



THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE - YEAR-END ISSUE - 1975

Réjoice Oye Nations

DEUTERONOMY 32:43a



In the Beginning

The words with which the Apostle John begins his description of the Gospel of Jesus Christ remind us of the description which Moses gave of the origin of all things. "In the beginning".

Thereby we keep in mind what the Apostle writes in chapter 20:31: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His Name."

John is the one who will endeavour to prove in his gospel that Jesus was a true Man, over against the basically heathen thought that no close unity was possible between the divine and the human, the spiritual and the material existence of things. How could, the false teachers taught, the Son of God take upon Himself the very nature of man of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary?

The Lord Jesus, John proves in his narrative, was a true Man. He was the Son of man.

Yet the Apostle begins "in the beginning".

The deliverance which Jesus of Nazareth came to bring is not a deliverance *from* this sinful and material world; His deliverance is a deliverance *of* this world which has become corrupt. And this could be achieved only because the very same Word that was in the beginning, has become flesh; it is that Word that has worked the deliverance of which we speak.

There may be a deep and persistent chasm between light and darkness and a continuous battle between those two, it certainly is not a battle between spiritual and material, between heavenly and earthly, for the same Word that became flesh, that dwelled, lived, worked, preached, and suffered among us, was there in the beginning. All things were made by Him. He was with God and He was God Himself.

The deliverance which He came to bring was not a new creation even though the same powers were required and even though the same Word was working both in creation and in deliverance. His deliverance was a re-creation: "Father, I do not pray that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil one."

He who came to deliver us "was" in the beginning: He existed, He was there already when everything created came into being: it came into

existence by Him, for He "was", He really *was*. And when God says of Himself that He *is*, then this also means that He causes His presence and His existence to be felt. It is an active being. Thus the Word *was* and He proved that He was by calling everything into existence.

Thus every effort to ascribe the deliverance to man is completely frustrated. If - as Arius and other heretics in his line asserted - the Son had been a creature, even a creature of higher rank than any other creature, yet a created being, then the deliverance would have been a human venture and a human achievement. But in that case it would never have risen above the level of a deliverance *from* this created world; but that would have been only relatively a "deliverance", in fact, no deliverance at all.

The very same Word that was there in the beginning of history and that was in the beginning, at the root of the universe, that very same Word is at the root of the re-creation: it is a new beginning, but then not without having anything to do with the first beginning: it is the beginning of the great restoration: the Light has overcome the darkness and Life has overcome death.

The creation was not the work of a subordinate being, but of the Word that existed in the closest possible unity with the Father. Likewise the re-creation is not the work of any being that is not God: the Word that has become flesh is God.

Thus we know that the deliverance by Christ our Lord encloses and covers our whole life, all our work: our study, our teaching, our trading, our welding, our accounting, our digging, our planting, our milking, our building. All these things are not of a lower order, "only" material things, but they have been enclosed by the one work of redemption of Christ our Redeemer. When our Lord asked the Father not to take us out of this world, He proved thereby that this world is not outside the reach of His deliverance, but is very much included. It may then have become "this" world through our lamentable fall, it is and remains the world made by the Word that became flesh. It is and remains the world which God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him

should not perish but have everlasting life. It is and remains the world that was made by the Word that became flesh, took upon Himself the very nature of man of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary. The deliverance is a deliverance of the same creation which was called into existence in the beginning, and the deliverance is the work of the same God who spoke at the beginning, by which all things were made.

Only in this manner we can see paradise beckoning at the end of the road, and only in this manner can we comfort ourselves at all times.

Many people look at Jesus as a Man only: they lose both creation and deliverance. Man claims the honour for himself, yet can never rise out above the things created.

It is good that we enter a new year in the same time in which we also pay special attention to the

incarnation: it gives us an opportunity to see clearly how the light of the deliverance shines upon all our days.

In the beginning was the Word. And in these last days God spoke to us through One who is more than all creatures, One who is Son. The first and the last days, they are connected and come together in Christ, in whom all lines come together: He is the summary of every period of the world history, Ephesians 1.

This world may then have become "this" world through our fall, God yet loved it and redeems it: Christ's work is worldwide: Bless Him who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy: His goodness is upon all His works: His works of creation and His works of re-creation. They are all works of the Word that became flesh and has made us partakers of all His works. vO

A Letter from the Publisher

We have come to the end of 1975, another year which saw the regular publication of Clarion, as well as the beginning of a new venture, the publishing of books. Although Clarion still is not found in every Canadian Reformed home, the number of subscribers continues to grow, a fact we happily acknowledge. Again this year, we could depend on a number of faithful contributors who made it possible to publish the magazine on a regular basis. However, both we at Premier and the Editorial Committee would like to see growth in the number of contributors. Greater participation in this respect will make the load lighter for all.

Up till now, most of the contributors have supplied their articles without receiving any remuneration for their work, but the time has come to pay all the contributors a small amount for the articles which they write for Clarion. We will begin to do so in the coming year. Due to this expense, as well as the continuously increasing cost of materials and wages, we have been compelled to increase the subscription rate to \$16.50 for the coming year. We trust that our subscribers will understand and accept this increase.

It is with great eagerness that we published our first books this year. However, this aspect of the business involves a great risk. We would not have been able to undertake the printing and publishing of books, or continue to do so, if it were not for the commercial printing end of the business which supports this work. (Commercial printing approximately 90%-Clarion and books 10%) In order to reduce this large element of risk, we hope to expand the market, penetrating into other "Reformed" and "Presbyterian" circles, not only in Canada, but also in the U.S.A., Australia, and possibly even England. We sincerely hope the market for our books will be adequate to cover our expenses and allow us to publish further worthwhile books in the future. It would be most regrettable to be forced to discontinue the publications due to lack of sufficient response.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank all those who gave so much of their time for our magazine, and assisted us in our publishing endeavour. Thank you, all contributors and correspondents across Canada. We express a special thank you to Rev. W.W.J. VanOene and Dr. W. Helder, the editors of Clarion, for their fine work in the past year for our magazine.

We pray that the Lord may continue to bless all our undertakings in order that also by them His Church may be edified, and His Name glorified.

Greetings to you all, and best wishes for 1976!

G. KUIK

A Year of Celebration

The past year was an important year for the Canadian Reformed Churches. It was the year in which the mercies of the Lord and the faithfulness of the King of the Church were remembered: Twenty-five years ago the first Canadian Reformed Church was instituted, soon followed by others. Celebrations were held in Coaldale (formerly Lethbridge), in Neerlandia, in Edmonton, in Orangeville, in Chatham and the whole federation rejoiced with these sisters. The celebrations may have been more elaborate in the one Church than in the other, what was foremost in the minds and in the mouths of those who participated was the mercy of our God and His faithfulness in defending and preserving His Church. New Westminster is another Church which recalls this year that twenty-five years ago the Church was instituted. When the tenth anniversary was there, a festive gathering celebrated that fact; there will be another thankful commemoration now that the twenty-five year mark has been reached.

Is it an automatic thing that, once a Church has been instituted, she will reach the twenty-fifth year? It certainly is not. It may be an (almost) automatic thing that such a Church still exists after twenty-five years, it certainly is not a matter of course that she will still be the Church of the Lord! The history of the Canadian Reformed Churches shows clearly that they were beset by many dangers and that various attacks were made on them. But this very same history also shows that the Lord preserved His own so that they still stand on the same basis on which they were formed, on which they agreed to live together in one federation, and in which they have struggled together to proceed towards perfection. It was this same favour of their Lord and King by which these Churches have grown to what they are today and that they have been able to achieve what they have brought about in these years.

Already a looking back over the past year shows a rich treasure of blessings.

Take just the Churchbuildings, photographs of which have appeared on *Clarion's* cover. The Rehoboth Church in Burlington dedicated their new building and so did Chatham. Then Guelph dedicated theirs, at the same time showing their organ, a modest two rank pipe organ but with the stops arranged in such a manner that one has the impression that there are more ranks. Winnipeg occupied their new building, New Westminster sold and left their old one and is in the process of erecting a new place of worship. It is not only the fact that these Churches have been enabled to undertake the building of these meeting places, it is also the fact that these Churchbuildings are beautiful and much more elaborate and dignified than could have been foreseen some twenty-five years ago. The Cloverdale Church obtained a new organ which outranks the old one by far; and even with the old one they were privileged above many other Congregations.

Not all Churchbuildings see the local minister conduct services there: various Churches do not have their own minister. Two of them were gladdened when a call was accepted and when the man whom they called could be

ordained or installed. Rehoboth Burlington received their own pastor and teacher in Rev. C. Stam, who came from the Netherlands, and Winnipeg received theirs when Cand. S. DeBruin was ordained after having completed his studies at the College in Hamilton. He received his degree at the solemn convocation.

Quite a few other calls were extended, but without the hoped for result. Neerlandia extended a few calls (in cooperation with Barrhead) but thus far they have not received the word "Accepted". Both those called from the Netherlands and those called within Canada declined the call. Hamilton thus far has not seen their vacancy filled either. At the moment a call from them is being considered by the Rev. J. Visscher of Coaldale, but he also has a call from the Church at New Westminster to serve in the mission field after the Rev. C. VanSpronsen has returned upon the completion of his term. The Rev. H. Knigge has returned from Irian Jaya and went to the Netherlands where he is still waiting for a call. Toronto did extend a call to fill that vacancy, but the Netherlands candidate whom they called declined. We are thankful that there are some workers who labour on our behalf and in our name in the places where the Gospel was or is being preached by "our" missionaries. John and Ardis Kuik were in Canada during this past summer but they returned to São José, and Bram and Joanne Vegter left for Irian Jaya to work there in the service of the Mission Aid.

As for the fruits of the mission work in Irian Jaya and in Brazil, we realize that in the former country new areas are being explored and that we can hardly expect any "conversions" at this stage. As for São José, twice during the past year brothers and sisters were admitted to the holy supper upon public profession of faith. No institution has taken place there as yet, for the majority of those who came to the Church are women. Yet it is a joy to read the reports about the work and the progress. Let those who labour there be assured that what they write is being followed here with great interest.

Above we mentioned that two new ministers were received by the Churches. On the other hand, one left us: Rev. A.H. Dekker accepted a call to the Church at Launceston, Tas., from where the Rev. G. Van Rongen left when he came to Grand Rapids. Thus our net gain is one. After some years we shall have more ministers, the Lord willing, for we bear in mind that there are seven students at our College. That will fill the vacancies which we find in our midst at this moment; however, the development is such that we may expect more places to become vacant before long and that new Congregations are formed. Cloverdale, for instance, works towards the establishment of another Congregation between Cloverdale and Abbotsford. Both Burlingtons have grown to such an extent that I would not be surprised when there is a third Church formed in that neighbourhood within four years. When our children (and the Lord has given many of them) are grown up and get married, and when, through the favour of our God, they remain faithful to Him and to His ways, to The Way, there will be many new Churches in the future. Then I do not even take other possibilities into account.

One of the means by which they are instructed in this faithfulness towards the Lord and His ways is the Reformed instruction which they receive at the schools that have been established. During this past year we saw one school started: the Guido de Brès Highschool in Hamilton. Over one

hundred pupils are attending and a capable staff has been found willing to teach at it. At other places plans become more concrete to establish a school: Winnipeg and Neerlandia. In the former Congregation hope is expressed that it will be possible to begin such a school in the fall of 1976. Smithers saw the first graduates of Grade XII (in British Columbia the Highschools have only Grade XII; Grade XIII is practically first year university) and thereby reached a milestone. For the better instruction of the children various teachers, too, followed courses: the Summer Courses for teachers were conducted again this past summer in our College. There are serious plans to expand these courses and to try to come to a complete teachers' college. We do recall the saying that being Reformed and being a teacher does not necessarily make one a Reformed teacher. Yet, when one sees the curricula as they have been drafted thus far by the teachers in Ontario (I did not see anything from the teachers in other parts of Canada) then one will be grateful for the serious endeavours to instruct the children in such a manner that the whole instruction is in full harmony with the Word of God.

Our young men and young women who study at universities also do their best to edify each other according to their specific needs. The Fellowship of Canadian Reformed University Students conducted a winter retreat and also organized more lectures by persons considered capable in a certain field.

The office-bearers came together twice in Ontario, once in the Fraser Valley, and also had a conference scheduled in Alberta. The ministers came to Hamilton two times to conduct their ministers' workshop where they enjoyed the instruction given by one of the Faculty members and for the second "lecture" listened to one of the colleagues (or should I say "one of the other colleagues"?). It is discovered time and again that such workshops and conferences are highly appreciated by those present and that they do bear fruit. It is a blessing when, instead of having to "give" all the time, one can "receive" once in a while. That is also one of the reasons why I enjoyed it tremendously going back to College and following lectures. If I had time to do it again I would gladly do it. There is a difference between going to College or university before you have found your life's vocation and going there after you have received your (definite) place in life to "recharge the batteries".

It is, therefore, not just in order to be away from home for an evening or for a day that our men and women have their men's and women's societies and their league days. They feel the need for such meetings and for the better insight which they derive from the common discussions that one evening every week or every fortnight. The women are more active in the point of regional meetings and league days than the men. The Ontario Men's Societies had their day this time in Rehoboth Burlington instead of in Fergus. The women came together in regional conventions or league days in Fergus, in Toronto, in Calgary, and in Abbotsford. And then there are the young people's societies. They, too, had their days or study weekends in East and West. More important: they had their (mostly) weekly meetings which deserve but do not always receive the cooperation of every member. Sometimes new methods are being tried out and they may work either for some time or permanently. But the main reason if a meeting appears to be unfruitful is that the members do not study the topics beforehand and may not even be aware of the topics that will be discussed when

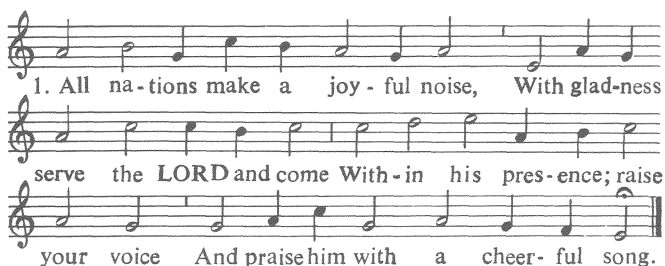
going to the meeting. And the reason for that may be that they do not learn at home how to study. It would be a good idea if the office-bearers during this year's homevisits paid special attention to the question "What are you reading?" or "Do you have any library?" or "Do you ever read any books, and what kind of books?"

Speaking of the younger ones draws our attention to those who live at the other end of the number of human years: our elderly brethren and sisters. For them, too, there are the meetings and they, too, are being thought of in efforts to erect senior citizens homes. In Hamilton and in the Fraser Valley property has been purchased and the activities are increasing to come to visible results. The point of subsidy and freedom of action has pretty well been cleared up, I think. We owe a debt to the brethren who have pursued this goal so persistently and who, by their efforts, have kept the thought alive. May this coming year show tangible results in seeing the first units or buildings erected.

The ones to whom we owe much are also the Ladies Auxiliaries or whatever name they may have chosen. The sisters have been working during this past year on all sorts of projects. In many instances they have contributed invaluable aid to the schools by purchasing equipment, adding to the building fund, or increasing the income of the school societies by just donating sums of money. They have supported Korean orphans and brought together sums of money for construction or rebuilding of orphanages. They have aided the mission workers and thus enabled them to show the mercies of our Saviour to those who live in



Psalm 100



2. Know that *the LORD* is God alone!
We are created by his hands,
We are his *people*, made his own,
The *sheep* that feed in fertile lands.
3. O enter then his gates with praise;
Within his courts your joy proclaim.
Give thanks to him, your voices raise
To bless and magnify his Name.
4. Because *the LORD* our God is good,
His mercy is forever sure.
His faithfulness at all times stood,
And shall for evermore endure.



darkness and poverty. All this has been done quite unobtrusively and without much fanfare, as has been the case with most of the Church-work.

Who will count the innumerable hours which have been given by men and women, boys and girls for the edification of the Church? Who will count the hours which the office-bearers have spent on family visits or on visits which were never reported but by which members have been saved out of the claws of the enemy? Who will tell how many miles they drove without asking for any reimbursement and how many hours they lay awake thinking about those entrusted into their care? Who will tell how many prayers were offered up in behalf of the flock?

The One who will count all this is the Lord from whom we expected everything at the beginning of this year and from whom we expect all things for the year to come, too.

There are many regions in this world where Christians are being persecuted. There are regions where God's children could come together unhindered when we began this year but where the powers of communism and ungodliness have gained the upper hand. We are still enabled by our God to come together unhindered, to

conduct our services protected by the sword of the magistrate, to have our societies and to maintain our schools. There is still an opportunity to work without having the mark of the beast on the foreheads. We can print our books and periodicals, we can conduct our Catechism classes. Whether we wish to praise the Lord loudly in our homes or in our auditoriums, no one hinders us and no spies are pressing their ears against the walls to report what is going on. How long yet?

May, therefore, the blessings which we have received incite us to the praise of our God and urge us to use them most faithfully for as long as they are left with us.

Twenty-five years the Canadian Reformed Churches have had the opportunity to exist here and to work. Twenty-five years is a long time. In another twenty-five years it will be the year 2000. We wish to end with expressing the hope that we shall never see that year for this reason: that our Saviour has appeared in glory before the calendar could proceed to that point. That's what we are aiming at and hoping for, aren't we? Thus we work as if it would be another two thousand years; and thus we live as if today would be the last one. vO



Remembrance Day

It has been many years since I have seen people wearing poppies and the line was brought to my mind, "In Flanders fields the poppies blow/ Between the crosses, row on row . . ."

There is a tendency nowadays (especially in Europe) to do away with institutions like "Remembrance Day". Let bygones be bygones, don't maintain old differences, do not live in the past but look towards the future, etc. Military men, e.g., sometimes refuse to go on parade, because they feel they should be demonstrating about present evils, instead of mourning about past developments.

True, we should not lose ourselves in the past. The "good ol' days" are gone, and with them their bright and dark sides. But on the other hand, we should remember the price paid by those who have preceded us to ensure our peace and freedom. The price was high, many gave their own lives.

Many people today are still feeling the after-effects of the great world war. The concentration camp syndrome causes many breakdowns and nervous disorders. Even if many were willing to forgive, how could they ever forget?

The present generation has not

experienced the war. Nor has it really known dictatorship and occupation. That's a great blessing. And it stands to reason that many cannot understand the real significance of Remembrance Day. How are we to remember that which we have not witnessed or experienced? Still it is wrong to close your eyes to the realities of history. If we wish to cherish present rights, we must know how they were achieved.

It is a sad sign of ungratefulness and shallowness when the present generation refuses to remember the faithfulness of a former one. Sadder yet, when this attitude is combined with an unwillingness to maintain the same ideals and freedoms and to stand for the same rights.

This is clear especially when we understand from Scripture HOW we must regard history and comprehend time. History and time both form a UNITY, mankind and humanity also form a unity. It is through time and history that the Lord achieves salvation for His people. Time and time again Israel is exhorted not to forget the great past deeds of the Lord, but, remembering the past, to have trust in the future. e.g. Psalm 77:5 and 11, "I consider the days of

old . . . I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord, yea I will remember Thy wonders of old . . ."

The great deeds of the Lord. In the continuous reformation and liberation of His Church. In the liberation of repressed nations and the granting of freedom to serve Him. In the government of the world to give the Gospel of salvation a highway of progress. How could we ever forget?

We do not only remember the allied soldiers who died in Flanders fields . . . but in this all, we must remember how the Lord, the God of our fathers, gave us time, opportunity and peace to continue the work in the Kingdom of Christ. And we realize that the battle still rages until the final rest has been granted.

It may sound silly, but let us not forget to remember Remembrance Day. And in remembering, remember the Lord who liberates His people from the powers of darkness.

My generation has not seen war.
But we are in the battle.
And we will thank and pray,
Lest we forget.

CL. STAM

(from the bulletin of Rehoboth Church,
Burlington)

Perspectives in Teaching

TEACHING A PROPERLY FUNCTIONING CONSCIENCE

How are you righteous before God? Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ; that is, though my conscience accuse me that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God and kept none of them . . . , yet God grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ . . . (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day XXIII)

Evolutionists have made one vital mistake; they theorized that man developed from a stupid mammal among mammals to civilized man, and established with satisfaction that man had come a long way. True, in the course of his development primitive man created a supernatural being to explain the unexplained, but in the end civilized man realized that the invented godhead was nothing but a projection; the temporary weakness could be eliminated by solemnly declaring, "God is dead." Man had to go through the stages of infancy, childhood, and adolescence, but finally reached the stage of maturity and manhood; man had *become* wise. And that's where the evolutionists were completely wrong.

It may be very flattering and mollifying to think of mankind as becoming wiser and wiser all the time, but we know the opposite is true. Man was created good and after God's image, but subsequent history shows a continuous downfall and degeneration. Man *was* wise, but as a result of the fall into sin *became* an utter fool. The foolishness of man shows blatantly in the fouled mechanism of his conscience. Since the fall into sin man does not know right from wrong; he does not know why and how to live, how to please his Creator, how to rule the world of which he once was king. A man's conscience may tell him that it is admirable to kill an enemy, and proudly and perfectly at peace he will show a great number of scalps. Another man's conscience tells him that it is wicked to kill a foe and he is at ease only when he is exempted from service in the army. Man's con-

science has become an unreliable and undependable, and therefore irrelevant and useless tool. The conscience of natural man is worth less than nothing.

But there is God. The God Who lives. He does not suffer His crown of creation to deteriorate; He saves and restores. He promises and gives salvation, and He shows man the way to be thankful for such deliverance. Is it not humiliating that man has to be told how to show gratitude? God gives His laws and statutes as a rule for thankfulness. Keep my precepts and you will do right, says God; trespass them and you go wrong. All that which is in accordance with My law, says God, is good, and that which violates it, is evil. How merciful is God, that He has come down to us and told us! We would have been completely in the dark if it had not been for the Covenant God with His Covenant words! God's law is an expression of His love toward His people.

Since God has revealed what is right and wrong, our consciences can function properly again. They must be conformed to God's law, reformed by the Spirit. The conscience of natural man may be utterly worthless, the conscience of spiritual man is restored to its original and valuable place; it is an accurate indicator of good and evil. But . . . that conscience must be trained and modelled. Man, the child especially, must be confronted daily with the Word of God, with the law of God also. The child has to make God's precepts his own, the rules by which he wishes to abide. God's standards for living must become the child's standards for living; they must be written on and in his heart, become part of himself. Then his conscience will function well; he has become wise. We may not underestimate the power of the conscience. Once it is consolidated, it does not listen to reason, but overrules heart and head. It works as an alarm system, forbidding one to enter a danger zone, and causing a person to feel ill at ease in an environment which is almost instinctively sensed as being "wrong". A properly functioning conscience does generate strong feelings of guilt

and remorse, and does accuse the person that he has "grievously sinned against all the commandments of God" (L.D. XXIII).

The conscience of the child is formed in home and church and school, and must be kept in form there, for a conscience tends to become dull if challenged too often. Guilt feelings do not come automatically if rules are ignored or violated frequently. The once properly functioning conscience may be silenced and finally become numb if it is not sharpened time and again by confrontation with God's norms. The daily reading of God's Word, the daily prayer at table and bedside, the weekly worship services must force us to readjust and perfect our conscience. Father and mother in the family, the teacher in class, the preacher in the congregation must not be hesitant to use the plumb line of God's Word to bring out deviations and aberrations. Such discipline is necessary and merciful, and an act of true love toward God and neighbour.

E. GOSKER



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event.

A Visitor's Impression of Brazil

(Report of a trip made by Mr. Cor DeWitt and Mr. Gerry Kuik in December 1974)

Twenty-five hours had passed from the time we left Winnipeg International Airport until the time we arrived at the Mission Post in São José da Coroa Grande, Brazil. Air Canada brought us to New York, and from there we flew by Varig, a Brazilian airline, to Rio de Janeiro, the former capital of Brazil. The service aboard this flight was the best we had ever experienced on any plane. Upon arrival in Rio de Janeiro, we were immediately struck by the very hot, humid air of the Brazilian summer. That was quite a change from Manitoba's weather in December. On the street in front of the airport, a judo demonstration was in progress, and, is nearby, a band stood beating on drums. Our baggage was unloaded by hand and was placed on a terrace, near the exit ramp of the plane. We had to walk past other planes to the Passport/Customs facilities inside an old wooden building. There we had our first cup of real Brazilian coffee, a very strong, black type of coffee, served in very small cups with a good

amount of sugar. There was standing service only at this airport.

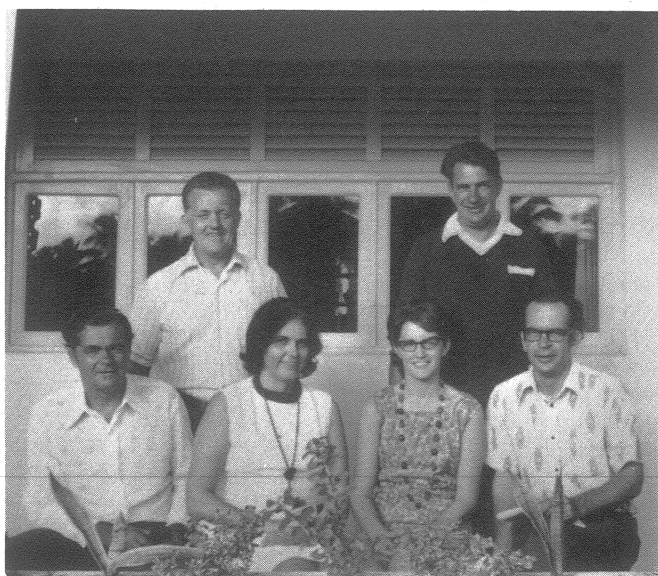
On the flight from Rio de Janeiro to Recife, the service and quality of food and drinks were not quite as good as that of Varig. The plane landed at several places along the way, each time ascending and descending very steeply. In Recife we were met by the missionary, Rev. C. VanSpronsen, and by the mission aid worker, John Kuik, and his family. After the hearty welcome, we set off by Volkswagen bus, belonging to the mission aid worker, to travel the last 120 km. of our trip. The road for 110 km. was paved, but the last 10 km. gave us a very rough ride. This stretch was sandy, with here and there a small bridge, consisting only of some tree trunks laid side by side. Even with a speed of only 10-15 k.p.h. the roughness of the road and bridges constantly shook us.

On Sunday morning, Sunday school classes began at 8:30 o'clock. Both the missionary and the mission aid worker attend with their whole family, as do many other adults. Approximately sixty people attended that morning. By custom, almost all

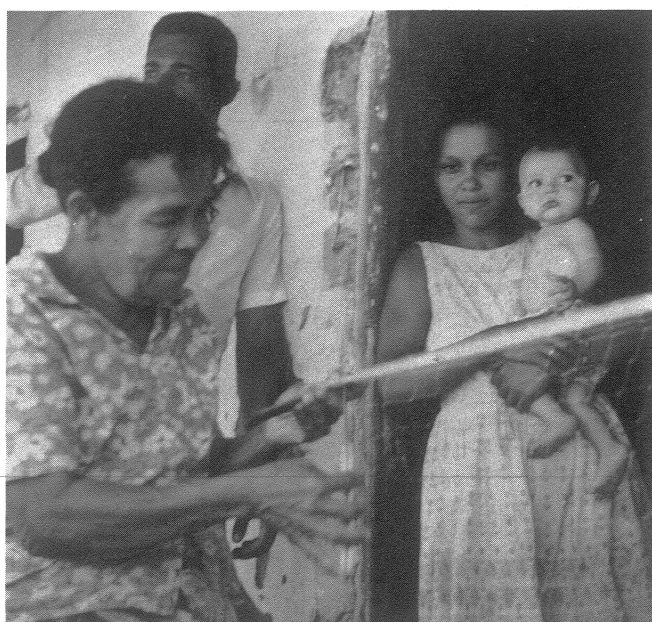


The oldest confessing member of the Church, Dona Maria Alves de Saluade.

people here shake hands with the mission workers and strangers whenever they meet and again when they leave. It made a deep impression on us to see those people listening and singing, dressed in their Sunday-best. Many of them wore clothes supplied by Mission Aid. They do not come if they are not clean and dressed. The children's Bible of Anne DeVries, which also has been translated into Portuguese, and the



On the verandah of Rev. VanSpronsen's home. Front row, from left to right: Mr. John Kuik, Mrs. Ardis Kuik, Mrs. VanSpronsen, Rev. VanSpronsen. Back row, Mr. Gerry Kuik, Mr. Cor DeWitt.



Grandmother making fishing net. Most nets are homemade.

flannelboard are used for instruction in these classes.

The Sunday evening service began at 7:00 o'clock. Most of the eighty-five present had also attended the morning classes. Before each service, sheets with the songs to be sung during the service are handed out by two boys or sometimes two girls and are collected again after the service. After the service, I had the pleasure of speaking a few words of greeting, also on behalf of br. DeWitt. Rev. VanSpronsen translated for the people. We sang together Hymn 16 from the *Book of Praise*, they in Portuguese, we in English.

Wednesday evening there is a Bible Study Club which is attended by some sixty-five people, more or less the same ones who come to the church services. Some catechism classes are held during the week and on Sunday. Besides these activities, there is also a small children's choir under the direction of Mrs. VanSpronsen and Mrs. Kuik, as well as a male vocal group. They practise together to add to the celebrations at festive occasions such as Christmas and Easter.

The people, on the average, are smaller than in Canada, of light brown to black complexion, a mixture of Portuguese, Indian, and Negro. The lighter the skin-tone, the more admired a person is.

The extent of the poverty, especially in this north-eastern part of



A grandmother raising three children. Big tummies often indicate intestinal worms. Centre child cared for by Mission Aid when very ill.

Brazil, has to be seen to be believed. As we walked around town, we could hardly understand how people can live in the conditions they do. We visited quite a number of families who attend either the Sunday school or the church services. Frequently we were invited into the hut. The huts in which they live are constructed mostly of clay. A light frame structure is made of poles which are dug into the ground and are secured vertically by horizontal strips

of wood on both the inside and outside of the pole frame. The spaces formed in this way between the poles are filled with mud which hardens with drying. A covering of coconut palm branches over the top of the frame forms the roof. A new roof is required at least every two years. Depending on the size of the hut, on the average, it costs about 60 cruzeiros to recover the roof. (60 cruzeiros, presently about \$8.00 in Canadian currency, is an



Kitchen utensils showing shelves with food containers supplied by Mission Aid.

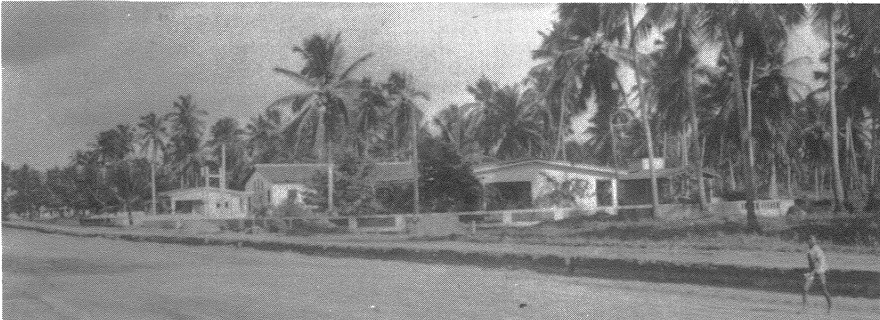


Other part of kitchen with cooking area. Stove consists of iron grill on clay supports, using wood for fuel.

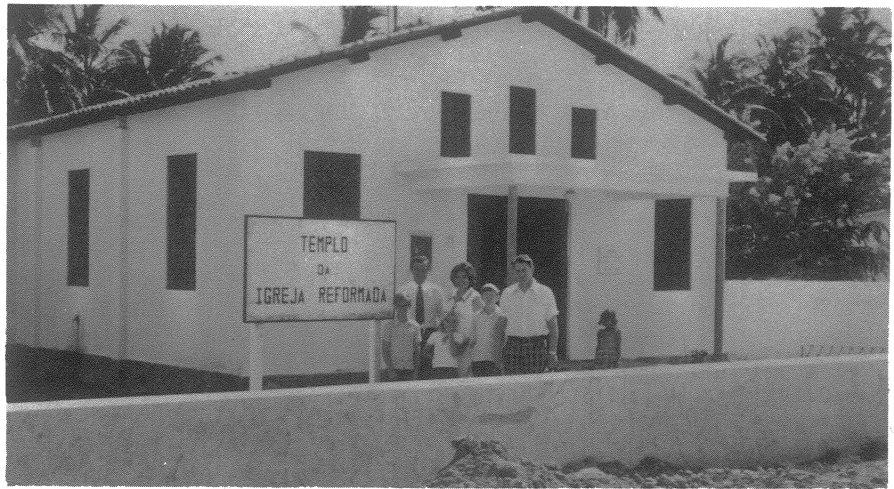
average weekly earning. Although there are some who earn more, and some who earn less, there are also some who have no income at all.) Some huts consist of two rooms, others of three or even four. Hut sizes vary as well, ranging from 10' x 12' to 12' x 20'. If you imagine this space divided over two, three, or four rooms, you will have an idea of how small the huts really are, and families of up to twelve live in them! Ninety percent of the huts have bare clay floors. Furniture, if there is any at all, is of the poorest quality. A few times we saw a couple of chairs, but in most cases there were only poor benches and tables. Beds are rarely seen. Babies sleep in home-made hammocks, never on the floor, but the rest of the family sleep on mats on the ground. Open windows are made in the walls, which



The mission post. In foreground, the home of Rev. VanSpronsen, in background, the home of Mr. John Kuik, and the church building in between.



Recovering the roof, with the help of neighbours and friends.



Church building, with family John Kuik and Mr. Cor DeWitt in front.



Main street with "shopping" area.

are covered at night. The doorways are closed at night also, sometimes by a two-part wooden door, the top part of which is left open for fresh air, but often these window and door openings are closed with only a covering of palm branches. These window and door openings are often used to lean or sit on. The partitions inside the hut are made of clay, but there are no doors inside at all. The land on which these huts stand belong to large landowners, who claim even the coconuts which grow on the trees. At best, the people living on the land can pick up coconuts which have fallen from the trees, and these are usually sick coconuts.

Quite often, boys up to four years of age run around naked in their own



Picture of part of church gathering, taken after the service.



The main road into town.

surroundings, and after that, only a pair of shorts until the age of maturing. With almost every family we visited, no husband was home. The husband is the master and does as he pleases. The woman is for bearing children and then trying to care for them with whatever the husband provides. (Instead of 'husband', we should say 'man', for only a small percentage is actually married.) If a man leaves (and that happens frequently), the woman is left with the children, and, for the sake of her own survival as well as that of her children, she simply must take in another man, no matter who he is. She may bear more children, and after a while be faced with the same thing again. It happens that a woman has children by

two or three different men. There are indeed some real families, but they are very few in number. Many a woman does not know from one day to the next with what she will feed her children. One evening, as we were sitting around the supper table laden with food, a woman came to the house with her three children; they had not eaten all day. Food and clothing are distributed, and medication administered, daily, continuously. The sight is often heart-rending. Many women give birth to from six to twelve or more children, but lose many of them. In one case, six had died out of eight; in another case, four out of seven. The infant mortality rate is very high. Mrs. Kuik has taken in many babies near to death, and nursed them back to health again. The causes of this poor state of



Going to the river to do the wash.



A mother with six children who attend the church.

health are undernourishment and poor hygiene. Due to undernourishment, the children have no resistance to even a common flu, and therefore the problem of disease is great. Due to poor hygiene, infestation with intestinal worms is common in children as well as adults. I could continue and dwell on specific cases, but from this you will have formed a good enough impression.

One day, we went along with a fisherman onto the ocean on his jangada, a kind of fishing raft. Jangadas, which vary in length from twelve to twenty feet, consist of five or six light-weight tree trunks fastened together, sometimes improved with a sail. Jangadas must be replaced at least every two years, and this can cost from 1000 to 1200 cruzeiros.

Many people work in the sugar cane industry. Workers are picked up from the town by truckloads, and returned each day if the fields are not too far away. Sometimes these workers stay away for several days at a time. Boys must help provide for the family in any way they can, be it by fishing, by selling fruit which they pick in the bush, or, as in bigger towns, by polishing shoes.

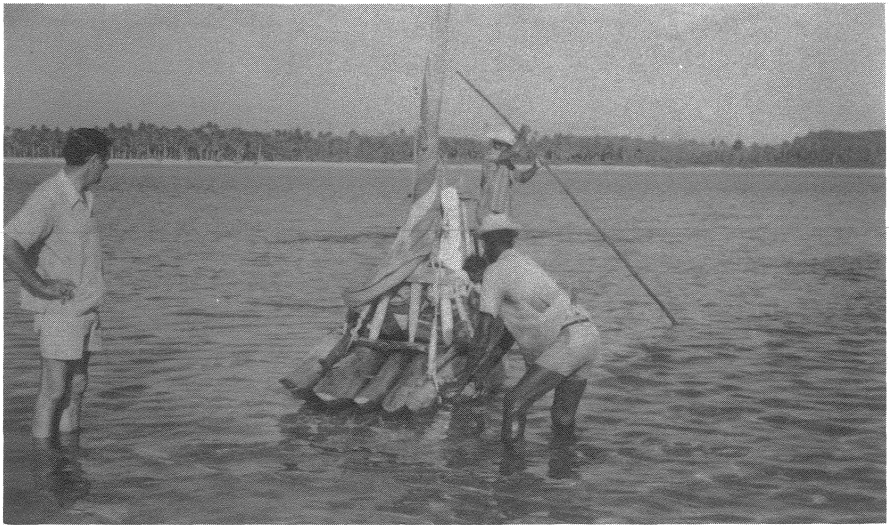
A few times, we had the opportunity to drive around, and so we visited several other towns and cities. One day we made a trip of approximately 700 km. Everywhere we went, we met the same conditions - extreme poverty. Since all the rivers in the north-eastern part of Brazil are contaminated, drinking water must be obtained from community wells, provided by the government. Often these rivers are not even suitable for swimming. However, clothes are washed mostly in rivers. Some cities and towns do have public facilities. Many times on our way, we were faced with beggars, some legitimate beggars because of serious handicaps and deformities. Though progress is slow, and the results often difficult to perceive, the Brazilian government is doing its best to improve conditions in this area.

On our travels, we found that the restaurants, except for the very expensive ones, were not very clean. In almost all places, tablecloths had big stains from food and drinks spilled by previous customers. Compared to our standards, not very appetizing, to say the least!

The homes of the mission workers are about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the



Sunday school class.

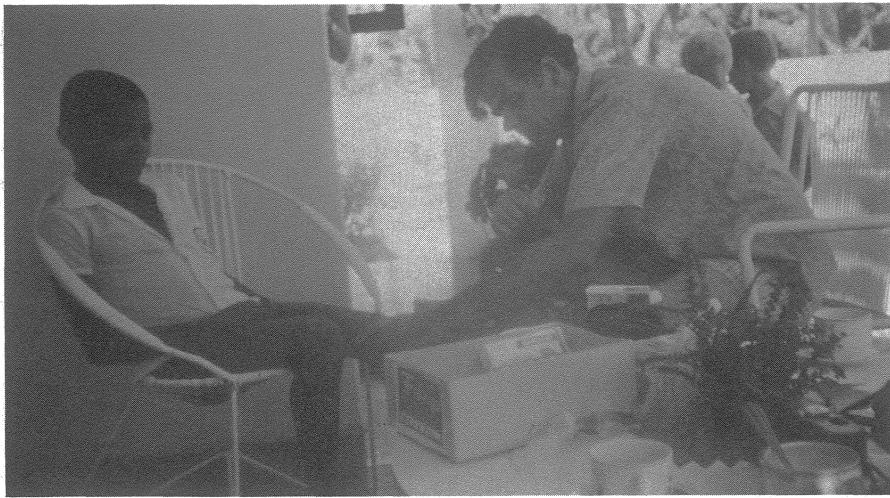


The common fishing raft called the "jangada".



Crossing a bridge to a neighbouring town.





Mr. John Kuik administering medication.



Typical meat and fish counter in neighbouring town.



Home of someone who attends church regularly. Note how the home and yard are beautified also by way of some flowers.

Atlantic shore. We went there several times a day for half an hour or so, for a walk or a quick swim. Temperatures rarely dip below 80 F., even during the night. In bright sunshine, temperatures are well over 100 F. Along the endless stretches of fine, white sandy beach are the vacation homes of many rich people from the big cities. During the absence of the owners, these homes are continually guarded.

After the evening service the following Sunday, br. DeWitt spoke a few words of farewell, which Rev. VanSpronsen again translated, and a few days later we left them to return to Canada. It had been a very educational trip, leaving on us a very deep impression.

G. KUIK



Quote

All that we have hitherto said of Christ leads to this one result, that condemned, dead and lost in ourselves, we must in Him seek righteousness, deliverance, life, and salvation, as we are taught by the celebrated words of Peter, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The name of Jesus was not given Him at random, or fortuitously, or by the will of man, but was brought from heaven by an angel, as the herald of the supreme decree; the reason also being added, "for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). In these words attention should be paid to what we have elsewhere observed, that the office of Redeemer was assigned Him in order that He might be our Saviour. Still, however, redemption would be defective if it did not conduct us by an uninterrupted progression to the final goal of safety. Therefore, the moment we turn aside from Him in the minutest degree, salvation, which resides entirely in Him, gradually disappears; so that all who do not rest in Him voluntarily deprive themselves of all grace. The observation of Bernard well deserves to be remembered: The name of Jesus is not only light but food also, yea, oil, without which all the food of the soul is dry; salt, without which as a condiment whatever is set before us is insipid; in fine, honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, joy in the heart, and, at the same time, medicine; every discourse where this name is not heard is absurd (Bernard in Cantica., Serm. 15).

- Institutes of the Christian Religion
(Book II, Chapter XVI, Section I)

- John Calvin



"The Commandment of David"

MOSES AND DAVID

We all know from the Bible what is meant by "the Law of Moses".

We all may understand that whenever the phrase "the commandment of Moses" is used, one of the many regulations or institutions which "the Law of Moses" contains is meant, e.g. a certain rule concerning the offering of sacrifices as in II Chronicles 8:13.

However, I am afraid that the title of this introduction may raise some eyebrows: What actually is meant by "the commandment of David"? Did king David also give a sort of law on behalf of God? Did he abrogate a number of commandments of the mosaic Law and replace them by some of his own making? What is this "commandment of David" about?

No, king David did not abolish any of Moses' commandments and replace it by his own. There is no contrast between these two expressions, let alone a conflict between these two great leaders of Israel.

There are even some places in the Old Testament where we find both phrases next to one another in perfect peace and harmony.

In II Chronicles 8:12-14 e.g. we are informed about king Solomon's activities. He not only looked into it that the burnt offerings were brought "according to the commandment of Moses" but he also organized the ministry of the Levites "according to the order of David his father", or as "David the man of God commanded".

In II Chronicles 23:18 we find them again next to one another, the phrase "the Law of Moses" and the statement "as it was ordained by David".

SIGNIFICANT

The fact that they are mentioned in one and the same context, Moses and David, and also that both names are closely related with a certain "law", "commandment", or "ordination", is of great significance.

We have just heard that king David was called "the man of God" (II Chronicles 8:14). We may recognize this name. This is what Moses was called. Deuteronomy 33:1 says: "And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death". And on New Year's Eve many people read Psalm 90, "A prayer of Moses the man of God".

"Man of God" means a messenger sent by God, a prophet of the LORD. Moses was a great prophet indeed.

But when king David is also called "the man of God" he is introduced to us in his office as a prophet of the LORD. Then it becomes clear to us that the "commandment" or "ordinance" or "order" which was issued by him was not just something of his own invention but given in the name of the LORD.

The Law of the covenant of Sinai is called "the Law of Moses" because Moses acted as an intermediary or mediator in proclaiming this Law. The same can be said of David. This commandment was not something of his own making but it came from the LORD God Himself. David

acted as a mediator only - compare II Chronicles 29:25 with I Chronicles 28:19).

When Moses as the "man of God" had to keep the people of Israel by the obedience to the covenant of the LORD, king David had to do the same when he proclaimed "the commandment of David".

It is no wonder, then, that in more than one place it is emphasized that David acted under the special guidance of the Spirit of the LORD (I Chronicles 28:12, 13; II Chronicles 29:25).

SOLEMN PROCESSION

However, we still do not know what it is all about, this "commandment of David".

In order to find out about this, let us go back to an important day in the life and reign of king David.

It was the day when one of his strongest desires was fulfilled: The Ark of the Covenant was brought to the city of Jerusalem. This was done in a solemn procession. For it was a very festive occasion. Even the procession itself must have been an impressive manifestation, considered from the musical angle only.

I Chronicles 15:28 tells us how one of the bystanders must have seen and heard the procession that was slowly moving towards the gates of Jerusalem. First he from a distance heard some people shouting. When they came closer by, he could hear the sound of rams' horns, which in the Bible are the signals of the arrival of the LORD. Then he saw the priests walking in front of all the others, blowing their silver trumpets. They cleared the way and exhorted the crowd of onlookers to show their respect for the LORD. After them came the singers. He had already heard the sound of the cymbals, by which they were providing themselves with the proper rhythm. And finally - but only when they passed by - he heard the soft music of the harps and lyres that accompanied the singing of the choir.

All this is summarized in the brief statement of I Chronicles 15:28, "Thus all Israel brought up the Ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps".

ARRANGEMENTS

The above-given picture of the solemn procession on the occasion of the Ark being brought to the city of Jerusalem suggests a fixed order. Even before the days of king David the Levites may have been connected with "liturgical music".

However, as soon as the Ark arrived in Jerusalem and was put at its place of rest, king David made certain arrangements concerning the music in the liturgy, in particular liturgical singing. "He appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the Ark of the LORD and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel, Asaph the chief" (I Chronicles 16:4, 5a).

The main body of this story even consists of a special song that was composed by David on this particular occasion. It is called "the first Psalm".

Indeed, it is a sort of Psalm, containing a great number of elements which we find back in other Psalms, namely 105, 95, 29, 106, 107, 118, and 136 respectively.

Another group of levitical singers was left behind at the place from where the Ark had been taken and where the burnt offerings were still brought, at Gibeon. They were put under the responsibility of Heman and Jeduthun

- two more names that, together with the name of Asaph, sound familiar to us. They, too, were appointed "to give thanks to the LORD, because His mercy endureth for ever".

At Gibeon as well as in Jerusalem the respective groups of levitical singers were praising the LORD. They sang - as was done at the end of the Psalm that David composed on this occasion - "O give thanks to the LORD; for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever" (I Chronicles 16:34).

CONFIRMED

Later on this institution and these arrangements were repeated and confirmed. We know this from a document that was written shortly before king David's death, and which we find in I Chronicles 23.

He would be succeeded by his son Solomon. Now it was a rule that on the occasion of the succession of a king, the future was as it were fixed by means of a covenant renewal that was imposed upon the people.

This is how David made certain arrangements. And among these the one concerning the building of a temple took a prominent place.

The same can be said about the arrangements that concerned the temple music. They played an important role in the ceremony whereby the people of Israel and the royal house pledged loyalty to the new king, Solomon (I Chronicles 29:23-24).

King Solomon confirmed his father's institutions.

This is proved by the story in which we are informed about the building and dedication of the temple (II Chronicles 5:12-13; 7:6) and also by the chapter that gives us a general view upon king Solomon's reign (8:14-15). Here also we find the terms "the order of David" and "the commandment of David".

CHARACTER

What, then, was the character of this special levitical ministry?

Several expressions give us a good idea about that.

In I Chronicles 16:4 it is stated that king David "appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the Ark of the LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel".

In verse 7 of the same chapter we are told, "Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD . . .", the words by means of which this had to be done being written in e.g. verse 8, "Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon His name, make known His deeds among the people", and in verse 34, "O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever", and in verse 36, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD". In verse 41 we are told that Heman and Jeduthun were chosen "to give thanks to the LORD, because His mercy endureth for ever". There were also musical instruments by which the singing to the honour of God had to be accompanied - "instruments for the songs of God", the American Standard Version calls them in verse 42.

I Chronicles 23:5 contains the information that king David appointed four thousand Levites who "praised the LORD with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith". And verse 30 again speaks of the office of the Levites who had "to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD; and likewise at even". In chapter

25:7 we hear about "songs of the LORD", while verses 1-3 inform us about Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, who together with their sons "prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD".

"FOR HE IS GOOD . . ."

As we have heard, the story of the procession which brought the Ark of the covenant to Zion contains the words, "Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren" (verse 7). Then follows the text of a song, parts of which return in several Psalms in the book of Psalms.

Really striking is the set of two lines in verse 34, which are so wellknown to us from Psalm 136:

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good;
for His mercy endureth for ever".

The first line is as it were the theme of Psalm 136, which is elaborated on in a great number of variations, while the second line forms there the chorus or refrain.

The same set of lines return also in I Chronicles 16:41, where we are told that Heman and Jeduthun were appointed to musically produce the same words.

In other words, the ministry of singing which king David instituted can be summarized in this exhortation:

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good;
for His mercy endureth for ever".

RETURNING

It is no wonder, then, that whenever liturgical singing is characterized we again read the same lines.

This happens in II Chronicles 5:13 and 7:3, on the occasion of the dedication of the temple; and also in 20:21 when these lines act as a battle song during the war that king Jehoshaphat waged. We find these two lines,

"O give thanks unto the LORD;
for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever".

again in all sorts of other songs, as e.g. Psalm 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1 and 29; 136:1; 138:1, as a reflection; and further also in Jeremiah 33:11, as a typifying of the good and happy life that would be restored under God's favour after the Babylonian exile.

The second line returns separately in Psalm 118:2, 3, and 4 - as it so often occurs in Psalm 136.

HIS MERCY

We cannot give now an elaborate interpretation of the word "mercy". We may refer to the fact that more than once the words "mercy" and "covenant" go together.

We may remember Moses' words in Deuteronomy 7:9: "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them who love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations". The echoes of these words are heard in the prayers of king Solomon (I Kings 8:23), Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:5 and 9:32), and Daniel (Daniel 9:4). However, they all go back to the proclaiming of God's name by the LORD Himself in His majestic appearance to Moses on Horeb (Exodus 34:6, 7), when He spoke: "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy to thousands . . ."

The covenant promise of blessing, as given in the wellknown words of the "second commandment" (Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10), is made true upon them who fear Him.

God's mercy is closely related with His covenant.

COVENANT AND LITURGICAL SINGING

Consequently we may say that king David, who taught his people to sing about the mercy of the LORD that endureth for ever, instituted a ministry of liturgical singing that has as its subject God's covenant, His covenant works and deeds and in particular His mercy. It would be worthwhile to make a journey along the path that connects all the different songs of the Bible and learn more about the role which is played therein by the word "mercy" and the line that acts as a refrain in Psalm 136.

We hear about the great comfort and strong support which David received from the mercy of God, in e.g. Psalm 18:51 and 30:6-8.

The sabbath song of Psalm 92 (verse 2 contains a special version of the wellknown chorus of Psalm 136) tells us the meaning of God's mercy for the whole of the nation of Israel.

Frequently this theme is elaborated on and as it were proved by certain facts and events. Therefore we find so many "historical sections" in the biblical songs, not only in those which we find in the book of Psalms but also in "the first Psalm", as the song of I Chronicles 16:15-22 is called.

It is on the same level and in the same line when we discover that the songs or fragments of songs which we find in the New Testament mention so many facts and refer us to so many sacred events - as for example is done in the credal song of Philipians, chapter 2.

Besides, did not young Mary and old Zacharias praise the mercy of the Lord and His faithfulness to the covenant? And are not the songs of the book of Revelation of the same character, being songs of praise to God because of certain great events that He caused to take place?

REFORMATION

After what we have heard so far it may not be strange - although its discovery may be surprising - that in all sorts of stories in which we are informed about the reforming activities of kings and other leaders we hear also about the restoring of liturgical singing "according to the commandment of David". Not unlike the Great Reformers of later days, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, they deemed the musical part of the worship of God of such an importance that they gave their special attention to it.

King Jehoshaphat is the first one in this series (II Chronicles 20:21). He even let the levitical singers lead the army into the battle against Moab and Ammon. The wellknown lines on the mercy of the LORD that endureth for ever were the battle song, as we have heard. Jehoiada the priest restored the liturgical ministry of the levites after the reign of the godless queen Athalia (23:18).

We read the same thing concerning king Hezekiah (29:25), and king Josiah (35:15). We hear again about the re-establishing of this ministry after the Babylonian exile. As soon as the foundations of the temple which was to be rebuilt were laid, there were the Levites, the sons of Asaph, "to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel". They sang the wellknown words, "because He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel" (Ezra 3:10-11).

These levitical singers are there again when the restoring of the walls of Jerusalem has been finished (Nehemiah 12:24, 27-29; compare also 13:10).

Once again the praises of the LORD were heard and His name glorified. The facts and events in which He

proved His faithfulness to the covenant - e.g. the return of Israel from exile - were mentioned. This way the people were kept by God's covenant.

THE NEW COVENANT

Under the New Covenant the same thing has to be done with the same means of liturgical singing.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians that they had to speak to each other "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (5:19). And the Colossians were told to use the same means to teach and admonish one another (Colossians 3:16). And does not the author of the epistle to the Hebrews say that one of the sacrifices with which God is well pleased is "the sacrifice of praise to God . . . that is, the fruits of our lips giving thanks to His name" (13:15)?



Hymn 9

Rather slowly *Melody attributed to Martin Luther (1483-1546)*

1. O heaven - ly Word, e - ter - nal Light,
Be - got - ten of the — Fa - ther's might,
Who in these lat - ter days art born
For suc - cour to a — world for - lorn;

2. Our hearts enlighten from above,
And kindle with thine own true love;
That we who hear thy call to-day
May cast earth's vanities away.
3. And when as Judge thou drawest nigh,
The secrets of all hearts to try;
When sinners meet their awful doom,
And saints attain their Father's home;
4. O let us not, for evil past,
Be driven from thy face at last;
But with thy saints for evermore
Behold thee, love thee, and adore.
5. To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honour, might, and glory be
From age to age eternally.

c. 10th cent.
Tr. Compilers of Hymns A. & M. and others



Liturgical singing, the singing of today's congregation in Church, is of great significance.

The temple which king Solomon built was filled with the glory of the LORD - not when the priests brought the offerings, for they were even hindered by the appearance of God's great majesty, but - as soon as the singers and musicians began their performance (II Chronicles 5:13-14).

Still today the praises of Israel are the throne on which the LORD is seated (Psalm 22:3).

Still today the people of God's covenant are kept by that covenant by means of their songs of praise to the mercy of the LORD that endureth for ever.

CONCLUSIONS

We are now able to draw a number of conclusions.

The first one is this that our congregational singing has to be of the same nature as that of "the commandment of David".

Although we have to add to this that the history of salvation has continued in the meantime. This means that Church singing has been strongly enriched. We have reason to sing the praises of the LORD because of His mercy and His faithfulness to the covenant as He has proved them in the sacred events of the New Covenant, Christ's birth, His preaching, His sufferings and death, His resurrection, and ascension into heaven, and the sending of the Spirit on Pentecost.

The songs that we sing in Church must be credal songs. They must be of a professing character.

We have some clear examples in the credal songs or fragments of such songs in e.g. Philippians 2 and I Timothy 3:16.

This means also that we should not avoid singing about the events of sacred history. In the songs which we find all over the Scriptures, in the Old as well as in the New Testament, the mercy of God that endureth for ever, His faithfulness to the covenant, is praised and proved from all sorts of facts and events. Well, we also shall sing about the same, even about the great events of the New Testament days.

It is a matter of voluntary poverty to restrict ourselves to the events of the "ecclesiastical year" only. Israel's history, that of the Old Testament, is also the history of the Christian Church, for the Christian Church is the new, that means the renewed, Israel.

There is every reason to sing e.g. Psalm 78 even today, and also other "historical Psalms" or Psalm sections, and no longer neglect them. On the other hand it may be clear that there cannot be brought forward any Scriptural objection against the singing of other songs than the Psalms only.

However, we have to be very careful in this respect. The history of Church singing contains several parts that inform us about serious troubles in this field.

The main thing which we shall keep in mind is that today still the great theme must be:

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good;
for His mercy endureth for ever".

This way we shall keep each other, the youngsters of the Church included, by the covenant of God!

PLENTY OF WORK

Therefore we would like to again express our strong wish that the so-called "Biblical Odes" - all sorts of songs that are scattered all over the Bible, as e.g. the Song of Deborah, the Song of Hannah - and also the credal

fragments and in particular the credal songs of the New Testament, may be put in such a form that they will be suitable for Church singing.

Even after that has been accomplished there will be plenty of work left.

It is really surprising to try to trace the line that runs from "Moses' second song" of Deuteronomy 32 through other songs, the Psalms, but also the songs of the book of Revelation.

It may be known that Mary based her song on that of Hannah, Samuel's mother. However, there is also a line which runs from Deuteronomy 32 via the just mentioned songs of these two mothers-to-be to the songs of Revelation. There is even more than this.

Nobody would be entitled to lawfully object against the writing of "free songs" and its use in Church - that is to say: against this sort of "free songs". It is even to be encouraged.

But why would we not begin as has just been explained?

REFORMED

We must remain Reformed, also in our Church singing. We have to be on our guard lest our liturgical singing loses its Reformed character.

The great majority of "free songs", usually called "hymns", which we find in all sorts of Psalters, Hymnals, and Song Books do not reach this high level.

Many of them are strongly influenced by Methodism and Pietism, which neglect the history of salvation and drastically narrow the mercies of the LORD to something subjectivistic: pious "I" and "me" and one's religious experiences and feelings are mostly in the centre.

Modern religiosity also is usually an enemy of sacred history and is definitely not "covenantal". This may be proved by listening to all sorts of "Jesus" songs.

THE WHOLE BOOK OF PSALMS

Another point of importance is this: It is a matter of fact that Psalm singing in many Churches is restricted to a number of "familiar" Psalms or even Psalm sections.

It must be admitted that we could sing more during our Church services. However, it must also be admitted that the length of the metrical versions of some of the longer Psalms is an obstacle. Therefore we would like to find a way and the proper means for the introduction of the singing of unrhymed Psalms. For let us be honest, are we really singing the Psalms of the Bible? When do we sing a whole Psalm, even a shorter one? There is enough reason to introduce some improvements.

FINALLY

But the main question is this:

Do we really comply with "the commandment of David"?

This commandment, as we may remember, had its origin in the LORD Himself. King David was only acting as a mediator in imposing it upon the people.

"Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruits of our lips giving thanks to His name . . . for with such sacrifices God is well pleased".

G. VAN RONGEN

This article served as an introduction at a combined meeting of some study societies in December 1973; it subsequently appeared in *Pro Ecclesia*, the publication of the Church of Grand Rapids.



Interior View of New Church Building.

Official Opening

The 21st of November, 1975, has become an important date for the congregation of Winnipeg. It is carved and burned into a large wooden key, which is hanging inside the building, for it does not fit any lock. During the celebration of the official opening on that date, the chairman of the Building Committee was privileged to officially present the new building to the chairman of the consistory with this symbolic key.

Several guests from the Sister Church at Carman and from the community had joined the congregation. The chairman of the consistory, the Rev. S. DeBruin opened that meeting. After singing Psalm 127:1 and the reading of Psalm 147, we thanked the Lord for this occasion and prayed Him to grant us a pleasant and fruitful hour. And that indeed it was.

In his welcome address, the chairman reminded us that we did not build a church, but a building. We may

be proud of such a beautiful building for our faithfulness in this accomplishment is a manifestation of God's love toward His people to let us serve Him in this way. The Lord indeed stirred up the spirit of the people (Ezra 1:5). It is all His work, and to His glory.

The clerk of the consistory, br. Dennis Teitsma, gave an over-all impression of the developments over the past years which finally resulted in such a delightful, but simply styled building. Although everyone had wished earlier to get a better building, which would be suitable also for societies and school, it was not until the 22nd of November, 1972, that an important step was taken towards the realization of this goal. In 1969, a building fund was born, due to a gift from the Ladies Aid Sale. At this time, three years ago, a lot was purchased. The seven thousand dollar shortage was collected within six weeks, even though it equalled our yearly church

donations. For about a year and a half, the congregation shared the sufferings of our late Rev. H.A. Stel, who passed away in the end of 1973. Nevertheless, building plans materialized, and a financial plan was adopted to pay for the new building within three years. Pledges, up to almost \$60,000.00, were made unanimously and without any extra pressure. However, the City of Winnipeg could not grant access to the property, because of a planned new highway. On the south we were land-locked by a large housing development. Thanks to the cooperation of the developer (B.A.C.M.), we could purchase the two adjacent lots, so that in the late fall of 1974 the construction started.

The chairman of the building committee, br. Gerry Kuik, expressed thankfulness for the fine cooperation given by everyone. The plan was almost completely designed by the congregation as a whole. The final interior design was decided on after

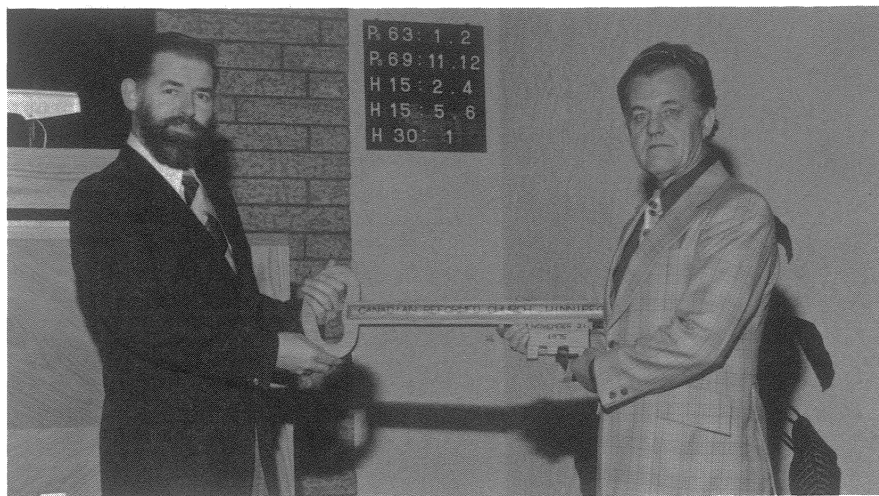


the project had started. For example, the ladies assisted in choosing the colors of paints and carpets, the kitchen design, the style of the light fixtures and what have you. Suddenly, the old building was sold for the price of a lot, and we all became anxious to get the new one completed. Every Sunday, after the services, many cars would pull up to the construction site and unload the concerned "inspectors". Most members just dropped in to see the progress, and although everyone had his own special ideas, the building as a whole was quite acceptable to each member. A few did certain jobs for the contractor, and then "forgot" to charge for labour and/or material. As had been mentioned earlier about the pledges, it all reminded us of Israel in the days of Haggai (ch. 1:13, 14). The Lord stirred the spirit of everyone, and they came and did the work. We are proud to show the deeds of the Lord among us, and therefore we praised His name by singing Psalm 108: 1

The Girls Choir of about two years old (not of two year olds) entertained us and praised also the glorious Name of our Lord by singing "Alleluia, Alleluia" by Jane Larowe.

The chairman introduced several guest speakers. The Rev. J. Geertsema, minister of the Church at Carman, reminded us of the first church service in this new building on March the second, 1975. The Word of God administered to us on that day dealt with the building of Solomon's temple. The glory of the Lord, as a dense cloud, filled the whole house. Today, the glory of the Lord is present in the clear proclamation of His Word, which is to be carried out to fill the whole community. It can be seen in our life in obedience to the statutes of our Father, and Redeemer.

Mr. Don Perry, City Councillor, and chairman of the Transcona Community Committee, addressed us on behalf of the City of Winnipeg. Approaching the lonely churchbuilding in this large, new development, he was reminded of the early pioneers. These days, when values are being attacked, he welcomed us, and expressed the hope that our faith and the Church may grow with the community around us. Another councillor present, Mr. Phil Rizzuto, told us later why this large development had received the name Mission Gardens. About 300 years ago



The chairman of the Building Committee, Mr. G. Kuik, presents the key for the new building to the chairman of the Consistory, Rev. S. DeBruin.

a land grant was made to the first Jesuit missionaries, who shortly afterwards moved to the St. Boniface area, along the Red River.

Although the local and the regional vice-presidents (Land Development) of the developer, B.A.C.M. (British American Construction Material), had other prior commitments, Mr. John Denholm, treasurer, spoke on behalf of the company. He expressed sincere congratulations and thanks for the fine cooperation experienced in working with the Building Committee. He was thankful for being with us, as he had not attended church for quite some time. "Perhaps", he said, "in this small way the Lord is trying to reach me." He saw the Church as a positive asset in this new area, and wished us the Lord's blessing in the future.

Several presentations were made by all kinds of groups among us. The Girls Society "Delphia" presented two large mirrors, making sure the long one would be installed in the ladies' washroom. The Boys Society quickly followed suit, although they expressed in a short poem their concern about the lengthy discussions, and surprised the consistory with an electric clock. The Birthday Fund, Ladies Aid and those who operated a flowerstand the last two springs, bought and installed curtains, invested monies in a brand new fridge and range, a perculator, dinnerware, cutlery, etc. A generous family had donated a bulletin board and the oak pulpit-chair. A concerned brother saw to it that clotheshangers would never have to be picked from the floor by donating closed ones. Last but not least, a representative of

the Young Women's Society "Struggle and Triumph" and one of the Young Men's Society "Believing and Confessing" made a symbolic presentation of the future landscaping by giving a first evergreen (and its pot). They had already saved \$1600.00 for this project from flyer deliveries, bottle collecting, hairdressing, installing insulation, etc. Each presentation was enthusiastically responded to with an applause.

The Mixed Choir "Jubilare Deo" sang "Great is the Father", by George F. Handel and "Crimond", by David Grant which was greatly enjoyed and appreciated by the audience.

In his closing remarks, the Rev. DeBruin made reference to several speakers, and emphasized that we really are and wish to be the Church, the Reformed Church and a genuine Canadian one. We do not wish to isolate ourselves, nor do we intend to be assimilated, but we will retain our heritage and reformed principles and, therefore, integrate—to the benefit of Christ's Church and the Community we live in, Winnipeg and Canada. We are thankful for the deeds of the Lord among us.

After singing together Hymn 62, the Rev. J. Geertsema led in thanksgiving and prayer. At the end of this program we sang "O Canada", and in a social gathering downstairs, we enjoyed coffee with all kinds of goodies. The visitors strolled around and admired all the rooms etc. We may look back on a memorial evening, and we cannot forget that the Lord, our faithful Father granted us all these privileges.

D.T.

"The Third Office of the Overseers"

"THE THIRD OFFICE"

Already in the year 1923 Dr. G. Keizer published a book with the title, *Het Derde Ambt der Ouderlingen*. With this title he did *not* refer to art. 23 of the Church Order, which, in the same year, enjoyed so much attention. A General Synod based a whole list of decisions on the last line of this article that speaks about "The office of the Elders", i.e., "and also to exhort others in respect to the Christian Religion."

No, Dr. Keizer had in mind the Form for the Ordination of Elders (page 534, Book of Praise), which describes the task of the overseers in *three* parts. The first is to take the oversight of the flock. The second, to pay regard to the good order in the Church. The third, and here we better quote literally:

Thirdly. It is also their duty particularly to have regard unto the doctrine and conversation of the ministers of the Word, to the end that all things may be directed to the edification of the church; and that no strange doctrine be taught, according to what we read, Acts 20, where the apostle exhorts to watch diligently against the wolves which might come into the sheepfold of Christ; for the performance of which the elders are in duty bound diligently to search the Word of God and continually to meditate on the mysteries of faith.

This, then, is the third office of the overseers.

Before going into greater detail, it may be good first briefly to analyze this paragraph.

UNIQUE!

The first remark here should be that our Form is, in this respect, unique and extraordinary. To my knowledge no other system of Church Polity ascribes to non-ministers such a responsible and much-demanding duty.

In the Romanist hierarchy this supervision of the preaching is given to the bishop (but certainly not the New Testament "bishop", *episcopos*, overseer). Some Presbyterian systems have a superintendent, while others put the minister under the supervision of the presbytery. Again others have their ecclesiastical "courts" to which the preachers are responsible, while at certain times in their history the Lutheran churches wanted the magistrate to see to it that the preachers stayed in line. Most of these systems, if they have any overseers or elders at all, draw the dividing line between the ministers as the clergy on the one hand, and on the other side all others, including the overseers, as the laity. It would be unthinkable to them to give the representatives of the laity the authority to supervise and eventually discipline the clergy!

This being the case, let us endeavour to truly retain this unique Reformed position of the overseer.

ANALYSIS, OR PARAPHRASE.

First, it should be stressed that the concluding sentence of the quoted passage is attached to this third office. This is not to deny that these office-bearers would not need constant Bible study for their first and second task; but it stands to reason that if they are really to "have regard to" (and that is here so much as "supervise") the preaching of

their minister, they must know what they, and especially what he is talking about! Overseers who do not diligently search the Word of God and do not continually meditate on the mysteries of faith (i.e., the revealed doctrines which form the contents of our faith) lose the moral right, and the actual ability, to fulfil this third office, although it remains their mandate.

Second, the object of their supervision is not just the minister but "the doctrine and conversation of the ministers of the Word." Our official documents nearly always speak of ministers in the plural because in the time of their origin some churches had several ministers. Our Form means, of course, that local overseers have the oversight only over the local minister, their own minister.

Then, "doctrine and conversation." The word "doctrine" must be taken in the active sense, as the Dutch original shows: "de lering". Not so much the Three Forms of Unity to which he subscribed but his actual preaching and teaching.

As we all know, in the language of previous centuries the coupling of two terms was favoured. Thus we have here, "doctrine and conversation". Such coupling usually means that the one term explains and complements the other. Considering the fact that (to mention one example) Art. 16 of the Church Order defines as the office of the minister "to continue in prayer and in the ministry of the Word", the word "conversation" indicates that the overseers keep watch over the minister to see whether his whole life in the midst of the congregation underlines his preaching and teaching. Prayers cannot remain hidden, and if a minister's first task is "to continue in prayer", this will certainly put a stamp on his "doctrine", as much as the lack of prayer will.

Third, and concluding this brief analysis, the great motive for this third office is that the edification of the Church is constantly threatened by "wolves" in sheep's clothes. This reality makes this third office necessary.

BASED UPON THE SCRIPTURES.

Our first need, now that we go into more detail, is that all become clearly convinced that this awesome duty of overseers is based upon the Scriptures. That is necessary, first, for them; then, no less for the pastors and teachers; and, finally, for the whole membership.

The Form mentions only Acts 20, where we find Paul's farewell-speech to the elders, i.e., all the office-bearers, of the Church at Ephesus. It starts in verse 18, and further on we read (verse 28f.) "take heed to yourselves (so, that comes first!) and to the flock (it is the flock of the Good Shepherd, see John 10, that Paul must have had in mind) of which the Holy Spirit made you guardians (here the word *episcopos*, bishop or overseer is used), to feed the church (preachers are included here)." Then Paul continues with warning against *two* dangers: fierce wolves (he may have thought of Judaizers, etc.) will try to penetrate into the flock. But a second danger may even be greater because subtler: "from among yourselves men will arise speaking perverse things, and draw away the disciples, the followers of Jesus Christ." Therefore be on the alert! That is your third office!

But there is more than Acts 20. In Hebrews 13:17 the believers are exhorted to obey their leaders or rulers, because "they keep watch over your souls as men who will have to give account." On judgment day, overseers will be reminded of their third office!

Titus 1:9 tells us that overseers "must be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it." This is the N.T. version of what we already read in Ezekiel 33:1-9: "if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, . . . his blood I will require at the watchman's hand."

All this must be seen in the context of the many and manifold warnings of the New Testament against false teachers and their heresies. II Peter 2:1, "There will be false teachers among you who will secretly bring in destructive heresies." I John 2:18f., "Many antichrists will come. . ."; 4:1, "Do not believe every spirit but test the spirits . . ." Gal. 1:9, "If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed." I Timothy 6:3, "If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . he knows nothing." Finally, the Bible concludes with a warning against the double sin of adding to or taking away from this book of prophecy, Revelation 22.

There need be no doubt whatsoever that the third office has a firm footing in the Scriptures.

* * * * *

These Scripture references, though clear and outspoken about the need for watchmen around the pulpit, do not tell us much about the *way* in which the third office must be fulfilled, and, subsequently, what the overseers exactly must watch for while listening to the preaching and teaching of their pastor and teacher. Thus we must say something about:

THE PREACHER AND HIS PREACHING.

We do not have a formal training for the office of overseer. The Form has already made clear that he must train himself. Part of that self-training should be that the overseer knows something about "homiletics" or the theory and art of preaching. Otherwise, how shall he be able to fulfil his third office well?

First, he must know that the preacher is, in the words of Psalm 116, "bound yet free". Let's start with the latter, because we can be brief about that.

(a) The preacher is free.

He is, for 50% anyway (think of art. 68 C.O.), free in his text-choice. I do not dare to bring in too many issues, like the so-called "Church Year": is the preacher bound to that beyond and above art. 67 of the C.O.? But he is free. His consistory may sometimes suggest that the congregation needs to hear specific truths (I hope to return to this) but may not prescribe on what texts he has to preach. (Dr. T. Hoekstra stressed this very strongly.)

The preacher is also free in his method and style of preaching. Although he would be a fool to despise the lessons of history and of his theological training, he is not bound to any specific method of preaching, be it in the set-up of his sermons, with theme and heads and all the works, or in the method of delivery, from notes, without notes, or even with a complete manuscript: no consistory can bind him to any specific method. He has to find and form his own style, in harmony with the talents God granted him, although he has to double these talents in the service of his Master. In the discussion of his sermons with his consistory (also see below) his fellow-elders may express certain wishes or come with interesting suggestions - they ought

not to impose upon him a method of preaching which they liked so much in his predecessor. He is free to be himself.

(b) The preacher is bound.

First of all the preacher is bound to the Scriptures, not only in that he has to choose his text from them without exception, but also in that his sermons must be biblical in the full sense. As a scribe of the kingdom, Matt. 13:52, he has to be a good householder "who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." Here certainly is a qualification of his freedom of text-choice, to which overseers may, if necessary, call his attention.

His preaching has to be biblical, not biblicistic, and that brings us to the next remark.

The minister is bound to and by the Reformed Creeds. This is not exactly a second binding, as though the Creeds add to the Scriptures. But he has promised to read and preach his Bible in the Reformed way. This means not only that he lets the whole Bible speak, nor that his preaching is Covenantal, but also that his preaching is controversial the way our Creeds are controversial. He must heed the warnings against heresies which we heard from the Scriptures. He must warn his hearers and equip them against all winds of doctrine that blow through our present world and are mostly newer editions of old heresies. If he does not do that, the third office may not keep silent. They must have their answers ready when church visitors come and definitely will ask about this aspect of preaching. It stands to reason that this aspect must and will come to the fore especially in his sermons "on the Catechism".

Third, the preacher is bound to the Church Order. I have already mentioned art. 68. Other than that - and I must say alas - our Church Order is extraordinarily meagre, if not poor with respect to preaching. It states, formally, in art. 16 that he must "preach the Word of God", but this is about all. This strikes us the more when we compare our Church Order with others. I want to quote from them (borrowing from Dr. Huijser's book, *De Ouderling en de Prediking*) in order to convey what in my opinion I should try to get across with respect to the third office that we are talking about. Our Church Order does not even refer to, for example, I Cor. 2:1-5 and other sayings of Paul which are prescriptive for all preaching. Faithful preaching is the first mark of the true church, art. 29 Conf. of Faith, but neither the Church Order nor the Confession elaborates on it. The Canons do indeed, here and there. To be fair, the Catechism makes a very important remark on preaching in Lord's Day 35. "God will have his people taught, not by dumb images, but by the living preaching of His Word" (answer 98). It does not say, "by the preaching of his living Word." Sure, the Word of God is living. But the preaching must also be living preaching. We realize that "living" here is the opposite to "dumb". It does not mean that the preacher must jump up and down the pulpit, make a lot of noise, but it certainly means that it is not to be dead orthodoxy, a proclamation of general truth and morals. Living preaching is such preaching in which the preacher does not throw up obstacles in the way of the living God coming to His temple. In living preaching, the Word takes hold of the people "under" the pulpit. It speaks to them today, in their condition and circumstances, in their needs and sins. Preaching, though never identical with the Word of God itself, thus becomes a sword nevertheless, a sword of the Holy Spirit that cuts through the heart and mind and spirit.

But now then back to those other Church Orders from

which we may learn what living preaching ought to be.

We could, believe it or not, even start with the Roman Catholic Law Book of 1917, containing over 2400 articles, in which much attention is paid to the pulpit, always considered by Romanists a bulwark to be defended. It knows no pardon for the (in their eyes) false preacher. It mentions three causes for fruitless preaching: not the right person, not the right intention, not the right manner of preaching. On that right manner it contains forty articles, taking Paul as an example, who gave himself completely to this task, who preached Christ crucified and who did not do that in order to please men (see I Cor. 2:1-5). Then the R.C. Church Order demands solid training, much preparation for preaching, especially prayer. The preacher must not seek man's approval but God's. His way of delivering the sermon must be in keeping with his being an ambassador of Christ, God making His appeal through him: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God! Preachers must continue to study homiletics, and if he during his ministry proves no longer equal to his task he must either resign or go back to school and again submit to an examination!

This R.C. Law Book of the twentieth century is, in some respects, similar to decisions of the Churches of the Reformation. The Lutheran Church Order, starting with the first one, of Halle 1526, stressed that nothing be added to the Word of God, but that the preaching be pure and clear. These words return in later Church Orders: "all depends on pure preaching and instruction in the doctrine of Christ our Redeemer, putting the 'justification by faith only' in the centre, and refraining from bitterness and abusive language against the Papist. "The sum of all preaching is John 3:16 (!) and every preacher must concentrate on that with all his zeal.

The French Reformed Churches put the same stress: in

Glory to God

*And there were in the same country
shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch
over their flock by night.*

*And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon
them, and the glory of the Lord shone round
about them: and they were sore afraid.*

*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for,
behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy,
which shall be to all people.*

*For unto you is born this day in the city of
David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

*And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall
find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes,
lying in a manger.*

*And suddenly there was with the angel a
multitude of the heavenly host praising God,
and saying,*

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth
peace, good will toward men.*

LUKE 2:8-14

successive editions of their Church Order they forbade showing off by many references to the Church Fathers. Preaching should not be scholastic but simple, simple, simple. Be it noted that these Reformed Churches entrusted the supervision of the preaching to provincial synods.

As to the Netherlands, the Covent of Wesel, 1568, warned against pompousness in preaching. The preacher should give more attention to the edification of the simple and unlearned than to the learned in their midst; not use subtle reasoning and complicated divisions and subdivisions to burden the simple; they should not preach on a motto, but let the Word of God speak for itself.

Although the picture of preaching that arises from all these Orders is far from complete, some very important aspects of preaching are stressed here which may help the overseers in fulfilling their third office. The Word of the Cross has to be proclaimed in a pure, simple, straight forward way. This must be done with authority, as being ambassadors of Christ; it is to be an opening and closing of the Kingdom of Heaven, see Cat. L.D. 31. But at the same time it must be done in love, the same kind of love with which God so loved the world. Paul uses the title "brethren" about one hundred times, and he combines both love and authority in the words already quoted from II Cor. 5:20. Why? Because the purpose of preaching is repentance, believing in Christ, and walking in His ways. "Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ. For this I toil, striving with all energy which He mightily inspires within me" (Col. 1:28, 29).

It could also have been said with the words of the Form for ordaining ministers, "that they thoroughly and sincerely present to their people the Word of the LORD, revealed by the writings of the prophets and apostles, and apply the same, as well in general as in particular, for the benefit of the hearers; instructing, admonishing, comforting, and reproving, according to everyone's need; proclaiming the repentance toward God and reconciliation with Him through faith in Jesus Christ; and refuting with the Holy Scriptures all errors and heresies which conflict with the pure doctrine."

FOR EDIFICATION!

This brings us back to the description of the third office of the overseer in the Form. In our brief analysis we did not yet stress the *two* elements of preaching which were mentioned, i.e., "the edification of the Church" and "no teaching of strange doctrine." The two are closely related, as becomes clear from Ephesians 4. Pastor and teachers have to equip the saints for the work of ministry, in order that these saints grow to mature manhood and are no longer tossed to and fro by all winds of doctrine.

Yet, they must be distinguished. A preacher may never teach any strange doctrine, and yet his preaching may hardly contribute to the edification of the church. When overseers "watch", to use Paul's word in Acts 20, that does not mean that they have always to act as heresy hunters. Their *first* interest is that the church be edified.

Again, this is the unique Reformed position of the overseers. Luther and Zwingli wanted the Government to do that. Their ground: the Government has to guard both tables of the Law. Zwingli saw an example in Acts 15: the meeting described there, consisted of the apostles and the elders, and to him that was the Government. Calvin, in the Church Order, 1541, ordained, art. 15, that in case of a conflict

between ministers the elders had to be called in, and, art. 78, if a strange doctrine was taught, the elders had to censure; but even he was inconsistent, because in both articles he added that, in case no solution could be found, the magistrate should be called in. (Think also of the Synod of Dort under the supervision of the States.)

Voetius rightly states that it was the overseers who saved the Churches from the Arminian danger. As long as Arminius lived, as minister in Amsterdam, under the supervision of the elders, not much harm was done yet. But as soon as he became professor in Leyden, the trouble really started.

A man like Koelman, who wrote a thick volume on *Ambt en Plichten der Ouderlingen*, 1694, gave 136 directives for their third office. One of them, remarkably, was that elders should warn their ministers against always applying the Word of God in general terms *only*.

Robbed of their office in 1816, the elders were restored in 1834, the year of "De Afscheiding", and since that time many have written about their third office.

Gleaning a list of directives from these publications, the following can be stated:

1. the purpose is always the edification of the church;
2. watch against heresies and sects;
3. see to it that it really be ministry of the Word;
4. the preacher ought not to close his Bible after the text is read;
5. elders do not always have to agree with the method of preaching;
6. but must ask, does it fill the needs of the congregation?;
7. not one single sermon but the continuous preaching is the object of their supervision;
8. those who have objections, much first make them known privately.
9. they have always to do it in a spirit of love, not as police-officers.
10. they should not do it right after the sermon;
11. overseers are only entitled to all this, if they seriously study, know God's Word, the Creeds, the dangers of heresies. They ought not to be strangers to their own hearts; must be modest, and have a knowledge of man.

Realizing that it will be impossible to present here a complete treatment of the fulfilment of this third office, I will now conclude with a *list* of remarks on certain aspects. The list is far from complete but may be conducive to a good discussion.

1. The overseer in his third office is neither the master of the minister nor his servant. He has his mandate as much from Jesus Christ as does the minister. Both are his servants; He the Master of both.

2. Although the individual overseer is certainly entitled to fulfil this office by means of a private talk with his minister, he is not entitled to in any way censure the minister. If the matter becomes serious, only the "presbyterium" has the right and duty to deal with it.

3. Should there be a regular point on the agenda: "sermon discussion", perhaps once a month, or once every three months? My answer would be the same as to whether the so-called *censura morum interna* has to be held at certain specific dates. I believe, No! There should always be opportunity for both, but not in a formal, rather formalistic way: "now, let's talk about the sermons . . . the calendar tells us to."

4. Does the preacher have to take into consideration

the so-called "ligging" of the congregation, by which is meant its specific character, be it subjective or objective, etc. Dr. K. Dyk, in *De Dienst der Prediking*, distinguishes between quite a few different "liggings" in the Netherlands. I doubt whether our Canadian situation is similar. Our congregations are melting-pots of people from various provinces. I myself have very strongly felt the difference in "ligging" between Mussel, Groningen, and Kampen. Having come from Kampen - which, at that time, was not free from subjectivism, and where going to the Supper for many still was, shall I go? shall I not go . . .? - I asked someone, Do you go to the Supper regularly? The answer was, "W'rom nait?" Then I came to Wezep in 1939, where at that time only about 40% of the professing members "dared to come" to the table of the Lord regularly. What a difference in "ligging"! Now: do the overseers have a task here? I think they have. Although they should not prevent a new minister from looking through his own eyes, his elders can be a source of information and help as to the special needs of the congregation.

5. How do overseers have to handle the *criticism* of the preaching coming from (members of) the congregation? They may hear that during home-visits or otherwise. How do they handle it? Be errand-boys of the members and just throw it on the table of the consistory, right under the nose of the minister, that public servant who is always in the limelight ("die aan de weg timmert, heeft veel bekijks")? He should be willing to agree with Psalm 141:5, "Let a good man strike or rebuke me in kindness, but let the oil of the wicked never anoint my head." Much has been written about this question. Luther defended the right of the congregation to criticize the preaching. Moses, he remarks, gave that right, even duty, to the people of Israel, Deut. 13:1-5. Christ spoke the words, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing," to all believers, in the sermon on the Mount, Matt. 7:15f. Paul did a similar thing in Romans 16:17 and said in I Thess. 5:21, "Test everything. hold fast to what is good." While John added, "But you have been anointed by the Holy Spirit, and you all know," I John 2:20.

As a result a Lasco, in London, gave the congregation once a week the opportunity to express themselves about the preaching.

T. Hoekstra, by writing a booklet on *De Tegenwoordige critiek op onze preken*, recognized this right of the congregation; C. Teeuwen did the same.

Huijser comes to the conclusions:

1. the elders should never invite such criticism;
2. if it comes, they should examine whether it has grounds; a search for the background of such criticism might also be helpful;
3. they should distinguish, and help others distinguish, between the form in which the truth is preached, and its contents;
4. they are not errand-boys of the membership. Imagine, so I add, if a minister throws on the consistory-table what some members tell him about the way some elders do their family visitation . . .

But, if the criticism is founded, they should suggest to the member, first to talk with the minister in christian love.

6. Do the overseers (and *ad majorem* the minister) have to reckon with the *wishes* of the congregation regarding the preaching? (N.B. that is not the same as criticism!) Prof. Van Veldhuyzen once undertook an inquiry.

The result was a cacophony. Criticism is easy, the art is difficult. What can one expect from such an investigation? The overseers themselves must know what preaching is and ought to be. This, again, does not mean that specific wishes should never reach the ear of the minister. If he has a good relationship with his flock, he will have lots of opportunities to hear those wishes. Although he should never "zijn preek uit de gemeente halen", his daily contact with the congregation should be of great help for his sermonizing.

7. Instead of too much lending one's ear to what the congregation might wish and criticize, elders for their part should work on the edification of the church by exhorting all to faithful attendance of church (Heb. 10:25); exhort them also to prayerful preparation for receiving the Word with joy. Theirs is also the task to see whether there are fruits of the preaching in the lives of members and families.

8. Because the rules for Church Visitation mention it expressly, I want to stress that to the third office of overseers also belongs: to check whether the minister concentrates sufficiently on his *studies*. Instead of loading him down with all kinds of things which eat away his time, they should rather be his assistants in this, and send him to his study, the

place, first of all, for constant prayers, and then, for continued study all his years of ministry.

9. In closing, the overseers, but also the minister himself, should make use of the opportunities in our regular church life to talk about preaching. I think of opportunities like calling a minister, preparing for the yearly church visitation, the discussion of reports of family visitation, which might easily develop into a general exchange among the office-bearers about the preaching. Whereas we have no special training for overseers, the consistory meetings are still the best place for training the overseers in a faithful fulfilment of their third office.

It is my considered opinion, however strange it may sound, that the minister is the first person, and the best qualified person to train his overseers in faithfully fulfilling their third office of watching over his preaching. He will, however, only be thus qualified if he possesses the christian virtues of modesty and humility in a great measure.

G. VANDOOREN

This is the text of an address delivered at a recent conference of special office-bearers, held at Rehoboth Church, Burlington.



Books

Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1 - 72* (InterVarsity Press, 1973), 257 pages \$5.95

This book is a new addition in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary series (which is edited by D.J. Wiseman) and it should be a useful aid in the study of these Psalms.

Before he gets to the actual commentary, the author, D. Kidner, devotes the first 46 pages to introductory matters. Here in a concise and clear way he gives the reader insight into a great variety of topics and often does it in such a way that the material he introduces has relevance and makes an impression on the reader. For example, when he discusses what exactly constitutes poetry in Hebrew, he shows that it was neither rhythm nor external forms that made their literature poetry. The characteristic of poetry is its parallelism of thought. For instance the thought of one line may be repeated in a following line (e.g. "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." Ps. 103:10). He also illustrates other types of parallelism. But then he notes, it is a "striking fact that this type of poetry loses less than perhaps any other in the process of translation . . . the fact that its parallelisms are those of sense rather than of sound allows it to reproduce its chief effects with

very little loss of either force or beauty. It is well fitted by God's providence to invite 'all the earth' to 'sing the glory of his name' " (p. 4). Here indeed we see the great wisdom and purpose of our God.

In the introduction the author also discusses the so-called Psalms of vengeance. According to him these Psalms create "an embarrassing problem for the Christian who is assured that all Scripture is inspired and profitable, but equally that he himself is to bless those who curse him" (p. 25f.). After a relatively lengthy treatment of this problem Kidner concludes that Christians cannot use these cries of vengeance as their own (p. 32). Must one therefore draw the conclusion that these Psalms (e.g. Ps. 5, 69, 109, 137) cannot be sung? The Bible clearly states that we are not to curse but even to bless those who persecute us (Matt. 5:44, Luke 6:28, Rom. 12:14). However, the question must be asked, how does one sing the Psalms? Does one sing of oneself or do the Psalms speak of the Christ? It is good to listen to the words of A. Janse on this point. "One calls these Psalms 'Psalms of Vengeance' and one is of the opinion that a Christian must not avenge himself. Correct. But that is the curse of our way of singing in the church, that we always want to sing of ourselves and with ourselves. Why can we not rejoice of

David and of Christ and with the church of all ages?" (*De Heerlijkheid Der Psalmen*, 35) And when we sing, not of ourselves but of the Christ, for the Psalms speak of Him, then we may be glad that Scripture reminds us that indeed Christ is the Avenger of His people. Christ does not love all people, but hates the unrighteous who do not repent. The so-called Psalms of vengeance remind us of the enmity and the struggle there is today. In that context we can also think of Rev. 6:10 where the souls of those slain for the Word of God cry out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before Thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (see also Luke 18:7ff.). In that old struggle in which we are still engaged today, the Psalms, which cry for the vindication of God's people and for the destruction of those who oppose the Holy One, are certainly still in place.

In the introduction one also finds a clear exposition of some of the aspects of the messianic hope in the Psalms and the New Testament usage of the Psalter. A detailed section on the titles and technical terms in the Psalms rounds off the introductory section.

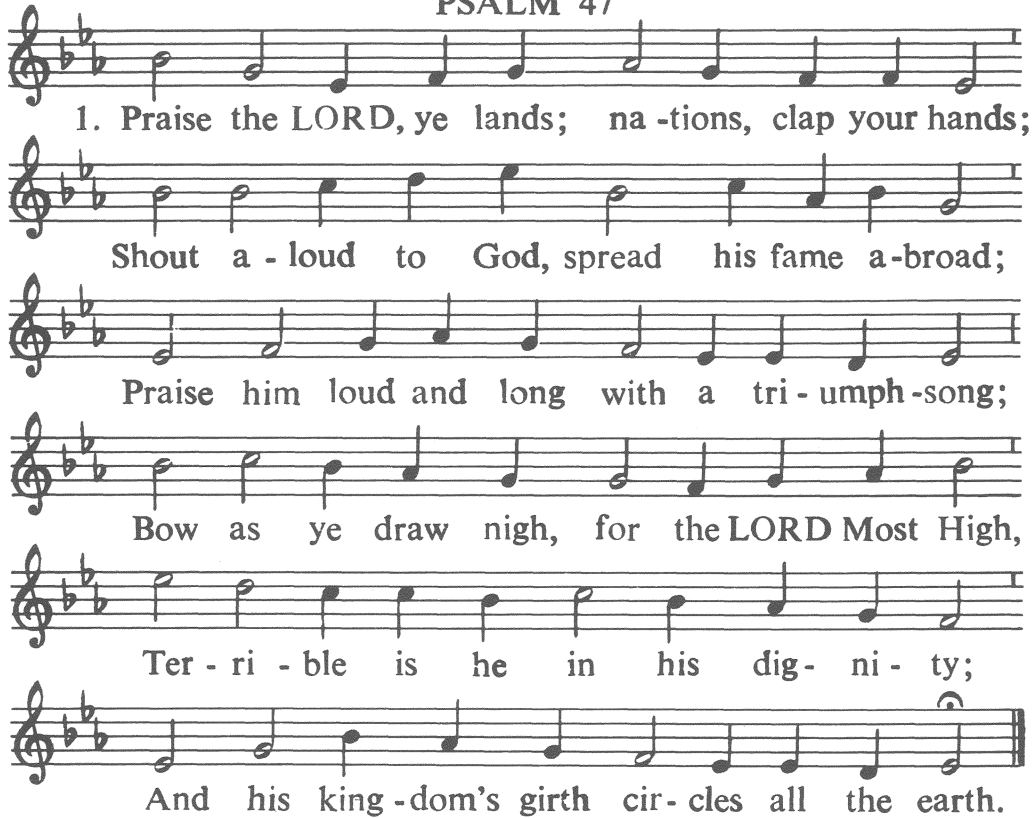
The commentary itself is to the point and, although it appears to be brief, is packed full of information. Throughout the commentary one notices that the author wants to see and understand the Psalms in the context of the entire Word of God.

In summary, one can use this book with great profit for understanding this part of God's revelation.

C. VAN DAM

Praise the Lord

PSALM 47



1. Praise the LORD, ye lands; na - tions, clap your hands;
Shout a - loud to God, spread his fame a-broad;
Praise him loud and long with a tri - umph - song;
Bow as ye draw nigh, for the LORD Most High,
Ter - ri - ble is he in his dig - ni - ty;
And his king - dom's girth cir - cles all the earth.

2. God has *gone on high* with a joyful cry;
Hosts with *trumpet sound* make his praise abound:
Sing ye *praise to God*, tell his fame abroad,
Take a *psalm and shout*, let his praise ring out,
Lift your voice and sing glory to our King;
He is *Lord of earth*, magnify his worth.
3. Praise his *majesty understandingly*;
God is *King alone* on his holy throne,
Issues his *commands* to all heathen lands.
Lo, the *princes* all gather at his call;
His the *shields of earth*, his the *power, the worth*;
He, the *God on high*, is our *Helper nigh*.

news medley

Yes, that is something which you did not expect to see in this issue of our **Clarion**, did you? You will know the saying that love is smart and succeeds in finding ways and means to achieve its goal even when others may say, "That is impossible". I do not mean my own love, but the love of the brethren who love the others and thus have found ways to get their bulletin into my possession. Our magazine will be one of the few that reach their subscribers and we may say that we are thankful for the trouble into which the people at Premier Printing go to get it to us and the extra costs which the publisher is willing to incur in order not to let you miss an issue. Hopefully, the strike will be over soon, but at the moment at which we write these lines there is no expectation of a settlement within the next few days, although the Postmaster General says that it could be solved within a few hours. I sincerely hope that he will stand behind his firm words and bow to no pressure from any quarter. I wished more civil authorities took as firm a stand as he has done during the current "dispute". One can overcome the revolution only by standing firm. But enough about that at this place.

We were going to have a medley. To this end we begin in Grand Rapids. The Ladies Auxiliary there used a "Market Day" and another Bazaar (Eastbrook) to gather some three and a half hundred dollars. New projects are in the making. The nice thing of having such sales is that you get money from other people and that it does not have to come from the same people all the time. There are, however, disadvantages. You know that I go only by written sources, but in this case I wish to tell you something Rev. G. Van Rongon told me at the latest Regional Synod of Ontario. He said that when they had the bazaar, there were men from the Internal Revenue service walking around, seeing to it that the Income Tax department received their "fair" share of the income even of charitable organizations which, however, were not registered as such. I am happy to say that I have never heard anything like that about Canada. One must be quite desperate for money if one goes and takes a share of the \$350.00 which a Ladies Auxiliary gathers to support a school-to-be! The welfare state gobbles up vast amounts without giving anything in return (Look at the City of New York!), not even gratitude. There are many injustices in this world and we long for the day when righteousness will cover the earth and when the knowledge of the Name of our God will be general. We long for that day not just because we have to pay money (what is money when it comes to the point?) but because we see the disruption of life and the misery.

Ladies Auxiliaries are busy everywhere. In Winnipeg they had a sale and this sale yielded some \$1,500.00. Certainly not something to despise! They do need a large amount there when we see how many projects they support, be it sometimes with relatively small amounts. Let me give you the list as I found it in the Winnipeg bulletin. "The Manitoba Heart Foundation; the Manitoba Cancer Society; the Sanatorium Board; the Society for Crippled Children and the Canadian Red Cross. Some money will be set aside for future projects as the Mission Aid. The bulk of

the proceeds will assist the Korea Fund, the Organ Fund, the buying of items for the interior of the Church (the Birthday Fund) and for the School Society." When you support such a variety of causes then you do need quite an amount. In Fergus/Guelph the Ladies Auxiliary or Ladies Aid (I never know where they are called the former and where the latter) also held a bazaar. There the yield was some \$1,300.00 which almost exclusively goes for the school. That is necessary, too, for there are serious plans to extend the present school (eight grades) with nine and possibly ten either next year or spread over two years, that is one by one.

Returning to Grand Rapids, I was surprised to see the whole schedule for family visits published with times and days and initials of visiting brethren.

The Ebenezer Church in Burlington published in their bulletin a report which was submitted to the Consistory regarding mission. In this report it was stated that supporting another Church should not be more than a temporary solution. As reason for that statement the brethren quote what happened in Antioch in Syria, where the Holy Spirit commanded the Church to send out Paul and Barnabas for the work of the mission. Therefore, the brethren argue, the "normal thing is that every local church obeys the mission mandate, 'Set apart for Me . . . send off'." It appears to me that here a conclusion is drawn which goes farther than can be justly derived from that text. We do not read in the New Testament that any such command was given to any other Church; Antioch was an exception as far as I can see it. Nor do we read that any other Church in the New Testament did send out brethren for this work. All I can read here is that the Holy Spirit uses the Church at Antioch to cause the word of the Lord to Saul to come true: that he was to be the Lord's witness unto the heathen. This calling is executed indirectly through the Church as is still the case today. But I cannot read here that therefore every Church has to do it. Meanwhile, I agree with it that every Church should strive for it.

Ebenezer Church also decided to have a collection every third Sunday of the month to partly support a Korean Missionary. The strange thing (not about Ebenezer Church but about this missionary) is that he has not been sent out by any Korean Church but by the Women's Evangelical Alliance of Korean Presbyterian Churches, as we learn from the Rehoboth bulletin. For that reason, too, the Rehoboth Church decided not to give support. Mixed with the above discussions and decisions is the fact that the Canadian Reformed Churches do not have correspondence with the Korean Churches in question. For the Rehoboth Church it was an argument against lending support, for they do not wish to put the Churches before a "fait accompli". "How can we establish 'peace' abroad if we do not preserve it at home?" they say.

There is more news about the Ebenezer Church in Burlington. The Congregation gave a "farewell present" to Bram and Joanne Vegter, who - we assume - have arrived in Irian Jaya by now. For the money received they purchased a shortwave receiver set which will come in very handy. By the way, their address will be Mr. B. Vegter, Mangellum, c/o M.A.F. Sentani, Irian Jaya, Indonesia.

In the Ebenezer bulletin we also find a brief "article" about society life and the question is put, "How do you prepare for Society Meetings?" Is the appearance in

harmony with that and is it so that the young people do not hurry home to change after Church "into those ugly, drab, discoloured blue jeans and jackets, even the girls? Do you do that to please the LORD?" I do not know whether the same thing happens at other places, but I would like to put the above question before all and everyone who does do the thing to which the Rev. VanDooren refers here. It is not becoming!

A few medleys ago I told you that the Consistory considered the possibility to have a telephone line from the Churchbuilding to the Senior Citizens Home which is being built close by. Now we read that a 63 unit home is being built on New Street and that there will be telephone connections to the pulpits of the nearby Christian Reformed and Canadian Reformed pulpits.

An item which concerns both Burlingtons: a balloon race was held and as deadline for results was set October 15. Now the winner was announced: his balloon was found in Ransomville, N.Y., about thirty-five miles east of Niagara Falls.

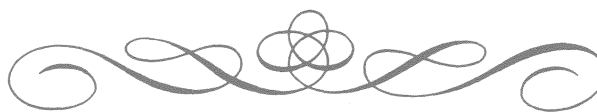
You were already informed about plans to issue an "evangelistic Magazine" which is to be specifically Canadian Reformed. Of course, for how else could we use it to tell others about the Church? And you cannot tell others about Christ in the right manner if you do not tell them about the Bride of Christ. The Consistories received a circular letter concerning this proposed paper. Some Consistories decided to order some for a period of a year. Others have objections to the schedule set-up and contents. The Rehoboth Burlington Consistory writes, "The consistory feels that the 'Canadian Reformed' image and contents of the magazine would be hazarded if articles are taken over from existing magazines like 'Outlook'." The Winnipeg Consistory is not in favour for "from the proposed content of the paper it appears that we will merely end up with a third magazine in our churches." From what I have learned from the planned contents, I would tend to agree with the above quoted criticism. The Fergus Consistory (and this did not come from me, but from the other members!!) also has objections. It was deemed wrong to insert articles by others and the necessity was stressed to combine forces to make what we have better all the time instead of cutting up the resources we possess even further.

Before we leave Ontario we mention that in Hamilton "the Consistory is reminded by a Brother about the need for lightning-rods on the church." There seems to be a difference of opinion among the experts about the use and the necessity of lightning rods. It was, I think, in 1962, that the Ebenezer Church in Burlington had to install such rods for the fire insurance. But when the Churchbuilding in Fergus was hit by lightning last year and when we asked the adjuster who came to survey the damage which was mostly to the organ, he said that such rods did not make any difference, that his company did not deem it necessary to install them and that it did not make any difference in premium. He also stated that such rods frequently attract lightning. Now, there you are: take your pick. In Burlington it was considered necessary, in Hamilton likewise. Who is right?

Winnipeg demands our attention a little longer.

Previously we mentioned that some changes were considered regarding the liturgy. Some progress has been

Continued on page 28



Happy Birthday



On January 6, 1976, the Lord willing, Mrs. H. Buit will celebrate her 85th birthday. Mrs. Buit was born in Avereest, Holland, on January 6, 1891, and is the widow of the late Mr. D.H. Buit, who was born in Hasselt, Holland on July 29, 1890. They had been married for 51 years, when Mr. Buit passed away on November 3, 1968.

Mr. and Mrs. Buit immigrated to Canada in October of 1949 and went to Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, where three of their children had previously settled. In 1950 they moved to Winnipeg, and in 1955 to Dryden, Ontario, where they farmed for six years. From there they moved to Rosedale, B.C. in 1961.

Under the supervision of the Church at Homewood (Carman), a house congregation was formed in Winnipeg in 1952, of which the family Buit was one of the first members and at whose home the meetings were held. Due to the influx of new immigrants, the group soon became larger, as did the soup pan and the coffee pot of Mrs. Buit. The Church was instituted on February 15, 1953, in which service the late Rev. Pieffers led.

Mrs. Buit is still in good health and now lives in Sardis, B.C. with Mr. and Mrs. W. Gelderman, although on her own. She is still busily knitting and crocheting, and loves reading, especially "Nederlands Dagblad". She receives many visitors, which she appreciates very much, and because of her great humour they always return.

Opoe Buit has four children, twenty-five grandchildren, and twenty-eight great-grandchildren. May the Lord bless her with many more years in good health. Her address is 42486SS Sumas Road, R.R. 1, Sardis, B.C. V0X 1Y0.



Drama and Church ⁽¹⁾

Second in a series of five, including: Drama and Preaching, Drama and Church, Drama and School, Drama and these Modern Days, Drama and Holy Scriptures.

HISTORY

Was the mediaeval "biblical play" a by-product of the decline in preaching, as in our first article we heard someone say? Can the propagandist for the re-introducing of drama in the church services as an alternative to the preaching rightly make an appeal to history? These questions make a dip into Church History necessary.

EARLY CENTURIES

The first fact to be mentioned is that the Christian Church condemned the "spectacula" rather early. These were plays that served as public entertainment during the days of the Roman Empire.

Because of their profane and pagan character it was no wonder that Tertullian strongly opposed them in his writing *De Spectaculis*, and Cyprian did the same, while the Synods

of Arles (314) and Carthage (397) made some clear statements against these plays. 1

However, at the same time a sort of "Christian drama" had developed in the East, in the Byzantine world. The liturgy became a matter of dramatizing biblical materials.

This was not strange at all. For Byzantium - or Constantinople - was considered as an earthly reflection of the heavenly sanctuary and palace, a sort of "image of God" on a large scale, representing the heavenly Great King here on earth.

Consequently the ludic element became a matter of course: They played there in every respect - although not as a game but with serious intentions. There was complete identification: the Kingdom of God was there in Byzantium!

However, even this did not go without opposition. The wellknown Chrysostomus, patriarch of Byzantium since 398, declared himself against these practices. 2

AETHERIA

It is a remarkable fact that later on the Church gave the impulse to the developing of what is called mediaeval drama. This was no wonder, since the liturgy had already been - at any rate partly - a matter of drama.

In the fourth century a Spanish nun, Aetheria, made a



NEWS MEDLEY - continued

made. I am aware of it that not everything can be said in a brief report on a Consistory meeting, and Rev. S. DeBruin promised that he would elaborate on this matter in the bulletin. He has already made a beginning with his explanations. But there are some things which I cannot follow. Must be my dullness. When I read, for instance, "The consistory could also agree e.g. with the reasons to include the 'summary' of the law. It is not used to include or add a New Testament element, for Christ quoted Deut. 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, but it is a commentary necessary to warn against tendencies of legalism", then I cannot come to any different conclusion than that that explanation qua argument is just, with your permission, flapdoodle. I still stick to my conviction that one either has to omit the reading of the Ten Words altogether - which I certainly would not advocate - or just to read them and nothing else. The word "Law" as used by our Lord in Matthew 22 means, I am convinced, far more than just the Ten Words. The latter are just a summary of The Law. If you wish to have an even shorter summary (not of the Ten Words but of The Law) then you can take what our Saviour said in His reply to the pharisees. Also in our Catechism the expression "Out of the Law of God" definitely has a wider scope than the Ten Words only. I know that in olden days we learned at Catechism classes the thesis: The Law is found twice in our Catechism, once as source for our knowledge of our misery and once as rule for our gratitude. Since, I have come to different conclusions, as I stated above. But enough about that.

The Winnipeg Consistory also urged the Congregation and took upon themselves the task of scrutinizing the Book of Praise in order to help the Committee that has received

the mandate to revise it in harmony with the criticism sent in, if the latter is found justified. Would that all Consistories would decide and do so.

The Winnipeg Building Committee informed the Congregation that "hopefully a settlement can be reached in the next two months" regarding the property lines and everything connected with it. We spoke of that before, but the matter is too complicated to tell you all about it.

Great joy was worked in my heart by the information that "it was decided to discuss, at the next meeting, if the price of a pipe-organ can be included in the arrangements for the final payments of the new building." Further, the Consistory decided that "starting February the Lord's Supper will be administered once every **two** months and then only in the morning service." The march of the pennies continues: no less than four hundred and eighty-two were handed in by a family. And, surprisingly, a lone dime and a lone nickel became entangled in the ranks of the pennies.

A final word about Winnipeg: they expect to be able to start an elementary school in 1976 and will start with the grades 4-9. A wise decision appears to be the resolve that any surplus of money at the end of the fiscal year shall not be applied against operating costs of the first year but shall be reserved. Only a fool devours everything, the Proverbs say. There is a tremendous treasure of wisdom heaped up in that one Book. Wise are they who act accordingly.

Herewith we concluded our Medley. We could deal with only a few Churches. There was, however, sufficient material. If the postal strike continues, what about giving your bulletins to your **Clarion** correspondent, so that he or she can send it along if they have anything to go to Premier Printing? However, it may be that the almost pre-historic figure of a mailman may re-appear in our streets and at our doors. Say hello to him from me, will you? vO

pilgrim's journey to Jerusalem. She was there also during "Holy Week". About the liturgy she reported that Christ's passion and death were enacted, just as it still happens in the wellknown "Passion Plays" of Oberammergau and other places. Every event was played, i.e., repeated, on its proper place in or around the city of Jerusalem, and also at its proper time during the week.

On Good Friday, e.g., at approximately 3 o'clock in the afternoon a solemn procession of worshippers went to Calvary. There the cross - which up till that hour had been kept under cover - was unveiled and given special honour - the "elevation crucis" as it is called.

There are still some remnants of this ceremony left in the Good Friday liturgy of the Missale Romanum. 3

"QUEM QUAERITIS?"

However, although this practice spread from Jerusalem to several parts of the world we cannot speak of a generally accepted liturgy. But this information may prove that dramatization of the biblical history was practiced at an early date already. Besides, was not to a certain degree the Mass - this degeneration of the biblical sacrament of the Lord's Supper - another proof of the same thing?

Anyhow, it seems that during the 9th century for the first time a musical addition to the liturgy was made. It was a "trope", a sort of dialogue between a number of monks who played the role of the women on the Easter morning.

After the first line this dialogue is called "Quem quaeritis?", whom seek ye? Here is its translated text as it is known from a 10th-century manuscript from the monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland, the author most likely being the Benedictine monk Tuttilo:

Whom seek ye in the sepulchre, Christian women?

Jesus of Nazareth the crucified One, O dwellers in heaven.

He is not here, he has arisen as it has been prophesied;

Go ye and announce that He has arisen from the tomb. 4

It may be interesting to hear that the Benedictine monks were given a sort of scenario for the performance of this trope. In an appendix to the Monastic Rule of St. Benedict, called "Regularis Concordia" and dating from the 10th century, we read the following:

While the third lesson is being sung, let four of the brethren vest themselves, one of whom, vested in an alb, is to enter as if to participate in the service. But let him unnoticed go to the place of the sepulchre, and there sit quietly holding a palm in his hand. While the third responsory is being celebrated, let the remaining three follow, and be vested in copes, and bear in their hands thuribles with incense, and advancing tentatively as though uncertainly seeking for something, let them come before the place of the sepulchre. 5

ADDITIONS

Later on more additions followed. The story of the "Peregrini" - the men of Emmaus - was added to the dramatized Easter story during the 12th century. Then also the story of Christ's appearance to the disciples in the evening was inserted.

During the 14th century a whole dramatic series was included in the Easter liturgy consisting of the following elements: The laments of the three Marys on their way to the sepulchre; "Quem quaeritis?"; Peter and John on their way to the grave after a lyrical sequence Victimae Paschalis Laudes; then a dialogue between the three Marys and the disciples - most likely represented by a choir -; while finally the Te Deum was sung.

Some manuscripts include also the story of Mary Magdalene in the garden.

PASTORES ET MAGI

In the meantime a second series came to the fore: the "Christmas and Epiphany Plays" (Pastores et Magi - shepherds and wise men).

This was apparently a development from the trope "Quem Quaeritis?" because the first line read here: "Quem quaeritis in praecepe, pastores, dicite", a question asked by the midwives who could not be missed in a "biblical" play: the shepherds had to tell them whom they were so eagerly looking for.

It is interesting to observe that even in its primitive stages "biblical drama" could not do without unbiblical fantasy!

A later addition was the announcement of the Saviour's birth to the shepherds in the field. Then the Magi, the Wise Men from the East, were introduced, which part of the play was performed on "Epiphany", January 6.

Afterwards the story of the flight to Egypt was added.

The "Christmas cycle" was complete when the "prophetae" was inserted. This was a play of the prophets. On the night before "Christmas" the preacher used to bring forward the Old Testament prophets as having predicted the Nativity event. In the 11th century this was replaced by a play.

Other additions were: the Annunciation - the story of the angel informing young Mary about the coming great event - and Mary's visit to Elizabeth.

OLD TESTAMENT

With the introduction of the "prophetae" the Old Testament was given a place in the mysteria - as this type of "biblical plays" is commonly called.

At the end of the 12th and during the 13th century the number of Old Testament plays was considerably increased, e.g. with the story of Joseph, and that of Isaac and Rebecca and their sons.

We can go even further back into sacred history. A wellknown play was "Ordo Adae", the story of the temptation and fall of man in paradise.

But also the very last of the sacred events in the history of salvation was given a place in the series of plays: the Judicium (= last judgment).

Herewith the "cycles" - see below - were almost complete.

(To be continued)

G. VAN RONGEN

1. Z. Rittersma, *Het dramatiseren van Bijbelse geschiedenissen door jeugdigen*, page 22.
2. Same, page 22.
3. This writer in *De Reformatie*, Volume 49, No. 4, and in *Pro Ecclesia* (Grand Rapids), Volume 19, No. 25. See also *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Volume 5, page 754, and *Christelijke Encyclopedie*, Volume 1, sub Aetheria.
4. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Volume 7, page 635.
5. V.F. Hopper and G.B. Lahey, eds., *Mediaeval Mysteries, Moralities, and Interludes*, quoted by Dr. Thomas Howard in *Eternity* of August 1975.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

This issue was still sent by special delivery, since the postal service after the recent postal strike may not be efficient.
Date sent: December 11, 1975

Letter from a Traveller in Korea

(3) Pusan, Friday, March 14, 1975

The letter from a traveller has to be ready earlier this week than normally. Tomorrow we are leaving for a neighbouring city, Taegu, where I hope to preach on Sunday. And we will have to make an early start. So it seems that I won't be getting around to writing in the next couple of days. If I want to keep to my goal of writing one letter per week for our paper (of which I, incidentally, know nothing, for *De Reformatie* arrives considerably after the date here even though it is sent by air mail), then this will have to be done in the meantime.

Before I gave lectures this morning from 11:30 to 1 o'clock, I led the chapel service for the students. This lasts for about half an hour, during which a meditation is held. This can be compared to the "Andacht" which was held once a week in Kampen when I was a student. Only once a week! But here it is held every day. And that's not all.

For the students of the Seminary and of the College the day begins early, namely at five o'clock. From 5:30 to 6:30 there is a prayer-meeting which is led by one of the professors, each taking his turn. That is very early in the morning! So early, in fact, that even here in Korea they have thought about starting at a later hour, and for a short while the hour of rising was set at 7 o'clock. But they have come back from that. Getting-up at 5 o'clock is part of the practical training for the ministry. For every day every minister leads in his congregation a prayer-meeting at 5 o'clock, as I wrote earlier.

The lessons begin at 8:30. They are naturally opened by prayer in the chapel service, and the lessons are closed by the communal praying of the Lord's Prayer. How it goes with the afternoon lessons (usually from 2 to 4 or 5 o'clock) I don't know. But likely the pattern doesn't vary.

The custom here in the Seminary is the same as in the church services. Prayer is frequent and often lengthy. There is prayer led by the minister leading the service. There is silent prayer by everyone. There is prayer out-loud by everyone after the preaching. Then the church resembles a bee-

hive, as my wife said after we had experienced this for the first time. The minister who leads the service first calls on everyone to thank the Lord for the good Word of God received, and then participates in this with the congregation. At a particular moment he rings a small bell from the pulpit, and all is quiet.

Without in any way passing judgment on this last phenomenon in the worship service, the question naturally comes to mind, whether here prayers are not immoderately multiplied. The question carries even more importance because it is our sister churches here in Korea who distinguish themselves from other churches by their frequent and lengthy prayers. Who does not think about what Christ teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount, "And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."?

This afternoon we had lunch at the home of an American missionary and his wife, Rev. and Mrs. Hunt (sent by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.). He knows Korea through and through. His father was a missionary here for forty years. He was born and raised in Korea. He speaks Korean like a Korean, according to the Koreans themselves. ("If we close our eyes, we cannot hear that a non-Korean is speaking.") He was imprisoned by the Japanese in 1941 for the cause of Christ, and wrote a moving book about this.* He refused to go along with the honouring of the Japanese emperor in the churches.

He was so friendly as to sit in on all my lectures, and after them we often discussed the material covered and related issues. I got to know him as a level-headed, Reformed man, who is sharply aware of the dangers in the lives of Korean Christians. He has been attached to the Seminary from the beginning as so-called "missionary professor" (not what we would call a specialist in mission work, but a professor "sent" by churches abroad) and in the circles of the Seminary he is

known, I may say, as a man of trust.

Well, I asked him: Do you not think that here in Korea prayers are too frequent and too lengthy, and is here not the danger of which Christ warns in the Sermon on the Mount?

His answer gave me much food for thought.

He did not deny the dangers. But he did show me much of the background. His story came down to this: Many of the pioneers of this church were imprisoned by the Japanese. Often they were there for years and years. I have experienced that life myself. And I know how during imprisonment one has more time to pray, and how one learns to pray for things normally excluded from prayer. One also learns to see different sides (aspects) of things about which one would also pray normally outside of prison but which aspects one then explores from all sides in one's prayer life with the Lord. This is also the way it went with our brothers here. When they were set free and were tossed into strife within the church, and when some led the services of the Korean Presbyterian Church, then they brought their manner of prayer from prison into the churches. They came out of Japanese prisons and they know how close the Communists are.

So they knew and still know the calling to make the people faithful in this life. Besides this, these are young churches. They continue to grow through the conversion of many heathens to the faith. The new Christians are then introduced to this practice of prayer. Don't forget either (so he continued) that families are often divided. For example, the wife has become a Christian, but the husband is still a heathen. (It is indeed remarkable to see how many more women and young people there are in the church than men.) In their homes they do not find the time to pray undisturbed. Often this is only possible when they are in church. Certainly there is the danger of imitation. He told (this as an aside) of a rather interesting example. Dr. Han, one of THE central figures in the Korean Presbyterian Church from the beginning, has naturally, as everyone, his own peculiarities of speech. When Rev. Hunt travels through Korea and meets a minister who uses the same characteristic sayings, then he immediately knows him to be a disciple of Dr. Han!

Yes, so it is in Korea. In the same way as you can often pick out the Schilder disciples by the characteristic expressions and mannerisms of the late Prof. K. Schilder. (I am not excluding myself!)

The danger of imitation. And the danger of routine. Indeed. But the causative background in this case is not the heathendom of Korea (of which I first was afraid). But the background is a precious segment of the Church History of Korea. And that you have to take into consideration, also when you see the dangers and warn against them.

That was a "lecture" for which I am thankful. This does not take away that questions remain. These questions, to my way of thinking, may also be directed to the brothers here. As long as we do not forget then that they also have the Christian right to ask us their questions. That is simply the practice in the communion of saints within the unity of faith.

This unity I found again this week. In the course of my lectures I had to handle several touchy issues, for example, the character of AMERICAN Christian and Church Life. I spoke about the Methodist revival movements and about the typically American "church form" of the denomination. Since Korea is "grafted" upon America, theological questions from America are much more dominant here than among us in Europe. As, for example, the questions concerning the millennium and the contrast between POST-millennialists and the PRE-millennialists (I don't have the time in this letter to explain the difference). These questions play hardly any role in Europe, but here, as in America, they are important. The distinction, in my opinion, is unjustified. And I also explained why, according to my conviction. Questions followed. I hadn't expected otherwise. But it was freely admitted during the discussion that the Holy Scriptures have full authority. And in the analysis and judgment of the Methodist revival movements, I enjoyed a good hearing.

The students (as I understand) are having a hard time with what they call the difficulty of the lectures. But they are gallantly doing their best. And if you consider that, when it is my turn at 11:30, they have already been busy for seven hours or so, then you can understand that it is quite a session



Prof. Kamphuis and his wife are seen with Prof. Dr. Soon Gil Huh while on a sight-seeing tour at Hae In Temple, a Buddhist shrine.

until one o'clock. But on the other hand, I haven't been sent here to tell some stories.

Since I'm now again speaking of the students and their program, maybe it would be good to round this off. A day that begins so early and is so full of commitments, can hardly end late. Around ten o'clock in the evening most are ready to hit the hay. At eleven o'clock lights go out. Thus a night of six hours rest is guaranteed. But it won't be much more than seven hours. The rhythm of the day certainly differs from that of college life in the Netherlands, also of that in Kampen.

The many time-consuming and attention-demanding activities of an undergraduate club hardly exist here. There would be no room for such in the tight study schedule of four years college and only three years Seminary (theology). A student newspaper does come out now. There are, I understand, a few clubs which keep themselves busy, among other things, with English literature and with modern religious trends. But that's about the extent of it. No initiation rites for the freshmen. No undergraduate meetings (neither regularly nor occasionally) and no debating sessions. Whatever extracurricular activities there are, they are usually conducted by the (senior) students of the College. The students of the Seminary have not only their tight

study schedule of three times two semesters, but on Sundays they also go out to help in the work of evangelization. Many of the churches here are not much more than evangelization groups (posts). Here there is plenty of opportunity for them to speak "an edifying word", as we call it. In this way they grow towards their work. The training is shorter, more intense, and much more practical in nature. There are advantages to this, but also disadvantages. But that is an entirely different story. And the time for this letter is almost gone. So I must close. This I want to add: the building of the new Seminary progresses by the day. It is a pleasure to see this, although at the same time I realize with some melancholy that the opening of the building will take place some time after our departure, in the beginning of April, the Lord willing. But both of us, my wife and I, can testify that thankfulness for the support from the Netherlands is very deep and sincere. Sometimes one becomes ashamed if one thinks that our contributions came from our abundance, and were given to a church community which really knows about poverty.

Hearty greetings from both of us.

J. KAMPHUIS

(Trans. Mrs. F. VanderBoom)

* Bruce F. Hunt, *For a Testimony*, London, 1966.

Preface to the Canons of Dort

The Canons of Dort, being the Five Articles against the Remonstrants or Judgment of the National Synod of the Reformed Churches of the United Netherlands, held in Dordrecht in the year 1618 and 1619 concerning the well-known Five Heads of Doctrine about which controversy has arisen in the Reformed Churches of these United Netherlands.

Among the very many consolations which our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has given to His Church Militant in this wretched pilgrimage, this is justly considered to be the most important one, which He left her when He was about to enter the heavenly sanctuary to go to the Father, saying, "I am with you always, to the close of the age." The truth of this kind promise is evident in the Church of all ages. For as she has been attacked from the beginning not only by the public force of enemies and the ungodly violence of heretics but also by the masked subtleties of seducers, truly, if the Lord had at any time denuded her of the salutary succour of His promised presence, she would long have been either oppressed by the force of tyrants or led to her ruin by the subtlety of deceivers. But the good Shepherd, who most steadfastly loves His flock, for which He gave His life, has always at the appropriate time and by His outstretched hand, often in a miraculous way, put down the raging of persecutors, and uncovered and destroyed the crooked ways and deceitful counsels of seducers; proving in both that He is truly present with His Church. Of this we have very clear proof in the histories of the godfearing Emperors, Kings, and Princes whom the Son of God raised up so oftentimes to the aid of His Church, kindled with holy zeal for His house, and by whose service He not only subdued the raging of tyrants, but also provided His Church, when she had to fight against false teachers, with means to healing, with holy Synods, in which faithful ministers of Christ, with combined prayers, counsel, and labour, placed themselves courageously in defence of the Church and truth of God over against the servants of Satan, even though these changed themselves into angels of light; and removed the seed of errors and of discord, preserved the Church in the concord of the pure religion, and conveyed the genuine religion inviolate to posterity.

With similar benefit our faithful Saviour proved His gracious presence in these times to the Church of the Netherlands, which was sore oppressed for some years. For this Church, having been delivered by God's mighty hand from the tyranny of the Romish Antichrist and the abominable idolatry of the Papacy, and having been saved so many a time in a miraculous way amidst the dangers of such a long war, and flourishing most marvellously in the concord of the true doctrine and discipline to the honour of God, to the wonderful growth of the commonwealth, and to the joy of the whole Reformed world, has been attacked, first secretly, then publicly, by Jacobus Arminius and his followers, bearing the name of Remonstrants, by means of various old as well as new errors and, being persistently disturbed by offensive disputes and schisms, having been brought into such grave peril that these thus flourishing Churches ultimately would have been consumed by a dreadful conflagration of discord and divisions, if not the compassion of our Saviour had interceded at the appropriate time. But praised be the Lord for ever who, after He had hidden His countenance for a moment from us (who in many ways had kindled His ire and wrath) proved before

the whole world that He does not forget His covenant or despise the sighing of His own. For when it seemed that according to human opinion there was to be had hardly any hope of restoration, He put it into the hearts of their Illustrious and High Mightinesses, the States General of the United Netherlands, that, with the advice and direction of the Illustrious Prince of Orange, they decided to meet these raging difficulties with legal means which have been generally well-known by the example of the Apostles themselves and of the Christian Church after them, and before this were also used with rich fruit in the Church of the Netherlands, and have by their authority convened a Synod at Dordrecht, out of all the Provinces of their territory, after previously having requested and, by the favour of the Great and Mighty King James, King of Great Britain, etc., and of Illustrious Princes, Illustrious Counts, and mighty Republics, having obtained many excellent theological men in order that by the joint judgment of so many theologians of the Reformed Church the teachings of Arminius and his followers might be considered maturely in a so renowned Synod and be judged from God's Word alone, the true doctrine be confirmed, the false doctrine rejected, and by God's blessing unity, peace, and tranquillity be restored to the Netherlands Churches. It is because of this blessing of God that the Netherlands Churches rejoice and humbly acknowledge and gratefully praise the faithful mercies of their Saviour.

This reverend Synod (after prior general fasting and prayer, called and conducted by authority of the High Magistrates in all the Netherlands Churches in order to deprecate God's wrath and to obtain His gracious assistance) gathered within Dordrecht, kindled in love to God and the well-being of the Church and, after calling upon God's Name, bound by a holy oath to judge only after the rule of Holy Scripture, and in the examination and judgment of this matter to act with a good conscience, has laboured most diligently and with great forbearance to move the main advocates of these teachings, summoned to appear before it, that they would fully explain their sentiments regarding the well-known five Heads of doctrine along with the arguments for them. However, when they rejected the judgments of the Synod and refused to answer to the points in question in a manner that was equitable, and, further, when no admonitions of the Synod, nor resolutions of the Well-born Noble Deputed States of the States General, yea when even the injunctions of their Illustrious and High Mightinesses the States General did not make any progress with them, the Synod was compelled to follow another course, by instruction of their High Mightinesses and in harmony with the customs of ancient Synods; and the examination of the aforesaid five heads of doctrine was taken in hand out of the writings, confessions, and declarations, partly issued beforehand, partly delivered unto this Synod. Now that this, by the special grace of God has been completed with very great zeal, faithfulness, conscientiousness, and concord of all and everyone, this Synod has decided to the honour of God, to the preservation of the uprightness of the saving truth, the security of the consciences, the peace and well-being of the Netherlands Churches, to pronounce openly and proclaim to everyone the following judgment (in which the true sentiment which is in harmony with the Word of God regarding the five aforesaid heads of doctrine is declared and the false sentiment which conflicts with God's Word is rejected).

(vO, trans.)



Country Walks

At this time of year when the bright hues of field and woods have faded and when on sunny days the sun gleams through the branches of the leafless trees it is rather a melancholy pleasure to take a ramble. The sound we hear is in harmony with the surroundings: the moan of the wind shaking the damp branches and twigs, the harsh sounds of birds like crows, blue jays, gulls and woodpeckers, and dark, threatening clouds on the horizon telling us of coming snow.

The few asters still in bloom in a sheltered gully tend to increase our melancholy as it seems such a few days ago that thousands of them were in full bloom and dotted the fields and valleys of Fletchers creek.

It is at this time that we notice beauty of a different kind. While taking note of these changes of the season, we can't help but marvel at the care with which God provides for the preservation of His Creation during the coming winter.

Seeing the frozen tangle of jewelweeds, killed by the very first night frost, we know that their seeds were hunted for by the many species of migrating birds this past fall and that the seeds which were overlooked will diligently be searched for by native sparrows and juncos in the months to come. And we also know that enough of the oil containing seeds will be overlooked to start another delicate batch of their kind again next spring. How many of us have observed the wildflowers after they have completed their cycle without realizing the important function they perform during the season of ice and snow when their tops barely protrude above the snowdrifts? Many of these wildflowers are known to us all. Who doesn't know the burdocks, the stickfasts, wild asters, evening primroses, mullein, or goldenrods? One of the best known is the milkweed.

This beautiful wild flower is, as its name implies, considered a weed, but anybody who has smelled its flowers and has observed how many insects, especially bees, are attracted by its nectar, will agree that it should have a more fitting name. As many of us know probably, the Monarch butterfly depends on this plant most of all. It is on the fresh young leaves of this plant that they deposit their eggs on their return from California each spring.

It is at the time when the last Monarch butterflies have emerged from their cocoons in the fall and are congregating for their long, treacherous journey south that the first seed pods of the milkweeds are ripe and start to split. It is then that on sunny fall days we see the stately plumed seeds make their unhurried journey over the fields and roads, some of them even entering our kitchens and cars.

As the seedpods do not open all the way at first and other seedpods on the same plant are slower to ripen, the process of distributing the seeds is a lengthy one, one that could last till spring.

Unlike the seeds of, for instance, the dandelion, whose seeds, by one gust of wind could be all carried off together, the milkweed seeds, like scales on a fish overlap one another. They have to wait their turn. As temperature and the varying degrees of humidity also have their influence on how far the seedpods open up, this takes weeks. This slow



Black-capped Chickadee

dispersion of seeds benefits the milkweeds as due to the continual change in wind direction the seeds are borne during storms, breezes and gales to every direction. As milkweeds flourish on sand as well as clay or peat, in vacant city lots, roadsides or fields, their seeds will in most cases always find a spot to grow, unlike the cattail, whose minute seeds are distributed almost the same way but which in order to flourish must land on moist spots, like lake or pond sides, marshes or ditches.

What always strikes me as the most remarkable fact is that all these perennial wildflowers, long after they have formed a new set of fleshy roots for next year's growth, still perform their duty by having the old stalk remain erect, thus giving the seeds the opportunity to scatter and to increase their kind.

At a time when the only birds we see are the sparrows or chickadees foraging in our backyard, it is gratifying to note that every month has its characteristics in nature around us, all associated with the beauty and bounty of their respective seasons.

COR TENHAGE

*For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him
should not perish,
but have everlasting life.*

*For God sent not his Son
into the world to condemn the world;
but that the world through him
might be saved.*

John 3:16, 17

Press Release

of the CLASSIS of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Alberta and Manitoba, held September 16-19, 1975, in Edmonton.

On behalf of the convening Church at Carman Rev. J. Geertsema called the meeting to order. He read Philippians 2:1-18, Psalm 25:6, 7 was sung, and he led in prayer.

He welcomed the delegates and reported that all the Churches were represented by two delegates with proper credentials. The Church at Neerlandia was represented by one delegate who was not an officebearer. Having heard the reasons it was decided to accept this brother as delegate. The Church at Edmonton had an instruction to ask advice in a matter of discipline.

Classis was constituted now with the following officers serving: Rev. J. Visscher, chairman; Rev. R.F. Boersema, clerk; Rev. D. DeJong, vice-chairman.

Rev. Visscher welcomed all members of Classis, the many visitors, the Deputies ad Art. 49 C.O. Rev. J. Mulder and Rev. M. VanBeveren, and expressed gratitude for the presence of Cand. S. DeBruin who accepted the call to the Church at Winnipeg. He expressed the hope that the result of the examination would be favourable for him and for the Church at Winnipeg. He also mentioned that the Church at Neerlandia extended several calls which were declined, and expressed the hope that also this vacancy will be filled. He wished the Rev. Geertsema wisdom in considering the call by the Church at New Westminster for Mission work in Brazil. Further, mention was made of the 25-years celebrations by several Churches in the oldest Classis of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

The Agenda was adopted after addition of the instruction of the Church at Edmonton and a letter of the convening Church for the Regional Synod.

It was decided that during this session there would be no smoking.

The documents concerning the call of Cand. S. DeBruin were found in good order; except that one of two attestations which should have been present was not there. The Churches were reminded by the chairman of ecclesiastical regulations in this matter.

Cand. DeBruin read his sermon-proposal on Galatians 5:13-15.

Classis, having heard this sermon, decided with the favourable advice of Deputies of the Regional Synod to proceed with the examination. Rev. Boersema examined O.T. exegesis of Psalm 1, 32 and 117, Rev. Visscher N.T. exegesis on Revelation 1 and 2, and asked on Deaconology. Rev. DeJong

examined on Knowledge of the Bible, Church History, and Church Polity, Rev. J. Geertsema on Doctrine and Creeds, and Ethics. Also other members of Classis asked questions.

After this, Classis decided with gratitude and with the favourable advice of the Deputies ad Art. 49 C.O., to admit Br. S. DeBruin to the Ministry of the Word and of the Sacraments in the Canadian Reformed Churches. Br. DeBruin signed the Form of Subscription according to Art. 53 C.O., after which Psalm 134:3 was sung.

Classis took note of the Report of the Church at Edmonton about Auditing the books of the Treasurer which were found in good order; also of the report of the Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry, approving of the work of this Committee.

Report of the Committee for Needy Churches was taken note of and the work of the Committee approved; Classis accepted the proposal to decide: "to continue to support the Church at Calgary until the next Classis in 1976 with the amount pledged so far, so that the Church at Calgary has the means to raise the honorarium of her minister, and to look into this matter again at the above-mentioned Classis".

An interim-report of the Committee to investigate the matter of Training Officebearers is taken note of; the timelimit of reporting is extended to next Classis.

The Churches at Barrhead and Neerlandia asked for continuation of preaching-arrangements. The following schedule was adopted: October 5: Rev. D. DeJong - 2x Barrhead, 1x Neerlandia; November 2: Rev. J. Visscher - 1x Barrhead, 2x Neerlandia; November 30: Rev. R.F. Boersema - 2x Barrhead, 1x Neerlandia; December 28: Rev. D. DeJong - 1x Barrhead, 2x Neerlandia; January 25: Rev. J. Visscher - 2x Barrhead, 1x Neerlandia; February 22: Rev. R.F. Boersema - 1x Barrhead, 2x Neerlandia; March 21: Rev. D. DeJong - 2x Barrhead, 1x Neerlandia; April 18: Rev. J. Visscher - 1x Barrhead, 2x Neerlandia. On the Sundays before and after next Classis: Rev. J. Geertsema and Rev. S. DeBruin.

Question-Period ad Art. 41 C.O. is held. The Church at Winnipeg asked a question concerning the Classical Regulations, and was referred to the Church Order.

The Church at Edmonton, in closed session, asked and received advice in a matter of discipline.

Letters of appeal against an advice of the previous classis as well as against decisions of the Consistory of the Church at Edmonton were dealt with in closed

session, since they dealt with matters of discipline. The requests were not granted.

Classis took note of a letter of the Church at Edmonton, convening Church for the next Regional Synod, that it intends to call this Synod together on December 2, 1975 in Edmonton.

As Convening Church for the next Classis the Church at Coaldale is appointed. Date: Tuesday, March 16, 1976, at 8 p.m. Place: Edmonton. Suggested officers: Rev. J. Geertsema, chairman; Rev. J. Visscher, clerk; Rev. R.F. Boersema, vice-chairman.

The Treasurer, the Archivist, the Deputies ad examina and the examiners, the Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry, the Committee for Needy Churches, were reappointed. As delegates to the forthcoming Regional Synod were appointed:

Ministers:

Rev. R.F. Boersema, Rev. D. DeJong, Rev. J. Visscher. Alternates: Rev. J. Geertsema, br. G. Kuik, br. W. VanAssen (in that order).

Elders:

G. Veenendaal (alternate D. Teitsma), A. Lubbers (alternate C. Bos), C. Bosch (alternate D. DeRuiter).

Rev. J. Geertsema will represent Classis at the ordination of Cand. S. DeBruin in Winnipeg.

Personal Question period was held. Censure according to Art. 43 C.O. appeared not to be necessary.

It was decided that the officers would take care of the Acts and the Press Release.

On Friday-morning at 5 minutes to 6 o'clock the chairman closed the Classis, after he led in thanksgiving prayer and prayed the Lord for His blessing over the decisions taken.

On behalf of Classis,
D. DEJONG,
Vice-chairman e.t.



Church News

Called: REV. JAMES VISSCHER
of Coaldale, Alta., is called by the Church of Hamilton, Ont.

Called: REV. J. GEERTSEMA
of Carman, Man., is called by the Church of Neerlandia, Alta.

The new address of the Deacons of the Canadian Reformed Church at Smithville is:

D. BOS
R.R. 3, Young Street,
Smithville, Ontario L0R 2A0

Press Release

of the Regional Synod Ontario of The Canadian Reformed Churches, held at Toronto on Thursday, November 13, 1975.

On behalf of the convening Church, the Bethel Canadian Reformed Church at Toronto, the Rev. D. VanderBoom opened the meeting. Psalm 132:8, 9 was sung. From Scripture I Corinthians 12:4-27 was read. Then the LORD was prayed for His blessing.

The delegates were welcomed. After which the credentials were examined. Both Classes were duly represented.

The moderamen were: the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, chairman; the Rev. C. Stam, clerk; the Rev. G. van Rongen, assessor.

The agenda was adopted.

The Church at Burlington-West made the following proposal:

that (a) Regional Synods be convened on an annual basis. (b) A specific month be chosen in which time period

synod would be held. Grounds: - Article 47 of the Church Order. - To avoid incidents as described in Article No. 6 of the Acts of Regional Synod of Smithville 1974. - To come back to an unresolved matter as described in Article 7 of the aforementioned acts. - The belief that this may serve the general well-being of the Church Federation.

Regional Synod decided not to adopt the proposal of the Church at Burlington-West, (a) that Regional Synods be held annually; (b) to chose a specific month in which Regional Synods be held. Grounds: - the Churches have already agreed in Article 47 Church Order to convene Regional Synods annually. - the Churches have already agreed in Article 47 Church Order to leave the time of the convening of the Regional Synods at the discretion of the convening Churches. Burlington-West has not given valid reasons why Regional Synods should be held in a specific month.

Synod, having taken notice of their report, expressed its appreciation for the work done by the Committee appointed by Regional Synod Ontario 1974, Article 5 of the Acts, "in connection with the revision of two laws which affect the position of the

Churches and the worldly possessions".

There was no activity on the side of deputies ad Article 49 Church Order.

Br. John Schuller was reappointed as Treasurer of Regional Synod.

Further appointments made were:

The Church of Hamilton to examine the books of the Treasurer. The Church of Toronto for the Archives of Regional Synod. The Church of Brampton to check the Archives. Deputies ad Article 49 Church Order; the Revs. C. Oly and W.W.J. VanOene; alternate the Rev. D. VanderBoom; for Classis Ontario-South: the Revs. P. Kingma and G. van Rongen; alternate the Rev. M.C. Werkman; for Classis Ontario-North.

The Church of Watford was appointed as the convening Church of the next Regional Synod.

The Acts of Regional Synod were read and adopted. The Press Release was read and approved. After the singing of Psalm 135:1, 9 the Regional Synod was closed with prayer in which the chairman led.

On behalf of Synod:

R. VAN RONGEN, e.t. assessor.



Doxology

Rev. 1:5-7



1. All praise to Him Who loves us
And freed us by His blood,
To be a holy kingdom
Of priests to serve our God.
2. Behold, He comes in glory.
On clouds He will appear,
And everyone who pierced Him
Will tremble then in fear.
3. To Him, Who rules forever,
Be praise eternally,
All honour, thanks, and glory.
Amen! So let it be!

S. VANDERPLOEG

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our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Christmas is so special, isn't it?

Why all the special things at Christmas?


"Oh that's easy," you say. "We remember that the Lord Jesus was born. And He was a Special Baby!"

And He was, of course. He looked like other babies, but His Father was God, not an earthly father. And He was special because of His special WORK. God gave Him to the world to save His people from their sins. He was God's Gift to the world. That's why we can always be happy and thankful at Christmas, but also every day of the year.

A joyous and blessed Christmas to you all, Busy Beavers, and to your families, too.

Let's have our Christmas story in poem this time!

CHRISTMAS



Christmas is a birthday
Of our Saviour Jesus Christ
Who was born in a manger
On a lonely Christmas night.
When the cattle were lowing
This little baby boy was born.
His name is Jesus Christ
Our Saviour, King, and Lord.

by Busy Beaver *Lorraine Heres*

The Bible tells us
That so very long ago
God's only Son was born,
In human flesh so low.
He had to come that way
To die for all our sins,
And go to heaven again,
To make for us a home.

by Busy Beaver *Brenda Beukema*

Thank you for sharing, Brenda and Lorraine!



From the Mailbox

Hello *Brenda Beukema*. It was nice to hear from you again! Thank you for your letter. It must have taken you a while to do all those things! And I'm sure the Busy Beavers will enjoy them. Write again soon, Brenda!

Thank you for your letter too, *Diane Beukema*. I'm glad I could get your, and your sister's letters anyway! Are you looking forward to your holidays, Diane? Bye for now. Hope to hear from you again soon!

Here is another poem for you by Busy Beaver, *Jenny*

Bosscher. Thank you, Jenny! And I hope the feeling you wrote about is shared by all the Busy Beavers.

At Night in Bed

At night in bed, so snug and warm,
I'm happy as can be,
Because this very day, today,
The LORD has been with me.

He's been with me in all my work
In Science, Math, and Art.
He's been with me in everything,
With Him I will not part!



A B C BIBLE QUIZ

If you look carefully you will find that parts of this quiz come from the Christmas story!

A is for _____, the father of Cain.

B is a town where the Christ child came. _____

C is for _____, God's Promised Land.

D killed a giant with a slingshot in hand. _____

E is for _____, the mother of all.

F is a man who trembled before Paul. _____

G learned God's will by the fleece and the dew. _____

H is a king, and a wicked one too. _____

I is for Abraham and Sarah's son. _____

J betrayed Jesus, the Holy One. _____

K disobeyed and the earth opened wide. _____

L was a beggar who went to heaven when he died. _____

M received the tables of law from God. _____

N in the ark was safe all through the flood. _____

O is the slave who to Rome ran away. _____

P saw a vision on the Damascus way. _____

Q came to Solomon, bringing him treasure. _____

R is the wife Jacob loved without measure. _____

S in the temple was serving the Lord. _____

T from a child had learned the holy Word. _____

U a wierd animal with just one horn is seen. _____

V disobeyed and could no longer be queen. _____

W is for _____ who followed the star.

X we will omit - it is too hard by far.

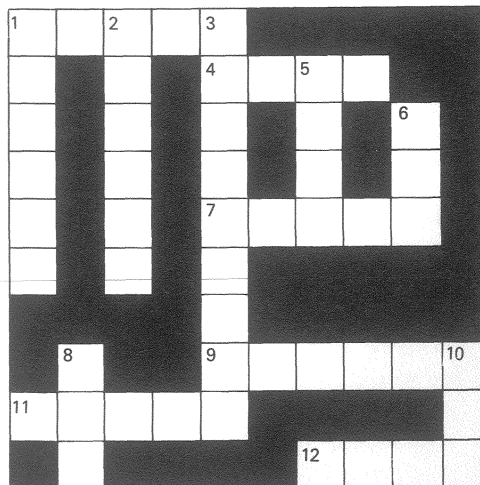
Y is for _____, and Christ loves _____ and me.

Z a short man, climbed a sycamore tree. _____

Now our A B C puzzle is through;

From A to Z how many could you do?

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

1. Mary's son
4. God is _____
7. Joseph and Mary were _____ when Jesus was born.
9. Joseph was one of _____ descendants
11. The _____ son is holy
12. a young child

Down

1. Jesus' earthly father
2. Jesus was born in a _____
3. people who take care of sheep
5. something that gives light
6. People went to Bethlehem to _____ their taxes.
8. Jesus was God's _____
10. What did the angels _____ to the shepherds?

Thanks for sending us this puzzle, Busy Beaver *Peter Van Assen!*

Now, put your thinking caps on! Here are lots of SCRAMBLED WORDS for you to unscramble, thanks to Busy Beavers *Bonita Stikma, Diane Beukema, and Brenda Beukema.*

Can you unscramble them all?

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. sraCea gtsuAuus | 10. oerdH | 19. nanA |
| 2. wlddigsan shotcel | 11. emehlhtBe | 20. niSeom |
| 3. rats | 12. abstel | 21. ingings |
| 4. perhdshes | 13. ayrM | 22. orgly |
| 5. gamern | 14. oeJpsh | 23. sdeilihl |
| 6. eceap | 15. eisw nem | 24. epesh |
| 7. narkicnsnfee | 16. albierG | 25. aiovSur |
| 8. gelsan | 17. maelnleum | |
| 9. rymrh | 18. ahEesbtill | |

One last quiz by Busy Beaver *Debbie Knol.* Thank you, Debbie!

- | | |
|---------|--|
| S _____ | the very first king who ruled Israel |
| A _____ | David's son who tried to be king and took Hushai's advice rather than that of Ahithophel |
| V _____ | Ahasuerus' first queen |
| I _____ | a prophet who prophesied the coming of Christ |
| O _____ | Naomi's daughter-in-law |
| U _____ | Bathsheba's first husband killed in the in the war by a plot of David |
| R _____ | Boaz' wife and Naomi's daughter-in-law |

Answers: A B C Quiz

A - Adam, B - Bethlehem, C - Canaan, D - David, E - Eve, F - Felix, G - Gideon, H - Herod, I - Isaac, J - Judas, K - Korah, L - Lazarus, M - Moses, N - Noah, O - Onesimus, P - Paul, Q - Queen of Sheba, R - Rachel, S - Samuel, T - Timothy, U - Unicorn, V - Vashti, W - Wisemen, Y - You, Z - Zachaeus

Christmas Crossword Puzzle

Across - 1. Jesus 4. holy 7. happy 9. David's 11. Lord's 12. baby Down - 1. Joseph 2. stable 3. shepherds 5. lamp 6. pay 8. son 10. say

Scrambled Words

1. Caesar Augustus 2. swaddling clothes 3. star 4. shepherds 5. manger 6. peace 7. frankincense 8. angels 9. myrrh 10. Herod 11. Bethlehem 12. stable

13. Mary 14. Joseph 15. wise men 16. Gabriel 17. Immanuel 18. Elisabeth 19. Anna 20. Simeon 21. singing 22. glory 23. hillside 24. sheep 25. Saviour

Saviour Quiz

S - Saul A - Absalom V - Vashti I - Isaiah O - Orpah U - Uriah R - Ruth

Dear Busy Beavers, I do hope you enjoyed the Christmas issue of Our Little Magazine. I hope it helps make your holiday a happy one!

And now we have come to the end of the year. Did you do lots of exciting things? Or did you just have fun doing every-day things? Did you have some real adventures? Or a very, very special day? Let's have a story-writing CONTEST and take for our topic "My best day in 1975." Here's hoping I get a whole big pile of stories really soon!

Till next year, Busy Beavers!

With love from your Aunt Betty

Little Children

*Little Children, can you tell?
Do you know the story well,
Every girl and every boy,
Why the angels sing for joy
On the Christmas morning?*

*Yes, we know the story well;
Listen now, and hear us tell,
Every girl and every boy,
Why the angels sing for joy
On the Christmas morning!*

*Christ, the Babe, on Christmas day,
Cradled in a manger lay,
Born on earth our Lord to be;
This the wondering angels see
On the Christmas morning!*

Long Ago

*Long ago the glorious Christmas star
Guided wisemen from afar
To the little town of Bethlehem,
To the Saviour of all men.*

*Over hill, across the desert sand,
Slowly t'ward the Holy Land,
With them precious loving gifts they bring,
Asking for the new-born King.*

*When they saw the Child they all rejoiced,
Worshipped Him with tender voice,
Bowing low, presented gifts of love
To the Christ-child from above.*

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