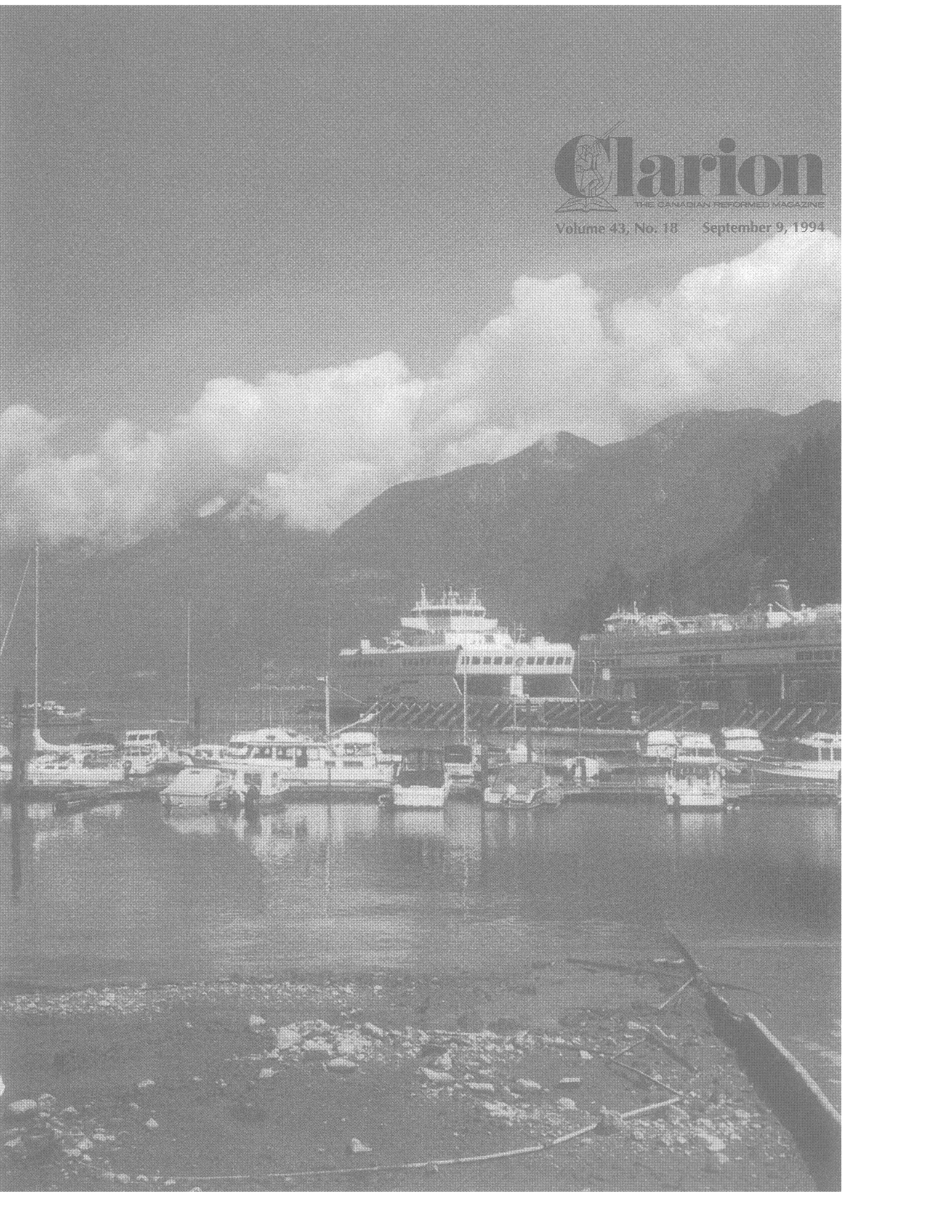


Clarion

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Catholicity and separation₄

By C. Trimp

Dr. C. Trimp is Professor of Diaconiology, emeritus at the Theological University in Kampen. This article originally appeared in De Reformatie, 2 October, 1993 and has been translated by Dr. H. Boersma. This is the fourth installment discussing Article 27 and 28 of the Belgic Confession.

The effect of BC Article 28

In the previous issue we discussed article 28 of the Belgic Confession: the duty to join the church. This duty is so serious that, if need be, one will have to break with “those who do not belong to the Church” – if, at least, one does *not* want to break with the church of Christ. We came across the word “separation,” or “secession”: separation with a view to *remaining* in the catholic church. For no one is allowed to separate from that church.

In the four centuries which have passed since the writing and adopting of the confession, this part of the Belgic Confession has produced radical effects in the course of ecclesiastical life. The formulation of the text offers a legitimation of the break with the church of Rome. A serious appeal is sounded in the direction of Reformed minded people. They may not hide their love for God’s commandment, but – in the words of answer 94 Heidelberg Catechism – they should love, fear, and honor God in such a way that they would forsake all creatures rather than do the least thing against His will in this important matter. When we have an eye for this historical context, article 28 turns into a touching document of godliness and trust.

But this article also has a more general meaning. Let us come as close to home as possible: in 1944, the author of the *Act of Liberation or Return* appealed also to this article in order to justify the casting off of the “synodical yoke” for the sake of the unhindered progress of the service of Word and sacraments.¹ Even though this Act has not received official ecclesiastical status, as a chief witness it clarifies the atmosphere in which the Liberation took place.

When one reads this Act he soon notices that the word choice and line of argument follows the *Act of Secession or Return* from 1834. In this year, the congregation of Ulrum separated from the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK), with an appeal to B.C. articles 29 and 28: “wherefore the undersigned declare herewith that, in accordance with the office of all believers, they secede from those who do not belong to the church and thus no longer want to have communion with the Dutch Reformed Church, until it returns to the true service of the Lord.” Thus, the Secession of 1834 takes its name from article 28. In this way, this article played a significant role in the formation of the institution of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN). That institution partly finds its origin in a *separation* or *secession* from the false church with a view to the *continuation of the catholic church*

of Christ. This explains the promise and assurance that they “want to exercise communion with all truly Reformed members and will unite with every assembly which is based on God’s infallible Word, in whatever place God has united it.

The interpretation of Herman Bavinck and its consequences

History teaches us that also within the Reformed churches doubts have arisen more than once with regard to the point of the relation between separation and catholicity. Instead of speaking of *subservience* to catholicity, people have, in connection with the application of B.C. article 28, spoken of *conflict with* or *obscuring* of the catholicity of the church.

We have in mind the famous speech of Herman Bavinck on *The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church* (Dec 18, 1888).² In this speech, Bavinck actually removes article 27 (the “one catholic church”) from under the division between Rome and the Reformation. According to Bavinck, the Reformation ushered in another ecclesiology: “Unity and catholicity now lack concrete organization but serve as the hidden foundation of all Christendom.” “The church, outside of which there is no salvation, was detached from all formal institutions and located in the invisible realm of mystical union with Christ” (238).

With Bavinck, the events in the sixteenth century almost receive the status of an additional divine revelation. When article 27 says that we “believe and profess,” this apparently does not just rest on the Word of God, but also finds support in the historical development. In any case, Bavinck makes his interpretation of article 27 dependent on his understanding of history. He broke the unity of B.C. articles 27-32 by referring the “catholicity” of article 27 to an “invisible” church, the mystical union with Christ. Article 28 would then deal with the visible manifestation of the church, while article 29 portrays two extremes: the false church and the true church. Bavinck notes in this connection that these two never present themselves, and never have presented themselves, “in an absolute sense” in the history of the church.³ This evolution in interpretation is, in Bavinck’s judgement, an inescapable development – even though it has its drawbacks; it is a reason for humility.

Bavinck’s conviction is accompanied by a number of considerations which at least introduce a certain tension with regard to ecclesiastical faithfulness. On the one hand, he reminds us of the warnings of people like Calvin and Voetius against arbitrary separations. After all, there are degrees of purity within the true church, and this fact must bridle our short-temperedness. On the other hand, he does not want to deny anyone’s freedom to separate from the church. Also if one does not consider “his” church to be a false church, it is allowed to leave this church and join another one. That is

even one's duty if one considers the other church "more pure." Yet, this does not nullify the fact that one must remain in one's own church as long as this church does not hinder us to be faithful according to our own confession.⁴

It will be clear to the reader that, in his thinking, Bavinck really does not know what to do anymore with the confession of B.C. article 27-29. It is equally clear that in his "solutions" he very closely approaches the typically nineteenth-century constructions of Abraham Kuyper (pluriformity, etc.).⁵

In his speech of 1888, Bavinck does not mince words with regard to his aversion against a separatist mentality (247). He even makes the statement that the Reformation of the sixteenth century also has a "church-dissolving" element (249), and that "heresy" has become a "fluid notion" among Protestants (241). Meanwhile, "catholicity" is completely separated from any particular way of being church, and is transformed into a characteristic of the culture of Christianity.

When one studies these constructions, he begins to understand two things, at least with regard to Bavinck. First, in his striving for unity between people of the First Secession (*afgescheidenen*) and the Second Secession (*Dolerenden*), Bavinck – who, certainly in 1888, was very much involved with this – managed to keep out of the "Stipulation" (*Beding*) a reference to articles 28 and 29. This reference had been part of the Act of Secession. Apparently, he did not think that such a reference was opportune. Undoubtedly, he thereby sought the hearts of the brothers of the Second Secession. But at the same time it was an expression of uncertainty in his own heart. Despite great esteem for Bavinck's ecclesiastical aims, one can regret that precisely the dogmatician of Kampen had such great hesitations with regard to a central motif in the Act of 1834.⁶

In the second place, Bavinck – like Kuyper – was of the opinion that articles 27-29 were already out of date in the year in which they were written. Apparently, this always continued to be his conviction. This explains that, many years later, at the synod of Leeuwarden (1920), he made a plea to expand the confession.⁷ For, according to him, especially also this section no longer reached the present-day level, and it did not respond to the needs of the time either.

Bavinck's doubts and uncertainties regarding the truth and the timely value of B.C. articles 27-29 still deserve our attention today. This is especially the case since Bavinck's question marks of 1888 have grown into the exclamation marks of the so-called *Open Letter* of 1966. The fact that the spokesmen from the years of the Liberation referred to article 28 was regarded by the authors of this letter as proof of a festering "liberation belief": "The Liberation would have been a joining of the one true church which our confession knows in accordance with the Scriptures." This so-called "liberation belief" is then marked as a "religiously very dangerous ideology."⁸

Meanwhile, Bavinck's opinion that the change in church concept was one of the consequences of the Reformation, is not supported by the actual facts. The choice of the Reformation as a turning point is relatively arbitrary, considering the church history of the Middle Ages.⁹ Besides, it is entirely clear that the Reformers regarded the churches of the Reformation as the ancient and true church of Christ, which has not lost, but has instead recovered its characteristic of catholicity in the struggle with Rome. For it is not the bond with the pope in Rome, but the restoration of the doctrine of the Scriptures in preaching, confession, and church government which guarantees the apostolicity, holiness, unity, and



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Dr. H. Bavinck

catholicity of the church. By all means, read Luther's *Wider Hans Worst* of 1541!

As far as the Second Helvetic Confession is concerned, simply its title and preface already refute Bavinck's opinion regarding catholicity which, according to him, was now detached from all formal institutions, and which from now on would be the *hidden* foundation of all Christendom. Article 17 of this confession does not lend itself to an interpretation in the direction of a theory of pluriformity. The confession of catholicity does not somehow diminish the value of the distinction between the true church and the churches that have alienated themselves from it. This true church is the church outside of which "there is no salvation." Every person ought to maintain communion with it. Bavinck's reference to this confession (238) is irrelevant because it is obviously incomplete. It is only in the time of the Enlightenment (the eighteenth century) that the churches of the Reformation have left or abandoned the name "catholic" to the church of Rome.¹⁰

Should anyone have doubts regarding the timely nature of these disputations, a reference to a recent publication may quickly heal him from his doubts. Two years ago, a book has been published under the title *Catholicity and Secession: A Dilemma?*¹¹ It comes mostly from the circle of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC). Many of the authors of this international group of people have a direct relation with the Secession of 1834.

Despite the differences in presentation, the message of this book is very clear: *separation* and *catholicity* do not go hand in hand. This assertion not only regards the historical event of 1834 as a mishap, but it also crosses out the key passage of article 28 regarding the duty to separate from those who do not belong to the church. H.B. Weijland formulates it very clearly: the reference to articles 28 and 29 in the Act of Secession represents a mistaken appeal to the confession. The Secession was no more than a transfer from a less pure sister church to a more pure church (111f.).

J.H. Kromminga and P.G. Schrotenboer present similar positions. Kromminga states that Reformed confessions have often been misused to justify separation (8). According to Schrotenboer, as Reformed people we have not come to grips with our Secession heritage (13). There is a discrepancy in the Reformed churches between its confession and its

history (of the Secession) (175). An introverted, sectarian, separatist mentality has come to the fore in the Reformed world (with reference to H. Bavinck) (183f.).

We are aware that these few comments do not deal with all aspects of this interesting book. Yet, now already we feel the need to make three comments:

1. In this book on the catholicity of the church there is not a single page which deals with the authority and the unity of Scripture. In other words: there is talk about the catholicity of the church without a word about its apostolicity. Still, that is precisely where the foundation of the catholicity of the church and its doctrine lies. That is just as certain as the fact that the idea of the plurality of the church and its truth goes back to the image of the multi-faceted character of Holy Scripture.

2. When the duty to separate – as it is formulated in article 28 – is regarded as an obstacle to the command of catholicity, the confessional legitimacy of the separation from the Roman Catholic hierarchy falls away; moreover, this means that the way is opened to remodel the "catholicity" into the "plurality" of the church.

3. Nowhere in this book is there any reference to the instruction of K. Schilder. It is incomprehensible that his extensive ecumenical arguments over against the idea of pluriformity (which is also opposed in this book) met with no response at all. But more than half a century before these authors appropriated Bavinck's thesis that the "right to separate" is not an article of faith (Bavinck's speech, p. 247), Schilder already taught us that Elijah did not pretend to have a "right" to separate, but that Ahab has carried out the "act" of separation. "The unbelievers in the church are always the separatists"¹² By definition, that separation is "anti-catholic." But therefore it is the calling of all believers to all the more maintain, in opposition to such separation, the unity of the church in every place where God has established it.

Provisional conclusion

For now, we have more than used up the space allotted to us. We are very aware that numerous questions have not been touched upon, let alone that they have been discussed. We hope to have the opportunity to pay attention to this in another series of articles – in due time. These four articles were meant to read together what it says in B.C. articles 27 and 28: the confession of all who hold to the Reformed religion.

Do we still let this confession speak to us? Or do we continue what has been the practice of many people for more than a century: by mouth they say that they believe and confess that there is one catholic church. Meanwhile, they hide behind opinions, slogans, and vague thought patterns which take away the attention of our faith from the beauty and the seriousness – the gift and the task – of the catholicity of Christ's church. In such a situation, it is good to again appropriate the wise word of K. Schilder, spoken in the direction of the "youngsters" (*jongeren*): only someone who knows the existing building well has a right to partake in a discussion about remodeling or expansion.

¹⁰The Liberation took place according to article 31 C.O. and by virtue of the "office of all believers," as this is activated in B.C. article 28. In addition, the Act appealed to B.C. articles 7, 27, 29, 30, and 32. We can say with H. Bouma, "When we liberated ourselves in 1944 according to article 31 C.O., we did this in order to remain church of the Lord in the Scriptural sense of the word, according to B.C. articles 27-29" (see "Persschouw," in *De Reformatie*, 44 [1992],

272). The Act speaks the language of B.C. article 27. It characterizes the act of the Liberation as a "return to the exercise of catholic Christian communion with the church and the offices," precisely on account of the refusal to go along on the "ungodly path of sectarian un-catholic self-righteousness and separation."

²Translator's note: Bavinck's speech has recently been translated into English by John Bolt (*Calvin Theological Journal*, 27 [1992], 220-51). References to Bavinck's speech will be taken from this translation.

³H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde dogmatiek*, 4th ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1930), IV, 300, 303.

⁴*Ibid.*, IV, 299-303.

⁵J. Kamphuis, "Geen klauw mag achterblijven," in D. Deddens and M. te Velde, eds., *Vereniging in wederkeer* (Barneveld: Vuurbaak, 1992), pp. 31-44; L. Doekes, "Het is mijn moeder!" in D. Deddens and J. Kamphuis, eds., *Doleantie-Wederkeer: Opstellen over de Doleantie van 1886* (Haarlem: Vijlbrief, 1986), pp. 35-36.

⁶The Acts of the synod of the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland, held in Leeuwarden (Aug 18-29, 1891), give an interesting overview of the proposals which were put forward by various delegates and advisors, with a view to the "Stipulation." The proposal of H. Bavinck-J. van Andel was ultimately accepted (arts. 160-69). Cf. also about these matters: H. Bouma, *De Vereniging van 1892* (Groningen, 1967), esp. pp. 38f., 70f., 114ff.; R.H. Bremmer, "Lucas Lindeboom: Eén van de 'vaders' van de Vereniging in 1892," in D. Deddens and M. te Velde, *Op. cit.*, esp. pp. 98-99.

M.E. Brinkman gives us information regarding Bavinck's view on the church in "Pluraliteit in de leer van de kerk?" in J.M. Vlijm, ed., *Geloofsmanieren: Studies over pluraliteit in de kerk* (Kampen, 1981), pp. 129-36; R.H. Bremmer, *In gesprek met oudere en nieuwere theologen* (Kampen, 1991), pp. 93-97; G.C. Berkouwer, *De kerk*, I (Kampen: Kok, 1970), pp. 65ff.

A. Kuyper wrote about the doctrine of the church in the Belgic Confession in a more nuanced fashion, more critically, and sharper than H. Bavinck. In his plea for the idea of pluriformity, Kuyper distinguishes various periods in the historical development of the sixteenth century. Already at that time, this development brought, in his view, a separation between the actual conviction and the formulation of the confession. We give one characteristic quotation: "This brought a huge rift between the conviction as it is expressed in the

confession, and the conviction which later took shape due to the pressures of life. The confession was still mostly from the first period. The factual change of conviction did not take place until the second period. Meanwhile, in their dogmatic expositions, theologians did not at all reckon with the reality of the situation; instead, by means of old syllogisms they again kept trying to make true the initially accepted contrasts. The result is that our Forms of Unity, as well as our old dogmatic authors, still maintained the idea of the unity of the visible church, while in real life people more and more openly reckoned with the pluriformity of the visible church" (*De gemeene gratie*, 4th ed., [Kampen: Kok, n.d.], III, 234; cf. also p. 271). Some demythologizing regarding this historical picture would not harm!

⁷Acts of synod Leeuwarden 1920, appendix 6.

⁸Here we come across such a crude form of historiography that one hardly recognizes the meaning of the Act of Liberation. I am still of the opinion that the "Stipulation" of 1891/92 gives us a historical example of a sound, ecclesiastical consensus, which for the sake of the unity and the continuation of church life may be considered legitimate. The text of the "Stipulation" leaves no doubt with regard to the function of the confession as a form of unity. But they did not push each other on the point of the valuation of the historical event of 1834. In this light, insulting qualifications, such as "ideology" and "liberation belief" in the Open Letter, represent a high degree of intolerance. The problem which the Reformed churches were saddled with in 1892 was not the validity and the meaning of B.C. articles 27-29, but the fact that these articles were practically rendered inoperative by spokesmen like A. Kuyper and H. Bavinck.

⁹Cf. G. Ebeling, "Zur Geschichte des konfessionellen Problems," in *Wort Gottes und Tradition* (Göttingen, 1964), pp. 41 ff.

¹⁰Cf. on this R. Rouse and S.Ch. Neill, *Geschichte der Ökumenischen Bewegung (1517-1948)*, 2A (Göttingen, 1963), I, 101f., 165; P. Steinacker, in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, 18.76f.

¹¹P.G. Schrotenboer, ed., *Catholicity and Secession: A Dilemma?* (Kampen: Kok, 1992). The authors are W.D. Jonker, F. van Rensburg, J. van Dyk, K. Runia, W. van 't Spijker, H.B. Weijland, H. Zwaanstra, R.C. Gamble, B. Spoelstra, S.H. Widyapranawa.

¹²Schilder spoke these words during the commemoration of the Secession in October, 1934. See *Van 's Heeren wegen* (Kampen: Kok, 1934), p. 68 (reprinted in *Verzamelde werken, De kerk*, II [Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1962], p. 104).



Responding to a plea: Report on a visit to the Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia held in Byford, WA.¹

By Rev. E. Kampen

Introduction

It is always an honour and privilege when you may represent the federation of churches at the broadest assembly of a federation of sister churches. That honour and privilege fell upon Rev. M. van Beveren and myself when we were appointed to visit the Synod of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia.

A question may arise as to why a delegation was sent to Australia at this

time. Further, the makeup of the delegation may be somewhat surprising. It is good therefore to briefly explain.

Why these ministers? Why this year?

Our relationship with the Free Reformed Churches in Australia of course goes back many years. We both look back to the same country of origin, the Netherlands. We share the same confessional and church political tradition.

As churches we are the fruit of immigration into English speaking lands. A number of congregations in Canada have had to say farewell to their ministers as they departed for Australian churches, and some have managed to obtain a minister from Australia. Further, a number of families have seen sons and daughters find their life partner on the under side of the earth. Also, over the years more and more Australian sons have headed for Hamilton

in order to study for the ministry of the gospel. Our church life is thus marked by strong historic, ethnic and family ties. Yet, despite these ties, it had never yet happened that either church federation had sent a delegation to the broadest assembly of its ecclesiastical sister. It seems that the Dutch Synods were more diligently visited. Whether that was because it gave an opportunity to visit the "old country" for some of the delegates, or whether it was because those synods were more interesting, that is hard to say. Maybe there was a little of a "mother/daughter" feeling. Whatever it may have been, the time had arrived for a meeting of English speaking sisters.

Yet, the question may come up: why this year? The reason was that the standard invitation to sister churches this time was not "standard." In the letter of invitation the deputies wrote, "... we would plead with you to send a delegation to our next synod." In particular they stated that our input would be appreciated on matters of Bible translation and the ICRC, both of which were issues of great concern and even contention in the churches. The word "plead" gave an urgency to the invitation.

As to the makeup of delegation, it so happened that the familiar travel team for the committee had been on a number of assignments which saw them miss a considerable amount of time from their congregations. Thus, the task fell to another committee member. Since a second committee member was not available, Rev. van Beveren was the natural choice because of his long service on the Committee up till his retirement, along with his extensive experience in the matter of the ICRC. In this way the inexperience of one delegate was nicely balanced by the experience of the other delegate.

Travelling far from home but still feeling at home

We departed for Australia on June 8, 1994. The Lord granted us a safe, eventful journey, as we arrived at around midnight, June 10.

Having been given one day to overcome travel fatigue, we both were honoured with an invitation to preach in several churches on Sunday. Here you could see concretely something of the catholicity of the church, for though we are geographically thousands of miles apart, the people assemble to hear the same gospel and sing the same

praises to God for His grace as we may do in Canada.

The mood in the churches about the Synod.

It is no secret that there was considerable tension in the churches about this Synod. Rev. Veldman, in an editorial in *Una Sancta* (Australia's "Clarion") wrote, "What should be a highlight in church life has become a dreaded event." In response to his own question of "Why?" he states: "At bottom I believe that in certain instances there is mistrust. From our entrenched positions we have already labelled others beforehand." (*Una Sancta*, Vol. 41, p. 366). Rev. Bouwman, in his sermon held during a prayer service for Synod called by the Byford consistory also spoke about the nervousness in the churches about the upcoming Synod. It should be noted that a prayer service for Synod is not customary in Australia like here in Canada and thus is only a local initiative.

What was the reason for this tension? To put it as compactly as possible, it came down to two issues, the first being Bible translation, and the second "Presbyterianism," as the churches were confronted with it in the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) and the contacts with the Presbyterian churches, especially the Presbyterian Church in Eastern Australia (PCEA). In the issues of *Una Sancta* in the months leading up to Synod the reports of the deputies

had been published. It is no overstatement to speak of two camps. With respect to the ICRC, for example, the issue was: Continued membership justified versus continued membership not justified. In this second issue, "Presbyterianism," of course we too will have a keen interest since that continues to be a point of discussion in Canada too. The bulk of the reports for Synod we had studied was devoted to the Presbyterian question in one form or another.

Synod looks like our Classis

On Tuesday morning, June 14, Synod was opened. Since there are only 8 Free Reformed Churches altogether in Australia, each church sends a minister and an elder, or two elders. Due to their size they simply cannot operate fully according to the C.O of Dort. Some of the tasks done by our classes are done by what they call a "Classis Church." Synods are held every two years. In that all churches have two delegates, an Australian synod is more like a classis with a very large agenda. Rev. W. Huizinga was elected chairman. It is a typical feature of Australian church life that the first clerk of Synod was an elder.

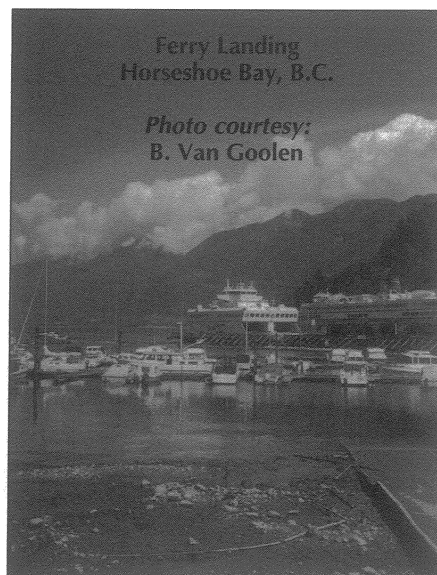
Church Order

The main order of business from Tuesday till the end of the Thursday afternoon session was the Australian version of the Church Order in the style of Dort. For many years deputies and Synods had been working towards an Australian church order that would be as close as possible to Dort as well as the C.O. used in the Canadian Reformed Churches. It was somewhat surprising that after all the effort spent in our churches to come up with a Canadian Church Order, to read comments like, for example, about article 16, that "its language is pathetic and the rambling sentence improperly constructed." The result was a much reduced article 16 in the Australian C.O., based on the ground that the longer Canadian version unnecessarily duplicated the form for the ordination of ministers. There was a similar trend in the articles about the elders and deacons.

Of special interest is art. 53 of the Australian C.O., titled, "Baptism Promise and Education." As adopted it reads,

"The consistory shall make sure that the parents honour their vows to instruct their children, to the utmost of their power, in the doctrine

OUR COVER



Ferry Landing
Horseshoe Bay, B.C.

Photo courtesy:
B. Van Goolen



Church building – Byford

of the Scriptures as summarized in the confession, and to have them instructed in the same by the instruction provided by the consistory. In accordance with the same vow, the consistory shall see to it that the parents, to the best of their ability, and with the cooperation of the communion of saints, give their children education (as stipulated by the civil government) which is based on Scripture and Confession.”

From the discussions both on the floor of Synod and on a personal level, it became clear that it was felt this article was needed if the elders were going to be able to properly do their work and tell the parents to send their children to our own school. The impression was received that without such an article the almost total support for the schools could not be maintained. This reasoning gives some reason for concern, for if the matter of reformed schooling is made a matter of legislation rather education of the membership on this matter you may indeed obtain whole, but not whole-hearted support. Further, the communal support is now even encoded in the C.O. A consequence of tying this to the baptism vow would seem to be that church discipline would be used for those who do not send their children to our own school, or for those in the community who do not support it.

It appears as a little too much regulation. Reformed education is definitely important, but this does not seem the best way to ensure it.

The overall impression from listening to these discussions was that in an effort to make a typical Australian C.O., there was some unnecessary duplication of work done abroad, with at times too much regulation.

Fraternal address and response

On Tuesday evening opportunity was given to address the Synod on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Brotherly greetings were passed on, along with an expression of understanding about their situation, since we are both immigrant churches. Special comment was made about the Presbyterian question, since this too is a mutual problem as we have to deal not just with Presbyterians far away, but much closer at home, basically in our backyard. We stated that though we did not have ready answers, and that we were facing the same issues in our own federation, it was our desire to be of service to the Synod wherever possible.

On Friday evening, Br. M. Bruning replied on behalf of the Australian churches, indicating appreciation for the presence of a delegation from Canada.

Bible translations

On Thursday evening, in the presence of a large audience, Synod began to deal with one of the contentious issues: Bible translation. The debate was: which version to endorse for use in the churches, the NKJV or the NIV. The two positions were as follows: endorse the NKJV, while granting (for some time) the use of the NIV, or to allow both versions alongside each other, placing them on par. This is an issue on which feelings ran deep. From personal conversations this was confirmed. It appears that the RSV never really took hold in Australia, only having gained official approval in 1983.

The discussion got quite emotional at times, with both elders and ministers making lengthy addresses. The lengthy

discourses were mainly in favour of the NKJV. Some of the information presented on the floor of Synod was very technical, even including references to the Hebrew. It appeared indeed that the matter of Bible translation had become a bit of a shibboleth, with positions quite entrenched.

The chairman, at the start of the discussion, had invited us to participate in the discussion at the end of the round. As it turned out, during the round, some questions arose from the delegates about the situation in Canada. When given the opportunity to speak, the Synod was informed that the issue is not as pressing in Canada, as there are sufficient RSV's available for now. It was pointed out that the Acts of Synod Lincoln mention that Premier could possibly print more, although this certainly was not preferable for we don't want to be an island in terms of the translation we use. Further, it was pointed out that the reason the NKJV is being studied in Canada is especially since the Australian churches requested this. This was important to mention, for the Australian churches sometimes have the impression that in Canada we don't listen to them. Synod was informed that there is not much interest in the NKJV at this time. It was suggested that in the matter of Bible translations it might be better to educate rather than legislate. Especially since the discussion was so intense, it might be good to step back from it, wait and see what Canada does, and in the meantime leave each other free.

The discussion about Bible translations came to a conclusion on Friday evening. The key part of that decision is as follows:

3. To endorse the NKJV as a faithful and reliable translation for use in the churches, as well as for study, instruction and family purposes;
4. To allow the NIV to be used in the church service, and for study, instruction and family purposes.

In the grounds it is stated:

3. It is highly desirable that all the churches in the bond use the same translation of the Bible. However, since the question of

which Bible translation to use is not one of principle but rather one of preference, room should be left in the churches for a degree of variation.

In the discussions it became evident that there was a real pressure by the proponents of the NKJV to make a decision now. There seemed to be a fear that if a decision was not made by this Synod, it would be too late. This seems to suggest that if a decision for the NKJV was not made, the NIV would take over due to its readability. What was somewhat

troublesome in the debate was the unwillingness to leave each other some freedom. The decision is somewhat hierarchical, in that it gives dominance to the NKJV, and it appears only an act of generosity to leave, for the time being, room for the NIV. A decision made in Canada a number of years ago to use the RSV for the official forms and leave the churches freedom in the use of either the KJV, RSV, or NASB, seems to give more room for the autonomy of the local congregations in this matter. **C**

Meditation

By G.Ph. van Popta

Read Acts 1:1-11

“ . . . speaking of the kingdom of God.”

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The book of Acts is about the work which the Lord Jesus Christ continued to do after He had ascended into heaven. Luke wrote two books of the New Testament. He wrote the GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE and THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. First Luke wrote an orderly account of all the things which Jesus Christ began to do and to teach until He was taken up. Then he wrote Acts, a second orderly account. This second work is about all the things that the ascended Lord continued to do, through His apostles whom He had filled with the Holy Spirit.

What were the things that Jesus Christ began to do and to teach? He began to bring the kingdom of God into the midst of mankind. Mark tells us that when the Lord Jesus began to preach in Israel He said: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Luke records the Lord as saying that God had sent Him for the very purpose of preaching the good news of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43).

In the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God in human flesh, the kingdom of God had come. The Lord Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him. The Spirit had anointed Christ to preach good news to the poor. Christ came to proclaim release to the captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who were oppressed, and to proclaim the Jubilee year of the Lord.

He preached the good news of the kingdom. He called people to repent of their sin, to amend their lives and to obey

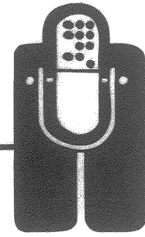
the law of the kingdom. He called upon people to submit to the King of the kingdom.

After the Lord Jesus arose from the dead, He presented Himself to the apostles. He met with them several times over a period of forty days, and spoke to them of the kingdom of God. He sent them out to preach the good news of the kingdom in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Then the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. He took His rightful place as King. But He continued the work of preaching the kingdom of God. He continued the work through His Holy Spirit empowered apostles.

Acts recounts to us how the apostles preached the gospel of the kingdom in ever wider circles. They started in Jerusalem. Then they went out into Judea and Samaria. Acts ends with Paul preaching the kingdom of God quite openly and unhindered in Rome, the capital city of the world empire.

That is how the book of Acts ends. But the Lord Jesus did not quit there. He went on working through the centuries. By the mouths of missionaries, He has brought the gospel of the kingdom to the end of the earth. He has brought it to us as well. We too have heard the gospel of the kingdom – the gospel which sets us free and which heals our spiritual blindness.

Let us embrace the gospel of the kingdom. Let us obey the laws of the kingdom. Let us submit to Lord Jesus, the glorious King of the kingdom. **C**



The secret is out!
What secret?

What the Watford Church is going to do about the crowded conditions in their present churchbuilding. They are going to build a new one.

"On June 22, we had our 'information meeting.' That means that the proposal of the consistory to go into the direction of a new building is now public. . . . The consistory proposes to build something along the lines of the Grand Valley Church."

"As consistory with the congregation we will also have to address the matter of location, financing, timing, etc."

That's what the Rev. VanWoudenberg wrote in the Watford bulletin. We wish the brothers much wisdom. It is always a beautiful thing when a congregation is working together on a new project. It strengthens the bond. On the other hand, there is also an increased possibility of friction, as almost everyone thinks that his views on the matter are the most beneficial ones. May the bond be strengthened and friction be totally absent.

The Chatham bulletin has a new cover page. I noticed it right away. What I read in one of the bulletins made me wonder whether that is the right course.

In the first place I would like to point out that it is wrong to write "The Reverends A. and B. will. . . ." Recently this was again pointed out to me, and I promised that I would pass it on. The proper way of putting it, I was told, is: "The Rev. Messrs A. and B." "Reverend" cannot be pluralized. We do not write "Yellows Jacket" either, but "Yellow Jackets."

Rev. Wieske wrote that with the Rev. Messrs Agema and DeGelder he would leave for Grand Rapids on a mission on which the brothers were sent by Classis Ontario South of March 1994.

"Classis Ontario South of March 1994 decided to send a committee to Grand Rapids to see if reconciliation can be attained between some excommunicated members and the Church of Grand Rapids. The fact that these members (ex-members, VO) keep appealing various actions of the consistory led this classis to the hope that under the blessing of the Lord, the troubles might be solved by a discussion with the two parties concerned."

I know nothing of the issues that led to the excommunication. And I do not say a word about the matters themselves. But I am convinced that here a wrong course has been chosen.

When someone has been excommunicated, the broader assembly should hear one appeal against the excommunication, if one does appeal it indeed. But if the broader assembly (or perhaps even assemblies, if the matter reaches a general synod) has denied the appeal, no further "appeals" from such

a person should be declared admissible. If the way of appeal has been exhausted, and the appeals have been denied up to a general synod, there is only one way open: that is the way of repentance.

When someone keeps on sending "appeals," this is no reason at all why any classis should deal with them or even assume the role of mediator, *as if there are two parties that have to be brought together!* We have seen enough in the history of the church of "committees for difficulties," and such like. Broader assemblies should restrict themselves strictly to their task, a task that has been sufficiently described in our Church Order. They have no mandate to send "goodwill missions" here and there. They should not assume any "pastoral task," for this is a task that belongs exclusively to the consistories.

In this connection I also have to say something about what I read in the District Bulletin of the West Australian churches.

Our sister churches there recently had a synod, and the various churches and church members are reflecting on it and on the decisions that were taken.

I was painfully struck by what the Byford consistory wrote. "Further the Acts of Synod will give us the decisions but will not portray the struggles of the synod and the differences of opinion. Synod was characterized by a lack of pastoral concern." The consistory then referred particularly to the decisions regarding the ICRC.

I am inclined to praise this synod for this alleged lack. A broader assembly, I repeat, should restrict itself punctuously to its task. And its task is: consider the proposals, weigh the arguments pro and con, and come to a decision on that basis. When it thus fulfils its obligation, no one has the right to accuse it of a lack of pastoral concern. It does exactly what it has been charged with.

Perhaps the above-quoted consistory statement alludes to the suggestions made that, since there appears to be a considerable number of members that are of the opinion that membership in the ICRC should be terminated, this should have been a reason for that synod to terminate it indeed.

But that quite a few members are opposed is no valid ground for any broader assembly not to proceed in the direction desired by the majority. Even in the case of a consistory it is doubtful whether such an argument should put much weight into the scales.

It happens more than once that one or two members are opposed to a certain action or course and threaten to walk out of church, for instance, when the Creed is sung instead of recited, and that consistories give in to that. Thus one or two members hold a whole congregation at ransom and dic-

tatorially "rule the roost." Such action should be taboo in the church.

I must admit that in the past I myself also gave in to such threats, but I have become convinced that we should not do so. Blackmail should be answered with discipline. Should the whole congregation be deprived of something because of the threats by a few members? Is that the style of the church?

Some happier news comes from Albany in the South. There a second church was instituted, and if I understand it well, it will be known by the name "West Albany."

Meanwhile there is quite some activity in Rockingham. "It is also good to see that the development in the combined church/school property has begun. Heavy machinery has been at work there clearing a driveway, widening the road, and has commenced clearing and levelling for carparks and I assume the building site."

Our Australian sister churches did mission work on Papua New Guinea, specifically in the Port Moresby area. Our readers may recall that the late Rev. Bruning went there more than once, accompanied by his wife. But the question becomes more and more pressing whether that is mission work indeed. Thus other regions are being considered.

The Bedfordale consistory report informed us that "The Mission Review Committee explain their written proposal to send two delegates to Indonesia. The Mission Review Committee considers there are opportunities on the Island of Sawu, Indonesia, for mission work using indigenous ministers."

We'll keep you posted.

In various bulletins, also in Canada, attention has been paid to the date of August 11, the day when fifty years ago many concerned members of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands met in The Hague to consider what course to follow with respect to the hierarchical development in the churches.

The churches in the Perth metropolitan area organized a meeting "to commemorate the mighty deeds of God during the time of the Liberation, fifty years ago."

Returning to Canada, we go to Cloverdale. "During the week of July 24th - 31st the deposit box for school cheques was broken into." Another reminder that an alarm system would not be a luxury. The Abbotsford church building was recently broken into again, for the third time, and some recording equipment stolen. I don't think that a sign "No money kept at these premises" would deter any would-be burglars.

Speaking of Abbotsford, I read "Though we do not have to publish banns anymore. . . ." Did I miss something in the Acts of our latest general synod? I do not recall that this synod deleted the Marriage Form from the *Book of Praise*, and so I checked again, but still could not find it. My conclusion was that the Churches still have the Marriage Form and the Form for the Publication of the Banns in their liturgy.

But where does the assertion that "we do not have to publish the banns anymore" then come from, and who gives a consistory the right to ignore and go against what the churches have agreed upon?

I know that in civil respect things have changed in British Columbia. A couple could get married without having to have a marriage licence as long as the banns were published on two consecutive Sundays. Now they need a marriage li-

cence in any case, and it is up to a church whether they will publish the banns or not.

As far as the civil aspect of a marriage is concerned, there was NEVER any requirement that the banns should be published, for a couple could always get married as long as they had a marriage licence, regardless whether the banns were published or not.

But the Churches adopted some forms, and no church has the right to ignore that.

I realize that a marriage is a private affair and not an ecclesiastical matter. But as long as we have the Forms, we should honour them.

We conclude our journey this time in the fertile Okanagan Valley. The consistory of Vernon discussed "L.S. sermonettes." For the uninitiate we explain that what the consistory referred to here are brief sermons before the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

It always gives me a bad feeling when I see the Name of the Lord abbreviated either in print or on the songboards in church. I think that we should honour the Lord also by writing His Name in full. When looking at the songboard and when seeing there "L.D. 25," I have the feeling that the honour of our Lord is thereby violated. The same applies when I see "Jesus" without the "Lord" in front of it.

Perhaps it is still the fruit of my sitting "at the feet" of the late Prof. S. Greijdanus, but he would never speak of "Jesus," always of "the Lord Jesus." If I recall well, he did this because the Lord Jesus is in glory now, having received the dominion over all things. When speaking of Him, we speak of our exalted Lord. This should also become evident in the manner in which we refer to Him.

Thus the "Lord" should never be omitted and abbreviation of His glorious Name should not be found among us.

Well, we have come to the end of our medley for this time. I did not want to leave you without one, and since we are going to take off for some time, I did not want to wait till we are back either, even though the news proper was not all that abundant.

Perhaps better next time.

Many blessings to all of you.

Yours faithfully

VO 



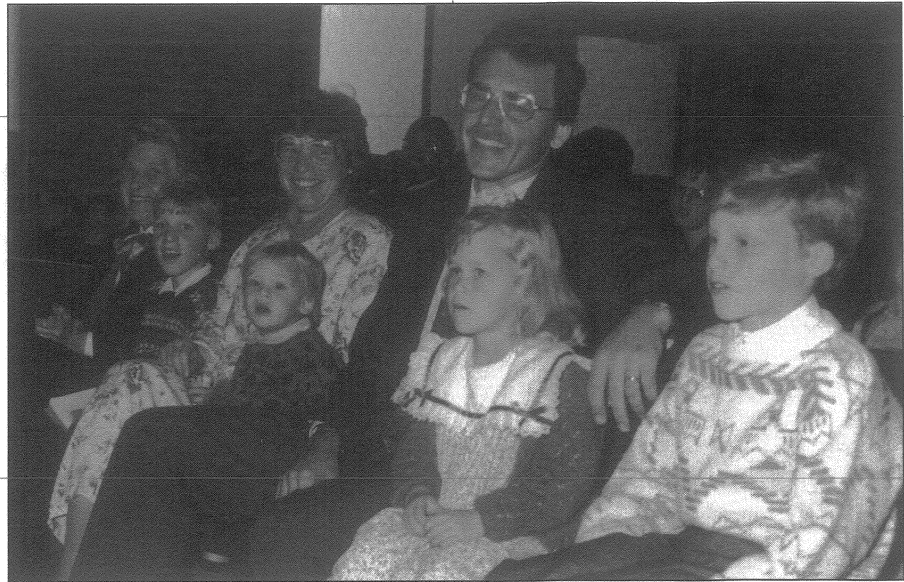
A new minister for Kelmscott

By Mrs. Helena Postmus

The sixth and seventh of August were two happy days for the Free Reformed Church in Kelmscott, for we could welcome a new minister. When the previous minister, Rev. Bosch, left in December last year and the first call was extended to a new minister who declined, many of us believed that we would have a long wait before a new minister would come. But God decreed otherwise and directed Kelmscott to extend a call to Rev. C. Bouwman, and He directed Rev. Bouwman to accept this call. So it was that on the afternoon of the sixth August, young and old gathered for a festive afternoon to welcome this "new" (though already known to most of us) minister. There was plenty of laughter, from the welcoming words of the consistory chairman – he must have been so relieved at being able to give up his office that it made him light-headed – right to the end. One thing we will be doing in Kelmscott: anxiously watching the new minister's head to see if his hair is either receding or changing colour.

The older school children sang three lovely songs, while the younger ones also sang and carried a letter each which the Bouwman family had to make into a sentence. It took a while, but they managed to put them in the right order.

As usual, the women were not shy in coming forward, and I'm sure the new minister now has a better appreciation of what his consistory members get up to in their spare time. The women also welcomed the Bouwman family in song. Two of the ladies also presented a brainteaser to the Bouwman family by asking them to guess surnames of church people from pictures. A bit more practice in this, and I'm sure the Bouwman family will become very good at this!



We could also enjoy watching a colourful ribbon dance and song by some of the Girls' Club members, ably accompanied on the piano by a Boys' Club member.

And whoever said that ministers are serious people, you would not have believed it if you'd heard (and seen) Kelmscott's Counsellor welcome the new minister. The fact that Rev. Bouwman and his wife also celebrated their twelfth wedding anniversary that day added fuel to the fire. We wonder if this hilarity was the result of relief at a job coming to an end? The men were also represented by a brother who spoke warm words of welcome and extended an invitation to Rev. Bouwman to join the Men's Club. They went so far as to almost bribe him to join, by giving away a 'free' membership.

The older Youth Clubs also showed that they had talents (in the field of mimicry, anyway) and we could laugh, not only at consistory members, but others

as well, as we watched ourselves walk, or even ride, out in front of everyone!

Among the presentations made to the family was a directory of church members: names, addresses and phone numbers. I am not sure if occupations are mentioned in there as well, but in any case, the Bouwmans have several business cards already in case they need professional help.

Rev. Bouwman's response was in the same vein as the rest of the afternoon. It is good to be able to laugh together, to have fun together, and for that we thanked our heavenly Father together in prayer. And then there was the opportunity to shake the new minister's hand and to congratulate him and his wife personally with their wedding anniversary. The women had provided ample to eat and drink and this too, went down very well.

Sunday is always a special day, but the seventh of August was extra special in Kelmscott because of the installation

of its new minister, Rev. Bouwman. In the morning the Counsellor Rev. A. van Delden held a sermon on Joshua 1: Through Joshua God caused His people to inherit the promised land. The surrounding enemies were strong, but he had to battle against them not only on a physical front, but also spiritually. There were abominations and idolatries associated with pagan worship and these had to be removed. Thus Joshua's mandate was very difficult. Difficult because of the nature of the war between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. But God says: "I will never fail you nor forsake you." In this way Joshua was strong, and he would be able to fulfil his mandate, his ministry, to the glory of God.

But there is a warning – be careful to go according to all the words of the law. Although master over the people, Joshua must remember that he is a servant of God. He must be guided first and foremost by the law. God demands total submission. He must meditate on the law, read and reflect on it, day and night. He cannot be ignorant of God's holy will, otherwise he will lead the people away from the inheritance. When the leaders go by God's Word alone, then the people will follow. Then they will be blessed.

If you live according to God's law you will have wisdom and prudence to fulfil your mandate and have success. Wisdom is practical, you will know

how to act and what to say, so that you may be led and lead in righteousness. Then you will be blessed, you will lead and be led to the promised land. We will experience God's grace, the grace shown in Jesus Christ, the true Good Shepherd of the sheep, His flock.


In the afternoon service, Rev. Bouwman chose as his theme: God Himself joins pastors and congregations because of His love for all of us (2 Cor 5:14a). The love of Christ controls us, the apostles, says Paul. But when the apostles died, God was pleased to give His congregations more leaders, pastors and preachers. The church of Corinth, as well as the church of Kelmscott, must be taught that the love of Christ controls its leaders.

Paul had to defend his authority, his apostleship, and explain that he is an earthen, weak vessel, with limitations. He has not made himself an apostle, his own merits and achievements do not commend him. No, he must be accepted as an office bearer because the love of Christ controls him. Paul's love for God does not drive him on, rather Christ has made him an instrument because of His great love for him and His people. It is nothing in Paul himself, but simply the love of Christ in him which makes him an apostle.

Paul says that the love of Christ controls us (constrains or compels us) all. It captivates Paul completely. His love is that One died for all. Christ died in

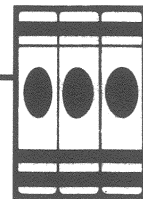
place of sinners, that's His love as displayed on Good Friday. The love of Christ bought the Church and His love does not grow cold. His Church is His bride and she should be blameless, without spot.

Christ compels, draws ministers to serve churches, even if personally they may not be all that keen. God Himself calls, not only Paul, but He sovereignly directed this minister's steps towards Kelmscott. We do not have to understand that. We accept and believe it. Christ Jesus directs His servants, and so this sinner is His tool in Kelmscott. "This reality gives me courage to take up the task God has given me," Rev. Bouwman said. For God will not fail to give the strength that is needed. The mandate laid on the minister is this: that Christ's love must be the centre of the teaching and preaching. The congregation must therefore not cease to pray, for the love of Christ controls us. Our attention must be on Christ. He sends us the tools of His choice.

The Master of the vineyard, when He returns, will look for fruits. Soon the Master will return, and what will He find? A people who follow after people? No, we must focus on what He has done. The love of Christ should control us and all the office bearers. Let this be a force to make you appreciate what has happened today, and in the weeks to come, till Christ returns in His glory. 

BOOK REVIEW

By C. Van Dam



Calvin Sermons on Job

John Calvin, *Sermons on Job*.

Facsimile Reprint of the 1st edition 1574. Banner of Truth, 1993. 750 pages (cloth, large format with double column). Price \$ 49.95 US.

In this splendid facsimile reproduction, the Banner of Truth Trust has

reprinted Arthur Golding's 1574 translation of Calvin's 159 sermons on the entire book of Job. (These sermons were delivered in French, daily on weekdays, from February 26, 1554 to about mid-March, 1555.) Nothing has been omitted in this reprint. The list of typographical errors as well as a detailed topical

index, showing page, column, and line number of the reference, have all been included. This volume concludes with the prayers that Calvin normally offered before and after the sermon. Since this is a sixteenth century translation, the spelling and the appearance of the letters belongs to an age different than

ours. However, given a little time and effort, the sermons can be read without any significant problem.

As is obvious from the need for this reproduction, Calvin's sermons on Job have never all been translated from the original French into modern English. In a sense this is surprising given that these sermons ranked among his most famous and Calvin never lectured or wrote a commentary on this book. The appeal of these translated sermons in the sixteenth century was tremendous and the entire set of 159 sermons were reprinted five times in ten years from the time they first appeared (1574). In 1952 Leroy Nixon translated a selection of twenty sermons which were published by Baker. But now all these sermons are once again available.

In these sermons Calvin follows the text closely while explaining it, and practically and pastorally applies it to the lives of his hearers. For example, in his first sermon, he shows that in Job we are given an example of suffering and but also of submission in all trial to God who does deliver us (p. 1). According to Calvin, Job was of the lineage of Esau who lived in ancient times (perhaps Mosaic?) and his faithful service to God was to show the Jews that God had a people who served Him although they were not separated from the rest of the world and had not been circumcised (p. 2). Calvin uses this later in the sermon to encourage his hearers to godliness. They too must fear God for His sake as our Father and Master. Now if Job who lived in the midst of the world was preserved by God in his desire to serve Him, will we who have the Word preached daily not keep ourselves purely for the service of God and keep ourselves from evil? (pp. 4-5).

Another example, in his sermon on Job 3: 1-10 (Job curses the day of his birth), Calvin typically asks what the intent of the Holy Spirit is in this passage that we may apply it to our life. The key element in his answer is that we are reminded of our frailty (due to our own sin) and never to stand in our own strength. Although Job still wanted to serve God, yet he could not resist the evil one on his own. We stand only as God upholds us and we must seek Him constantly in prayer and supplication. There is a constant struggle within us (cf. Rom. 7). But the strength of God will not cease to dwell in His children and uphold them (pp. 47-48).

As can be expected, the providence of God and the tremendous comfort this gives figures prominently in these sermons. For example, in his sermon on Job 1:20-22 where Job mourns the tremendous losses he sustained, but at the same time acknowledges the preeminent place of God and says "blessed be the name of the LORD," Calvin notes that when we experience the chastising hand of God, then we should all the more worship Him, as Job did, in acknowledgment of our humble and miserable status before Him (pp. 29-30). He also notes that by our becoming aware again of our condition through trial, God does not cease to be merciful to us when he sends us affliction (p. 29). Also God has every right to take from us what He has first given us. All that we acquire comes from His hand and have no absolute ownership (p. 31). We must live by faith when affliction comes. Although God be blasphemed by many when there are trials, believers know that God does nothing without reason.

So then let us acknowledge that in all points and in all respects He proceeds with wonderful justice, exceeding great goodness and infinite wisdom, so as there is nothing but uprightness and equity in all His doings. . . . If we be afflicted, we must not think it happened without reason, but rather that God has just cause to do it. And therefore when we be troubled and grieved, we must have recourse unto Him, and pray Him to grant us the grace to know that nothing befalls us in this world, but by his ordinance; yes, and to be assured that he disposes things in such wise as turns continually to our welfare. And if we have this manner of knowledge, it will make us to bear patiently the afflictions that he sends upon us. (p. 32).

Calvin then suggests they pray resting in his mercy

that when He has once made us to taste of it, we may be fully persuaded of His love . . . that although He causes us to walk in many troubles and adversities in this world, yet we may never cease to cleave fast to Him continually . . . until He has rid us out of this mortal body and out of this imprisonment and bondage of sin wherein we be, to gather us up



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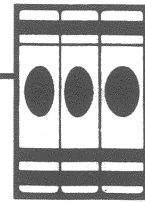
in to His heavenly glory, where we shall have no let (hindrance), but that we may rejoice in our God as partakers of His glory and of all His goodness (p. 31).

Much more could be said of these sermons. Also homiletically and doctrinally there are interesting aspects. Indeed, the sermons of Job have been studied for many years. To give only two examples, we can think of the late Prof. M.H. Woudstra's "The Use of 'Example' in Calvin's Sermons on Job", his contribution to the festschrift for Prof. J. Kamphuis (*Beziel Verband*, 1984) which was reprinted in *Diakonia* (7:1 [1993]), and more recently Prof. J. Faber's study "Nominalisme in Calvin's preken over Job?" in the festschrift for Prof. H.M. Ohmann (*Een Sprekend begin*, 1993). But, although these sermons continue to give scholars much food for thought, that is not why Calvin preached them!

These are sermons, and above all they should be read, some say out loud, and appreciated as sermons on the living Word of God. Happily they are now available for a wide public! To make that clear and to encourage their being read is the main point of this review. Those who read and ponder these sermons will be richly blessed. 

BOOK REVIEW

By J. Faber



Diet Emans with James Schaap, *Things we couldn't say.*

Cloth, 390 pages (approx. 30 photos), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. Price US \$ 19.99.

It is a small world. Last week it was exactly fifty years ago that I went sailing on the Loosdrechtse Plassen together with my friend Hein Sietsma. We had always sat together on one bench in our secondary school (*Gereformeerd Gymnasium* at Amsterdam), and from that period I vividly remember the day the principal entered our classroom in order to announce in a few terse sentences that the Germans had murdered Hein's father, Dr. Kornelis Sietsma, minister of the *Gereformeerde Kerk* in Amstterdam-South. Now we had together begun the study of theology in Kampen and he had invited me to join him on a sailing trip in the neighbourhood of his father's first congregation in Tienhoven. The trip was cut short because of the sudden death of my minister, Dr. M.B. van 't Veer on August 17, 1944.

Now half a century later I read a book that contains the name Hein Sietsma time and again. He was my friend's older cousin and the fiancée of Diet Eman. This Hein Sietsma was a son of the principal of the Christian school in a little farming community just outside Nijkerk. I did not know this at that time, but Hein Sietsma and Diet Eman were heavily involved in a group that risked everything to rescue Jews imperiled by Nazi persecution.

Diet Eman with the help of James Schaap, professor of English at Dordt College, wrote a book that replaces the reader completely into the war situation of occupied Holland and tells of the resistance work of Hein and Diet. Diary entries and excerpts from personal letters give us a direct insight into their hearts and minds during those turbulent years. Diet Eman tells of her stay in the prison at Scheveningen and in the concentration camp of Vught. Hein had already been captured by the Germans and sent to camp Amersfoort. The reader reads with deep emotion

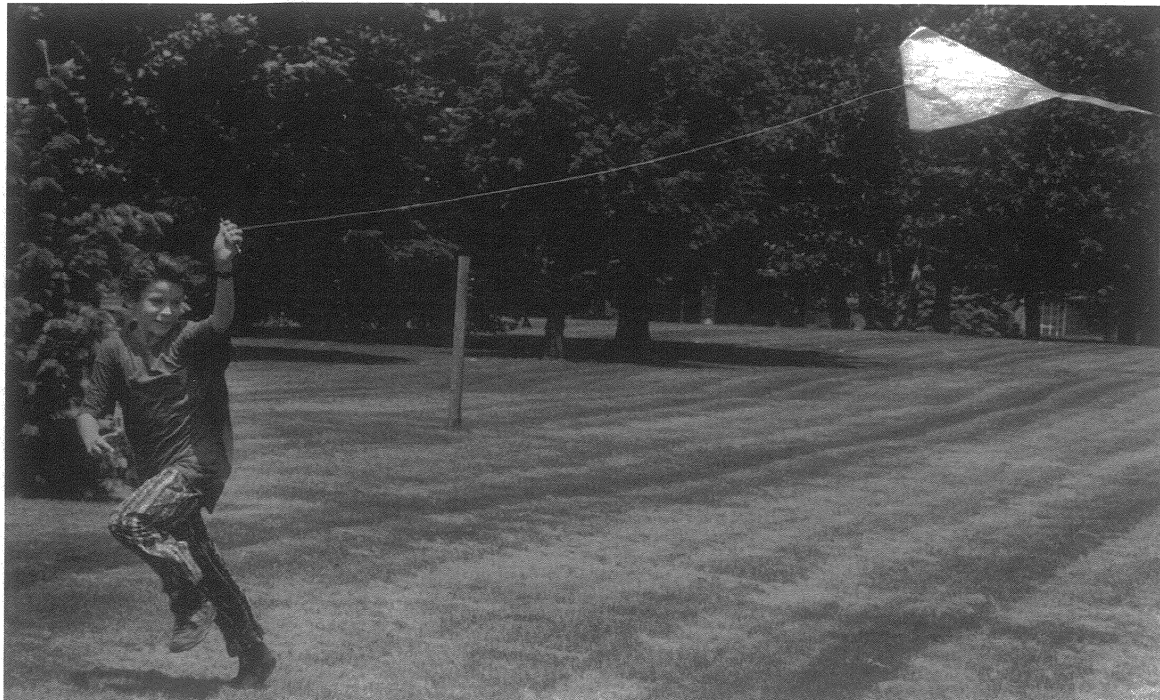
and sympathy the notice placed in a newspaper, shortly after the war:

After years of struggle against the principles of national socialism, my deeply loved fiancée, Hein Sietsma, died in the concentration camp at Dachau sometime in January, 1945. He was 25 years old. God leads us according to His counsel and took Hein already up into His glory.

The striking aspect of this book is that it testifies to God's covenant faithfulness. We read on the last page: "The God of creation did not renege on what He'd promised me as His child. . . . We all break our promises, but our Lord never does."

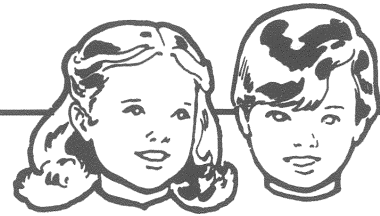
Reading this book I recognized the war situation of fifty years ago and sometimes I was even reminded of another struggle that was raging in 1944 and led to my double liberation.

I heartily recommend it not only to my contemporaries among Dutch immigrants but also to their children and grandchildren. **C**



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

Letters.

They're wonderful, aren't they?

With just a piece of paper, a pen, an envelope and a stamp, you can tell someone far away all kinds of interesting things about yourself!

Sometimes I get letters that end with, "Well, I don't know what else to write about." or "Well, that's about all."

And so I have been thinking about all you Busy Beavers out there in Canada, America, Brazil, and maybe other countries, too. You all have a family to live with, maybe pets to play with and take care of, and you probably have things you like to do in your spare time, that I will call hobbies.

You are so used to all of those things, that you don't think of writing them down in your letters to me or your penpals, but little things, like how you play with your baby brother, or the crafts that you do in your holidays, that's what make letters interesting.

So, maybe you could remember that the next time you sit down to write a letter. (Maybe I've even given you the inspiration to write a letter.)

When I read interesting pieces in your letters, I'll include them in this column. That way you Busy Beavers get to know some more about each other.

Speaking of letters, another Busy Beaver would like to have a penpal. His name is Josha Sietsma, and he lives in Brazil. (Now that sounds interesting!) If you want to find out what it's like to live in Brazil as a missionary, just send Josha a letter.

Here's his address: Josha Sietsma
CX Postal 2031
Maceio AL
57061-970 -BRASIL

THANK-YOU!

A very big thank you to all the Busy Beavers who sent in answers to the Super Summer Quiz Contest. Soon the winners' names will be published, and they will receive their prizes.

Quiz Time!

TONGUE TWISTERS

by Busy Beaver Marian Wierenga

How fast can you say these? Have a contest with your friends!

Wild berry makes Larry hairy and scary but rarely contrary.

Susan says sparkles send shivers shooting swiftly through her spine.

WORD SEARCH

by Busy Beaver Tim Sikkema

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

FIND:

COUNTRIES

United States of America	Canada	Germany
Italy	Holland	Mexico
India	Australia	Japan

CITIES

Ottawa	Toronto	Winnipeg	Halifax
Montreal	Calgary	Edmonton	Niagara Falls
St. Johns	Victoria	Quebec	

COLOURS

Red	Orange	Yellow	Green
Blue	Purple	Black	White
Brown	Pink	Grey	

AT SCHOOL

Ruler	Teacher	Paper	Pen
Pencil	Work	Notebooks	
Homework	Addition	Subtract	Recess

MONTHS

January	February	March	April
May	June	July	August
September	October	November	December

SOLVE THE PUZZLE

by Busy Beaver *Meghan Ludwig*

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q
 ♡ * ☆ ☺ □ ▢ ◊ ○ △ ◌ ⊗ ⊗ ♣ ∞ ♣ 7

R S T U V W X Y Z
 ▢ △ ⊗ ◊ ♣ ◊ ◊ ◊ ◊ ◊

◊ ◊ △ ◊ △ ⊗ ∞ ◊ ◊ △ ◊ ♡ ⊗ ⊗ ◊ ◊ ◊

⊗ △ ◊ ◊ ⊗ ◊ ☆ ◊ △ ⊗ ☺ ◊ ◊ ◊ ◊



PUT YOUR THINKING CAP ON!!

by Busy Beaver *Jacqueline Post*

Unscramble the words!!

1. ogd _____
2. tac _____
3. itknte _____
4. nieckch _____
5. eohrs _____
5. ocw _____
7. hikcc _____

Hint: They are all farm animals!!

Answers:

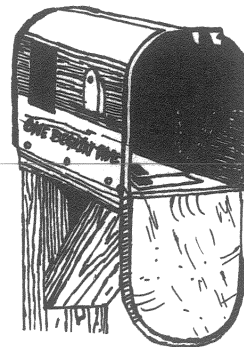
1. dog 2. cat 3. kitten 4. chicken 5. horse 5. cow 7. chick

CRAFT TIME

If you feel like making something, this activity is for you!

You will need:
 sheet of paper
 empty matchboxes
 felt-tipped pens
 scissors
 paper glue
 ruler
 drawing or painting

1. Choose a favourite drawing or painting. A simple one with bright colours is best.
2. (Younger children may need help here.) Using the ruler, mark off the sizes of the matchboxes on the back of the drawing – most matchboxes are 5.3 cm x 3.8 cm. Across the top of the paper place a mark every 5.3 cm. Down the side of the paper place a mark every 3.8 cm. Draw vertical and horizontal lines on the paper to make boxes.
3. Following the lines, cut out the rectangles. Glue each square drawing to the top of each matchbox. Arrange the boxes to make the picture you started out with!



FROM THE MAILBOX

Hello, *Joshua Sietsma*. Sounds like you've had an exciting summer with your opa and oma coming to visit you! Did you go see interesting places, around where you live, with them? I bet they were glad to see you and your family

again. Hopefully you'll get a penpal soon, Joshua. To write to the Government of Canada, address your letter to the Prime Minister of Canada in Ottawa. Most likely he will get it. Keep writing! Bye, Joshua.

Hi, *Chelsea Kampen*. Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club. Why did your dad go to Australia? That sounds like a very interesting place to visit. How did your swimming lessons go? Bye for now, Chelsea.

Hi, *Jared Helder*. A big welcome to you, too. How was your pool party? You and your friends probably had lots of fun! Did you get your badge at swimming lessons? Write me about it. Bye, Jared.

Hello, *Meghan Ludwig*. Sounds like you have had a very busy and fun summer! Who did you see out west? Did you also see lots of beautiful mountains? I'd love to hear about it. Bye, Meghan.

Hi, *Marian Wierenga*. How was your cousin's wedding? Where was it? Did you do anything special for your cousin on the wedding day? I hope you had good weather for your camping trips. Bye, Marian.

Love to you all,
 Aunt Betty 