate were present to show solidarity. The Canadian Reformed observers were also given the floor. The text of what was said is printed elsewhere in this issue of *Clarion*.

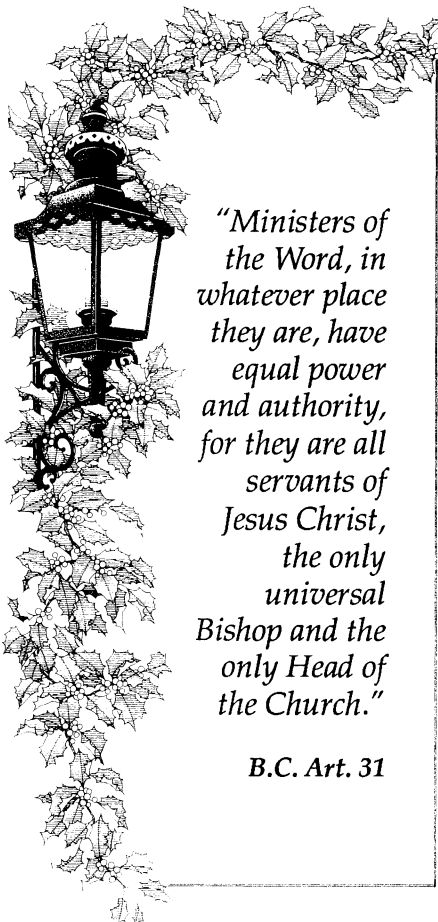
A plea from the Rev. Dr. N. Hegeman reminded the CRA not to forget the work of mission. Much confusion exists in the mission field in the Dominican Republic about the direction of the CRC. Please do not let us down.

It was also reported that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) had invited the CRA to meet with their Committee on Ecumenicity. The OPC also asked that another Reformed or Presbyterian "denomination" not be formed.

## To stay or leave?

The following day and a half was packed full of overtures, speeches, and decisions, all under the skilful direction of Mr. P. Moen.

Advice was requested on how to respond to the latest synod decision concerning women in ecclesiastical office. The CRA, which is an advisory body only, formulated several responses. In the first place, although it seems futile,



*"Ministers of  
the Word, in  
whatever place  
they are, have  
equal power  
and authority,  
for they are all  
servants of  
Jesus Christ,  
the only  
universal  
Bishop and the  
only Head of  
the Church."*

*B.C. Art. 31*



churches were encouraged to use all avenues of protest and appeal available to them. Secondly,

the CRA advises its member councils that the initiative and responsibility for withdrawing from the denominational relationship belongs to the church council. A decision to withdraw ought only to be made in the light of the resolutions adopted by the Alliance in its meeting of March 1990.

These resolutions mention, in part, that

The exercise of federative relationships is possible only on the basis of a unity in faith and confession. Spiritual unity precedes organizational unity, and is an absolute condition of it. Therefore, when a congregation's federative relationships compromise the credibility of her witness to the truth and serve to lead her members into sin and unbelief, the congregation is duty bound to cast off such relationships. When the unity of faith has been thus destroyed the congregation must enter a new scripturally obedient federative relationship. Belgic Confession, Art. 32.

The CRA also decided that should a member church withdraw from the CRC, "the Alliance requests such a council to notify all the churches of that action, and seek continued participation in the CRA."

In a further decision regarding the same area of concern, the CRA maintained strong solidarity by declaring that

Should a member council of the CRA be placed under discipline and be suspended or deposed from office by Classis or synod on unscriptural grounds, the Alliance advises member councils to consider such suspension or deposition as having been taken against all of the member councils.

As ground was given that the suspension and deposition of church councils by classes and synods is an expression of synodicalism, and militates against the Scripture, the Creeds, and the Church Order.

The CRA also decided to "appoint a Committee of Fraternal Relations with the mandate to explore, establish, and maintain relationships with churches which are committed with us to the Reformed confessions." In this context the Reformed Church of the United States (with whom our Dutch sister churches now have a sister relationship), the Orthodox CRC, the Free Reformed Churches, the Canadian Reformed Churches, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church were mentioned.



*A meeting in session in Lynwood Christian Reformed Church*

In a related decision that was taken the next day, councils who were considering separation were advised to remain in the CRC until they could provide for an orderly withdrawal. Also in regard to congregations which have separated themselves from the CRC

the CRA advises them to remain "independent" Reformed Churches with the understanding that they will, at the proper time, seek affiliation with like-minded Reformed Christian churches. In the meantime they should seek fellowship with other congregations through the CRA.

A committee of advice to help churches and individuals was appointed. Its members are Dr. R. Venema, Dr. P. Y. De Jong, Rev. J. Julien, Rev. M. Beach, and Prof. N. Kloosterman. A committee to study the practical implications involved in a possible withdrawal from the CRC was also formed. This decision came with a vote of 41 to 35 and was preceded by vigorous discussion. This committee is to report at the next meeting of the CRA. Its members are Rev. E. Knot, Rev. E. Lanning, Rev. A. Verburg, Mr. R. Snoeyink and Mr. R. Sittema.

### **Women in office**

The CRA reaffirmed their opposition to the ordination of women in the ecclesiastical offices because Scripture forbids it (1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 2:12). Member councils were also advised to take action to express their unwillingness to cooperate with synod's decision by various means. Those who preach and administer the sacraments should be limited to those endorsing their council's stand. Those who profess their faith or are to be received by transfer of membership are

to be questioned "concerning the full authority of the Bible and only the Bible for the regulating, founding, and establishing of our faith" (Belgic Confession, Art. 5)." Furthermore, congregations are to be instructed in the "council's responsibility to recommend financial support only for those institutions and agencies which uphold the full authority of Scripture."

With respect to relationships outside the immediate congregation, councils should cooperate closely with like-minded councils and limit their cooperation with churches that choose against Scripture and the Forms of Unity by implementing Synod's decision. A restricting of cooperation with such churches can be achieved

1. by refusing classical appointments, church visitors or counsellors from such churches;
2. by refusing financial support for denominational causes that implement synod's decision;
3. by leaving the broader assemblies and refusing to acknowledge the authority of their decisions each time a woman is seated as a delegate.

The CRA also gave advice to individual church members whose councils failed to acknowledge the authority of Scripture, to councils whose pastors refused to acknowledge the authority of Scripture, and councils with pastoral support whose congregations refused to acknowledge the authority of Scripture.

### **Seminary graduates**

Since the control of the pulpit can have a profound effect on the direction of a congregation, there was a justifiable

concern for the training of future ministers. At present all seminary students have to spend at least one year at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids. However, the promotion of the position that women be ordained will no longer be merely the opinion of some professors. This will now be taught and promoted, as well as the new method of Biblical interpretation that led to this decision. The CRA therefore recommended that member councils overture their classis to approach synod 1991 on this matter.

The CRA prepared a document that could be used. It was noted that "examination and licensure of candidates properly belongs to the local churches and their assemblies, not to a board or committee or agency of Synod." Already at the second meeting of the CRA (1987), the need to restore the responsibility of determining candidacy as much as possible to the churches was voiced.

With respect to procedure the CRA declared the following to be in accordance with Scripture and Reformed church polity.

1. Licensure Exam - that a council be authorized to examine for and grant licensure for conducting worship in its pulpit.
2. Candidacy Exam - that a regional group of councils be requested to conduct an examination for declaration of candidacy ...
3. Ordination Exam - that upon the recommendation of three councils a candidate who has accepted a call in a church affiliated with the CRA be examined by a regional group of councils in doctrine and life for the purpose of ordination.

In defense of this procedure it was noted that

the current situation violates Scripture, the Confessions, and Reformed polity by requiring candidates for ministry to submit to officially endorsed heretical departure from God's Word.

This procedure avoids the dangers of independentism by placing the process of examination squarely within the hands of the councils and/or group of councils called to exercise the authority of Christ.

It was further noted that this action was warranted because "councils possess original authority over the pulpit and means of grace."

### Statement of Affirmation

The Alliance adopted affirmations in which the Lord Jesus Christ was acknowledged as the only Head of the Church (Belgic Confession, Art. 31) and that the ordaining of women to office is contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture. Furthermore, synod's decision on women in office was affirmed to have

### Conclusion

It is clear from the decisions taken, that the faithful churches in the CRC are on a collision course with the official positions as well as the accepted way of doing things in the CRC. What struck this observer was the repeated emphasis at the meetings on the authority and responsibility of the local church. Syn-



*From l. to r. Dr. C. Van Dam, Hamilton, Rev. J. Tuininga, Lethbridge, Rev. J. Gangar, Wellandport*

"broken the covenant and trust that has existed between the churches and departs from the historic position of the Reformed Church." It was also affirmed

that we are spiritually one with all those who are committed with us to the historic Reformed confessions and therefore we desire to establish and maintain relationships with Churches which share this commitment.

### Confession of Sin and Call to Repentance

In this document, the delegates acknowledged their own sins and recommitted themselves to what they had promised to do as ministers and as elders. Finally, the CRC is called

to repent of this unbiblical decision by declaring it to be contrary to the Word of God, our confessions, and the Church Order;  
to take the necessary steps of discipline to ensure that our historic understanding of and obedience to the Scripture and our Doctrinal Standards be maintained;  
to discipline those officebearers who will not repent and who persist in their unbiblical teaching and practice.

odicalism and hierarchy were repeatedly opposed.

The concerned in the CRC are a lonely minority. The emphatic statement of one delegate still rings in my ears. Here, he said, we experience the real unity of the faith that we no longer experience at the classical and synodical level. This last meeting had surprisingly little discord. There was virtual unanimity on most important decisions. A very good spirit of tenacious determination to remain Reformed prevailed.

If the decisions (the advices!) of the CRA are taken seriously, then unless the miracle of repentance from liberalism occurs, the days of the member churches in the CRC are in all likelihood numbered. As observers, Rev. J. Mulder and I were also encouraged by the decision to establish a Committee of Fraternal Relations. May Reformed people on this continent find each other in the unity of faith!

I have noticed in various ways that the plight of the concerned in the CRC has the attention of the membership of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Let us continue to pray for them and where possible offer support locally. May the Lord Jesus Christ at His time bring together those who belong together!

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## *Text of a short speech as observer at the Meeting of the Christian Reformed Alliance (1990)*

*By C. Van Dam (slightly abridged)*

### **Esteemed brothers,**

Rev. J. Mulder and I are very grateful for your invitation to observe this meeting and for the gracious way in which we have been received and even given the privilege of the floor. You have a very weighty agenda in which much is at stake. In a sense, it would have been understandable if you had wanted to keep this a private in-house affair. The fact that you did not do so attests to an applaudable openness in the way you conduct your affairs.

We have not been officially delegated by any major assembly of the Canadian Reformed Churches and so we cannot speak officially on their behalf. We can pass on the greetings of our respective churches, the Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church, and the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church both at Burlington, Ontario. As you are aware, the Rev. Cl. Stam was not able to attend as planned, but the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton of which he is minister sends greetings. Although not officially empowered to speak on behalf of the federation of churches of which we are officebearers, we are convinced that we speak in the line of past discussions and decisions concerning the Christian Reformed Church if we mention here the following.

In the first place we are very thankful that we can be in your midst. The Canadian Reformed Churches have had a long and deep interest in the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). Historically, we are brothers from one house. Before the Second World War and the terrible events leading up to the ecclesiastical liberation of 1944 we were Dutch sister churches. It is therefore not surprising that from the very beginning of our existence as Canadian Reformed Churches we have sought to address the issues that were separating the CRC and us in order that we could experi-

ence unity with the CRC. We therefore also felt the need to address the CRC in our Appeal of 1963 and warn it about dangers which we saw in, for example, the hierarchical features of the revised Church Order. In 1977 we warned about the leaven from the CRC's sister church, the Reformed Church in the Netherlands that continued to do so much damage in your midst. What you as the conservative element in the CRC were fighting through your associations and periodicals, (for example, of Report 44 on the

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**“... seek each other in obedience to the will of our Head, Jesus Christ, who prayed that they all be one.”**

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nature and extent of Biblical authority), we were concerned with in addressing our last appeal to the CRC. Needless to say, Canadian Reformed people have felt and continue to sense a kinship with you and not a few subscribe to conservative periodicals published in your midst.

You will understand brothers that from a Canadian Reformed perspective the recent decision by the CRC synod on the admission of women to the offices of the church is not seen as an isolated mistake, but it is part of a continuous pattern of deviation from the Reformed faith which follows, be it at a certain distance, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands with whom the CRC is now in Ecclesiastical Fellowship.

You will also understand that as

Canadian Reformed observers, our prayers and sympathies are with you. Your cause for the Reformed faith is also our cause. Your desire to be truly Reformed in obedience to the Scriptures and the Reformed confessions is also our desire. May the Lord guide and enable you by His Word and Spirit as you continue to wrestle with the weighty issues that are before you.

We as Canadian Reformed Churches have yearned for the removal of barriers with the CRC for many years until the CRC decided to discontinue their committee for contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches in 1972. Our Synod of 1977 also officially stopped the contact in 1977. The present situation raises a question. Could the time be coming closer that we, the concerned in the CRC and the Canadian Reformed Churches, can find each other under one ecclesiastical roof? We need each other in a world that is becoming increasingly secular in outlook and lifestyle. There are many proposals on your table. Some are more far reaching than others. We do not envy your very difficult position in a church which you have loved and laboured for so many years, – a church that now is straying from the Word of God. It is not proper for us to give unsolicited advice from the sidelines. We only wish to make one general point. Should the discussion go into such a direction, then please do not form another “denomination.” Those who profess the Reformed faith should not fragment their witness, but should seek each other in obedience to the will of our Head, Jesus Christ, who prayed that they all be one.

Brothers be assured of the great interest and prayers of the Canadian Reformed community in your present struggles and of our readiness to be of support and assistance. May the Lord bless you in the way of obedience to His Word.



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# Two Aspects of K. Schilder's Importance for the Liberation

By W.W.J. VanOene

The name of Prof. Dr. K. Schilder is inseparably connected with the Liberation of 1944. Were not the liberated Reformed Churches in the Netherlands sometimes called "Schilder Churches?" And such in spite of Schilder's own expressed warning: "The *church* does not swear by someone's character; and its 'spirit' is still good for as long as it has the courage to say: 'Test my letters.' It does not live from 'nice people,' but from the *truth*." (p.47, see below) What was meant by this derogatory nickname was that these churches showed allegiance to one man, that for the sake of one man they had "broken" with the church and had formed their own sect; for this is one of the characteristics of the sect that it pledges allegiance to one particular person, that it elevates his ideas and theses to the rank of official doctrine and condemns whatever does not fully agree with it.

There is no doubt about it that we who were taught by "K.S." esteemed him very highly and were fond of him. He definitely was not the unpleasant person many considered him to be. On the contrary, he had a warm heart and if I am to mention one "shortcoming" it was that he trusted people too soon. But who would call this a shortcoming? It certainly was not because he was our professor of dogmatics and we *had* to follow his lectures that you hated it if you had to miss one. Although it was often difficult to grasp what he was saying, we realized that he brought something substantial, that every time anew he directed us back to the basics, to the Holy Scriptures. And anyone who witnessed his return from the prison to which the German occupation forces had confined him for more than three months in 1940 cannot



but testify that there was such an outburst of love and friendship as I have never seen in the case of any other professor. I still recall the event and when I close my eyes I can still visualize the scene: Schilder slowly ascending the stairs that led to the Lesser Assembly Hall. At first there was silence, but when he was about halfway, there suddenly was a burst of jubilation, and we rushed down so that he was surrounded and carried by the love and joy of his students.

But is Schilder inseparably tied to the Liberation because of personal love and high esteem? No such claim can justly be made. There were others as well whom we loved and esteemed highly but whom we had to leave because we did not love them more than we loved Christ and the obedience He demanded.

Is it then perhaps because he drafted and read the *Act of Liberation or Return* at the meeting in The Hague on August 11, 1944? Is it because he was the acknowledged leader of the "movement" who demanded absolute loyalty and who led his followers into a venture the consequences of which they could not oversee or even surmise?

Such and similar assertions amount to nothing less than mere slander.

The answer to the question what his importance for the Liberation was must be sought in a completely different direction, a direction which has nothing to do with personality, with likes and dislikes. I realize that there will have been more aspects than the ones I want to bring to the fore in this brief commemorative article, but as I see it and to put it briefly: K. Schilder's importance for and contribution to the Reformation of 1944 was that he brought us back from systems to the Scriptures and taught us to see the church again, not in a narrow, sectarian way but in a wide and truly ecumenical way. These two elements are basically one: for also in the point of the church he stressed the need to go back to the divine revelation.

In his address at the above-mentioned meeting of August 11, 1944, he followed the line we can see clearly in his publications until that date. Let me give two quotations from my notes on that meeting. I know that what Schilder said on that occasion has been published in a more complete form, but this time I go by my own notes.

## Two quotations

In what has happened, he said, we recognize the decree of the Lord. But there is also the "It Is Written." What has

happened is inscrutable, but the next step may be taken only in complete obedience to the revealed Word. What should be done? What should be done concerning the recognition of synodical decisions? God is a God of order. Synodical decisions must be kept in the churches as long as everything goes according to the good order. But there is also the provision of Article 31 of the Church Order: what is contrary to God's Word or is in conflict with the Church Order cannot be maintained. Here it is not a question of prestige. We must ask: What did the Lord reveal?

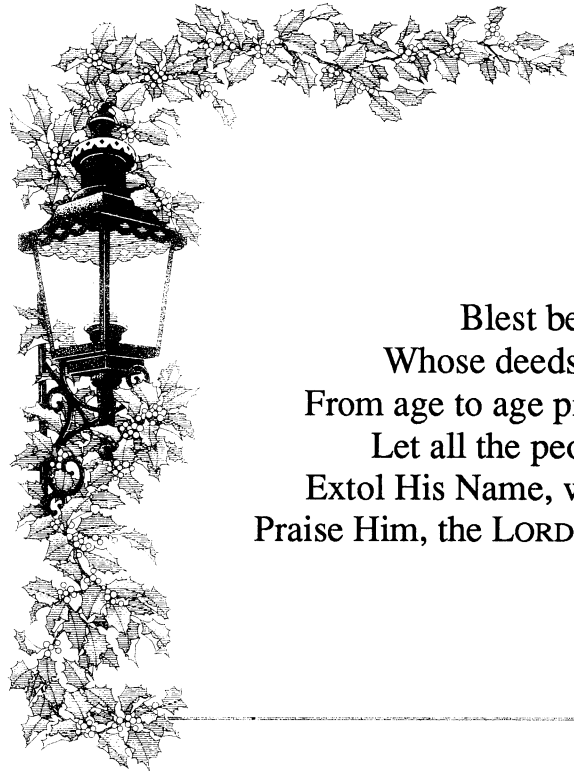
Through the addition to the confession an obstacle has been laid in the path towards the unification of all who in this country could become one on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity. In binding and loosing we must be standing on God's Word and the unabridged but also unadulterated confession, that so we may call together that one church which we may call catholic. We may never hot-headedly leave the church. No one should ever be able to say that we have widened the schism. The schism has been caused by the general synod. We, on our part, are not allowed to take one step unless it is one according to God's Word.

### The two elements

In these two sections from Schilder's address I see the very same two elements which, as said before, characterize his work and constitute his importance for and contribution to or, if you so wish, his role in the Liberation: back to the written Word of God and : be aware of what the church is according to that Word. This is the reason why in the synodical decisions he also saw an impediment to the unification of all who with us were standing on the foundation of the Holy Scriptures as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity.

It was his desire to see them all together within the church and it was his striving indeed "that they all may be one," not merely in the sense in which these words are commonly understood but according to the true meaning of the Saviour's words. It is particularly because of the true meaning of our Saviour's words that Schilder did all he could to refute the error of the pluriformity of the church and that he stressed the need to see the church as we confess it on the ground of God's Word.

There may be a considerable number of people who doubt that Schilder was truly ecumenical and that he desired the unity of all true Christian believers. Some may even recall his polemics and question whether such writing was con-



PSALM 106:24

Blest be the God of Israel  
Whose deeds in majesty excel;  
From age to age praise Him forever.  
Let all the people "Amen!" say,  
Extol His Name, who fails us never.  
Praise Him, the LORD our God, for aye!

ducive to true unity or was rather an impediment to it. Did Schilder not alienate people by the manner in which he wrote against them or "discussed" controversies with them? And was his manner of conducting polemics really an indication of his desire for unity?

In answer to these questions we may ask: "Would he really have spent so much time and effort in trying to convince others if he had not been driven by the desire that they all might be one?" "What is 'love'?" he once asked. "Am I permitted to let my neighbour stand there where in my opinion he is not allowed to stand?" (page 130, see below)

Whoever reads Schilder's polemics must of necessity keep in mind the two elements mentioned before. Admittedly, his manner of writing often was such that opponents felt antagonized and paid more attention to the manner in which he brought the arguments to the fore than to the arguments themselves. But also in all his polemics Schilder followed the two axioms: God's Word as it is lying there before us in the Holy Scriptures is the Truth and the Judge; and : abide by what on the basis of the Scriptures we confess concerning the church, the Bride of Christ. Thus he opposed and refuted the theories of Karl Barth, specifically regarding the Scriptures, as well as the idea of the so-called pluriformity of the church. Only if one takes the confession of the church seriously, there is hope for unity, was Schilder's stand.

A brief article is not well-suited for an extensive survey of Schilder's thoughts about the church. Besides, this is more a

topic for a dogmatician. But in connection with our question what his importance is for the Liberation and our answer, namely his emphasis on the necessity to go back to the Scriptures and to uphold the confession concerning the church and to live according to it, we'll give a few quotations. I could have given many quotations from the volumes of *De Reformatie*, but our readers may not have access to them. For this reason I confine myself to a small section of one volume of *De Kerk*, Vol. I (Oosterbaan & LeCointre N.V.: Goes, 1960) so as not to make it too extensive. These quotations have been chosen to substantiate my evaluation of Schilder's importance for the Liberation.

### Not based on experience

"No one among the Reformed builds up a doctrine of creation from *experience*. Creation (as an act of God) *cannot* be experienced. The concept 'creation' receives its contents among us only from the *revelation-word*. But when people come to the point of the *church*, it seems that this *revelation* no longer has any input. Then everything is based on *experience*. What can I achieve? Can I maintain that the church is the communion of the *believers*? Am I able to 'see' that? If *not*, then I make something *else out of it*, I call it 'discipleship' or the 'life under God's Word,' or something else; in any case: I make it such and I say it in such a manner *that I can find a way out with it in the experience*." (p. 152)

"Scan the Apostles' Creed. Recall all that has been going on about justifi-

cation, the return of Christ to judge, eternal life, the descent into hell. Occupy yourself deliberately with church history and dogma history to know in how far *Scripture* determines *everything* here, while *experience* determines *nothing*." (p.153)

"I can only speak a wise word about the church when I distance myself from what I see. I do the same when speaking about other points of the faith: the virgin birth, the satisfaction, the coming of Christ." (p.126)

(We are the ones that) "endeavour to derive from Scripture the principles concerning the church and church government and then to realize them in time. In the point of the church they are faced with the *same* problems there are with *all* 'good works': not reaching perfection, yet they labour to the best of their knowledge that as well as possible the rules of Scripture are being observed in practice. This leads to a firm position in their own obligation, for then we apply to *ourselves* : whoever does not gather with Me scatters; and when judging others we say that which is parallel to it : whoever is not against Me is for Me." (p.49/50)

"In our days the anti-Reformed group wants to construe the concept of the church from experience, from what can be seen, from what, as it seems, can be realized. This is applying to the church a rationalistic, modernistic manner of reasoning. No, the church is *object of faith*. I must determine its essence in precisely the same manner in which I describe the Trinity, Christ's satisfaction, the last judgment. When describing the essence of the church, I am not at all concerned with what is given empirically or with the practical situation or with what can be achieved, but my only concern is the spe-

cial revelation, the Word of God. Why do people want to reason out all the articles of the Confession from out of Holy Scripture and dogma except precisely the article concerning the church? Because they want to excuse their own disobedience and in this respect are no longer Reformed. They forget that the church is just as much object of faith (a stumblingblock and folly for the flesh) as the Cross of Christ." (p.88)

### Call to unity

"Who has greater love with God: the one who thoughtlessly, or with a weak thought makes a *gesture* of unity at a place *where neither of the two parties ought to stand* and who is in the given situation unable to proceed beyond that gesture, or he who prays for himself and for the other one that God may lead them both *back to the place where they both ought to be?*" (p.129)

"Someone who is earnestly convinced that the church to which he belongs *must* exist for Christ's sake and that every one is in duty bound to join himself to her can be wrong therein, but at least he thinks that he serves God in the church. But whoever accepts relativism and does not dare to call his own church the only one that is allowed to be in existence shows that his own reformation is nothing but an organized work of mulishness. Not shrinking from a schism because one is convinced that it is a **MUST** — it **CAN** be an error; but **BASICALLY** it is the will to be obedient." (p. 57)

If anyone should think that Schilder wrote the above words to justify the Liberation, he must know that they were written in 1928 ! He fought against relativism, for this does not get us anywhere

either in the church or outside of it. And the following words from 1926 apply not only to the world outside the church, they are most up to date also to describe the political situation in our country. Calls for unity abound, but each and every one should retain his own distinct character. With all the talk about multiculturalism our country has never been more divided than it is right now. And with all the talk about also ecclesiastically "retaining one's own identity" new groups are being formed as if we were dealing with a repeating fraction. Here follow Schilder's words : "As far as life outside of the sphere of religion is concerned: note that there has never been a century that clamoured more for the *community-idea* in its broadest and richest application than our century; on the other hand, no century has so strongly expressed itself in favour of differentiation." (p.11)

We must come to a close, although the temptation to quote more extensively from Schilder's writings is great. Quotations, I realize, are always given to prove one's point and I did the same in the above. On the other hand, I am convinced that one cannot find a different line of thought in all of Schilder's works, even though there was undoubtedly development in his thinking. On purpose I confined myself to a small part of the early period. No one can now justly assert that those lines were written to defend the Liberation of 1944. That they prepared the way for it is beyond doubt and therefore we thank the Giver of all good things for His gracious gift in our brother Klaas Schilder who humbly bowed for God's revelation and refused to go beyond it.





# REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By R. Schouten

## *The Measure of a Man*

Today I want to address the question, "What should I look for in a guy?" This is a question that primarily concerns young women, but for obvious reasons should be read by young men as well. After all, they are the ones being evaluated! Yes, we propose to take a look at what every Christian girl should expect and has a right to expect from the boys in her church.

Of course, I recognize that there are all kinds of complex factors at work between males and females. Who can really ever comprehend the "chemistry" that makes one person that special somebody? The way in which a girl sets her heart on a boy and a young man on a young woman is very mysterious. Nobody can discern just why one person becomes very special.

And yet, there are some basic principles which govern our choices. Although every relationship is unique, there are certain things which Christian women ought to expect from every Christian man. What, indeed, should a girl look for in a guy?

Well, the world has its own answers to this question. Some answers are crude: the guy should be "cute." He should have a good physique, a fabulous body. And, of course, he should have the bucks, the right wheels, the right clothes. He should be able to make hilarious remarks at all the right occasions. He should be popular. In short, for many people today, when it comes to looking for a guy, the big question is outer appearance. What counts is the surface impression.

Other answers of the world are a little more sophisticated. It is said that the man should be "sensitive" to the woman's needs. He should be "mature" which means that he shouldn't take the relationship too seriously and should simply accept things if at a certain time the girl wants to end the relationship.



Of course, these realities cut both ways. What girls want (or pretend to want), the guys are inclined to give.

Undoubtedly, all the factors which influence male/female relationships in the world have their impact amongst Christian young people as well. So we make it our task today to find out from the Word of God what the standards should be. What is the Biblical measure of a man? And once we find out what that measure is, we would encourage Christian women to hold men to it and not grant their favours to those who fall short. We need young women who will demand the very best in their choice of a partner—not the best in looks, prestige, ability and so on, but the best in meeting the Biblical requirements.

In a nutshell, the Christian young woman should expect of her male friend/fiancé commitment to God. A relationship with a member of the other sex is meant, indeed, to be fun and exciting, but at the same time, it is a deadly serious business. You can't afford to be vague in your expectations on this point.

So when you think about the young men you know, the most important question is always: what kind of a relationship does this person have with God? The religious question is always the first one. The kind of relationship a potential boyfriend has with God will totally govern the kind of relationship he might have with you.

But how do you tell if a person has a good relationship with God? Well, in the first place, this means that you are going to have to talk with him. This will sometimes be hard in a society which values touch much more than talk. If a fellow is pawing all over you on the first occasion that you go out with him, this will have to be seen as an indication of a very poor relationship with God. Because he fails to know and love God, he also fails to treat you, God's creature, with respect and dignity. Drop him!

A man who knows God will have learned to keep his hands at home

where they belong. Sexual intimacy of any sort is something that must be preserved for marriage. Of course, there is growing mutual desire and physical attraction, but that, too, must be carefully controlled throughout courtship and engagement.

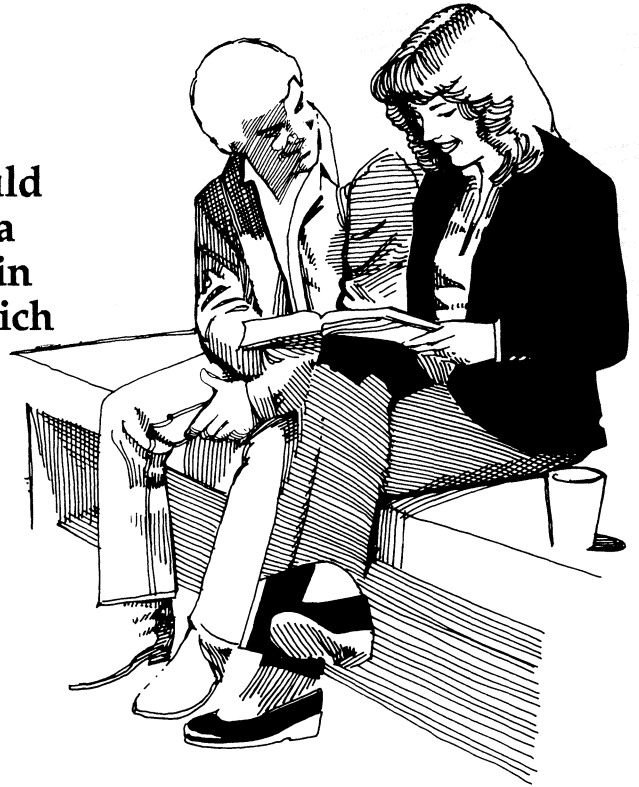
The Bible presents sexual intimacy and intercourse not as the foundation but rather as the pinnacle of a male/female relationship. Without the framework of a relationship built on communication, lifelong commitment and the mutual worship of God, such forms of behaviour are merely degrading animal-like activities. Any man can fool around with a girl. Any man can try to seduce a girl. Any man can give in to lust. That takes no talent at all. But it takes a real man, yes, it takes really Christian, manly self-control to behave yourself when you are with a girl you really like. It takes a Spirit-filled Christian man to find a wife for himself in all holiness and purity – not in lust like the pagans.

This does not mean that the Christian man is a prudish person who denies the reality of sexual attraction or who has no eye whatever for feminine charms. Far from it. But precisely because he knows the power and beauty of sexual attraction, he has learned to deal with it carefully – according to Biblical norms. So the young women of God's church should always make it clear that those young men who see girls as so many trophies to be won and placed in the cabinet, will never have a hope of winning their affection. A man who is always trying to get his hands on you should be thrown out of your life – at least until he smartens up. Even better, you should tell your parents about him.

A Christian young man will be interested in how a girl thinks and in what she feels about various matters. He will respect her opinions. He will be able to talk about God with her – not just in an abstract way, but concretely and personally. The measure of a Christian man is that for him, his girlfriend or fiancé is never number one in his life, but always number two – yes, number two after God!

All this does not mean that every serious young man should always be talking about God and Christ whenever he goes out with a girl. That would be unnatural. But it does mean that his relationship with God in Christ does govern him at all times. Even when he is having fun, sharing a joke, eating dinner at a restaurant, enjoying an evening of recreation with a girl he likes or is getting to know, he always conducts himself as a person living under the law of God. And, even though he might not always be

**“... you should always seek a partner within the faith, which also means within the church.”**



talking about God or Christ, yet it will inevitably come up in conversation.

Unfortunately, many men themselves are under the impression that “spiritual conversation,” and serious talk of any sort is the wrong way to attract a girl. For the guy who is serious at a Young People's Society meeting, or who takes an active role in church functions and affairs, who is even known to read *Clarion* and other kinds of religious literature is all too often seen as a “wuss” or a “wimp” or worse. They are not real men. Real men are macho. Real men don't read the Bible. Real men don't pray. Real men don't show a soft side. Religion is for women. Real men buy nice clothes and hot cars and look for a good time. Real men drink beer and go to parties and dance well.

Well, the Bible has a different measure of a man. And it's high time that all you young ladies of the church start holding the men to that measure. You ought to have high expectations. After all, if God blesses the beginnings of a liking so that it blossoms into a mature relationship and even marriage, the boy you once went out with for the first time will become your husband.

At that time you don't want to be thinking to yourself: Oh, I wish I had a husband with some convictions. I wish I had a husband who could lead our home, who could give spiritual direction, who could help me in disciplining our children. Love can cover physical blem-

ishes. Love can cover a lack of money or the absence of a really nice car. But no amount of love can cover up the absence of disciplined manhood, of male Christian leadership. Love can cover a less than perfect body, a body which by the standards of the age is a weak body. But love can never cover a weak faith.

Let the girls of the church of Christ make it clear that what they really despise is a man who is weak of faith, soft in principle, a man who has never given his heart to God. Of course, you should always seek a partner within the faith, which also means within the church. But simply having his name in the church books is not good enough. What you want to see in him is a developing Christian character.

Does this sound dull? I hope not. I can't imagine anything duller, more predictable and uninteresting than the modern ideal of what a young man should be like. Truly exciting men are those who know God and who are working on getting to know Him better all the time, who live by His Law, and who, as living members of the church, are deeply involved.

Living by this Biblical measure of a man is the only hope for young men. It is the only hope for young women interested in building a happy and stable Christian life. And ultimately, only when people live by this Biblical measure of a man, is there any hope for the church. It's that serious.

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# K. Schilder and subjectivism

By W. Boessenkool

## A lecture by Prof Dr. K. Schilder

Horat! This is a Latin word announcing that after a short break the new lecture will soon start. The professor is on his way to the lecture room and it is a custom that all the students are inside the lecture room before he will enter. All the students are standing. With a gesture of the professor the students will take their seats and listen to his dictation or lecture.

Before Prof. K. Schilder starts with his lecture, he glances back and sees some notes on the black board by a previous lecturer about the psychological distinctions among man. He takes the brush and wipes all the annotations out. The students hear him saying: "The gospel must not be brought in that subjectivistic way." It was the time before the Liberation (Vrijmaking) of the church and in these few words there was already an indication of the struggle lying ahead.

He then starts with his lecture. He has only a scrap piece of paper which he fits into one of the books which he always had with him. However, he does not open the books because he knows the quotations by heart. Even if we cannot write that Latin sentence that fast, he gives us, from his memory, the number of the page so that we can look it up later. "Do you understand?" is his question. "No, professor," is the hesitating answer of one of the students speaking for the mute majority who do not understand. And with all patience K.S. explains the matter thoroughly. It is a heavy duty lecture for the students. He always called them: "Amici," i.e. friends and had a fatherly ear to listen to their problems.

## One of the oral exams

I remember an oral exam in dogmatics and ethics in 1948. He asked me the

question how it was possible that I could be so advanced with my studies. Now we had received a letter from a Prof. Greijdanus saying that those who entered the theological studies in war-time could continue with their studies without passing the propadeutic exam, normally completed after one year at the College (today: Univer-

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**"... the covenant of  
grace has been  
established with  
the believers and  
all their children,  
and they all belong  
to that covenant."**

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sity). So I produced that letter and he started questioning. Suddenly there was a phone call. He apologized and disappeared into another room. There was undoubtedly a good tiding, because his face was beaming when he returned. He continued with the questioning and especially paid special attention to the perspicuity of the Holy Scripture, i.e. that the Scriptures are transparent in themselves. He also paid attention to the promises, commandments and threatenings of the covenant of grace. In his examination he armed you against subjectivism.

He concluded with saying that he was very busy, as we all knew very well, I had,

however, also made an appointment for the oral exam of ethics. Cautiously I reminded him about that exam. "O.K.," he said, "but then I do it in ten questions and all the answers must be correct otherwise you fail or you must make a new appointment." I agreed to that stipulation and he started questioning. One of the questions was how to act in the congregation if there was a different attitude towards a special matter.

He was always busy training ministers for the ministry to be ministers of the Word, not looking at the persons (subjects) but going back to the infallible Word of God as the only authority in church life and in ethical matters.

I got the highly appreciated certificates that I had by passing these two oral exams. Delighted I left his house, 14 Vloeddijk, Kampen and told my friend, with whom I celebrated it student-like.

## Liberation – the struggle against subjectivism

In the years 1942 till 1945 Prof. K. Schilder could not give lectures and the Nazis gave him an interdict not in any way to write publicly. So he had been made mute. He was also sought by the Nazis who wanted to take him captive. The Lord, who reigns over everything protected his church and the life of his servant.

He even had the possibility to give courses to the members of the church of Groningen in the last winter of the Second World War. At that time, by bicycle, he went from one place to another to explain what had to be done in obedience to the Word of God against the decisions of the Synods of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands from 1942-1944. As soon as it was possible Prof. K. Schilder returned to Kampen, the city of our Theological College, and prepared, for the students, the course about that well-known report of the Synod

of 1943. A committee prepared the so-called "Praeadvies." This "pre-advice" was a brochure of 64 pages, distributed among the delegates of the synod on Friday before closing and to be dealt with the next Monday afternoon. Not even the elder delegates had the opportunity to read it. Nevertheless, the conclusions were adopted. The appeals against the decisions of 1942 were declined. The decision meant that the children of the believers must be presumed to have been regenerated, until the opposite appears, later in their life.

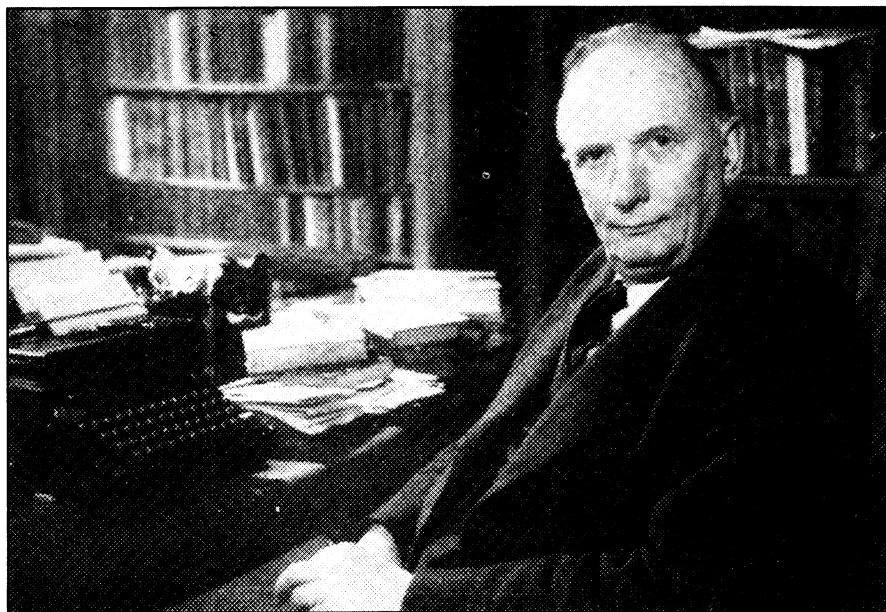
Prof. Schilder lectured on this synodical "advice" for about half a year.

It is impossible to give even a summary of that course in this article. Besides I have no library at hand. But one thing remains in my mind. K.S., (an abbreviation of his name and sometimes used by himself) stressed that in that advice and decision the truth of God's promises was made dependent upon its acceptance by the believer. If anybody who had been baptized was not regenerated or elect the promises were of no value for that person. His baptism was only a messing with water. Schilder saw that the truth of God's Word was at stake in the advice and decision of the synod. Every member, elder, deacon and minister was compelled to accept the synod's decision as the truth according to Scripture on penalty of being suspended from their office.

The synod accused K.S. and all who followed him that they were following the Arminians when they said that all children of the believers are in the covenant of grace. However, K.S. kept to the Scriptures and to the confessions, and he quoted many Reformed authors of the 16th and 17th century, who say that the covenant of grace has been established with the believers and all their children, and that they all belong to that covenant. With the view of the Synod we first have to find out whether we are elected or that we are regenerated. Where do we find the answer? One must find it in himself.

The Reformed Churches were ruined by these decisions. Prophetically K.S. warned that this was only the beginning of deformation. More would come. And now, half a century later, we see the result. In 1981 the synodical Reformed synod published the report: "God with us!" In it we are told that God's revelation, the Bible, only then becomes God's truth when it functions in its relation to the believer; and that the Bible, to be truly God's Word, needs a believing person. This is pure subjectivism.

K.S. stood for the reliability of God's promises and commandments and threatenings in his covenant of grace. Because we are even as believers very weak and cannot stand against the at-



*Prof. Dr. K. Schilder*

tacks of the evil one, not even for a moment, we cannot find any assurance in ourselves. Many, he warned, will use this pre-supposition as a sleeping pillow, and will not respond with obedient faith to God's call of repentance. The synod said that those who were baptized and did not arrive in heaven were only the exceptions. But the Bible tells us: "Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (1 Cor. 10:5), because the good news "did not meet with faith in the hearers" (Hebr. 4:2). K.S. could become very angry when he considered that so many sheep and lambs had been led astray by those synodical decisions. It was, at the same time, his compassion for the dearly bought flock of the Good Shepherd.

K.S. stressed in his lectures on the synodical decisions that, according to them all the certainty of faith had to be found in the human subject. Thus he turned the accusation of Arminianism back to the synod and its decisions. This is obvious, for according to the decisions we have to find the truth that we belong to the covenant of grace, inside ourselves. Not finding it there, would mean that God's promises are not for us and our children. Thus the covenant of grace had been overturned by the synod in 1943.

### **Epilogue**

We are living in Canada on this 100th anniversary of the birth of K. Schilder. We are living in a world which does not take into account the Word of God. But we are also living in a world with (so-called) denominations which followed

the apostasy of the (synodical) Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Others turned the charismatic way because they were sick and tired of the sermons which are more a political lecture than explanation of the Word of God.

In such a world God has granted us the rich inheritance of the Liberation of the church, that wonderful gift of the Father of lights, that we may know about the struggle against subjectivism in the early forties of this century in the Netherlands. The struggle continues. As soon as the trustworthiness of God's Word is attacked, we all, big and small, have to be on the alert. As soon as the subject of the believer will be the center of preaching, of catechism teaching, home visits, and of everything else in church life, then God is bereaved of His honour and we make Him a liar and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:10).

Once I said: If it were only for my own faith, I'm glad that I have been and still am a student of K.S. Sometimes, at the end of a thorough, profound lecture on a dogmatic topic, K.S. concluded with the remark: "How glorious it is to be Reformed!" Indeed, against all subjectivism of the modern age which comes to us in many ways there is only one response: It has been written, and it has happened. It is God's Word and God's history in which all His promises and threats will be fulfilled. His covenant of grace will stand forever. Even when children of the covenant will be thrown into the outer darkness (Matt. 8:12), others will hear: Come, O Blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34).

# COLLEGE CORNER

By C. Van Dam

## Gifts for the Library

Once again it is my pleasant duty to report on gifts received for the library. You will understand that I am referring to special gifts received over and above the regular support our library receives from the Women's Savings Action. From various church bulletins it is clear that the work of the Savings Action continues and the College community is most grateful for it. Our library would not be what it is without this labour of our sisters!

In Australia too, the sisters are gathering money for the library as was recently reported in *Clarion* by the Women's Savings Action. The fact that Australia also remembers the needs of the College was underlined by two letters which have been received. One came from Rev. C. Bouwman and contained a cheque for \$400 (Canadian), the result of an offering in Byford when Dr. Faber spoke about the College and one was sent by br. A. M. VanDongen with a cheque of \$781.81 (Canadian), the result of offerings taken at two evenings at which Dr. Faber spoke about the College in Launceston and West Tamar. We are very grateful for these donations which we also value as an expression of the love for the College and its work from the Australian brotherhood!

Over the past several months we also again experienced the joy of receiving special gifts from individuals who were able to part with good books for our College. Let me begin with one of the teachers of the first hour, the Rev. G. Van Dooren, the first instructor in the diacological disciplines. In view of their advanced age, the Rev. and Mrs. Van Dooren have moved out of the manse that has been their home in Burlington for thirty-five years and now live in an apartment. While the Rev. Van Dooren is still a vigorous student of the Scriptures and preaches regularly, he did use this opportunity to donate the larger part of his library to the Theological College. Needless to say we are very thankful for this. Although the collection has not yet been processed, it is clear that our library will be enriched by it! What we already have in the College, will be passed on to the students for a token amount.

We were privileged to receive from Prof. L. Selles a copy of his new *A Series*

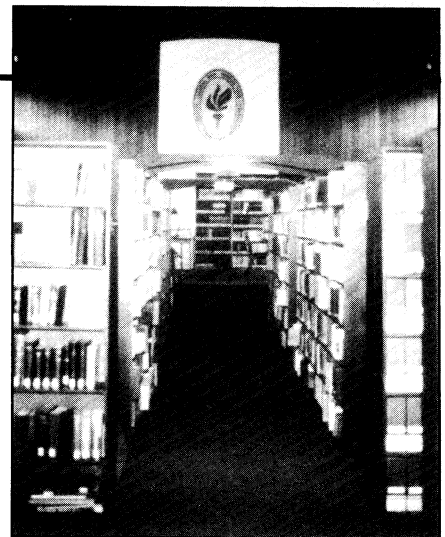
of *Outlines on the Revelation to John* (revised edition, 1990). We are thankful for this fruit of his pen on a very difficult book of Scripture and for the fact that he is able to continue to study and prepare outlines. May his work also be studied in the midst of the churches! It will enrich the reader.

The Rev. G. Van Rongen remembered us by sending a copy of his new book on liturgy, *Met al de heiligen. Liturgie in hemel en op aarde* (1990), [*With all the saints. Liturgy in heaven and on earth*]. The Rev. Van Rongen has spent much of his life studying liturgical matters and we appreciate receiving his most recent book.

Mrs. G. Scholten, the widow of the first lecturer in church history and church polity, the Rev. H. Scholten, donated a copy of H. de Cock's famous book entitled (in abbreviated form) *Verdediging van de ware gereformeerde leer* [*Defense of the True Reformed Doctrine*] or as it is also called, *De Schaapskooi van Christus aangetast door twee wolven en verdedigd door H. de Cock*, [*The Sheepfold of Christ Attacked by Two Wolves and Defended by H. de Cock*]. This book was published in Groningen in 1833 and was a catalyst in the events leading to the Secession of 1834. Needless to say it is wonderful to have this part of our history in the library.

Another book of historical significance (be it of quite a different nature!) was donated by brother J. Gansekoole from Fergus. He gave us a copy of Friedrich Delitzsch, *Babel und Bibel* (1905) [*Babel and Bible*]. The first volume was printed under this title in 1902, with subsequent publications under the same title in 1903 and 1905. These books became famous because Delitzsch basically argued that anything of significance in the Old testament was based on earlier Babylonian ideas and practices. This stance precipitated quite a heated debate.

Brother Joh. de Haas of Langley enhanced our library by contributing volumes 4 and 5 of his *Gedenkt uw voorgangers* (1989) [*Remember Your Leaders*]. These books complete this important biographical reference work of ministers who served from the Afschei-



ding (1834) and died before 1986. We congratulate brother De Haas in finishing this large project!

We have also been enriched by a number of *Acts* of Synod of our sister churches in the Netherlands which have been donated to us by these churches so that they are now complete from 1923 on. This donation as well as the excellent cooperation with our sister institution in Kampen in receiving publications from their midst is much appreciated. We would also like to acknowledge with gratitude receiving the *Acts* of the 1990 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia.

From Mr. T.M.P. Van der Ven, principal of the Teacher's College, we received with thanks a copy of *Le Psautier de Genève* (1986), a beautifully illustrated catalogue of a 1986 exposition of Genevan Psalters held in Geneva, as well as a copy of a Thai-English New Testament.

Of a somewhat different nature is the gift that the Rev. B.J. Berends, a governor of the Theological College gave us. From him we received a video of his visit to the College at the end of February and early March of this year. This gift was also gratefully received and joins other videos in our archives. In the future such a video will give a first hand glimpse of daily life in the College in 1990.

Once again these gifts remind us of the close relationship that the College enjoys with the churches which we may serve. May our gracious God continue to bless our labours.

P.S. Although this was not for the library, we have also received an anonymous donation of \$1000 for the building fund. Since we do not know the name of the donor and are thus unable to thank this person, we would like to gratefully acknowledge this gift here. Many thanks!

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# K. Schilder 1890–1952

By J. De Jong

## Three of a kind: Schilder, Barth and Mozart

We live in years of commemoration, in the world and in the church. In the eighties, we have remembered the Separation and the "Doleantie." The year 1986 was also a "Barth year" commemorating the birth of Karl Barth in 1886. This year commemorates the birth of K. Schilder in 1890. Next year is another commemorative year: the world remembers Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who died in dismal poverty in 1791.

What do the figures Barth, Schilder, and Mozart have in common? They all shared a gift which comes only to a few, the gift of *genius*. Schilder and Barth were contemporaries, yet in camps diametrically opposed to each other. They met no more than once or twice, and only had their most significant exchange around the third figure in the triad of genius we are considering, W.A. Mozart. In this article remembering Schilder's work for Christ's kingdom, we wish to consider how Schilder and Barth tangled on the figure of Mozart, and what the implications of this debate were.

### Karl Barth (1886-1968)

Karl Barth was originally schooled in the modernistic liberal theology of Post-Enlightenment Germany. Yet he sounded the death-knell to this theology with his commentary on the letter to the Romans, written in 1919. At the time, he was a pastor of the church at Safenwil in Switzerland, and he was very concerned about applying the gospel to the dismal social conditions of the labouring classes. Barth was active for a time among the religious socialists, but soon took an independent course. He was in all respects a child of his time, for many of the old and traditional ways of doing theology were beginning to crumble. And the liberalism of his day was a house that could not stand!

The hallmark of his thinking, which

later became known as dialectical theology, was that the Word of God is not Scripture itself, but is *in* Scripture, and only comes to us in the moment of God's good pleasure. He equated the Word revealed with a flash of lightning which strikes so suddenly and unexpectedly



Karl Barth

that here one can be only passive. Barth stressed the absolute antithesis between God and man. So great is that distance that the Word does not get through, except in God's time and in His way.

Implicit in Barth's thought was a rejection of all natural theology as well as natural revelation. Man and all his arts and abilities lay under a curse. Even man's religion was his enemy, – indeed, his worst enemy. God speaks and acts not because of anything in us or done by us, but actually in spite of us, in sovereign grace. God may use any means in order to get His Word across, but none of these means qualify in themselves as means of grace. God makes them His means in His time.

The cultural standpoint that this theology led to may be termed *quietism*. Barth's followers in Holland ridiculed the Neo-Calvinist movement as an example of human *hubris*, natural pride in which man thinks he can establish the kingdom of God on earth and do His work for Him.

Later, however, Barth began to speak more positively concerning man and his cultural activities. Rather than emphasize the negative, holding that all these faculties and activities were under the curse and condemnation of God, he began to emphasize the positive. God freely uses them for His unique purposes! He uses whom He will, and in the way He wishes. God can speak through a flute concerto, a storm, a book – indeed, by many means.

Here the figure of Mozart appears, who incidentally had begun to take an increasing importance in Barth's life. When Volume III/3 of the *Church Dogmatics* appeared in 1950 there was an extensive small print section on Mozart. For Barth the music of Mozart was not just beautiful; it was "wise, strong and sovereign." Mozart's music incorporates the Yes and the No of creation, the positive and negative side in a perfect balance. So says Barth, "Hearing creation unresentfully and impartially, he did not produce merely his own music, but that of creation, in its twofold and yet harmonious praise of God." In a talk on Mozart Barth said, "When Bach plays, the angels sing along, but when Mozart is playing, the angels stop and *listen*." Bach was only John the Baptist compared to Mozart. So Mozart has his place in theology because his music represents the peace of God which far transcends any thing that speculative reason tried to do. Mozart was an agent and a witness to God's grace in creation.

At the time Schilder published the third volume of his commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism. It included an extensive critical comparison of Barth's view of creation with his view of the two



sides in creation, light and darkness, corresponding to God's Yes and His No. Schilder exposed the Manichaeic roots of Barth's concept of "Nothingness," holding that Barth had an essentially dualistic approach to creation. However, for Barth the "Nothingness" was also caught up in a process of unity. All opposites are in the final analysis overcome! Here Schilder sees the return of the ancient rule of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464): the coincidence of the opposites. God is the infinite unity of all finite contrasts in



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

creation, including the contrast between right and wrong, good and evil. This also explains, according to Schilder, why Barth was so enamoured with Mozart. Mozart was the "pantheistic flute player and funeral guest of Buddhist "all-to-one" music ("al-een-heids-muziek") at the same time; Mozart, the composer who wrote a requiem one day, and an opera the next. Schilder says: so the older Barth calls the tune to lead out the younger Barth; and Mozart plays an "all-to-one" piece along with it!

Schilder here describes Mozart as dominated by motives of Eastern mysticism and pantheism in his music. In 1947, in *Christus en Cultuur*, Schilder had spoken about Mozart in the same way. For Schilder this music was not a testimony to God's grace, nor was it music in praise of creation. In fact, it was music directed against creation and the kingdom of Christ, and only retained certain characteristics of outward beauty and form because of the vestiges of Christian music in which Mozart himself was still entangled, due to his own cultural heritage and background. Here one could not speak of worldly signposts to the future kingdom, as Barth did,

but only of regressive music, held in check through God's law of restraint over sin as it worked in all creation.'

At this point it is clear that we have two opposing views on the music of Mozart. Two men of genius, theological opponents, have entirely opposite views. One stresses grace in creation (Barth) the other stresses restraint of sin by creation's own laws (Schilder).

### Barth's reply

Schilder's criticisms were apparently brought to Barth's attention by his Dutch friend T.L. Haitjema. It was the reference to Mozart that made Barth, who normally paid no attention to the Dutch Neo-Calvinists, finally raise his voice in anger. In the preface to Vol. III/4 of his *Church Dogmatics* he says:

"That the Neo-Calvinists in the Netherlands and elsewhere are not among my well-wishers is something that I have been forced to recognize at all stages of my path so far. Let us not blame them for this, nor for accusing me of being a "monist" which they have recently proceeded to do. But it is going too far in that in their attacks, obviously to offend me the more, they so far forget themselves as to use unrepeatable terms in disparagement of W.A. Mozart. In so doing they have, of course, shown themselves to be men of stupid, cold and stony hearts to whom we need not listen."<sup>2</sup>

These are no mean words! Indeed, Parker takes this as an example of Barth's occasional harshness in polemics. Obviously, Barth was rather incensed at the reference to Mozart, and it was clear to all who had read Schilder that Schilder was the man he had in view!

### Schilder's response

Through the round-about route of the Dutch press, Schilder became aware of Barth's anger. He responded to Barth's statements with two short articles in *De Reformatie* entitled "Barth is angry" and "Mozart."<sup>3</sup> In these articles he deplored the fact that rather than deal with the issues, Barth simply chose Mozart to begin his rebuttal. And what did Schilder say about Mozart? As he put it, he just brought forward elements that were commonly known, and could easily be found in the encyclopedias.

G.C. Berkouwer also found Barth too harsh and, more particularly, too general in his rebuke against the Neo-Calvinists in the Netherlands. This was just the time in which Berkouwer had moved into the Barthian direction in his thinking. He had recently published his book

on Barth, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*.<sup>4</sup> Having read the book, and having the matter of the Preface drawn to his attention by Berkouwer, Barth was moved enough to revise his earlier outburst in his Preface to Vol. IV/1:

"As I hurry to end this preface, I must not forget to make some necessary amends...I am thinking...of the fierce attack I made on the Dutch Neo-Calvinists *in globo* in the Preface to III/4...I should like to with-



Professor Dr. K. Schilder

draw entirely the generalised and therefore ill-founded words which after many years of provocation I suddenly unleashed. There are obviously "Fundamentalists" with whom one can discuss. Only butchers and cannibals are beyond the pale, (e.g. the one who summarily described my theology as the worst heresy of any age) and even they only provisionally, for there is always hope that they will attain to a better mind and attitude...And if in future they do not say any more unseemingly things about Mozart, they need have nothing to fear from me."<sup>5</sup>

Berkouwer obviously had some success in getting Barth to play off one group of Neo-Calvinists over against the other. Exactly who Barth has in mind as being among the "butchers and cannibals" is not clear, but he does not mince words! Two things strike us in the second preface: first, Barth's tone has hardly improved; if anything it is much worse. And second, he retains his grudge against those who supposedly spoke some "unseemingly" things about Mozart.

## Looking back

As I stated, Schilder was thoroughly disappointed that instead of being open to any essential discussion, Barth only retorted to the Neo-Calvinists in Holland with a defense of Mozart. For Schilder, it meant the end of all discussion. Presumably it meant the same for Barth. At any rate, this is the last there is of any contact between the two men. Schilder felt that Barth did not want to discuss issues.

If we look back at this brief and indirect encounter between two men of genius, we might at this point suggest that the debate was more important than Schilder himself realized. For the remarkable fact is that Mozart began to increasingly dominate Barth's thought, and occupy his attention. And the "synthesis of the opposites" characterized his final years. He even stated that he hoped to meet not only Mozart but also his arch-rival Schleiermacher in heaven! One can

say that Barth died with Mozart. Mozart was played shortly before his death. He was played the morning he died, and he was played on his funeral. Here it was a case of genius meeting genius on one level.

For Schilder, on the other hand, also the person with special gifts had to bow before the demands of the Kingdom. Where others tried to erase the antithesis, he sought to maintain it in all areas, and for every person, small or great – also for the genius and the child prodigy.

Points which may seem insignificant to us may not be so insignificant. God does not see as a man sees. And this small point of debate between Schilder and Barth is telling enough, for it not only opens up important perspectives on culture, but also draws a line among three of a kind: the line where one unconditionally bows with all his gifts before the will of his Creator. And if anything should be said commemorating Schilder's work, it ought to be prefaced with this fact:

he was a faithful officebearer, submitting his exceptional gifts to the one whom he saw as the Giver of all good. These men were three of a kind, but one was different – only by the grace of God! Today we can still give thanks for what was given to us in this man.

<sup>1</sup>See note 13 in *Christ and Culture* (Winnipeg, 1976), p. 88, where Schilder says that while Mozart's mind was drunk with Buddhist motifs, it was unable to express its own pagan-teutonic cycle of thought in adequate style forms. Schilder attributes this to "common impotence, which is the result of tempering that allows no one to transcend creation."

<sup>2</sup>*Church Dogmatics*, (Edinburgh, 1961, English Trans, p. xiii.

<sup>3</sup>See *De Reformatie*, Vol. 27, p. 23, and 129.

<sup>4</sup>The original title was: *Der Triomf der genade in de theologie van Karl Barth*, Kampen, 1954.

<sup>5</sup>*Church Dogmatics*, IV/1, p. xii. ©

## To Our Readers:

Those of you who have reached the age of three score or more may reflect sometimes on the rapid global developments of this nearly finished century. For most of you the horizon of the past was limited to local affairs, perhaps for some to national boundaries.

Today one cannot but be internationally involved. Think of the oil prices that affect us economically. Politically, we appropriate the mounting tensions in the Persian Gulf through the media. Similarly, we are made aware of ecclesiastical developments throughout the world. Even though we all, young and old, must first of all be culturally busy on the local scene, we cannot close our eyes to what is happening outside our borders. The Lord sometimes provides us with missions beyond our own doorstep. Each and everyone must take on, in true obedience to the Lord, the mandate given at home or abroad.

As publisher we are happy to have been able to provide *Clarion* again this year. In its pages you have found articles that are of importance here in Canada as well as universally.

We appreciate the constant efforts and dedication of our editors, Prof. J. Geertsema, chief among them, Prof. Dr. J. De Jong, Prof. Dr. C. Van Dam, and Rev. W.W.J. VanOene. They make *Clarion* an edifying magazine. Besides, we have our regular contributors on whom the editors rely to fill *Clarion*. Many thanks to you all.

Because of you, subscribers and advertisers, *Clarion* enjoys a steady growth. We thank you for your support.

At this festive time of the year we wish to send you our greetings. May the Lord of the earth keep us all in His protective care during the coming days, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and enter a new year. Let us, His children, dedicate our lives to the praise of His Name.

W. Gortemaker

# B. Holwerda's

## The Church in the Last Judgment

### Forty years later<sup>3</sup>

*The Church in the Last Judgment*, by B. Holwerda, 40 years later  
(Original title *DE KERK IN HET EINDGERICHT*. Translated by Dr. P.Y. De Jong.)

Address delivered to The Conference of Officebearers in Ontario of April 7, 1990, by L. Selles.

[In this discussion of the identity of the harlot of Rev. 17 and 18, as presented by Prof. B. Holwerda, some forty years ago, we saw that the political and cultural interpretations met with grave objections. In what follows here the ecclesiastical interpretation will have our attention.]

As said, the objections brought forward by Holwerda have shown irrefutably that the prostitute *cannot be the world* and that therefore the political and cultural interpretations have to be given up.

There remains the *ecclesiastical* (the church-related) interpretation. It would *not* do if the contents of the visions had to be understood literally. The beginning of the book, wherein the verb "signified" was used (v.1), already taught us that the language of the visions should be understood symbolically. This is confirmed by the apposition added to the name of the woman, namely "mystery," which calls for a symbolic understanding of the name Babylon. It tells that the things which characterized that city, her arrogance, her immorality and her idolatry are the marks also of the woman. Now a picture of this city – the harlot of ch. 17,18 – was already shown in Chapter 11:8 which testifies regarding the faithful witnesses that "their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified." It is clear that the Lord Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. But if the prostitute is called by the allegorical names Babylon (17:18), Sodom and Egypt (11:8), then it

follows that Babylon, Sodom and Egypt in the context stand for the apostate, the false church which sold its birthright of bride of Christ for the harlotry with her paramours (See Outlines on Revelation, Volume I, 17,D, p.116).



Prof. B. Holwerda

After having referred to the woman of Revelation 12, who brought forth Christ in this world, Holwerda continues on p.11 with referring to the woman of chapter 17. "This woman is also the church, the apostate church, who was the bride but became a prostitute. This church is "Babylon," because she does what the world empires have wanted to do since the beginning: seeking unity without believing in the promise and without concerning herself with God's demand." "It is striking," Holwerda continues on p.12, "that

when John speaks about the beast, he refers to Daniel. But when he speaks of the woman, he reminds us of Ezekiel 16 and 23 where we find the same message. When God drives Jerusalem into captivity and punishes her He says, "Sodom was bad and Samaria was even somewhat worse, but Jerusalem was the worst prostitute which the world has ever seen." "And because she was an unfaithful wife for God, she became a bad mother for her children. John beheld her drunk with the blood of the saints and of the witnesses of Christ" (p.12). "Read then" Holwerda continues, the rest of the papers of history. What did the Roman Catholic Church do? What did the Reformed (state) Church of the Netherlands do? What did the synodically bound Churches do? One may say that today there is no bloodshed. Yet there is a persecution which is more bitter than death. As often as the church abuses church discipline against her children, God says that she is drunk with the blood of the saints" (p.12). Holwerda, as he assures, is not saying that out of these denominations no one is saved.

What he is saying is that, because of their unfaithfulness, their abuse of the keys of the kingdom, entire generations are lost to Christ (p.13). This false church, as indicated by the place where the woman is sitting, is international. "When," Holwerda writes, "the beast in its sixth head received the deadly wound and loses the opportunity for centuries to establish a world unity and thus a political international power, the church becomes throughout this period an international power and by means of her false unity manifests the image of Babylon.... In her apostasy the church has pursued earthly power and obtained it.... The church is the chief figure in world politics" (p.15).

As proof, Holwerda points to Christian Europe: "But who had power in Russia in the past? The Czars! Yet over them

stood the Greek Catholic Church, the prostitute. In Spain Philip II ruled, but the Roman Catholic Church was in control....A century and more ago in the Netherlands William I was king, but the Reformed (state-) church committed fornication with him....The actual power rested with the apostate church, the whore" (p.15). In Indonesia – which around the middle of the 20th Century severed the bond with the Netherlands – it was not so much the interference of the Security Council as the Catholic Church and the World Council of Christian Churches which, behind the scenes, stirred up trouble. "All the misery in Indonesia and throughout the world was born in the church who is the whore" (p.16).

"When in our day the world empire, this seventh head, is being built, this is occasioned by the church," that is the apostate one. "All wars and revolutions and social injustices and abominations are born within and are fed by the adulterous church.

This underscores the significance of the creedal article on the true and false church. This demands the reformation, the return unto the Lord" (p.16).

### Comments

On this score, I wholeheartedly agree with Holwerda. We should not underestimate the significance of the true church to which the Word of God is entrusted. But on the other hand we should also not ascribe the monopoly of all evil to the apostate church and blame her for all ills, ecclesiastical, political, economic, and social, of which the world is full. Although Holwerda may not have meant to make her the source and harbinger of all iniquity it certainly comes across that way. "All wars and revolutions and social injustices and abominations," he writes on page 16, "are born within and fed by the adulterous church."

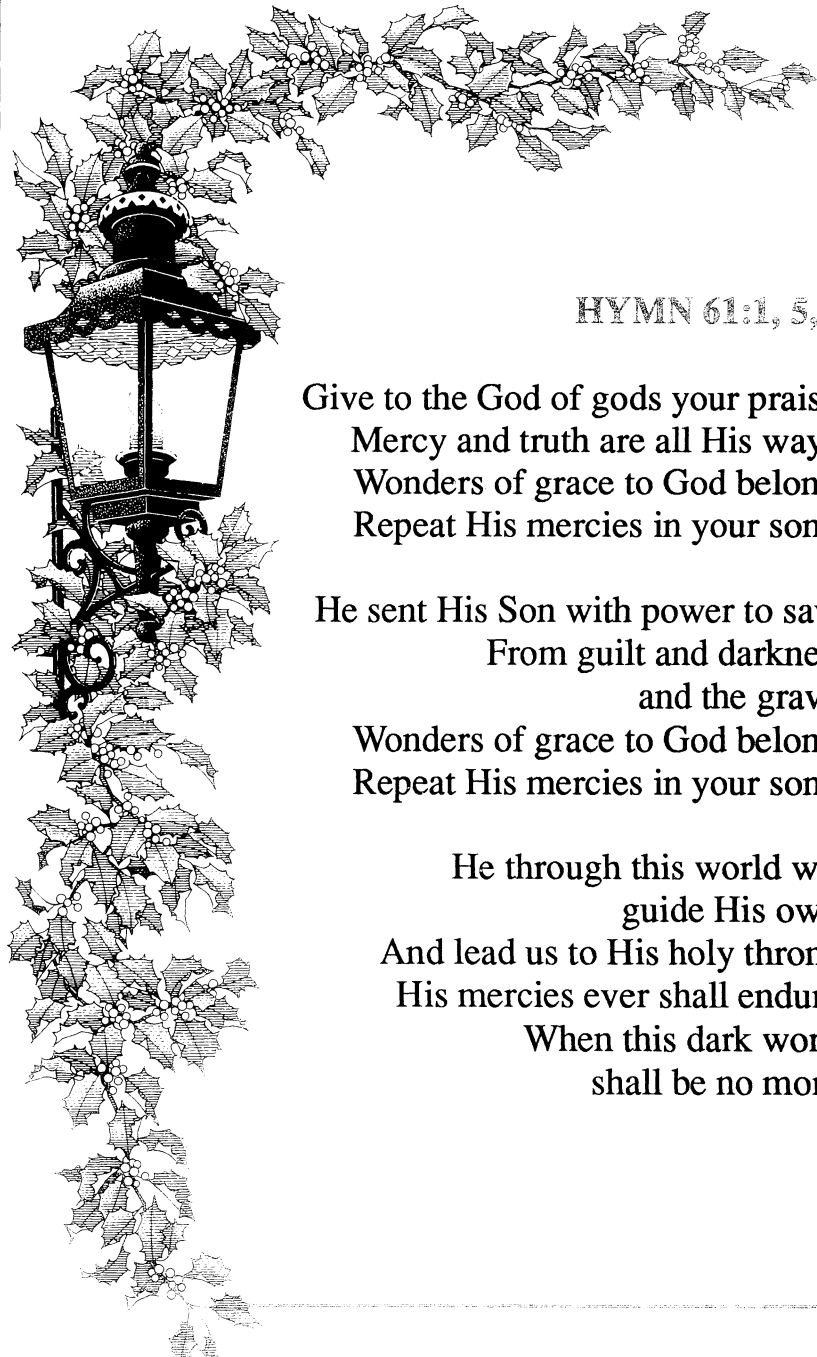
This becomes even clearer when on page 18 Holwerda writes "In the place of the beast we see today as an international power the apostate church. Therefore John could say: At present the beast is not." "Formerly in the days of Rome [the Roman empire] and earlier the beast was, but today is not, even though he *is*. For the beast dwells within the church." It comes down to this, that at least for a time, as long as the eighth head i.e., the antichrist has not yet made its appearance, the prostitute has absolute power. In the section with the heading "The dragon and the beasts," I mentioned the *second beast*, namely the one of false prophecy as described in chapter 13, to which Holwerda refers as well on page 3 of his printed speech. Even though this second beast is not reintroduced in chapter 17 because it exclusively deals with the woman sitting on the scarlet, i.e., the *first beast* of chapter

13, this does not alter the fact that the *second beast of false prophecy is and remains* a tremendous power besides the first beast, the prostitute, the kings and the antichrist.

This *second* beast makes itself heard from the pulpit of the apostate church via preachers who do not open the Word of God but are constantly trying to put it under lock and key. It makes itself felt in secular, political and other sciences, via biology and cosmology, through art and literature and, not to be forgotten, by particular kinds of music and the entire movie industry. However extensive, therefore, the influence of the prostitute may be, it will not do to make her responsible for all the world's iniquity and sin.

Holwerda may not have wished to do so, but what he writes on page 18 comes factually down to it. See above!

*Absolutizing*, of which the identification of prostitute and beast is an example, may sound right, but is not always right. It may even lead to a regrettable mistake. Wanting to illustrate from history the initial judgment which comes over the apostate church, Holwerda points to the fate of the Jews who were still considered the apostate church by him in Nazi-Germany in the years before and during the Second World War (1933-1945). "Hitler" he writes on page 19, "hated the Jews because of what they had done to Germany in the spheres of politics and economics." Without substantiating it, he continues, "World Jewry



### HYMN 61:1, 5, 6

Give to the God of gods your praise;  
Mercy and truth are all His ways.  
Wonders of grace to God belong;  
Repeat His mercies in your song.

He sent His Son with power to save  
From guilt and darkness  
and the grave.  
Wonders of grace to God belong;  
Repeat His mercies in your song.

He through this world will  
guide His own,  
And lead us to His holy throne.  
His mercies ever shall endure,  
When this dark world  
shall be no more.

is guilty of many evils. Thus at last the flames of hatred begin to burn."

Without wanting to rationalize the persecution of the Jews, he writes, nonetheless, "Jewry as the apostate church has exerted tremendous power and with her abominations has led many astray. Thus the judgment comes and hate burns brightly!" No word is written about the real cause of the hatred of the Jews, i.e., the pagan doctrine of race, blood and soil, which called for the extermination of world Jewry and came with its 6 million victims quite a way towards this goal.

With the same good intentions we ourselves may have given up the apostate church to hell and damnation before God did so, and so we may have judged it before the time.

I think of the recent upheavals in Eastern Europe which came totally unexpected and stunned everyone including the best politicians, and futurists and historians. The surprising thing was that the impulses and the impetus for the throwing off of a satanic yoke originated, in addition to a Reformed pastor with his faithful congregation in Romania, in the Roman Catholic Church, which, on the basis of its doctrine and worship, we rightly consider an apostate church. Not only can the Lord show a lot of patience in executing His judgments, He is so great and mighty that He can even make the apostate church to do His bidding.

This does not change, of course, our duty in the least, according to B.C. Art. 28, "to separate from those who do not belong to the Church..." Again, therefore, I wholeheartedly agree when on the same page 19 Holwerda takes up the warning of Revelation 18:4, "...come out of her" - i.e., Babylon, the apostate church - "my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues...."

However, I see it as a wrong dilemma when Holwerda writes a little bit further on, "When we have understood this [that i.e., the apostate church is - the source of all evil], then we know that the issue is not what America has plotted or the United Nations has planned, but rather what is the true church!... When men suggest that we make common cause against communism and thus demonstrate that in unity lies our strength, I would reply: Rather stop all this, for we cannot prevent this development. The coming of the seventh head cannot be stopped nor that of the eighth" (p.20).

In the second part of his speech, about the prophecy of the marriage feast of the Lamb, Holwerda, after having surveyed the previous part, warns not to react in a *fatalistic fashion* to the development leading to the arrival of the seventh head. It will be closely followed by the eighth which is not another head but, as we saw before, is the

beast itself, come into the flesh and served by ten horns or kings who hand over their power and authority to the beast, 17:11-13. Not only is all this *governed* by God, but He is also making the preparations for the impending marriage feast. The four "Hallelujahs" of chapter 19:1-8 form the introitus and the bride makes herself ready by cloth-

given up on it. Soon it will be taken over by the antichrist and his confederates, who will make short shrift of the whore.

If this is the fate of the apostate church, the true church can hardly expect that she has anything to hope for as far as this world is concerned. All that is left for her is the taking up of her cross and her follow-



**"Who really is significant in the world?  
...he who in his own small corner keeps  
the commandments of God and clings to  
the testimony of Jesus Christ."**



ing herself with the bridal gown of the righteous deeds of the saints.

*Not fatalism*, therefore, but a *humbly doing* of God's will (p.29) should rule us. But, according to Holwerda, *no activism either* should be our attitude.

"Even among our people," Holwerda writes on page 32, "we hear some say: We must do something! We must establish an organization for this or that purpose. We must gain some influence and win the world for Christ."

"Let us," he warns, "not intoxicate ourselves with such illusions. We will not overcome the world. The antichrist will conquer. Influence will be gained by the apostate church...but the true church is always persecuted, driven, despoiled, slain. What alone is significant?"

Not that our businessmen make a profit, but that they do the will of Christ in their assigned place. Not that our labourers attain to a higher standard of living, but that they are zealous in good works....

"Significant in our day is only the question of whether we are truly church and whether all of us, as living members of the church, manifest the pattern of the true church in all good works" (p.33).

We cannot but hear good things in these words. It tells us what the main thing should be for us. But at the same time I detect in the whole context a certain *negativism* and *passivism* with respect to the present world. Holwerda, it seems, had

ing in the footsteps of the Lord in the hope of the glory of the marriage feast of the Lamb (p.34).

"Who really is significant in the world? ... he who believes that today God is preparing for the coming marriage feast and, therefore, dares to face the future... He who in his own small corner keeps the commandments of God and clings to the testimony of Jesus Christ" (p.38).

"Blessed is the man who remains faithful to God when the whole church denies Him, who remains faithful to the brethren when everyone tolerates their slaying, who in word and deed believes in the church even when he has to stand alone" (p.39).

"For in very truth this is the man, although he may have to stand all alone and be effectively isolated in daily life, who mingles his voice with that of the innumerable multitude roaring like the sea and rumbling like the thunder, singing, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth and we are traveling to the great marriage feast.... These are the true words of God" (p.40).

Indeed, but so is for the time being, the well-known exhortation which concludes Paul's chapter on the resurrection, 1 Cor. 15:58. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain."



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# Christmas Meditation

By K. Schilder

## The Dictation

*And you shall call His name Jesus for He will save His people from their sins.*

Matthew 1:21

There is a remarkable contrast between the giving of names on the first pages of the Old Testament, and the great giving of a name on the first page of the New Testament.

In the former we taste an improvisation of men.

In the second we have a dictation of God.

In the first, man seeks to give utterance to his thoughts, his longings, his hopes and fears. He takes a pencil, and tries to draw the plan of the evangelical city; there is a monument here, and another one over there. Or, he tries to give an outline of the messianic road: a landmark here, and a landmark there.

However, in the second, the angel of the LORD commands that room is made for the dictation of God. This dictation, in which His counsel is proclaimed, His plan is pointed out. He does take a "man's pen" (to speak with Isaiah), this means, He does speak in common writing of man, or even in the writing of the common man; and all this because of His great compassion, in order that we would rightly understand Him, and would not be overwhelmed by Him and by His voice. But, – on this proclamation board which the Lord Himself set up on the market place of the church-city, it is nevertheless He who writes. The writing is "man's writing." However, the hand is entirely God's hand. It is a dictation, an order, a revelation, which does not allow for any discussion: you shall call His name Jesus.

Thus, already the fact in itself – the fact of a heavenly dictation regarding the name Jesus – is related to the difference between true and false prophecy. False prophecy does not speak out of the *Word*, but "out of the heart." The simple fact of this speaking-out-of-the-heart marked it already as false prophecy, and with it as anti-messianic. Over

against this, the true prophecy is bound to the *Word*: it is under authority. And in line with the authority of true prophecy, God, having come to Joseph, now dictates him the name of Jesus.

O Joseph, it's a painful hour for you.

For weeks you knew your anxieties: was that bride yours, or was she not? They were your anxieties. Now, in one moment, at least in as far as you believe, you have been relieved from these anxieties through the word of the angel of your God. You can and may now take your betrothed wife – at least in the context of the law, and therefore in abstinence for the time being. That woman is not yours; she belongs to the Seed, and to the church. And even though your heart and soul call out because of the anxieties and deliverances which you have experienced, – the name of the child cannot express these private matters. Call His name after His office. His office is for the church. That's it, Joseph.

It is not easy to stand at the crossroads of the false prophecy and of the true prophecy. Never has "the heart" felt so moved, as when Joseph received his wife, and both of them their child (it, too, was immediately involved). But never was the person, the heart of man, under so strong an obligation to keep silent, as in this terrible hour.

Turn now back for a moment to the first pages of the Old Testament. The names which there are given to the children are, considering the authentic "interpretation" of the parents, a groping with uncertain hand. Cain – a man, says Eve; is he, perhaps, the strong one, the bruiser? It was exactly that element of strength, which was pushed to the fore so much in the "mother promise:" to "bruise the head of the serpent." However, Cain does not build. He breaks down. Next comes Abel – "vanity" this means – he

who praised too much yesterday, does not praise enough tomorrow.

In this fashion the church began – seeking, groping. A promise she had; but the manner and the time and the speed of the fulfillment of the promise was not un-veiled to her. In this way the church seeks, and misses. In this way she calculates, and she is mistaken. She evaluates, and it does not happen.

It is for that reason that now the angel from above comes down with a heavenly dictation. It is "human writing," for Joshuas (Jesus-es) were there before, and are there by the hundreds in the days of the emperor Augustus, and will always continue to be there. Many Joshuas (Jesus-us) died in the concentration camps. But the explanation that accompanies this "human writing" comes from heaven. He will redeem His people, namely from their sins.

Thus, you also, o man, whoever you are, have to honour the name of Jesus as a dictation-from-above. This means: you have to believe on the authority of God. Not afterward, when it has come about and is experienced, but beforehand you have to honour Mary's son as the Saviour who redeems from sins. You are not allowed to "try" Him "out." And you are not allowed to "design" the way of salvation. And you are not allowed to "pro-ject" the course of revelation. And the cost of our salvation you are not allowed to "budget."

All you have to do is to receive on authority Him, who had His name authenticated from above, and protected, and who has been sent to you with rich promises, but never without "the command of faith and repentance" (Canons of Dort).

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*De Reformatie*, vol. XXI, 22 Dec. 1945.  
*Schrift Overdenkingen*, vol. III, pp. 79ff.  
Translated by J. Geertsema



# NEWS MEDLEY

By W.W.J. VanOene

It is hard to believe, but this is already the last newsmedley of the year 1990. It seems such a short while ago that we entered this year, the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century, and now we are already at the end of it. For this reason I want to use the opportunity to wish all my readers a blessed new year. As every time, so this time we do not know what the future will bring us. The only thing we do know is that salvation is nearer now than it was at the beginning of 1990. We are looking forward to the appearing of our Lord and Saviour. May He come this year.

In the meantime we are to live and to work as if He is going to stay away for a long time yet. And so we turn to the business at hand, the various occurrences in the midst of the churches.

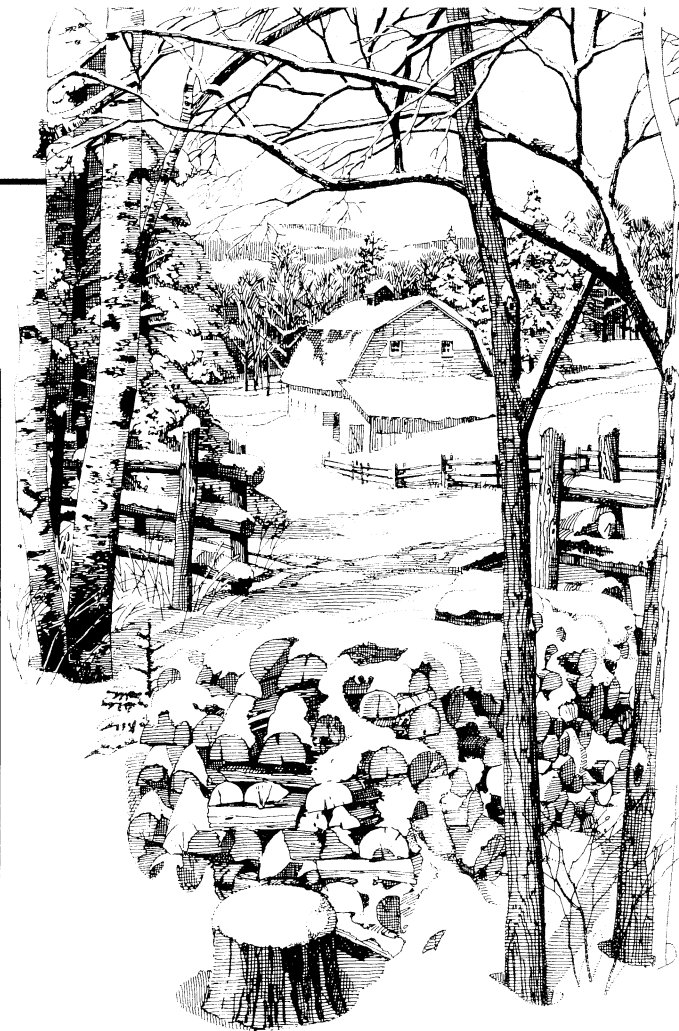
This time we start in Ontario. Lincoln is the church we visit first. The preparations for the institution of a church in Rockway are in full swing. From an "Institution News Update" we learn that several meetings were held. "The name of the new church was also briefly discussed. The question was raised: 'Should we have a name, for instance *Hope Canadian Reformed Church* or should we have the location in the name, for instance *Canadian Reformed Church of Rockway*?' " If I counted the names well, the new church will have a total of 64 addresses, while the old church will retain 91 addresses. Still a considerable number, while the to-be-instituted church will not be one of the smallest churches either.

From the Lincoln bulletin we also gleaned that "Four brothers, appointed by the consistory, will meet this week Wednesday with a few brothers of the Free Reformed Church at Vineland." This is a happy tidings. We only express the wish that this meeting may be one at which not just discussions are held but unification is brought closer. If I recall correctly, there were discussions in the past, but I have not read anything that gives me the impression that much progress was made.

In connection with the above we take a brief side-trip to the Fraser Valley. A "Symposium for Reformed Understanding" was held there on Saturday November 3rd. Rev. J. Visscher wrote the following lines about this Symposium.

"The first Symposium for Reformed Understanding is now history and by all accounts received, it was a great success. Much of the credit for this goes to the Rev. L.W. Bilkes and the excellent speech which he delivered on the topic of 'Regeneration,' as well as the way in which he fielded the questions. As a result of such positive reactions, and the good turnout of about 400, the organizing committee will no doubt be stimulated to organize more meetings.

"The format for this first Symposium was something new. In the past when different churches and their members have dealt with issues and obstacles, the discussions have been at a consistorial level. For this Symposium it was decided to go to the grass roots because that is precisely where previous attempts to further unity floundered. We have heard it said years ago by elders and ministers, and it is still there, 'We may be prepared to take certain tangible steps towards each other, but we cannot get our people to go along.' It was with this in mind that this novel approach was taken. Hopefully, it will serve to inform and educate the members of the various



churches and so lay the basis for a more successful round of official discussions at a later stage. Let us go forward in patience, charity and prayer."

For the information of our readers it be mentioned that the various ministers who gave information about their respective churches came from the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Free Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches.

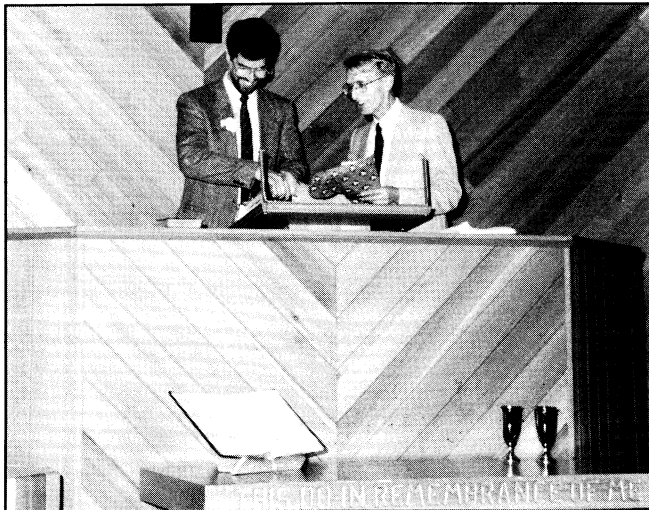
And now back to Ontario. From Lincoln we travel to Hamilton. This church is looking for a second missionary to be sent to Brazil and to work together with the Rev. J. Kroeze. Information is being sought about students both here and in Kampen, but no tangible results can be reported until now.

When the Rev. G.H. Visscher of Maranatha Church in Surrey was in Ontario recently, his presence there was also utilized by having him attend a meeting of the Mission Board/Mission Aid Board in Hamilton. "Last week the Mission Board/Mission Aid Board met with the Rev. G.H. Visscher of Surrey, B.C., chairman of the sending church there." I know the Rev. Visscher, but I really do not know what kind of a reptile or mollusk or other creature the "chairman of the sending church" is. Perhaps a revived dinosaur?

In nearby Burlington East good progress is being made with the church building. "The concrete floors have all been poured and some of the inside work has begun. Surely we are all looking forward to its completion, hopefully before this year's end. The installation of the organ is slated to begin sometime in January 1991. We therefore most probably will have our singing accompanied by piano for the first little while." A later bulletin told us that "The Organ Committee reported that the new organ will likely be installed in January/February 1991." Happy new year!

"With a view to the fact that it becomes increasingly more difficult to find ministers and elders who are sufficiently fluent in the Dutch language, we are having another look at our Dutch services. As you may know, Burlington West is no longer participating. Left are Burlington South and Burlington East, who look after the services eight months of the year. However, Burlington South is cutting their involvement down by half, to every other week. That leaves Burlington East with ten months of the year." For this reason it was decided that starting April 7, 1991, "we will arrange for Dutch services every other Sunday only."

For quite a while already I read in various bulletins that a change was being suggested in the set-up of the Superannuation Fund. Until now I did not read precisely what the proposal was, although I had a fair idea. Now I read in Burling-



Rev. R. Aasman and Rev. M. van Beveren

ton East's bulletin what it contained. "A letter from the Foundation for Superannuation requesting a vote of approval to allow increased retirement payments to small congregations. The proposal suggests an extra \$5000 per annum to congregations with less than 50 communicant members who support a retired minister. Each additional communicant member over this number would result in a reduction of \$33.33 of the amount." As practically all consistories who discussed this proposal, so Burlington East gave its approval.

Although I am aware that things cannot be changed any more, I do want to register my serious objections to this proposal. I wished I could have spoken out on it at an earlier stage. Here the basic and original set-up of the Superannuation Fund has been abandoned. From the outset we stated: equal payments, equal benefits. Things did change already somewhat when it was decided to change the contributions in such a manner that an equal amount per church should be contributed plus so much per communicant member as soon as a church received a minister. Thereby a differentiation was brought about since smaller churches with fewer communicant members contributed less. One might not object to this too strongly, although it means that the larger churches supported the smaller churches via the Fund, because for a much lower "premium" the smaller churches would receive the very same benefits.

But now things got worse. By proposing and adopting the proposal to support smaller churches with an extra amount the set-up of the Foundation has been changed. *Now the Foun-*



Rev. and Mrs. R. Aasman at his installation, Providence Church of Edmonton

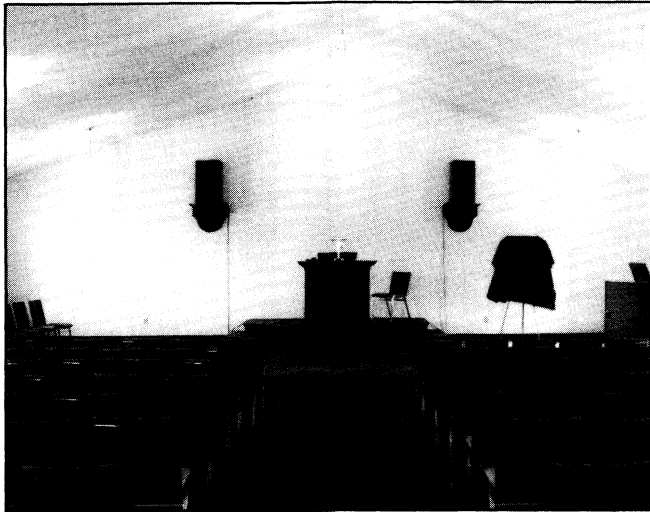
*ation acts as a pseudo-federation that lends aid to needy churches, and this is what we tried to avoid from the very beginning.* If a church is unable to call another minister in addition to the support it gives to the retired minister, the way is *not* that help is given by way of an extra amount that comes from the Foundation for Superannuation, but then this church should receive support in the normal way from the church federation, for then it has become a needy church. Now the Foundation takes away the task of the federation and that is my most serious objection. It plays "church federation" by taking the needs of the smaller churches into consideration. And I am sorry that apparently most consistories did not realize this but voted in favour. The few brothers with whom I talked about it admitted that they had not thought of this. They just thought "that it was a good idea." Sorry, it is *not* a good idea but a completely wrong one.

As reported before, the three Burlington churches had some contact and discussions about issuing a combined bulletin. In Burlington West's consistory meeting "the chairman and the vice-chairman were delegated to attend a meeting with our Burlington sister churches to consider a 'combined bulletin.'" The Burlington East consistory told us that the committee met and "reported that it recommends that the three congregations continue to publish their own local bulletin but that they together produce a 'General News' sheet which can be inserted in the local bulletin." That is a giant step into the good direction.

We mentioned Burlington West already. "There was further discussion on a proposal for the Training of Office-bearers. A final plan will be deferred to a future decision. It was suggested that, in the meantime, consideration be given to expand the existing library in the consistory room."

"The Case of the Missing Tapes" was partially solved in Fergus, for "five people took care of bringing the borrowed tapes back, but still more than half of the tapes are missing." Keep sniffing them out!

More than once I mentioned unknown or relatively unknown Psalm tunes. The church at Elora decided to do something about these tunes or rather about the congregation's familiarity with them. "Beginning this afternoon, let us start with singing from Psalm 1, next Sunday morning from Psalm 2." And so on. This singing is done before the start of the services and it looks like a good idea, to quote an earlier quote.



*Interior of Grand Valley Church*

Above we already mentioned contact with others. From Ottawa comes the same information. "Contact with l'Eglise Reformee de Quebec. Rev. VanPopta reports on contact he has had with the pastor of the Eglise Reformee de Quebec in Ottawa. Consistory decides to address le conseil regional de l'Eglise Reformee du Quebec in order to introduce the Canadian Reformed Churches to them."

Concerning the situation within the congregation Rev. Van Popta wrote : "We remember with warm feelings the five families of Grand Valley who came to help frame and roof as well as the six men of Burlington and Smithville who put up the siding. And the incredible effort put out by our own congregation was truly outstanding." The reference is to the new parsonage, as faithful readers of our column will have understood.

Our journey brings us to Carman. "With respect to the decision of the sister churches in the Netherlands to extend sister church relationship to the Reformed Church in the U.S. the question is asked whether an article should be published to explain the work the church at Carman has been doing in this respect. It is decided that Rev. DeBoer will prepare a submission on this matter."

Experiencing growth is always pleasant but it is especially encouraging when our smaller sisters enjoy it. Rev. Schouten was able to tell us about Calgary; "By my calculation, we now have exactly one hundred members (with six more soon to come)." The first second-generation baby was born in the congregation. The mother "was baptized in this church in 1969!" For many churches this may not be a rarity, but it is a reason for joy especially for Calgary that often served as a "centre for transients," so to speak.

I should like to recommend the following two lines, found in the bulletin of the Providence Church in Edmonton, especially to the writers of appeals.

The Christian who is pulling the oars  
Doesn't have time to rock the boat!

The Okanagan Valley is our next stop. "Seeing the results of the congregational meeting," Vernon reported, "the Building Committee is authorized to have official blueprints made, taking into account the input of the congregation."

And now we take a long flight, all the way to Australia. We stop first in Armadale.

A request has been received from a family temporarily residing in the Armadale area to remain members of Byford. In

conformity with a previous decision, it is decided not to approve this request."

I fully understand that the Armadale consistory could not decide otherwise. There is an agreement with the sister churches in the Perth metropolitan area, and this agreement has to be honoured. In my opinion the brothers were completely correct in denying the request. But this brings me anew to the question: "Is it now really necessary to cause so much ill will and grief?" For that is what the result is of such an agreement. There is an almost constant consultation about boundaries, and the combined boundary-committee has to advise now about this, now about that. Boundaries have to be outlined and changed again. A family moves temporarily to the "territory" of a neighbouring church and is planning to return to the "old" church after three or four months or an even shorter



*Celebrations at the opening of the Grand Valley Church*

period. But because they happen to move across the agreed-upon boundary, they have to become members of the other church. I cannot see the sense of it. Such a family will not do everything in its power to integrate in that other church because they are planning to go back across the line to their old church anyway. If it were a divine command that there shall be boundaries, we would have to honour it. Now we should show the flexibility which promotes good harmony and whole-hearted cooperation by the members. It is not only in Australia that this problem exists. Canada has also places where the brothers make it unduly hard on themselves and on the members.

Also for the instruction of our Canadian brothers I should like to pass on what the Rev. VanDelden wrote in the district bulletin. I am happy to note that his Canadian/American past did leave some healthy fruits. (Hm!)

"You will all have had the opportunity to look at the proposed new boundary lines for the metropolitan churches. You will also have read in the short report of the last consistory meeting that the consistory has no objections to the new boundaries. But we realize that many would prefer just to leave things the way they are. Most have found their little niche in the congregation, and would be most content to leave things as they are. If I understand the proposal correctly, no one would be forced to change congregations if these new boundaries would be adopted — no one, that is, except those who would move into a new boundary after these have been adopted.

"Personally, I wonder whether there might not be an easier and better solution to this whole matter of boundaries, and that is to use them only as guidelines. One restriction would apply here, and that is that once they have made their choice, it cannot be changed unless they move into the area of another suggested boundary. This is the way that it works in the Fraser Valley, and it was a most pleasant situation. As it is now, we read of a few families requesting permission to stay in the church of which they are presently members. Consistories are turning such requests down, which is understandable in light of the agreement which has been laid down. But it leaves some quite unhappy, and needlessly so. If one doubts whether such a system would work, I might state that it works very effectively in the Fraser Valley, where there are six churches very close to one another. It leads to a very pleasant situation for all concerned. Think about it!" Please do, and act upon it, too.

The Byford church now hovers around the 400-mark. The members living in the Rockingham area number approximately one hundred. As a consequence, "the possibility of making Rockingham a separate ward will be discussed after the election of office-bearers." This is the first step on the way towards institution.

I found a strange thing in the Byford section. "Deacons' work: The collection for Dr. Faber realized \$189.10." At first I thought: "It is wrong to publish who is being supported by the deacons." My second thought was: "The Canadian Reformed Churches should look better after their retired professors." My third and probably correct thought was: "This collection must have been taken to defray some of the extra costs involved in Dr. Faber's travels, and the deacons of Byford functioned only as the channel through which this money was forwarded." In any case, you know now that the Australian brotherhood looked well after our retired professor while he was in their midst.

The Kelmscott consistory discussed the question whether the Lord's Supper should not be celebrated more frequently than the four times a year as is the custom right now. Unfortunately, the brothers did not see sufficient reason to increase the frequency of the celebration.

The column "General News" gave the following information: "A dramatic re-enactment in period costumes of the suspense, intrigue and politics of Europe's war-filled history during the 1650's. You will be introduced to Louis XIV, king of France, and Prince William III of the Netherlands and his wife Mary Stuart."

Bedforddale's consistory received a communication "From Year 11 students requesting cancellation of Catechism classes and youth clubs during the week November 5 - 9 in connection with their forthcoming drama production. Granted." Kelmscott's consistory, too, granted the request. Byford, on the other hand, came to a different conclusion. "This is declined as those who need to attend catechism classes can see the production on the other night."

Some time ago the students of Hamilton's Guido de Brès High School also had a drama production, if I recall correctly.

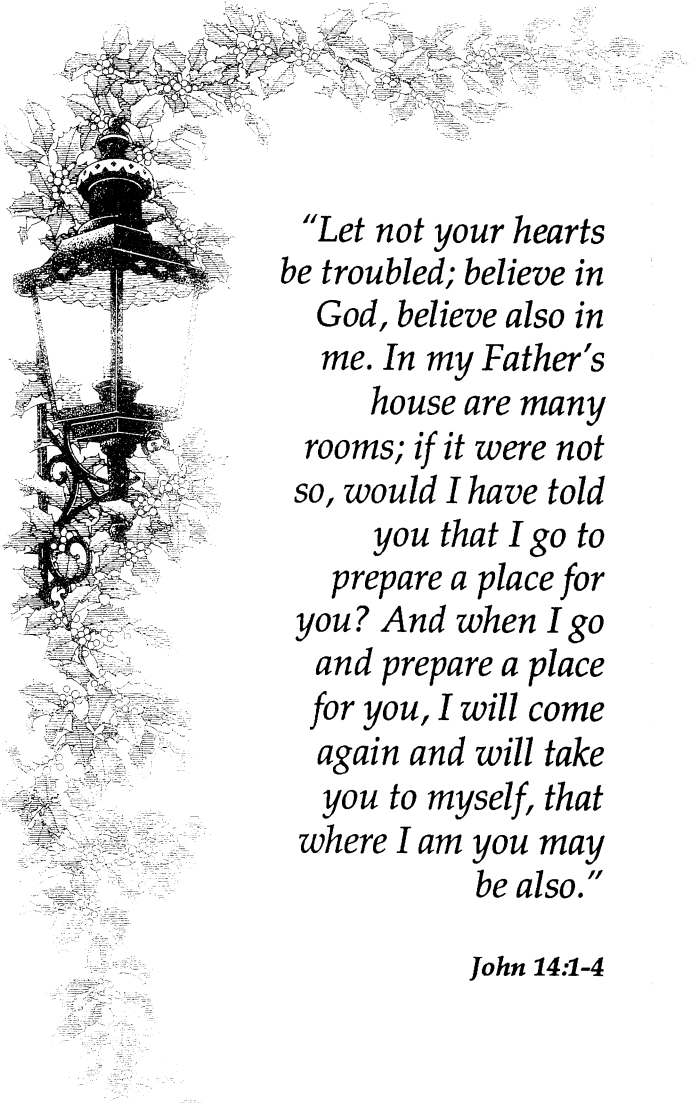
It seems to become more and more the custom to have these things also in our midst. Our high schools also (have to?) teach "Drama." But frankly, I think that we are going somewhat overboard with it. I even wonder whether we should have these "performances" and "stage productions" among us. In my teenage years our Reformed people frowned on stage plays and declared them taboo for Reformed young people. Nowadays most church members seem to see nothing wrong with them. I still tend to side with our parents and grandparents, with the older generation that considered these things alien elements that should be avoided. And

even when our high schools have to teach "drama" this does not mean at all that they are compelled to stage plays and to organize performances of plays. One can study the plays of Shakespeare and others without performing them. Then I do not even speak of the time spent on preparatory work for such performances and the cost involved. All this is secondary and if we must have them, time and cost should not enter into the picture. It is my conviction that our teachers and school boards should re-think this whole matter and hopefully come to the conclusion that we should abstain from having stage productions and plays.

And catechism classes should take preference over any other activity, for which reason I side with Byford. But this is something you did suspect already.

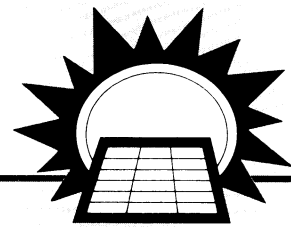
Yes, and this has to be the end of our medley. I did give you sufficient material to keep yourselves occupied during the holiday season. Have a pleasant and "gezellige" time. Thank you for your attention and appreciation also during the past year. Till next time, the Lord willing.

Most sincerely yours  
VO



*"Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."*

*John 14:1-4*



By Mrs. J. Mulder

*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,...In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples.*

*Isaiah 11:1,10*

## **Dear brothers and sisters,**

When Isaiah spoke of the stump of Jesse, every Israelite knew what he was talking about. The kingdom of David had fallen, as a mighty tree that is cut down. Only a stump remained. The old glory was totally gone.

But now the prophet may announce the restoration of the house of David. He spoke about a king and a kingdom which would be far more glorious than the reign of David or Solomon ever was.

However, the great king who would come to restore David's kingdom and bring justice and peace, would have but a very humble beginning.

At Bethlehem the Son of God, the shoot from Jesse's stump, became a helpless and vulnerable child. Like a root out of dry ground, He had no form nor comeliness that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him. (Isaiah 53:3)

The Son of God entered into our weaknesses to empower us to become sons and daughters of God. But just as a fallen tree will often rise again through the shoots that grow out of its stump, so also the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign, visible from afar, strong and able to withstand the raging storms. Through His sufferings and death our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has established a Kingdom, which in power and majesty surpasses that of His forefather David. From all the nations of the earth people come to seek salvation in Him. Through His reign the peace and harmony of Paradise will be restored. Once all His enemies will be destroyed by the power of His mouth and the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of God. (vv. 2-9)

When the angel announced Christ's birth to the shepherds, he said, "Be not afraid, for behold I bring you good news of a great joy."

We may rejoice when we again celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. But we should

also remember that He is not a tender root anymore, a babe lying in a manger. He is now our victorious King, who carried our sins away and won the victory over sin and death once and for all. He is now at His Father's right hand, from where He rules the nations.

Christmas is not having a good time for a few days with parties and gifts, and then back again to the everyday treadmill of life.

The exalted Christ who revealed Himself to John on the isle of Patmos as the root and offspring of David said, "Blessed are those who washed their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life." (Revelation 22:14,16)

We are ransomed with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only when we believe in Him and serve Him as our King, we can rejoice not only during the Christmas season, but all the days of our life.

For "the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." (Revelation 11:15)

## **From the mailbox:**

Mary VandeBurgt sent me a note of appreciation for all the cards (50!) she received. She now lives with five other girls in a Home in Clearbrook, BC. I am glad to hear that you like it there, Mary! Don't work too hard!

Thank you, Mrs. Huisman, for sending me those two address changes. I appreciate your help and your encouraging words.

## **Our birthday calendar for January 1991:**

### **LIZ KONING**

Dickins Field, Extended Care Centre,  
14225-94th Street, Edmonton, AB  
*Liz will be 30 years on January 2nd. She is doing quite well and just loves it to get many cards!*



**CHRISTINE BREUKELMAN**

Box 666, Coaldale, AB TOK OLO  
*Christine hopes to celebrate her 19th birthday on January 7th.*

**ROBERT WIERENGA**

Box 115, Neerlandia, AB TOG 1R0  
*Robert will be 10 years old on January 10th*

**HENRY DRIEGEN**

72 Ross Rd., RR 1, Abbotsford, BC V2S 1M3  
*Henry's 35th birthday is on January 17th.*

**GRACE HOMAN**

"Anchor Home,"  
361 - 30th Rd. South, RR 2,  
Beamsville, ON LOR 1B0  
*Grace also hopes to celebrate her 35th birthday on January 17th.*

**JANINE SMID**

"Anchor Home,"  
361 - 30th Rd. South, RR 2,  
Beamsville, ON LOR 1B0  
*Janine, the second birthday-girl in "Anchor Home" this month, will be 21 on January 19th.*

**HENK ORSEL**

705 Surrey Lane, Apt. 1201,  
Burlington, ON L7T 3Z4  
*And last but not least, Henk, who hopes to celebrate his 50th birthday on January 27th.*

Congratulations to all of you!  
And I wish you the Lord's blessing for the year ahead.

The LORD has once to David sworn  
An oath He never will bemoan:  
"There will to you a child be born,  
A son shall from your body spring  
Whom on your throne I'll set as king."

"Your sons, if they My covenant hold  
and hear when I My law unfold  
Which I revealed in days of old,  
They also shall for ever own  
Your Kingdom and your glorious throne."

Greetings and best wishes for the new year to all readers,

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

**PSALM 111:1, 4, 5**

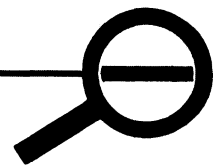
Praised be the LORD! I shall  
impart  
My thanks to Him with all my  
heart  
Among the righteous  
congregation.  
Great are the doings of the LORD,  
And all to whom they joy afford  
Will study them with dedication.

The wondrous works His hands  
have done  
Are just and faithful: everyone  
Can put his trust in God's  
direction.  
The LORD's decrees are firm and  
sure;  
They shall eternally endure,  
Performed by Him in true  
perfection.

To Israel He redemption sent;  
Eternal is God's covenant.  
His holy Name is all-surpassing!  
The fear of God is wisdom's  
source,  
A light to all who walk its course.  
O LORD, Thy praise is everlasting!





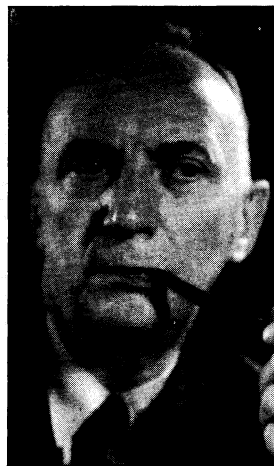


## Schilder Remembered

It is gratifying to see how well the 100th anniversary of the birth of Schilder (December 19, 1890) is being remembered among the concerned and faithful in Christian Reformed circles. Mid-America Reformed Seminary, *Christian Renewal*, and *The Outlook* all pay attention to the gifts received through this talented Reformed minister and professor. Because of the necessary constraints of space, let me not start discussing the contributions but simply pass on some items that struck me.

### Mid-America Reformed Seminary

In the official publication of this seminary, *The Mid-America Messenger* (November 1990), the well-known Dr. P. Y. De Jong writes a front page article "In Grateful Remembrance." He especially singled out the importance Schilder attached to the pure preaching of the Word. "What this required was the opening up of the Bible in every sermon in accordance with its redemptive-historical character, thus counteracting the superficial moralizing and/or introspective soul-searchings so common in some congregations at that time." Mid-America Reformed Seminary has also shown itself to be committed to the redemptive historical approach as their publication of two important essays has shown. (These are B. Holwerda, "The History of Redemption in the Preaching of the Gospel" and M.B. van't Veer, "Christological Preaching on the Historical Materials of the Old Testament.") Dr. P. Y. De Jong also reminisces how he and his friend, the Rev. J. Piersma, "heard K.S. no less than twenty three times in seventeen or eighteen days" during his first tour of North America in 1938-39. He then notes that "also in the Christian Reformed Church there are to this day not a few, members as well as ministers, who honor the memory of Dr. Klaas Schilder and thank God for what this theologian by grace has been able to accomplish for the Reformed faith in days of crisis and conflict." Mid-America Reformed Seminary also commemorated this 100th anniversary.



Prof. Dr. K. Schilder

### Christian Renewal

The issue of November 26, 1990 contains no less than five articles on Dr. K. Schilder by Rev. H. Vander Kam ("Not Ashamed of the Gospel"), Rev. J. Tuininga ("The Schilder Controversy"), Dr. J. De Jong ("Schilder's Legacy"), Mr. J. Van Dyk (on *Schilder's Struggle for Unity*), and Dr. T. Plantinga ("What Really Happened in 1944?"). All these articles are very sympathetic and appreciative of Schilder's work and significance. It also struck me how clearly and accurately the history of the Liberation in 1944 is recounted. The ignominious role of the Christian Reformed Church during Schilder's second North American visit in 1947 is acknowledged as well.

With respect to Schilder's importance and relevance for today, the following two voices from the Christian Reformed Church especially struck me. The Rev. J. Tuininga writes:

Today the ideas (theology) of Schilder find the greatest reception among the Canadian Reformed Churches of Canada. This anniversary remem-

brance of Schilder would be a good time for a bit of genuine Reformed ecumenicity. The CRC made some bad mistakes in the past in dealing with the controversy in the Netherlands (there was some belated acknowledgement of this in later years). With increasing problems in the CRC, concerned members ought to be taking a hard and serious look at our brothers and sisters in the Canadian Reformed Churches. In a sense we can let bygones be bygones, and find ourselves in a common confessional and theological heritage (p. 2).

After giving an analysis of what really happened in 1944, Dr. T. Plantinga asks

Are there lessons here for the Christian Reformed Church in its present plight? I believe there are...It could well be argued that the current woes of the Christian Reformed Church have a great deal to do with a hierarchical approach to governance and church order, and that the first thing needed is a return to the old church order.... It appears that we are headed for a similar clash over church order - unless it turns out that there is very little consciousness of proper Reformed church polity in the younger ministers who identify with the conservative cause, which is quite possible. In other words, if our younger officebearers wish to be faithful to the Bible and the confessions but fail to realize their own responsibilities in this regard, falsely believing that the church is supposed to be governed and run by a synod, the 1944 parallels will never emerge in our history.

It is my hope and prayer that the hundredth anniversary of Schilder's birth will lead Christian Reformed people to reflect especially on what Schilder believed concerning church order and will trigger a return to genuinely Reformed church polity (p. 12).

Also noteworthy are the parallels that J.

Van Dyk saw in his review of R. van Reest's *Schilder's Struggle for the Unity of the Church*.

Of particular interest are the abundance of parallels during the 1920s to 1940s to today's happenings in the Christian Reformed community: the gradual denigration among some of the importance and relevance of the confessions; a growing worldliness in the church brought on in part by affluence and materialism during the 1920s; unfaithfulness in church attendance; "a mistaken conception of the doctrine of common grace... and, an increasing ignorance of the Reformed truth" (p. 60); a tolerance of heretics and false teachers... a willingness on the part of the church to compromise for political gain; a decline in preaching; a false ecumenism - unity at the expense of truth (p.8, 13)).

### The Outlook

Also *The Outlook* (December 1990) gives much attention to Schilder in articles written by Dr. J. Douma (an overview adapted for this issue by Prof. N. Kloosterman of Mid-America Reformed Seminary), Rev. H. Vander Kam ("Dr. K. Schilder and Preaching"), Rev. J. Piersma ("Klaas Schilder in the U.S."), and a review of *Schilder's Struggle for the Unity of the Church* by Rev. T. Vanden Heuvel.

Dr. Douma has aptly noted that

the subject of the church lay close to his [Schilder's] heart. He laboured

earnestly for the unity of Christ-believers and refused to make his peace with ecclesiastical division. For that reason he attacked Abraham Kuyper's teaching about the "pluriformity" of the church, and along with it the distinction between "visible" and "invisible" church. If the church can appear in various forms (pluri-form), then why strive for ecclesiastical unity? But plurality in the church's form provides a glimpse of self-will and disobedience. And if being a member of the invisible church (to which all believers belong) is all that's necessary to be saved, then why make so much fuss about the unity of the visible church here on earth?... Schilder attacked various "scholastic" distinctions that had been applied to the church (p. 6).


In a personal footnote on Douma's article, Prof. N. Kloosterman writes:

It was under the leadership of Klaas Schilder and his theological-intellectual comrades that Kuyperian theology experienced a "purification" in the Netherlands, the likes of which we Reformed Christians in North America are in such desperate need. Concerning especially the doctrines of the covenant, of common grace and of the church, Schilder provided such incisive analysis. But most importantly, because he wrote and preached with the soul of a poet, K.S has become for many of us a poet of and for the soul.

On Schilder's preaching, the Rev. H. Vander Kam notes:

Today if people would hear or read the sermons of K. Schilder they might well complain that there seemed to be so little application. It is true that no applicatory remarks were appended after the sermon. This would have destroyed the effect of the sermon itself. The whole sermon was applicatory in nature! When the Word of God is preached properly according to Schilder, the Spirit, who speaks in the Word, will also apply that Word to the hearts of those who hear. So many of today's sermons are so weak and so short on the Biblical material that the sermon must be filled up by all kinds of applicatory remarks.... The Word must be brought in all its fullness and the Spirit will do the rest.

It was a pleasure to read these commemorative issues on Schilder. In 1947 Schilder was officially denied access to the pulpits of the Christian Reformed Church. Now he is publically remembered with great appreciation by the concerned in this church.

May these articles contribute to a rethinking of basic issues such as the church and church order. May they also help to improve understanding among the faithful in the Christian Reformed Church for what the Canadian Reformed Churches (who have been so strongly influenced by Schilder) stand for. 



# 1990

## The Year in Review

By J. Visscher

Last year as we ended our review of the twelve months that had gone by, we asked ourselves what a new year and a new decade would bring. The decade of the eighties was just about over and the decade of the nineties was about to commence. Well, what has the year 1990 brought us, and what has the decade revealed thus far?

Turning our attention first of all to our church life, we may say that the past year has on the whole been a fairly quiet one. No synod was held. No international conference convened. No controversies raged. We slipped into a new year and a new decade rather smoothly. Does that mean that nothing happened? Hardly! Members worshipped and studied, prayed and witnessed. Ministers preached, elders visited, deacons distributed. Choirs sang and committees met. Professors lectured and students studied. In other words, a host of normal activities took place, the kind that we often tend to overlook and undervalue, the kind that in reality take up the largest share of time and effort.

Still, all this should not lead us to assume that nothing special took place and that the past year was devoid of newsworthy events. From across the wide expanse of this land and continent we have gathered together some items that deserve to be mentioned (forgive us if our faulty memory fails here and there to comment on what you may consider either a highlight or a disappointment).

### New churches

Every family rejoices when a new offspring appears and somewhat the same emotion is not out of place when a church federation welcomes a new congregation. The beginning of 1990 saw the institution of the Port Kells church in

British Columbia. Somehow it managed to squeeze in between the already close churches of Cloverdale and Langley. All three are less than ten minutes of driving apart. Imagine that, and not an official boundary anywhere in sight.

Part way through the year news reached us of another impending birth,

be a great plus to have a new congregation so close. May the new minister not be far behind.

Finally, toward the end of the year some more news reached us. This time it is about a birth that will take place in the Lincoln area of southern Ontario. However, seeing that this is planned for



Maranatha Christian School Choir, Fergus, ON, welcoming Rev. J. Huijgen and family

this time in the southern part of Alberta centered on the town of Taber. No official word about the exact date of this institution has trickled down to us, but if it has taken place already – congratulations! Having pastored my first congregation in that part of the country during the seventies I have many fond memories of the Coaldale, Lethbridge, Picture Butte and Taber areas. The only negative that comes to mind is the isolation of both congregation and minister, hence it will

the new year, we shall refrain from further comment, except to say – best wishes on your preparations.

### Vacant churches

It would be a great thing if we could tell you that this past year has seen a real change in the number of vacant churches, but, alas, such is not the case. New vacancies arose. The church at Ancaster saw its minister, the Rev. R. Aasman, go west to Edmonton (Provi-

dence). The church at Burlington (South) saw its minister, the Rev. J. deJong, move next door to the Theological College in Hamilton. The church at Lower Sackville saw its visiting minister, the Rev. J. Kroeze, depart for Brazil. The church at Lynden saw its minister, the Rev. A. VanDelden, head down under to Bedforddale, Australia.

Both of these churches, as well as the other vacant churches, made attempts to fill their pulpits and parsonages again. Burlington (Ebenezer) received declines from the Rev. P. Feenstra and J. Schreuder. Lincoln received the same from Rev. J. Schreuder. Lynden turned to the Rev. P. Feenstra but he did not feel free to accept. Port Kells extended a call to the Rev. K. Kok, but to no avail. Smithville called the Revs. B.J. Berends and P. Feenstra but without positive result. Winnipeg called the Revs. D. Age-ma and P. Feenstra but received a decline from both. It did, however, receive a positive response from the Rev. K. Jonker who is currently serving the Free Reformed Church at Launceston, Tasmania. He is slated to arrive some time in the new year and that will help to offset the loss of those who took part in the past ministerial migration to the land of kangaroos and koala "bears."

Another arrival that bears mentioning is that of the Rev. J. Huijgens who moved from the Netherlands to Fergus, Ontario. By now he and his family will have adjusted in part to their new home and its surroundings. Seeing the time of year they will also be adjusting themselves to that fluffy white stuff that falls in such great abundance in that part of the country. Happy shoveling and welcome to the federation!

Another welcome is in order and it goes to the Rev. W. Boessenkool who is the emeritus minister of the Free Reformed Church of Johannesburg, South Africa. He is helping out the vacant church of London, Ontario, for a number of months. May it prove to be a beneficial experience for all the parties involved.

### Buildings and parsonages

In a number of congregations construction projects of various types were either being planned or executed. The church at Abbotsford decided that the growth of the membership warranted the renovation of the balcony to bring it up to building code standards. Regardless of what one thinks of such alterations, they are some times the only feasible additions that can be made to a church building. The church at Burlington (Ebenezer) is in the process of constructing a new building after the destruction of their old one by fire. It should

either be in use by the end of the year or very close to that stage. From all accounts it should prove to be a vast improvement and so heal whatever pain remains from the loss of their former place of worship. The church at Coaldale is also facing the prospect of a new home. They have sold their present building and are making plans to build again. We have not learned the exact reason for this change, which can hardly be related to the age of the building, so probably it has to do with the size (too small), the price offered (just right) or the new organ that is coming (too large).

The church at Ottawa was also involved in a building project; however, it had nothing to do with a new house of worship but with a new house for the minister. Up till now the manse has always been a rented home, but when the small membership there saw the opportunity to acquire property and to build on it, they seized it. Reliable sources have informed us that the finished product is a tribute to the efforts of the congregation and a very suitable place for the minister and his family. In connection with the construction of this home, it may interest you to know that a group of church members came all the way from Grand Valley to assist in the building. One group of believers helping out another is a beautiful thing to see. Well done and may it lead to more inter-congregational assistance where needed.

### Theological College

Moving on from the churches to their College, we see that there are a number of matters that deserve to be mentioned. Pride of place goes to Prof. J. de Jong who received his doctorate in March of this year from the Theological

University in Kampen, the Netherlands. His thesis was entitled: *Accommodatio Dei* (A Theme in K. Schilder's Theology of Revelation). As such this particular topic is not an easy one to tackle, and especially not in conjunction with the writings of Schilder whose style, while beautiful, is often difficult; nevertheless, our newest professor has done a commendable work. May it serve him in his work at our College.

It should also be mentioned that Dr. J. de Jong, together with Dr. J. Faber, will be taking part in a Schilder Symposium that will be held during the month of December in Kampen. Elsewhere in this issue of *Clarion* more attention has been paid to this event.

With regard to Dr. J. Faber, we may inform you that although he has retired from his teaching task at our College, he has been busier than ever traveling to different parts of the world. During the past year he has been off to South Africa, Australia and the Netherlands. How's that for a retirement! We are sure that wherever he went he manifested himself to be an able defender and promoter of the Reformed faith.

While no major changes were made to the building which houses our seminary, the interior did see a change that augurs well for the future, namely the installation of a new computer system. The fact that all the professors now have computers in their offices should facilitate their work and increase their efficiency.

It should also help them to deal with a student body that has seen some modest increases over the past couple of years. We can be thankful for that; however, it is no secret that before the vacancy level in our churches decreases substantially a significant number of



Rev. and Mrs. K. Jonker (far left, front) with family and church members of the Hobart house congregation, Tasmania

new students will be needed. At present there are more than a dozen vacancies in our small federation and there are more coming. A number of the older ministers are approaching retirement and the number of new congregations grows. The result is that the number of total vacancies is in danger of rising from 25% to 40%.

Surely, in such a situation every effort should be made to urge potentially suitable young men to consider whether or not they have a duty to embrace the ministry of the gospel as their life's work. The Canadian Armed Forces used to recruit young people, may be they still do, with the slogan: "There's no life like it." Well, speaking as one who continues to enjoy the Lord's work among the Lord's people, it can honestly be said that in the case of the ministry it is true that "there is no life like it." Preaching the Gospel and pastoring the flock are among the greatest of all earthly tasks. May such a perspective be embraced and promoted among us. May it lead to an increase of labourers in God's glorious harvest.

### Missions

The mission front also saw its share of activities during 1990. In Brazil, in Irian Jaya, and in the Bulkley Valley region of northern B.C., the work of calling people to embrace Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord continued. With respect to Brazil, another set of new faces were evident there in the persons of Rev. J. Kroeze and his family. At the moment they are still in São José adjusting to a new land and a new language; however, after some time of adaptation they will begin the work of selecting a suitable mission area for the church of Hamilton, and the supporting churches of Classis Ontario-South.

While it is great to greet the arrival of a new missionary it is also sad to be informed about the future departure of another. Rev. P.K. Meijer and his family have come to the decision to leave Maragogi and to return to the Netherlands. The bright spot is that they may not be returning immediately but may spend some time in Recife where Rev. Meijer will busy himself with translation work, with the training of future office-bearers and with other needed tasks.

The Rev. R.F. Boersema and his family, who were away from the mission field for some time on a study leave, returned and took up their work again. Only this time they are busy starting a new work on the outskirts of Recife. Rev. Boersema also continues to make regular trips to São José and Maragogi to lend a helping hand there.



*Sunday School Children after Sunday morning service, Camaragibe*

With respect to Irian Jaya, the past year saw the departure of the Mission Aid worker, B. Vegter and his family. They have returned to Canada and are in the process of settling down in Coaldale. This leaves the Rev. H. Versteeg as the only worker in our mission field there, and it may be said that even his years in that part of the world are coming to a close. Meanwhile, the need for missionaries is just as pressing, if not more so, than the need for ministers. The sending churches both here and in the Netherlands are facing a critical juncture in their work. Pray that their efforts may be blessed.

### Christian education

The matter of Christian education continued to receive a great deal of attention in our Reformed community during the past year. In many respects it has become a vast enterprise with all of its schools, boards, teachers, committees and budgets. No one has added up all of the costs involved but you can be sure that the total runs into the millions.

While many schools faced expansion, only one new school came into being and that is the school started by members of the Blue Bell congregation in Pennsylvania. Their membership is not large but, having seen a little of small groups, no doubt what they lack in numbers they make up in enthusiasm and involvement. We wish them the Lord's blessing in their new educational venture.


Expansion was mentioned and in that regard we have heard about various building and renovation plans in different parts of the country. The only actual reconstruction work that we know of is at this moment taking place in the Fraser Valley of B.C. where an addition of

three quarters of a million dollars is being made to Credo Christian High School in Langley. It will house new science labs, classrooms, shower facilities, and a music room for the future fine arts program.

Teachers and ministers have a number of things in common and that seems to apply to the personnel shortage as well. Every year our Teacher's College in Hamilton and the universities and colleges graduate a new class of teachers for our Reformed schools but the competition for their services is intense. There are simply not enough of them. Also here we have a matter that needs both our prayers and our encouragement.

### In conclusion

When we began this Review we mentioned that things had been fairly quiet in our federation of churches during the past year. The above chronicle of events bears that out. Nevertheless, tranquility in the church has not translated into tranquility in the world. The year 1990 will long be remembered in world history as a year of great and astounding changes. Who could have predicted the demolition of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany, the demise of the Soviet empire?

The church is living in startling times. Yet the people of God need not fear for both the future of the church and of the world are in the hands of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Son of God came as a Child to Bethlehem, as a Prophet to Israel, as a Priest to Jerusalem and as a King to heaven. Today He reigns from there and He will continue to do so until all things and peoples have been placed under His feet. 



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# A Report of Three Schilder Lectures

By J. Geertsema

*What follows here is my summary of the three Schilder lectures, organized by the Theological College, and given by Dr. J. De Jong, Dr. N.H. Gootjes, and Dr. J. Faber on November 15, 22 and 29, respectively. The report will be rather brief, just enough to whet the appetite. There are plans to publish these lectures in a more extensive form later. Besides, all three of them were put on tape. To our regret, the discussions after the lectures were not taped in their entirety, but the lectures themselves were. The tapes can be ordered from the College in Hamilton for the price of fifteen dollars per set of three, including postage and handling.*

## Schilder and Revelation

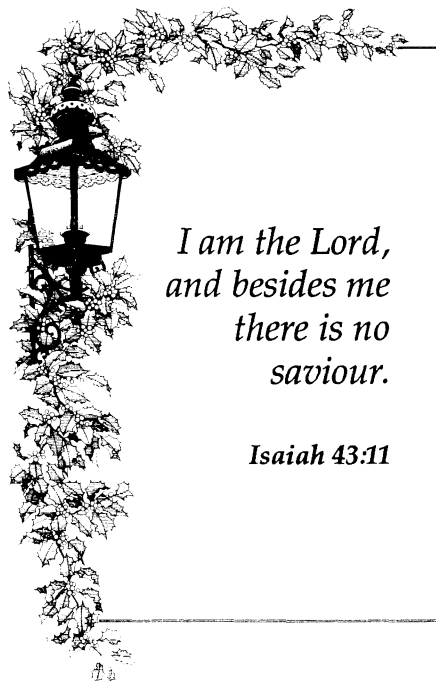
By Dr. J. De Jong

The three lectures in honour of K. Schilder must be seen, not as the glorification of a man, but in the light of Hebr. 13:7, "Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith." Not the person, but the work of Schilder was important. We recognize in him and his work God's gift.

In 1933 Schilder went to Germany to study for his degree of Doctor in Philosophy. The next year he became professor in Kampen. His stay in Germany thoroughly acquainted him with the situation there. Germany was in turmoil, politically and theologically. Hitler's star was rising on the political front. The German nation was indoctrinated by the pagan philosophy of National Socialism. Antithetically, Schilder placed over against this paganism the revelation of the true triune God in the Scriptures.

Schilder's antithetical struggle focussed especially on the theological front. The first World War had shattered the religious humanism of the liberal theology of the "Old School." Karl Barth and other dialectical theologians tried to save the Christian faith. Over against the old religious humanism, Barth stressed that God is the totally different One, far above this world.

According to Barth, this contrasting distance between God and creature is present also in the difference between the actual speaking of God and the written human Bible. God's Word, God's speaking, can only touch us, but not become something that we can hold in our hands. Barth said that the Bible is a hu-



*I am the Lord,  
and besides me  
there is no  
saviour.*

*Isaiah 43:11*

man book with human weaknesses and errors. It can only become God's living Word, God's revelation to man, when God actually speaks it to a person, in his heart, in an event in which that person hears and believes. God's speaking strikes a human heart in a moment of time, just like lightning hits the earth. After that, God's speaking, God's Word, is not there anymore, just as lightning disappeared and did not stay. All that is left is a human impression, a human memory. That is why the Bible is just a human, fallible testimony that points (back) to God's act of revealing himself.

Since the speaking of God and the hearing of man becomes a coinciding momentary event, stress is placed on the experience of the human subject.

Schilder also opposed subjectivism as this was promoted in the Reformed churches of which he was a member. It was the subjective element in the theology of Dr. A. Kuyper and his followers. Kuyper maintained the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, but taught that God works regeneration in the heart of the elect apart from the (preaching of) the Word of God. Stress was so placed on God's revelation inwardly and directly in the heart of man.



In response, Schilder strongly maintained that the written Scriptures are God's revelation which He gives us in our hands. Schilder, too, spoke about God as transcendent, highly exalted above man. But Schilder said that God comes also down to us. God reveals Himself to us in understandable human words. God accommodates Himself to man in His revelation. He makes a covenant with us. He speaks to us about His heart, His eyes, His hands, His wrath. This does not mean that God is

like us. This accommodation means that we can understand Him in His self-revelation. Schilder speaks here in line with Calvin, Augustine, and other church fathers.

This revelation sets also limits to our knowing. We must not go beyond our capacity. When God speaks about His eyes or hands, we must not explain that in a human way. In God's revelation is also progress. It comes to its fullness in Christ Jesus.

All this means now that God still speaks to us in the Scriptures. And He wants from us a faith that says "yes" to these Scriptures and obeys them. This was Schilder's struggle. And this is relevant also today, over against a Barthian thinking and over against a new and growing subjectivism, as this comes out in the so-called new hermeneutics that stresses human experience of God and of the Holy Spirit, apart from and even in opposition with the written Word.

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## Schilder and Culture

By N.H. Gootjes

The term "cultural mandate" is probably coined by Schilder. His view on culture has always been controversial. One opponent called it an absolutizing of common grace and in conflict with the gospel, another characterized it as deformation. It is still one of the most rejected and debated ideas of Schilder.

In order to understand Schilder, one has to go back to Dr. A. Kuyper, who saw culture from the perspective of common grace and in the framework of sin. It is undeserved grace that in the history of mankind there were so many achievements in the different civilizations, that were independent from Christianity, as in the near and far East, as well as on the American continent. But these cultures were limited. Much was broken down and disappeared.

However, one civilization was not limited. This is the line from Babylonia and Egypt, via Greece and Rome to the Western civilization. This was first a preparation for and later assimilated by Christianity. Christ's saving work influenced this western culture. Only this can explain the high development of western civilization, compared to other civilizations. Kuyper was very optimistic with regard to this western culture. The darkness of the first World War broke this idealism.

In that situation Schilder went in a different direction. He, too, connected culture with Christ, but in a different way. Schilder connected it with Christ in His office as Saviour, according to the confession in L.D. 12. Christ makes rebellious people regenerated servants of God again in all the created relations. He brings them back to the calling Adam had in paradise. The following aspects of

culture in the definition of Schilder are mentioned:

1) Culture is the totality of the work that is to be done in this world. It begins with the farmer, Adam, who had to culti-

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**"John the Baptist did not tell soldiers to become preachers, but to be soldiers in the fear of the LORD."**

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vate the garden so that it could produce food. This work is not limited to arts and scientific work, but includes everything, also the garbage man and the housewife.

2) The world has to be developed. It was created good and has possibilities for a growing mankind. So for increased garden work a spade for the hands had to be invented first by the brains. So there could come the development from the garden to the city.

3) This daily cultural work is the duty of all. Many, in rebellion, refuse to serve God in this cultural mandate. Those regenerated show also here only a small beginning of the new obedience. This means that we cannot bring our cultural mandate to fulfillment.

One of the objections was that there is no basis for a cultural mandate in Scripture. But Schilder pointed to Gen. 1:26 (man is given dominion over creation, which includes development); Gen. 1:28 (man is called to fill the earth and subdue it); Gen. 2 (man is to till or cultivate the garden and guard it); the same cultural mandate remains after

the fall in sin; this is clear from, e.g., Psalm 8.

Another objection is that this idea of a cultural mandate gives us a wrong perspective on our time: the N.T. dispensation needs preaching; there is the command to preach the gospel to the end, not to fulfill a cultural mandate to the end. Here is a false dilemma. John the Baptist did not tell soldiers to become preachers, but to be soldiers in the fear of the LORD.

Can this cultural mandate be maintained today, while the earth is dying under man's polluting and exploiting hands? The answer is positive. Misuse or abuse is illegal and must be forbidden, but this does not deny a proper use.

If Schilder was correct with his concept of the cultural mandate, the consequences are broad and rich. The execution of this God-given mandate begins with the farmer cultivating his fields and includes the professor giving a lecture as well as the street sweeper cleaning the streets of the city. Schilder mentions further the kitchen worker and the artist. The work a housewife has to do is fulfilling the cultural mandate (over against feminism). The consequences is also that, under Christ as Lord and Saviour, all daily work becomes again serving the Lord, instead of a necessary evil to get the means to have fun during the weekend. Ministers and elders, in their special office, become culture forces. They have to stimulate us to do our work in this world as fulfillment of our cultural mandate.

So, let every one, according to Schilder, see his daily work as part of the God-given cultural mandate in which s/he may serve the LORD to His glory.

# Schilder: his life and work

By J. Faber

The lecture is divided into three parts: Schilder's life, his publication work, and his significance.

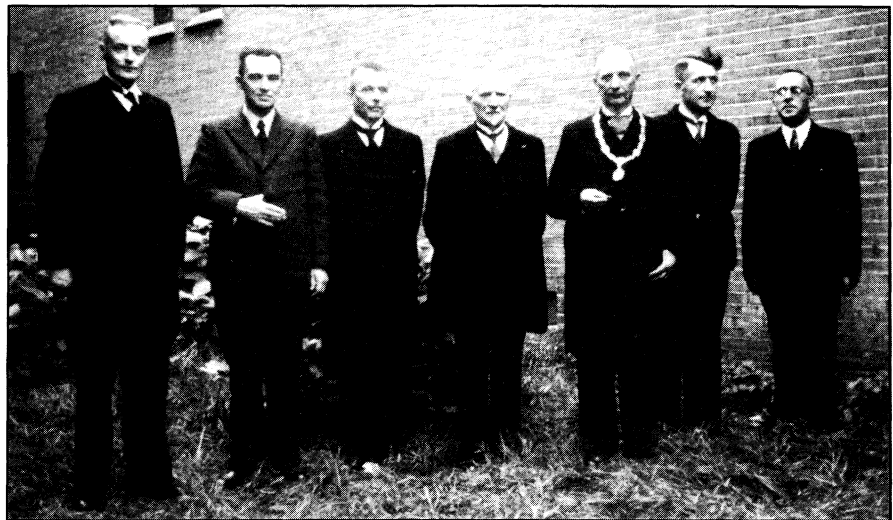
## Schilder's life

(Note from your reporter: only a few things will be mentioned here. For more detailed information I may refer you to the book of Rudolph van Reest, translated by Dr. T. Plantinga, *Schilder's Struggle for the Unity of the Church*.) He was born on December 19, 1890 at Kampen, where he attended the Reformed Grammar School and the Theological College. In 1914 he became minister and served six congregations until 1934, the year he became professor in Kampen.

His lectures were interrupted by two journeys to America (in 1939 and 1947) and by the war. Arrested by the German Security Service already on 22 August 1940 because of his public resistance against the National Socialists in articles in *De Reformatie*, Schilder was freed on December 6 of the same year, but was forbidden to publish, and soon he had to go into hiding.

On March 23, 1944 he was suspended and on August 3 deposed from his office as minister of God's Word and from his professorship because of his opposition against doctrinal statements of 1942 concerning covenant and baptism, presumed regeneration, and common grace, and against the hierarchical development in the Reformed churches. At the meeting in The Hague on August 11, 1944, he read the Declaration of Liberation and Return, prepared by him.

On that same day he met separately with many of his students. They did not accept the disciplinary measures against him. Having been present himself, Dr. Faber told that Schilder addressed them in an unforgettable way, warning against wrong actions, because he was "nothing but a deposed professor." He said frankly to those theological students, who were wondering whether they ever would get a call when following Schilder and the others on this way of Liberation: "I do not promise you anything." Just like Dr. S. Greijdanus had urged them to take the decision of signing the Declaration



Picture taken in 1946 in Kampen, the Netherlands. (l to r) Rev. D.K. Wielenga, Prof. C. Veenhof, Prof. P. Deddens, Prof. Dr. S. Greijdanus, Prof. Dr. K. Schilder, Prof. B. Holwerda, lecturer Mr. D.J. Buwalda

of Liberation only in faith, so Dr. Schilder said: "We are like Abraham. We are called to a place that we do not know. We have to go out in faith."

The Reformed churches (Liberated) asked Schilder and Greijdanus to continue the training for the ministry. In 1945 the two of them gave all the lectures. Schilder conducted the sermon sessions, too, in an unforgettable manner. The provisional Synod of Enschede of 1946 appointed three new professors. Schilder was elated when this synod recognized the right of the Theological College to grant the degree of Doctor of Theology.

After the war Schilder resumed also his editorship of *De Reformatie*. He worked strenuously, often day and night. In his writings he defended the Reformed churches against the attacks from the outside and the inside; and he tried to keep the churches together in the unity of the true faith. On March 23, 1952 he passed away through heart failure. Some time before that day he had said to his colleague, Professor Deddens: "It is well with me. I go to Jesus."

## Schilder's publication work

A (not complete) bibliography can be found in the *Almanak 1953 of Fides*

*Quadrat Intellectum*, the student association of the Theological University [then: Hogeschool] in Kampen, pp. 123-167. We can divide this publication work into three periods: from 1920-1930, from 1930-1940, and from 1944-1952.

1) 1920-1930: In the beginning of this period both Dr. H. Bavinck and Dr. A. Kuyper had fallen away. It was the time in which, on the one hand, the epigones of Kuyper established themselves, and in which, on the other hand, a young generation came up that went in a more liberal direction (e.g. Dr. J.G. Geelkerken). In Germany Karl Barth and Emil Brunner became known with their dialectical theology.

Of the articles and books published in this period, the following can be mentioned: *Wat is de Hel?* (Hell, what is it?); *Licht in de Rook* (Light in the Smoke); *De Openbaring van Johannes en het Sociale Leven* (The Revelation to John and Social Life); *Een Hoornstoot tegen Assen* (A Horn's Butting against Assen [against Dr. Geelkerken]); *Bij Dichters en Schriftgeleerden* (With Poets and Scribes; containing, among others, an article about the paradox in which the perspicuity of Scripture is defended against the theology of Karl Barth); *Tusschen Ja en Neen* (Between Yes and No; with a

chapter against mysticism, stressing the need to listen in obedient faith to the (written) Word of God).

In this period Schilder gave a forceful impulse for positive work on the Scriptures, stimulating, among others, the writing of commentaries. He himself wrote the three volumes of *Christus in Zijn Lijden* (English title: *Christ in His Suffering*) with its emphasis on the three-fold office of Christ, causing the reader to have deep appreciation for the suffering of Christ Jesus and leading him to devotion of the Lord. On the basis of exegesis, Schilder defended inspiringly the redemptive-historical and revelation-historical approach in preaching in which comes out the unity of Scripture.

2) 1930-1940: In this period we find a well-known work on the doctrine of Christ, *Jezus Christus en het Cultuur Leven* (Jesus Christ and the Life of Culture), later worked out in *Christus en Cultuur* (English title: *Christ and Culture*); it is an excellent introduction to the thinking of Schilder. Then there is his dissertation about the history of the concept of the paradox, *Zur Begriffsgeschichte des "Paradoxon" mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Calvins und des nach-Kierkegaardschen "Paradoxon"*; it deals with God's revelation to man and how man can know God; over against the irrationalism of the dialectical theology, Schilder maintained the rational character of God's revelation and our knowing of God: after the fall in sin sins of thought are made, but the laws of thought remain. God's revelation is reliable and true; man can know Him, because God has accommodated Himself to our level of understanding.

In his (never published) inaugural speech, too, Schilder placed the Reformed doctrine of obedience of faith in response to the Scripture over against the dialectical theology of Barth c.s. [Parts of this speech appeared in the notes added to the brochure *De Dogmatische Beteekenis van de Afscheiding* (The dogmatic Significance of the Secession; the Secession was a return to the Canons of Dort).] Important were also the brochures *Ons Aller Moeder* (The Mother of us All; an appeal to the Dutch Reformed Church for true unity) and *Geen Duimbreed* (Not an inch; against National Socialism).

In this period Schilder wrote many polemic articles about, e.g., the covenant, common grace, the concept of the pluriformity of the church. At the end of this period Schilder was deposed.

3) 1944-1952: In this period Schilder defended the Liberation in many articles in both its doctrinal aspect (on the covenant, on baptism and regeneration [the

promise cannot be restricted to a prediction for the elect], to mention only these), and in its church-political correctness. He prepared a revised reprint of *Christ in His Sufferings*, (vol. 1,2), and published his dogmatic master piece, *The Heidelbergsche Catechismus* (four volumes on the Lord's Days 1-10), in which he continued his discussions on many fronts.

### Schilder's significance

It can be said that Schilder, in his works, devoted himself negatively to fighting subjectivism and positively to the acknowledgment of Holy Scripture as the reliable revelation, the trustworthy Word, of the God of the covenant in the history of mankind. This written Word is the Word that God speaks, also today. In subjection to that Word of God in Holy Scripture, Schilder recognized the confessions of the Reformed Reformation as being a good expression of the unity of faith and as a suitable means for the

true unity of the church. In this framework, Schilder placed himself over against the dialectical theology of Barth c.s., over against the scholastic Kuyperian theology, and over against some aspects of the "wijsbegeerte der Wetsidea," the philosophy of the cosmonomic idea. On all three points Schilder's antithetical writing on these three fronts was worked out.

Dr. Faber concluded with saying that, thus, the significance of Schilder was that he defended the Word of the God who speaks. This Word is very near you (Deut. 30, Rom. 10).

"It is a profound happiness and a deep joy to be Reformed,"

Schilder wrote in connection with his thinking about the paradise situation.

But it is a profound happiness and joy to be Reformed also in the recognition

of the Christ of the Scriptures and of the Scriptures of the Christ.

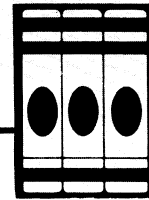
## PSALM 26:5, 7

Thy praise I will record.  
I love Thy house, O LORD,  
The place where all Thy glories dwell.  
O let my voice not falter  
When I before Thy altar  
The wonders of Thy might retell.

But I shall walk with Thee  
Who vindicatest me.  
My foot stands firm on level ground;  
In the great congregation  
I bless the LORD's salvation;  
In praise of Him I shall abound.

# BOOK REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENT

By J. Geertsema



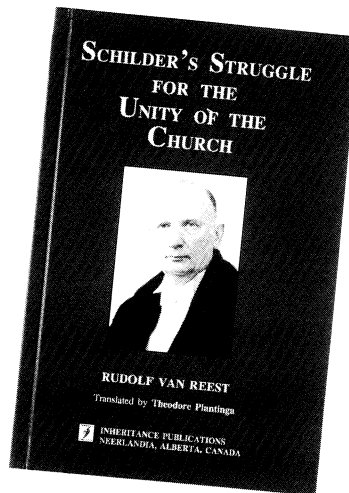
## A Dr. K. Schilder book

With thankful joy I announce here the "birth" of a book. On my desk is a copy of a book about Dr. K. Schilder, who had a leading position in the Liberation in the Netherlands in 1944. It is the English translation of the book of Rudolf van Reest, penname of K.C. van Spronsen, *Opdat zij allen Eén zijn*. The translator is Dr. Theodore Plantinga, professor at Redeemer College in Hamilton. Dr. J. De Jong, wrote an "Introduction" for this English edition. The title of the translation is *Schilder's Struggle for the Unity of the Church*.

The book was first published in two volumes in 1962 and 1963, in the series "Reformation Books" ("Reformatie Boeken" or "R.B. Serie"). The author was a personal friend of K. Schilder (from now on K.S.). Van Spronsen followed K.S. both in his fight against the occupying powers of Hitler's National Socialist Germany and in his struggle against synodocratic powers in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Both the translator and the author of the "Introduction" notice that this friendship of the author with the person whom he describes resulted in a somewhat biased picture. However, Plantinga writes, "I believe van Reest has told his story honestly." And De Jong says, "The book is essentially accurate on historical details," while the small inaccuracies have been corrected in the translation. He continues, "Besides – and this is even more important – it is also accurate in its assessment of the issues involved in the ecclesiastical struggle that marked the later part of Schilder's life." DeJong gives a short outline of this life of K.S. in his "Introduction" and points to the meaning of K.S. for the (Dutch and the Canadian) Reformed Churches today.

The total number of pages as I have them runs up to 471. The book itself ends on page 406. The last sixty five pages contain appendices written or added by Dr. Plantinga. I let him explain why he added these appendices and what they are:

In one area I found the book incomplete, namely, the impact of Schilder and the church struggle of the 1940s



on the North American church scene. Some material could be added in translator's footnotes, of course, but when it came to the question of the relationship between Schilder and the Protestant Reformed Churches (a matter of considerable interest to van Reest), something more substantial than a footnote was needed. Therefore I have added an appendix on the North American developments, which is followed by a second appendix containing Schilder's final statement on this matter, together with a brief response to Schilder by Herman Hoeksema. A third appendix is Schilder's speech "Your Ecumenical Task," which was translated into English some time ago but is not readily available. A final appendix, drawn from a brochure by Rev. C. Veenhof, deals with church-order parallels between 1886 and 1944.


The reader understands that these additions make the book so much more valuable. It explains the reasons for the separate existence of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches in North America.

The actual book of Rudolf van Reest gives us a picture of K.S. in the framework of his time, especially in the thirties and the forties. We get a picture here about the line of thinking of K.S. himself,

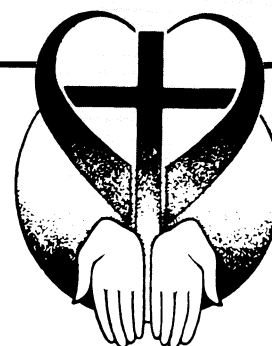
and of those who struggled together with him for the faith, as well as about the views of those who opposed him. In these four hundred pages we see how things developed in these two decades. What comes out very strongly is that K.S. and those with him were dominated by the zeal of faith and the strong desire to be and remain truly Reformed, that is, obedient to the Word of God and faithful to the confession of the church based on that Word, and therefore also faithful to the ecclesiastical agreements laid down in the Reformed Church Order.

More I am not going to say about the contents of the book. I want to conclude with a word of thanks of recommendation. A word of thanks for Dr. Plantinga is certainly in place. He has done us all a great service with the translation of this book about K.S. and with his additions in this Schilder Year. Thank you very much, Dr. Plantinga. And thank you, br. R. Janssen of Inheritance Publications for the publication of this work now. In the second place, I want to express the wish that among the members of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches this book becomes a bestseller. Investing in a good book is one of the best things we can do with our money. I hope that many outside our circles will read it. And it belongs on the book shelves of every Canadian and American Reformed home, not just to stand there, but to be taken and read. Parents, give it as a (Santa Claus or, if this custom has been taken over, as a Christmas) present to your children. It is, together with the book of the Rev. Van Oene (*Inheritance Preserved*), an excellent tool for them to learn about their/our Reformed roots. It is also an excellent tool for others to learn to understand our Canadian and American Reformed thinking. The price (\$29.95) is for a book of this size, or rather, with this contents, and its sturdy hardbound form, certainly not too much.

Therefore, buy it and read it.

The book can be bought from Inheritance Publications, Box 15, Neerlandia, AB, T0G 1R0 or from a familiar Christian Book store. 

# 1990 Annual Report



As usual at this time of year, C.R.W.R.F. is pleased to bring you, our supporters, its Annual Report. 1990 was a year of special note for us for it marked our 25th Anniversary as an organization. Perhaps you celebrated with us at the Anniversary evening held in September, or perhaps you read the special brochure printed to mark the event. We rejoice in the faithfulness of our heavenly Father who has allowed us to minister to so many needy people over the past 25 years.

Thank-you for your contributions over the years, also for your prayerful and financial support this past year which enabled us to work in these areas:

### **Acheho Children's Home, Kenya**

Numbers at our home increased at the end of last year as fifteen children were admitted, bringing the total cared for there to seventy-five. Mr. James Randa, the manager, writes of these "new" arrivals: "The children are very happy and are wondering about the great change in their life. It is indeed a real happiness in the home."

Outside school hours, all of the children are kept busy with various clubs and activities organized in and around the home i.e. domestic science, drama, gardening, tree planting and choir. There is even a kindness club which involves Christian service to the elderly and sick in the community.

We recently sent an extra gift to cover the cost of two sewing machines to aid in teaching the sewing club and in the considerable task of mending.

The Randas are capable managers whose dedication to the work they espouse is evident. They correspond with us regularly and we also periodically receive letters written by the children – a treat to read!

### **Pokot Children's Home, Kenya**

Happily, this year, C.R.W.R.F. was able to identify a new project which will allow us to care for a few more of Africa's needy children. After much planning and deliberation, a new home in the extremely impoverished region of West Pokot, Kenya, will soon open its doors.

The land was donated to the African Inland Church by an area chief and construction costs have been covered by the Dutch organization "Save a Child" who together with the A.I.C. will provide supervision for Pokot on our behalf. (A similar arrangement works well for Acheho.) Our responsibility, when the necessary details and agreements have been worked out, will be to cover total ongoing costs for day-to-day running of the home. In this, we will be aided by the substantial annual interest from a memorial trust fund designated to assist homeless children – a welcome contribution! Near the home, construction has been completed on a simple school building so that the Christian upbringing in the home will be reinforced in the education the children receive.

### **Ban Vinai Refugee Camp – Thailand**

Life continues much as it has in the past for the more than 32,000 refugees still at Ban Vinai. The staff has put much energy and dedication into the medical program and this runs smoothly. As well as a strong emphasis on training refugees for a variety of medical roles, the multi-faceted program covers everything from immunizations to prenatal care to mother-child clinics to an onsite hospital.

Our approximately \$8,000 contribution funds all dental services and equipment. An ex-repatriate dentist is presently teaching seventy students to perform basic dental treatment such as scaling, fillings and extractions. He also runs a dental preventative school team to teach, screen and refer school children.

In spite of having their basic needs met and certain educational opportunities afforded, many of the refugees understandably find their situation very discouraging. Returning "home" is not seen as a viable option by most, and Thailand increasingly tires of its role as host. In fact, the Thai government recently officially announced that Ban Vinai will be closed within three years. Though



*Acheho Children's Home – Kenya*

the time schedule may be doubtful, the announcement adds to the uncertainty of life for those in the camp. For many, especially the young, repatriation is seen as the only way out, and about 4,000 will soon move to Phanat Nikkom, a transit camp, in hopes of being accepted by a western country.

A decade is a long time to be confined to a camp.... Our prayer is that God

both of restoring and protecting sight and of educating the blind and handicapped may continue and expand.

### Development in Somalia

Although the Madanys were forced to leave Somalia in mid-1989, the agroforestry project they initiated is still "alive" and it is hoped that conditions may permit it to continue. Michael plans to main-

### Community Development Bangladesh

One thousand families. The number is small when seen as a percentage of Bangladesh's staggering 110 million population. Yet, it is nevertheless a significant number when one thinks of *one thousand families* whose lives have been affected in some positive way – either through functional literacy classes, involvement in handcrafts and other skills groups, nutritional training, or the development of co-ops which facilitate saving and income-generating projects.

Working with the landless and nearly landless people of Khanjanpur in north-west Bangladesh, the program, run by C.R.W.R.C. and funded by us (\$25,000 annually) brings a spark of hope to an otherwise dismal existence. People in this crowded, impoverished area actually *see* their families' health improving as nutrition lessons are put into practice. They definitely benefit from the extra income their joint ventures produce. And the spark of hope is fanned as Christian workers seek ways of planting seeds of God's truth and grace in Christ. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve in Khanjanpur to meet the challenge of overwhelming need with the help of God.

### Emergency Aid to Ethiopia

The situation in Ethiopia remains volatile. Though reports of imminent political changes are rampant, the present regime as yet maintains the upper hand militarily. Starving those who "rebel" has



Community Development – Bangladesh

will bless all that is done to provide a better life for these unfortunate people and to point them to *the* better life.

### Papua New Guinea – Refugee Aid

Life for the Irian refugees who have resettled inside P.N.G. is becoming easier as new gardens begin to produce and small businesses are set up. It is hoped that the sawmill operation which initially constructed health clinics, churches, schools, storage sheds and more, will soon hold its own. Richard Bultje, who ran the project, is due to return home this year, and hence our support of this work will come to an end. We are happy to have been able to provide some financial backing for this brother and in this way contribute to the work of helping refugees resettle and begin a new life.

### Christian Blind Mission International

As the Lord saw the misery and despair of the blind and lame, He had compassion on them and He acted. This picture of Christ is at the heart of C.B.M.I.'s ministry. Our support of their work enables many to receive new sight and to begin again to care for themselves and their families. C.B.M.I. has an urgent need for ophthalmologists willing to work and train others in third world countries. It is our prayer that this need will soon be met so that the vital work

tain contact with the work by visiting periodically if security allows. Our commitment at present is simply to cover travel costs from nearby Nairobi, Kenya, where the Madanys presently produce a Christian radio program which is broadcast into Moslem Somalia.



Hmong trainee dentist at Ban Vinai Refugee Camp. Our contribution covers the entire dental program



long been a powerful weapon of Mengistu, and many have suffered from his repressive tactics. According to U.N. reports, up to 4 1/2 million people in Ethiopia faced starvation this year alone due to the twin perils of drought and war.

It is difficult for the West to assist the hungry when ports are closed and supply convoys bombed. Still, food supplies have managed to trickle through to Eritrea from neighbouring Sudan and the worst of the disaster has been averted.

Our emergency fund has contributed to this lifeline. Sent through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, your gifts (\$15,000 so far) have been tripled through a long-standing agreement with the Canadian government, and careful monitoring as-

ures us that the food indeed has reached those for whom it was intended and has saved many lives.

The people here and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa, though not now actually dying from lack of food, are still suffering the ongoing effects of hunger such as forced travel to seek food, malnutrition, and ill health. An acute need for food exists at least until the next crops are harvested. Your gifts and prayers for this country in turmoil are therefore still urgently requested.

We are thankful for the support you have rendered this past year. May the Lord enable you to contribute again in 1991 so that this work of mercy done in dependence on Him, may continue.

Gifts for the work of CRWRF may be directed to:



CRWRF  
PO Box 793  
Burlington, ON  
L7R 3Y7

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

## You Were Asking?

By W.W.J. VanOene

### Funeral services?

From one brother the question was received whether it is proper to use the term "Funeral Service" when brothers and sisters are together for the interment of one of the brotherhood. He cited various instances when this term was used indeed. In a particular issue of *Clarion* he read: "A funeral service was held on ..." He heard an announcement from the pulpit that "a funeral service will be held for sister A." On the other hand, he wrote, when at a church visitation the question is asked "Are funeral services held?," we answer with a "No." He questioned the propriety of that term and asked me to write something about it in *Clarion*. "And tell those proofreaders to be on the ball."

As for this last point, it is a standing rule that proofreaders are not allowed to change the text of a submitted article or advertisement without asking permission from the one who sent it in. Even if there is an obvious mistake in a certain submission, they have to contact the author and to ask him whether he wants it printed that way. It did happen that a proofreader corrected an obvious mistake without permission, and the whole order was returned to end up at the garbage dump at the cost of several thousands of dollars, because the customer wanted that mistake printed just like that. So, don't blame proofreaders for wrong expressions or terms. They only check whether the

printed text is exactly the same as the one in the submitted copy.

Now for the question itself. It is wrong to use the term "funeral service." The churches have stipulated in Art. 65 of the Church Order that "funerals are not ecclesiastical but family affairs, and should be conducted accordingly." In the previous text of our Church Order the provision was found that funeral services shall not be held. Our present text amounts to the same, but gives at the same time the reason why: they are family matters.

Neither in advertisements nor from the pulpit nor on "Orders of Ceremony" the term "service" should be used. The very fact that funerals are conducted from out of the church building does not make them services either. The place from where is irrelevant; the character of the gathering is decisive. It is a gathering of the family with relatives and friends, with brothers and sisters.

Also in our terminology we should avoid wrong concepts.

P.S. In the first issue of *Clarion* in 1973, the "Question Column" was one of the features mentioned. Very few questions have been received in the almost eighteen years that have elapsed since that time. Our readers are reminded of the opportunity to submit any question they may have. If I cannot answer it, I'll pass it on to someone who is able to do it.

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# Welcome to Rev. R. Aasman

By. D.S. Postma

On August 12, 1990 the Providence Congregation officially received her new Minister of the Word, Rev. R. Aasman, coming over from Ancaster, Ontario. Rev. M. van Beveren, our previous (and retired) minister, led the service. He had chosen as text Hebrews 13:17, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you."

Congregation, we rejoice greatly because we receive a new minister. Even though the attention of the whole world is focussed on the middle east a new minister has to proclaim the greatest power on earth, the Word of God. It changes the hearts of men. That Word gives real peace.

How do we receive this minister? The text says, "Obey your leaders and submit to them." The theme is: "The relation between officebearers and the congregation." We will first look at, "the task of the officebearers." Second at, "the task of the congregation," and third at, "the blessing of a harmonious relationship."

Keeping watch over our souls summarizes all the work that the officebearers are to do, and the Great Shepherd Jesus Christ is behind them.

On the other hand, the task of the congregation is to, "obey your leaders." We, as congregation, must open God's Word as well and also check what the officebearers tell us and if it is right, then we have to accept it.

If we listen to them we will have a harmonious relationship. It is a great sin if we work against our leaders when they lead us according to His Word.

Let us then rejoice for the Lord is good by sending us a new minister.

The Rev. P. Aasman was then installed as minister of the Providence congregation in Edmonton. After the benediction the delegate of the church at Barrhead, Rev. B. Tiggelaar, brought greetings and a message of encouragement.



The Aasman's family — l to r. Nicole, Laura, Tanya, Mrs. Aasman, Rev. Aasman, James

Br. A. DeLeeuw, representing the Immanuel congregation of the classical resort, brought greetings on their behalf. He also noted that his father, Br. A.W. DeLeeuw, installed the first minister in Edmonton, Rev. J. van Popta, almost 40 years ago.

Letters of congratulations were read as received from the churches at Winnipeg, Coaldale, Calgary, and Neerlandia.

Reverend van Beveren then spoke a few words of welcome. The chairman of the council, Br. P. Van Bostelen spoke a final word also to Rev. VanBeveren for his work done during the past two years.

In the afternoon service the Rev. R. Aasman presented his inaugural sermon. The text was Revelation 2:1-7, the letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus.

John saw Jesus Christ among the Seven Golden lampstands and in His right hand seven stars. He is the head of His Church.

The message is summarized as follows. "Jesus Christ commands the church at Ephesus to Resurrect her first love." First His words of commendation. Next His words of condemnation and third His words of exhortation.

The congregation at Ephesus during

its first 40 years had enjoyed unparalleled blessings with the services of Paul, Aquilla and Priscilla, Apollos, Timothy and then the apostle John. They knew the truth. We also read about their patient endurance, while suffering persecution for 40 years. They hated the Nicolaitans. Yet all was not well in Ephesus because they had abandoned their first love.

This is an admonition to us as well as to them. A people who love Jesus Christ will grow in faith and love in every aspect of their lives. Praise to Jesus Christ. If we do not repent He will remove our lampstand from us. He exhorts us to listen to Him and repent *now*. His promise is that to him who conquers He will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

On September 14, 1990, we had a party in our church auditorium to welcome the R. Aasman family. Br. Hooimeyer opened the evening. All and especially the Aasman family and Mrs. Aasman's parents, the van der Schaaf's, were welcomed.

Thence followed an introduction. We heard some of Rev. Aasman's life history.

The kindergarten to grade 6 kids



*The Edmonton schoolchildren singing the praises of the Lord*

sang a welcome song. Rev. van Beveren, presented the new minister with a very large paintbrush. Next came the young peoples.

Sr. Betty Bouwsema gave a brief history of our ladies society from its beginning in 1951 and its contribution to our congregational life. Our choir sang their theme song, "Praise the Lord," "I know who owns tomorrow," and "Follow Jesus." Br. Gerrit Vanderveen spoke a word of welcome on behalf of the Evangelization Committee. Elizabeth Teitsma and Carolyn Vanderveen presented a duet on clarinet and piano entitled, "Fox Hunt." Others spoke on behalf of their societies.

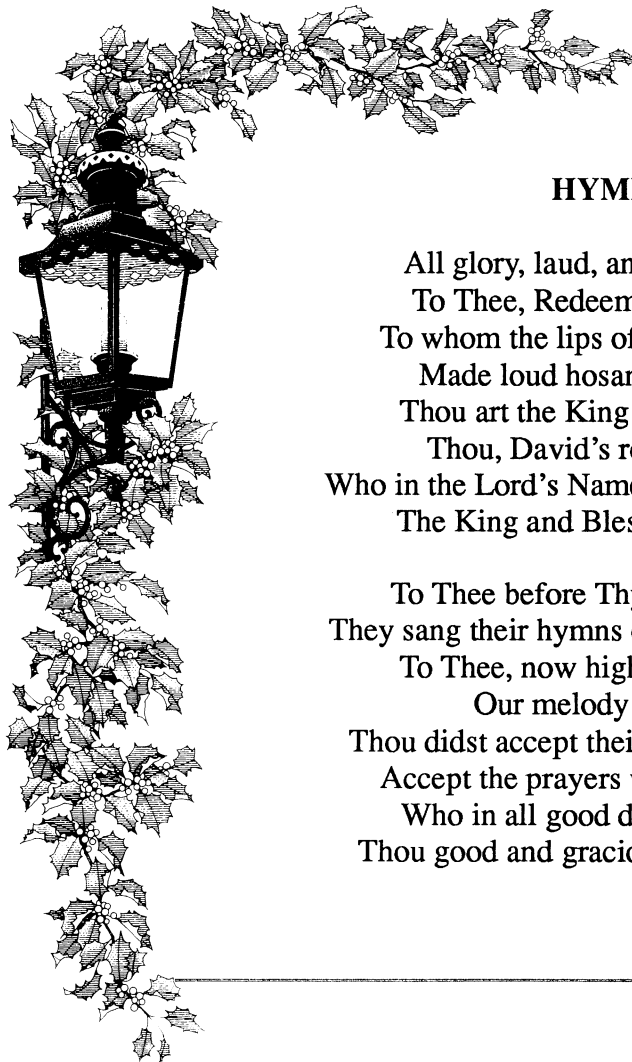
Rev. and Mrs. Aasman spoke a word of thanks noting that they'd have no more trouble with homesickness after all the welcomes to date.

We sang Hymn 65:1 and 3 to end the official part of the evening and retired to the basement for coffee. We hope and pray that the Lord will give the Rev. Aasman and family yet many years of faithful service in the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. ©

#### Editorial Note:

*This is an abbreviated version of the report. Those who write about welcoming and saying farewell to ministers are requested to make their story very short.*

*J. G.*



#### HYMN 25:1, 3

All glory, laud, and honour  
 To Thee, Redeemer, King,  
 To whom the lips of children  
 Made loud hosannas ring.  
 Thou art the King of Israel,  
 Thou, David's royal Son,  
 Who in the Lord's Name comest,  
 The King and Blessed One.

To Thee before Thy passion  
 They sang their hymns of praise;  
 To Thee, now high exalted,  
 Our melody we raise.  
 Thou didst accept their praises;  
 Accept the prayers we bring,  
 Who in all good delightest,  
 Thou good and gracious King.

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# Guido de Brès High School Commencement

October 12, 1990

By G. Alkema

Back to Guido de Brès they came, forty-four of them, this time in unaccustomed finery. Dressed to the hilt, they were coming back to their "old" school for an occasion they had looked forward to for years – graduation. Four years before, they had come for the first time, rather small, unsure of themselves, a little lost. Now they had their high school years behind them, and it showed. Shining faces, a bit of a swagger, secure in the knowledge that they were the centre of attention. But the lessons were not entirely complete: this day would serve as a reminder to them that the education they had received was directed towards a high and worthy goal. Accomplishment was in some degree behind them, but graduation is also commencement – the entering into a new phase of directing their lives in the service of God.

At six o'clock grads and guests entered the gymnasium for the graduation dinner. On this occasion the gym was more than a gym, as was immediately apparent. It was decorated with balloons, ribbons, and splashes of colour. The graduates sat by themselves at a lengthy head table, some of them escorting guests. Smaller tables, also draped and decorated, seated parents, board members, and guests. Good food was served by the Ladies' Auxiliary. From time to time a group of staff members proceeded to the microphone and read poetry specially composed for the graduates. The verses offered the guests of honour an opportunity to laugh at themselves and benefit from the insights (and praise) proffered by their former teachers. After dinner the grads were marshalled for a visual record of four years of togetherness, the last class photograph.

The actual graduation was held at a nearby church that was large enough to

accommodate upwards of a thousand people who wanted to witness the ceremony. After a rousing processional and congregational singing, Mr. W. Oostdyk, the chairman of the Board, opened the graduation with Bible-reading, prayer, and a word of welcome. Next the podium was occupied by the Principal, Mr. J.G.

vance to the corner of the stage to snap a picture. Finally the entire class stands together at the front, and due applause is rendered.

It is time for the main address, presented this year by the Reverend Clarence Stam, who indulged in some quite appropriate nostalgia. This year

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HYMN 48:4

With song and prayer, in faith progressing,  
In all you do God's will obey.  
Expect from Him alone your blessing;  
He will renew it every day,  
For God will never those disown  
Who put their trust in Him alone.

---

VanDooren, who used this opportunity to give a final word of instruction. Grace, mercy, and peace from the LORD had enriched the lives of these young people thus far, he reminded them, and God's peace would attend their future endeavours as they enter the world of work or secular education.

Towards the beginning of the evening's program was the presentation of diplomas. That event is always filled with solemnity. Each graduate, when called forward, shakes hands with the principal, and receives the document from the chairman. Proud parents ad-

marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of *his* high school graduation, and he used the occasion to draw parallels and contrasts. It is at this point that the listening graduates can learn an important lesson. When Rev. Stam graduated, the man addressing his class spoke in vague generalities. The year was 1965, and despite Cold War concerns, graduates were encouraged to build a new, more loving world based on humanitarian commitment. They were told to dream, then work together to realize those dreams. Twenty-five years later, the speaker addressed a class in a different



*From left to right – Back row: Christopher VandenHaak, Darren Bartels, Andrew Horsman, Marc Jagt, Tom VanEerden, Earl Wanders, Andrew Hordyk, Allan Buist, Richard VanderLaan, William Ravensbergen, Chadwick Dykstra, Job Schenkel, William Bartels, Carl VanDam; Middle Row: Edward Stam, Lennard Nienhuis, Carl Ludwig, Matthew DeGelder, Bernard Huinink, Bruce DeBoer, Matthew Sloots, Steven VanBodegom, Peter VanderBoom, David VanEs, Henry Gelms, Frank Post, Andries VanEs; Front Row: Marian VanderHout, Charlotte Elzinga, Jennifer VanAmerongen, Jennifer VandenBerg, Patricia VanderVeen, Marian Hoeksema, Joanne Geertsema, Sonya VanderLaan, Debra Smouter, Adria Schuller, Margo Hofsink, Tracy Jelsma, Diane Vis, Janice Scholtens*


world, but he had a meaningful message, "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:6). The ways, said Rev. Stam, are the level, paved roads we take in our lives. On those ways the going is often easy, and we are allowed to plan great things, with the provision that we take seriously our role in faithfully working in God's Kingdom. When we carry out our Christian mandate and the ways turn into narrow, steep, and difficult paths, then the LORD will direct our steps. Then we will not be dismayed or discouraged, but can continue in faith, trust and obedience. This message gave real meaning to our graduation exercises. It is not that we want to glorify our graduates or the efforts of our school system,

but that young people may be nurtured and educated so that their entry into the world may have proper Christian meaning and hope.

The main address is a centrepiece, but the program was far from over. Happily, it included plenty of inspirational music provided in part by Guido de Brès students. A girls' duet sang "O magnify the Lord" by D. Tunney, and a mixed quartet sang "In Times Like These" by Ruth Caye Jones. Awards were presented, among them proficiency awards, participation awards, scholarships, the Governor-General's Bronze Medal, and the highly-regarded Student of the Year Award, presented in 1990 to Allan Buist.

One of the graduates, Sonya Vanderlaan (who had contributed to school

life for years with her music) sang a memorable song, "Friends" (by M.W. Smith) for her class. Then Matthew Sloots took his schoolmates down memory lane in his valedictory address. He reminisced on striking and humorous events, but did not neglect to stress the main purpose of four years of study at Guido de Brès High School.

The formal program was concluded with the singing of Psalm 103:1 and 7. Graduates and their parents, board members, staff, and well-wishers could join in praise and thanksgiving. Once again we could witness the LORD's goodness, rejoice in it, and ponder the miracle that we are used by Him in advancing His coming Kingdom. 

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# Canadian Reformed Church at Grand Valley

## Official Opening

By P. Witten

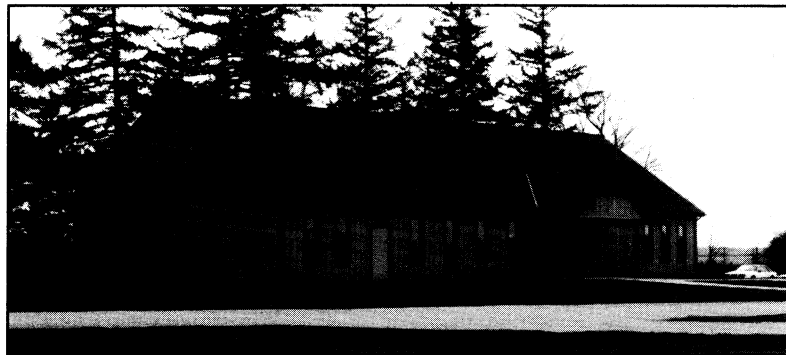
With great enthusiasm and much anticipation, the church of Grand Valley, on Saturday afternoon, October 27th, officially opened its new church building. One year plus a day after the decision was taken to go ahead with the building of a church and manse. The building



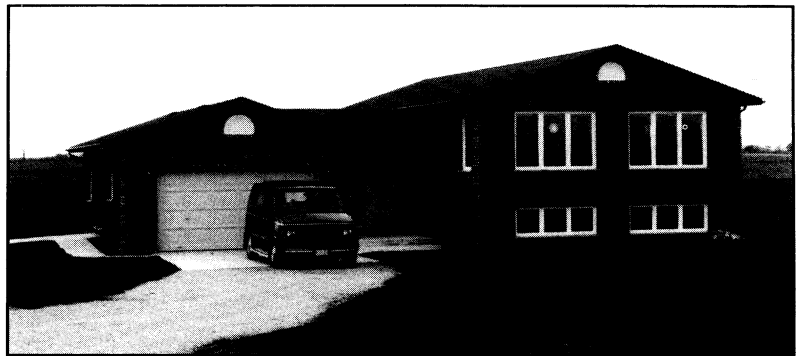
Br. and sr. J. Groen, who unveiled the plaque

effort which became known as "Project 90" caused great joy and pride within this small young congregation (67 communicant members, instituted 1987). Appropriately they chose as the theme for the official opening, "Soli Deo Gloria." The Rev. P. Aasman selected as text meditation Psalm 8 wherein God is glorified, "He has made it all possible."

The ceremony M.C. Br. B. Wilderboer presented a brief historic overview of events leading up to the day and expressed on behalf of the church, sincere gratitude to the local community for the support the church had received while being without a building. The building committee chairman, Br. J. Schutten presented to Rev. P. Aasman as chairman of the consistory, a ceremonial church key. Br. Schutten also thanked the many peo-



The church building



The manse

ple who had donated resources and free labor. The project manager, Br. J. Post was presented with a white hat in recognition of his leadership.

During the ceremony, a commemorative plaque was unveiled by the church's senior couple, Br. and Sr. J. Groen. The plaque read: "Project 90" Soli Deo Gloria, Canadian Reformed Church, Grand Valley.

Words of congratulations and future best wishes were spoken by Br. K. Knol on behalf of the church of Orangeville, Br. Medemblik of the church of Fergus, Mr. B. Tovell, East Luther's Councillor,

and Mrs. P. Kalapaca, Reeve of Grand Valley.

In the evening, the congregation celebrated this great event in festive mood, singing songs of praise, watching a play about the activities by the Young Peoples, a video presentation of the different construction phases, songs sung by the Women Society and lots of refreshments. All in all it was a very special day.

Grand Valley's new church service times are 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. They hope many will come and see their new church building, joining them in worshipping the Lord. ©



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*Canadian Reformed Society for a Home for the Aged Inc. operating*  
**Mount Nemo Lodge Nursing Home**  
*and*  
**Ebenezer Villa**

**Burlington, Ontario**

It is more than a month ago that these photographs were taken of the new addition under construction at Mount Nemo Lodge Nursing Home on Guelph Line which is located just North of Burlington in the district of the Rehoboth Church on Highway #5. By the time this magazine reaches you, we expect the roof to be on and most of the brick work done. During the cold winter months, the interior will be finished. When completed, the nursing home will have doubled the number of beds from 30 to 60 at a cost of approximately \$1,600,000. As well, we will then be able to provide care to 12 residents in our new Alzheimer Wing. The residents in the old building will temporarily move to the new addition while extensive renovations, repairs, and remodeling are done in the existing building. We look forward to the completion of this massive project by May 1991.

The nursing home is operated under license from the Provincial Department of health and on two occasions received special accreditation for excellent care and outstanding services. However, it became apparent that from a cost effective and financially viable point of view a nursing home with less than 50 beds cannot, in the long term, operate successfully even on the basis of a non-profit status. Hence, when the Ministry of Health announced its intentions to expand the number of nursing beds in our area, an immediate application was filed to obtain funding for additional beds and after many hearings and consultations, we received the good news of the extra 30 beds. After many more meetings, hearings, planning, and replanning, we finally received in August the approval to our building plans and a construction permit was issued. The successful con-



*One wing is now under the roof. To the right the new main entrance*

tractor, br. Gary Aikema, operating Shelterclad Construction Ltd. started immediately with the project. Indeed, we are thankful for the progress made and pray that the Lord will continue to bless our

endeavours. Look forward to the grand opening in the spring and plan to attend that big event.

**Hamilton, Ontario**

At Ebenezer Villa, as well, we are planning an addition of four (2 bedroom) apartments with a basement, where the new crafts room will be relocated. A one-bedroom unit will then be added as well in the existing building. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$430,000. Regretfully, we cannot provide you with a progress photograph as construction is not expected to start until about the last week of November 1990 with completion in March 1991. For all five new units, tenant leases will have been signed. Of the 35 units, 26 will then be occupied by Canadian Reformed Church members and 9 by members of the Christian Reformed Church. We are grateful for this beautiful Villa as a haven for our senior members. Many activities maintain a busy schedule for the residents.

Through subsidy received from the Ministry of Social Services, excellent



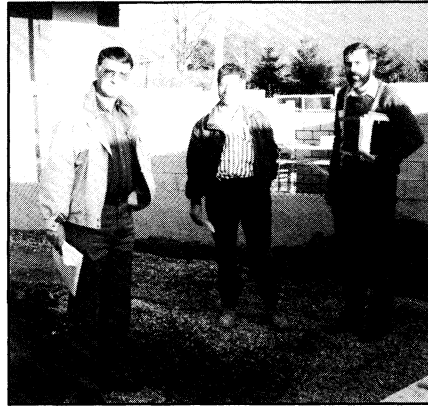
*I trust in the  
steadfast love  
of God for ever  
and ever.*

*Psalm 52:8B*

home care services are provided for those who request them. This service is increasingly in demand. We are pleased to assist in this need for the benefit of our residents. Any of our brothers and sisters who wish to be entered on the waiting list for one of the two homes should write us at:

P.O. Box 20052  
Upper James Postal Outlet  
Hamilton, Ontario  
L9C 7M8

We urge our church membership to become a member of this Society. Even though we receive financial support from the Government, there are always the extra services for which extra money is so badly needed.



From l. to r.: br. L. Knegt, chairman of the board; br. G. Aikema, contractor; br. J. Boersema, vice chairman. A construction site building inspection

At this place we express a public "thank you" to the many volunteers who give generously of their time and effort for the wellbeing of the residents in both homes. We invite others to join them. Please call Mrs. Liz Oostdyk, Burlington (637-9584) for services at Mount Nemo Lodge Nursing Home and Mrs. A. Geertsema, Ancaster (648-0087) for Ebenezer Villa activities.

The Board, our Management committees, and Care Committee wish you all a blessed Christmas and God's rich blessing for a happy and healthy New Year.

For the Building Committee  
Tony Vanderhout



## PRESS RELEASE



### Combined meeting of the ILPB and the Administration and Marketing Committees — November 9, 1990, Hamilton Ontario

Representing the

Men's League:

G. Helder and G. Schutten

Women's League:

M. DeGelder and L. Schutten

Young People's League:

J. Poppe and D. Kieft

Administration Committee:

T. Hutten, R. Pieterman, H. VanMiddeloop, T. Heyink, E. Spiensma, H. VanDam

Marketing Committee:

R. VanAndel

1. The Chairman, G. Helder, opened the meeting in the usual Christian manner, and welcomed everyone.
2. The agenda was adopted as presented.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on March 24, 1990 were adjusted and adopted.
4. Reports were given on the progress of various projects:

*Revelation Vol. 2* (Rev. L. Selles) was published September 1990. Sales were steady. Several aspects of the physical appearance of the book was discussed.

*Open Communion in the OPC* (Rev. B. Hofford) was just received from printers. It is a 22 page, staple bound

booklet which will retail for \$3.50. Advertising should begin immediately.

*Galatians* (Rev. M.J.C. Blok) has been revised and will shortly be ready to be printed.

*Romans* (Rev. J. Francke) is in the final editing and correcting stages. Publication is scheduled for summer - fall 1991.

*Church in the Last Judgment* (Prof. B. Holwerda) is being edited and revised by a new editor.

*Philippians* (Dr. K. Deddens) is still being edited.

*Luke Vol. 1,2,3* (Rev. Hagens) are scheduled to be re-edited. It is preferable to publish these in one volume.

*Acts Vol. 1,2,3* (Rev. VandenBerg) are being translated. These may also be published as one volume.

*Believe and Confess Vol. 1 and 2* (Rev. C.G. Bos) are still being edited. No change reported.

*Hebrews* (Rev. L. Selles) has been revised and is being edited.

*Lectures on the Church* (Dr. J. Faber) is available from Australia. We will order a number of copies. This booklet will sell for \$3.50.

5. Sales Report was tabled. Sales are up from last year and an inventory count has been done.
6. Financial Report was tabled.

Audited financial statements were reviewed and discussed. Auditors report was discussed.

7. Marketing Report was tabled and discussed.

A Reformed Book Service operating from Belmont ON will be contacted and perhaps utilized to reach other Reformed communities.

It was mentioned to continue sending new publications to the Editor of *Clarion* for book reviews.

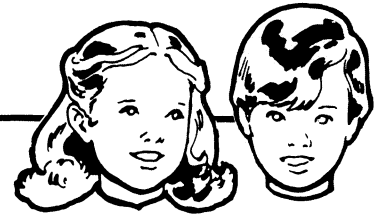
8.
  - i. It was decided to approach various corporations/companies for assistance with funding when a new book is ready for publication.
  - ii. New committee members were unanimously approved.
  - iii. Our agreement with Pro Ecclesia Publishers, Australia, was reviewed and discussed.
9. Question Period was held. It was clarified that the ILPB concentrates on publishing Bible Study material for Society meetings rather than topical books, although some had been published in the past. Ministers of the Word should be encouraged to submit outlines and commentaries for publication once a study has been made of specific Bible books.
10. In closing, Psalm 138:1 was sung and the Co-ordinator, T. Hutten, closed the meeting with thanksgiving and prayer.

T. Heyink,  
Administrator



# OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

A boy I know made and decorated a papier mâché plaque at VBS this summer.

He (very neatly!) printed this poem on it:

J	ust a little baby
E	arly one evening was born,
S	ent to save
U	s from our
S	ins.



I thought, "That's a Christmas poem!"  
That's what Christmas is all about!  
God the Father sent His own dear Son into *our* world to be *our* Saviour.

He came as a little baby, just as all of us.  
He is the perfect Saviour for us because He is just like us.

Except for one thing, of course – the Lord Jesus never sinned.

And that's why He can save us from *our* sin.

Long ago the Jews wanted a great *king* for their Messiah. People today might want a super hero. But every Christmas (and every day) we are thankful and happy with this perfect Gift God sent us, a perfect Saviour to save us from our sin and give us *life*.

Let's show our thankfulness every day by living as His children.

After all, a present deserves a "Thank you," don't you think?



## Saviour

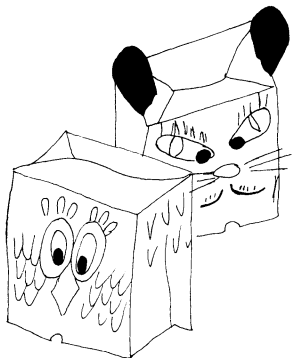


- The LORD your God \_\_\_\_\_ in the midst of your \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_ you and to give up your enemies before you.... Deut. 23:14
- The LORD saves not with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_; for the \_\_\_\_\_ is the LORD's.... 1 Samuel 17:47
- Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be \_\_\_\_\_; save me, and I shall be \_\_\_\_\_; for Thou art my praise. Jer. 17:14
- But fear not, O Jacob my servant...I will \_\_\_\_\_ you from afar, and your offspring from the land of their \_\_\_\_\_ . Jacob shall return and have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ . Jer. 46:27
- ...you shall call His name \_\_\_\_\_, for He will save His \_\_\_\_\_ from their \_\_\_\_\_. Matt. 1:21
- ...for to you is \_\_\_\_\_ this day in the city of \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11
- My soul magnifies the \_\_\_\_\_ and my spirit rejoices in God my \_\_\_\_\_. Luke 1:46, 47
- ...we have our hope set on the \_\_\_\_\_ God, who is the \_\_\_\_\_ of all men.... 1 Tim. 4:10
- ...we have seen and testify that the \_\_\_\_\_ has sent His \_\_\_\_\_ as the Saviour of the \_\_\_\_\_. 1 John 4:14
- The saying is sure and worthy of full \_\_\_\_\_, that Christ Jesus came into the \_\_\_\_\_ to save \_\_\_\_\_. 1 Tim. 1:15
- Because he cleaves to me in \_\_\_\_\_, I will deliver him; With long life I will satisfy him, and show him my \_\_\_\_\_. Ps. 91:14,16
- ...to the \_\_\_\_\_ God, our \_\_\_\_\_ through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, before all time and now and for \_\_\_\_\_ .... Jude 25

# For you to do

## Paper Bag Crafts

Does your Mom have a large paper grocery bag? Maybe she can ask to have her groceries packed in these paper bags. They're fun for making masks!



Glue on ears made of construction paper.

Use crayons or big markers to draw eyes, nose and mouth. And maybe whiskers!

Don't forget to cut out eye holes so you can see where you're going.



## STUNTS: FUN FOR GROUPS

### Autograph Headwork

Try to write your name on a piece of paper held against your forehead.



### For older Busy Beavers

The little poem about the Lord Jesus at the beginning of our column is called an "acrostic" poem.

That's a verse in which the first letters, taken in order, spell a word or phrase.

Can you take some other word or name, maybe about Christmas, and write an acrostic poem like that?

Give it a try!!



### Box Buildings




Boxes can be used to build a house, a village, or even a totem pole!

If you have a really large carton (maybe your family has a new dishwasher?!) you can make a house with doors and windows.

Tape or glue your cartons together so you can crawl from one carton to another.

Have fun!



### PASS THE HAT

The players stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. Each wears a silly hat. When you say, "Hats left" or "Hats right," each player takes off his hat and places it on the person on that side of him. "Hats off" means hold your hat in your hand. "Hats on" means leave the hat alone. Anyone who misses is *out of the stunt!*

## Quiz Time!



### Find the Hidden sentence

A	H	U
V	Y	O
E	I	T

Start with the letter Y, and draw a continuous pencil line from letter to letter, going left, right, up or down – but never diagonally. When you have finished, if you've done it right, the letters will form a sentence.

SOLUTION: You have it.

In the diagram below, start with the letter A\*, follow the same rules and see if you can discover the hidden sentence.



T	E	A	U
O	L	B	O
D	O	A*	Y
T	I	R	E





Can you find the 10 wrongs? Look below for answers.  
By Busy Beaver *Lydia Viersen*

Tonight when you go to sleep think about the best thing that happened to you this Christmas. Will you share "The Best Part of My Christmas" with the Busy Beavers? Please write to:



The Busy Beaver Club  
c/o Aunt Betty  
Premier Printing Ltd.  
One Beghin Ave.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2J 3X5

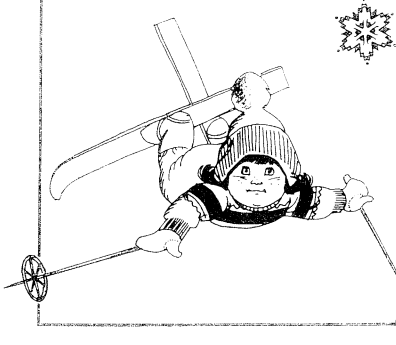
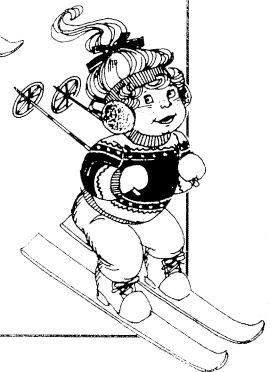


# Winter



By Busy Beaver *Jodie Lodder*

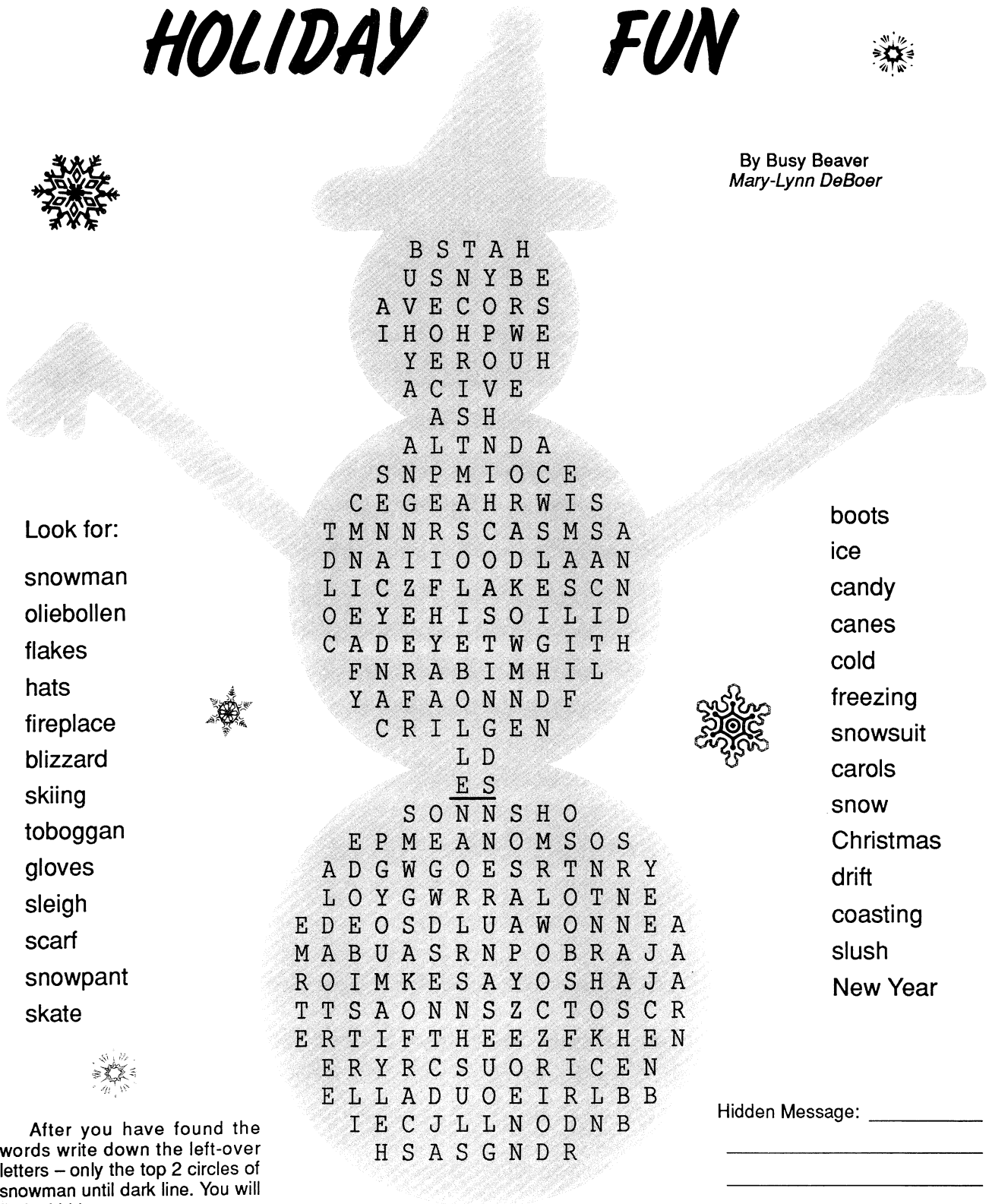
The snow is falling,  
the birds are all gone south,  
the bears are all sleeping,  
the chipmunks are keeping  
their acorns and chestnuts.  
Fall going away,  
Winter is on the way.



# HOLIDAY FUN



By Busy Beaver  
Mary-Lynn DeBoer



Look for:

- snowman
- oliebollen
- flakes
- hats
- fireplace
- blizzard
- skiing
- toboggan
- gloves
- sleigh
- scarf
- snowpant
- skate



- boots
- ice
- candy
- canes
- cold
- freezing
- snowsuit
- carols
- snow
- Christmas
- drift
- coasting
- slush
- New Year

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

After you have found the words write down the left-over letters – only the top 2 circles of snowman until dark line. You will find a hidden message.

Hidden Message: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



## BIRTHDAY LIST

Lots of Busy Beavers, start the year off with a birthday!  
We all join in wishing you a very happy and thankful day  
with your family and friends.

May the Lord bless and keep you through the year.  
Congratulations.  
Here's hoping it's your best birthday yet!



## January



Kerri-Ann Spoelstra	5	Kelly Kleefman	19
Vicki Roodzant	6	Irene Bikker	20
Christina VanderVelde	7	Karen DeBoer	20
Anna De Vries	8	Tanya Strating	20
Brad VanOene	9	Mary-Lynn DeBoer	24
Brenda Grim	12	Sarah Vanderzwaag	25
Michelle Meyer	17	Melanie DeBoer	28
Jennifer Postma	18	Brian De Gelder	30

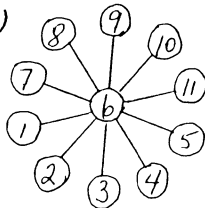


## Answers

*Find the Hidden Sentence:* Are you able to do it?

*What's Wrong?*  
1. Fruit doesn't grow in winter. 2. Birds don't make nests in winter. 3. Grass doesn't grow in winter. 4. Butterflies don't fly in winter. 5. Fish don't swim on water in winter. 6. Water is ice during winter. 7. People don't fly kites in winter. 8. Birds don't fly North in winter. 9. Icicles don't grow on clouds. 10. Cactus don't grow in winter.

*Number Puzzle (from last time)*



## Rewards

Yes, I have a sticker reward for you!  
Send in your answers to the *Saviour* quiz. And I think the Busy Beavers that send letters on "The Best Part of My Christmas" deserve a sticker reward, too. I'm looking forward to your letters!



Busy Beavers, very best wishes to you all for a Blessed Christmas and a fun holiday!

With love to you all,  
Aunt Betty

