

He made Him who
knew no sin to be sin
on our behalf, that
we might become the
righteousness of
God in Him.

II CORINTHIANS 5:21 (NASB)

Christ and Scripture:

Incarnation and Inscripturation

The Catholic Church commemorates the birth of her Lord and Saviour and renews her glorious confession: "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God . . . who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man."

The Church celebrates Christmas both in the freedom of her Christian life and in the continuous struggle to maintain her Christian faith. At the end of the year 1977 our thoughts, as far as this struggle for the truth is concerned, are immediately directed to what Harold Lindsell called *The Battle for the Bible*. In this twentieth century one of the central attacks of Satan on the congregation of Christ Jesus is the assault on Holy Scripture. Therefore the topic for our "Christmas meditation" is *Christ and Scripture*. Because this title is still rather broad and leaves several possibilities open, I added the subtitle "Incarnation and Inscripturation."

What is it all about?

Well, the words may be clear; those who use them mean: the Word became flesh and the Word became Scripture. Incarnation says that the Word became *flesh* and in-scripturation signifies that the Word became *Scripture*. Does it not sound like a convincing analogy, does it not seem to be a striking parallel and does this parallelism not invite us to search for deep speculations?

One may even find this parallel in *different* camps on the battlefield around the Bible. A few quotations are sufficient. Lindsell writes that the revelation of God has become inscripturated. "It has come down to us in written form. Thus there are two Words: the Word of God incarnate, Jesus Christ, and the Word of God written, the Bible . . . Just as Jesus had a human and a divine nature, one of which was truly human and the other truly divine, so the written Word of God is a product that bears the mark of what is truly human and truly divine" (pp. 30-31).

A completely different position on the battlefield is taken up by Dr. Allen Verhey whose ordination as minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church as under attack at Synod 1976 and 1977. In the May 1977 issue of *The Reformed Journal* he attacked the "inerrancy" doctrine of Lindsell. Nevertheless, he uses the same parallelism. The Bible is both the Word of God *and* the words of men. The conjunction of the divine and human has always been a difficult thing to be precise about, but in the case of the divine and human natures of Jesus of Nazareth the church finally contented itself at the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) by constructing four dikes against heresy. The conjunction of the divine and human must not confuse the two natures, transmute the one into the other, divide them into separate categories, or contrast them according to area or function.

Dr. Verhey now wants to point out "the relevance of Chalcedon to our confession that the Scriptures are both the Word of God and the words of men. That conjunction, too, must be made without confusing the two or transmuting the one into the other and without dividing them into separate categories or contrasting them according to area and function. Chalcedon's dikes against heresy here ought to prevent the floodwaters of both liberalism and fundamentalism. The error of liberalism has typically been to divide the two, and contrast the Word of God with the words of men found in Scripture. The error of fundamentalism has typically been to confuse the words of men and the Word of God or to transmute the one into the other."

Dr. Verhey then warns the Christian Reformed Church that, if the church takes Chalcedon seriously, it will not remain orthodox or Reformed by sustaining the appeal against his ordination: "There is indeed a heresy with swelling tide, but the heresy is the un-Chalcedonian suggestion that the conjunction 'and' in 'the Word of God and the words of men' signs an equivalence." The author promotes the Chalcedonian recognition that the Bible did not drop from heaven, that it is both the Word of God and the words of men, and that the words of men are — as always — limited, time-bound words. He concludes that if there is to be a "battle for the Bible," then it must also be waged against those who have not learned the lessons of Chalcedon.

Our readers possibly understand the remarkable position on the battlefield: Lindsell fights for the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture; he calls it the view that the Bible is free from error in the whole and in part. Verhey admits that the Bible states its case on history, but alleges "that it is quite unconcerned with minute circumstantial accuracy." Therefore he shoves the "inerrancy" doctrine of Lindsell and of his own opponents in the Christian Reformed Church aside as fundamentalistic; he even suggests that there is a heresy with swelling tide from the side of fundamentalism. But both, Lindsell and Verhey, undergird their positions with the analogy or parallel between the doctrine of Christ, the incarnate Word, and the doctrine of Scripture, "the inscripturated Word."

At the moment we are not interested in the arguments for or against the doctrine of inerrancy, although our place on the battlefield is over against Verhey. He puts Matthew over against the other gospels and asks: was there an earthquake or not at Easter? Then he puts this question out of bounds, for the Bible is, in his opinion, not concerned with the kind of history which some twentieth century "objective observer" would be interested in. Nevertheless, Dr. Verhey asserts that "Matthew's inclusion of an earthquake in proclaiming the discovery of the empty tomb is terribly significant." It shows the

apocalyptic interest of Matthew in the proclamation of the "death and resurrection of Christ." But is it possible to speak of an apocalyptic significance of something that has not really happened? Proclamation in Holy Scripture is always proclamation about *facts*. Although we are tempted to elaborate on other details of this controversy about the Bible, we return to our topic and ask: what do we have to think about the parallel between the incarnate Word and the inscripturated Word? May we stress an analogy between the Word made flesh and the Word made Scripture? May we reason on the basis of a parallelism and then speak about the "Chalcedonian recognition" that the Bible did not drop from heaven and that it is both the Word of God and the words of men?

I am aware of the fact that the usage of the analogy is widespread and has a long tradition. One can find it with such champions of the Reformed doctrine as Warfield, Kuyper and Bavinck. Nevertheless, I would venture to say that it is an unwarranted parallel; it obscures more than it illuminates; and especially the quotations from Dr. Verhey's defense and attack show that it can be used in an unScriptural and unReformed manner.

First of all, as far as I know, a parallel between incarnation and inscripturation is never found in Scripture itself. Sure, the Bible speaks about both. In contrast to those who only want to know about the contents of Scripture and who say that the Bible is not interested in "formal" matters, we must maintain that God also reveals something about His act of revealing and the product of it, therefore also about His revelation in Scripture. Holy Scripture speaks about itself and the doctrine of inspiration is part of the contents of the inspired Scriptures. One needs only to be reminded of the proclamation of the "God-breathedness" of Scripture in II Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired (God-breathed) by God . . ."

At the same time, Scripture is full of the mystery of our religion, the incarnation of the Logos (the Word of John 1): "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh . . ." (I Timothy 3:16). And neither can it be denied that there is an intimate connection between incarnation and inscripturation. Our Lord Jesus is the Christ of the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are the book of the Christ. The sacred writings are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, the apostle says in the same context (II Timothy 3:15).

Nowhere in the Bible, however, are incarnation and inscripturation paralleled. The salvation-fact of the incarnation is completely unique, "einmalig," once for all. The glory of "the Word became flesh," of His conception by the Holy Spirit, and of His birth from the virgin Mary, is unrepeatable. And because the Bible is silent about a parallel between incarnation and inscripturation, no creed or confession of the church mentions it, as far as I know. When Dr. Verhey writes about "the Chalcedonian recognition that the Bible did not drop from heaven," he gives the impression that the ecumenical council of Chalcedon itself has elaborated on an analogy which Chalcedon in reality knew nothing about and which is only the product of the speculation of theologians. Where Scripture and confessions are silent, should theologians not be careful?

Our following remark is this. Because the analogy is not found in the Bible itself, everyone can take his own course in his speculation. One of the most important questions concerns the subject of inscripturation. If you want to make a parallel between incarnation and inscripturation, who or what is then the subject? It is completely clear Who is the subject

of the incarnation. It is He Whom we confess in an awesome, grandiose manner as "the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made." But Who or what is the subject of what is called inscripturation? If one would speculate, — I speak in an unwise manner — then I would defend that, while incarnation has as its subject the Son of God, inscripturation would have as its subject the Holy Spirit. Do we not confess: "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life . . . who spoke by the prophets"? And is the Holy Spirit not promised to the disciples, exactly for their apostolic task as witnesses in preaching, teaching and also writing? (John 14-16). Does Paul not speak about his words as not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit? (II Corinthians 2:13). If there has to be speculation, one could easily defend the parallel: incarnation of God the Son — inscripturation of God the Holy Spirit. And shame upon speculative theologians: they *have* spoken of a self-humiliation of the Spirit, in His becoming Scripture; they have fantasied about Scripture as a form of servant of the Holy Spirit, yea, even about the formation of the canon as a crucifixion of the Spirit . . . Nevertheless, if one is to speculate about a parallel between incarnation and inscripturation, one could, in a trinitarian theology, think of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

But if we stay with the most familiar form of the parallel, the question still remains. Who or what is the subject of the inscripturation? The word of God? With a capital "W" or with a small "w?" "Word" or "word?" But the Word is the Logos, the Speaker of the Father, the Word Who was with God and Who was God. And the word is the word that proceeds from God's mouth. In the case of God's act of revelation after His act of creation, it is the word that He speaks to man. It is the word of God spoken to and through the prophet of whom the LORD said: "I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him" (Deuteronomy 18:18). It is the word of which Moses said that it is very near; "it is in your mouth and in your heart"; and of which Paul added: "that is, the word of faith which we preach" (Deuteronomy 30:14; Romans 10:8). But can one say that this word became inscriptured in a manner analogous to the Word or Logos (Speaker)? When God spoke the word through the prophets, did He not speak it already in human language?

It is remarkable that Dr. Verhey in his rendering of Chalcedon forgets what was the most important point: the *Subject*. He speaks in a generalizing manner about the conjunction of the divine and human as something which it is difficult to be precise about. "The conjunction . . . must not confuse the two natures, transmute the one into the other, divide them into separate categories, or contrast them according to area or function." But the Catholic Church of Christ did not make a theoretical statement about "the" conjunction of the divine and human! Chalcedon confessed the Blessed *Person* of the Mediator between God and man. *He* has assumed human nature. He remained Who *He* was: God; and He became what He was not: man. In His *Person* the divine and human nature are united in a manner that transcends human comprehension and human description. The Reformed confession has, in its defense of Chalcedon over against Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism, always stressed that in Christ the Godhead is *personally* united to the human nature (Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 48) and that by the conception the *person* of the Son is inseparably united and connected with the human nature; "so that there are not two Sons of God,

nor two persons, but two natures united in one single *person* . . ." (Belgic Confession, Article 19). Why did Dr. Verhey not even mention this stress on the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ? The Son of God is the Subject of the incarnation and our Lord Jesus Christ, the Person of our Mediator, is the subject Who possesses two natures: the divine and the human. In this important point about the Subject, the so-called parallel between incarnation and inscripturation becomes completely vague and unclear. How dangerous the parallelism is in the hands of Dr. Verhey is evident from the manner in which he writes about the Bible as both the Word of God *and* the words of men. The error of liberalism would have been to divide the two, and to contrast the Word of God with the words of men found in Scripture. The error of fundamentalism would have typically been to confuse the words of men

and the Word of God or to transmute the one into the other. To say it with the names of Church history in the days of Chalcedon: liberals would be followers of Nestorius and fundamentalists would be followers of Eutyches.

But is it true that we can make a parallel between the *divine* nature of Christ and the Word of *God* in Scripture on the one side, and Christ's *human* nature and the words of *men* in Scripture on the other side? Does the parallelism do justice to the miracle of "God-breathed" Scripture? Is prophecy not this — that God's words are put in human mouths? And is the witness of the Spirit not given in and through the witness of the apostles? "No prophecy ever came by the impulse of men, but men *moved* by the Holy Spirit *spoke* from God" and therefore "no prophecy of *Scripture* is a matter of one's own interpretation" (II Peter 1:20, 21). Does the construction of Dr. Verhey not lead to a dualism between the Word of God *and* the words of men? What does he mean, when he says that there is a heresy with swelling tide, namely the suggestion that the conjunction "and" in "the Word of God and the words of men" signs an equivalence? Does Paul not state "we impart this in *words* not taught by human wisdom but *taught by the Spirit*" (I Corinthians 2:13). And does he not thank God constantly for this — that "when you received the word of *God* which you heard from *us*, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of *God* which is at work in you believers" (I Thessalonians 2:13)?

The dualism in Verhey's construction becomes evident when he remarks that the words of men in Scripture are, and always, limited, time-bound words. So, in his opinion, Scripture in analogy to the divine nature of Christ is the Word of God and in analogy to Christ's human nature it is limited and time-bound. One is inclined to ask whether the human nature of Christ is not exalted today; how does Dr. Verhey bring the exultation into account with respect to the Scriptures that found their climax in the dispensation after Pentecost? What is his answer to those who, like Bavinck, compare the conception of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit and the conception of the Scriptures through the same Spirit as a conception without spot or blemish? What is his answer to those who like Warfield, Bavinck and Kuyper compare the *sinlessness* of the Lord Jesus and the *inerrancy* of Scripture? What is his answer to those who are accused of docetism in their doctrine of Scripture (docetism taught that the Lord Jesus only appeared to be human but in reality did not partake of our nature) and who remind their accusers of the fact that humans and sinful are to be distinguished?

Although I side with Warfield, Kuyper and Bavinck in the battle for the Bible against the liberalism and "ethical theology" of their days and modernism and neo-orthodoxy today, I do not defend their usage of the parallelism between incarnation and inscripturation. But they use it in the right way; the direction in which Dr. Verhey uses it weakens the Reformed doctrine. "God, from a special care which He has for us and our salvation, commanded His servants, the prophets and apostles, to commit His revealed word to writing. Therefore we call such writings (not: the Word of God *and* the words of men, but) holy and *divine* Scriptures" (Belgic Confession, Article 3).

The Word became flesh and authenticated Himself by the Scriptures. He said: It is the scriptures that bear witness to me (John 5:39). Honouring the Son of God Who became one of us, we listen to His words, the words of Scripture taught by His Spirit. The Scriptures speak of Christ, and He is the Christ of the Scriptures.

J. FABER

An old man stood in the Temple.
He had lived a long time.
He had waited a long time.
Today would he see that for which he
Had lived a long time?
Had waited a long time?

An eagerness throbbed in his breast.
A flame of hope burned stronger in his brain.
His trusting eyes searched the doorway.

Woman and children passed through the doorway.
Men and boys followed them in.
Old people, bent people,
passed through the doorway.
And many went out again.
Still those eyes searched the entrance.
Still the aged limbs stayed at their post.
Still that Voice that had kept him there
So many years,
Made him study the throng.

Then the Voice seemed to burst within him.
His legs moved not by his force
And carried him to a small group by the altar
And his mind knew his quest was at end.

With hands trembling with age and emotion
He took the Child, looked tenderly at its mother,
And said,
"I have seen Thy glory, Lord.
Now I will rest happy.
Thy promise has been fulfilled this day in Israel."

JULIE LINDHOUT

"LEFT-OVERS"

The world has the keen knack of building up tension until it is almost impossible to bear. Like the days before Christmas. These days are always filled with a high degree of expectancy, stimulated by the famous countdown . . . ten . . . nine . . . days before Christmas. There's a tension in the air of things to come, a feeling of surprise and merriment. The whole atmosphere of suspense is so beautifully captivated in the lines, " 'twas the night before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse"

But as it goes with build-ups, the real thing often does not measure up to the expectancy. The preparations usually surpass the feast itself. The bubble of excitement already bursts in the early morning hours under the deceptive glow of the Christmas tree. There still is some eating and drinking and visiting. But the empty wallets are like unto the un-filled hearts. And the inevitable night shrouds the festivities.

What is left over? Well, we still have Boxing Day. A day on which many are hung over, and others fruitlessly hang on to the fleeting feeling of Christmas. A last visit, a final drink, and another Christmas has come and gone.

As a child I never understood the meaning of the name, Boxing Day. For some odd reason I associated this day with left jabs and right hooks, with the art of professionally beating someone to a pulp. Kind of appropriate, really, for after the temporary "peace" of Christmas, people quickly come out fighting . . . Christmas ceasefires are usually introductory to intensified shelling. Just ask the vets of Vietnam.

Later I learned that Boxing Day indicates an old (British) custom, prominent among the rich, to give Christmas "boxes" to the servants and to others, like the mailman, who have been extraordinarily busy because of the Christmas season. After all, it is Christmas, and even the servants must share in "the feeling" of being appreciated. At least once a year they may receive a token of recognition. On the day after Christmas, to be sure. The day of the left-overs.

First things first? First the family and the relatives, and then the servants and the poor? Left-over goodies for left-over people? Because all — even the lowly — must partake in the goodwill of men! You may con-

Circumspection . . .

veniently forget someone on Christmas Day, because on Boxing Day you still receive the grand opportunity to show your benevolence to those left over.

Something tells me that the order is not exactly correct here. I remember, the heavenly choirs of angels first went to the shepherds of Ephrathah. To the ones who were not reckoned with at all, the barbarians, the uncouth, the uncivilized. The left-overs of Israel. The shepherds lived at the outer fringe of a highly cultured society. But they did stand in the center of God's Christmas attention. In God's Book, the left-overs are first served.

Do we, perhaps, touch on one of the essentials of Christmas? It is a feast after God's order, not styled after the priorities of man. Those who feel enlightened in themselves, do not need the Light of the world, but "the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light" (Matthew 4:16).

Those who are rich in themselves cannot appreciate the riches of redemption in Jesus Christ. On Christmas Day, the Lord seeks those who have been passed by and are left over. We have made the un-lawful separation. With the Lord, Christmas is Boxing Day. The day of God's immense gift of love and life to the poor and lowly of His heritage.

On Christmas Day, Jesus Christ — Who was rich — became poor, so that we — who were poor — might become rich in Him. The Son of God became a servant unto men, so that servants of Satan might become servants of God. First things first? Bethlehem above Jerusalem. Shepherds before Scribes.

Christmas means that the Lord saves the lame, and gathers the outcasts, changing their shame into praise and renown in all the earth (Zechariah 3:19). Yes, the Gospel also went to the healthy and the wealthy. But that was later, on our Boxing Day. Christmas Day was for the left-overs, the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek and the hungry, who were pure in heart.

The celebration of Christmas must make us joyously humble. Our God did not pass us by or leave us over. He gave us a firm footing in the history of redemption. A place at the eleventh hour, so that we would esteem others higher than ourselves. Because He first called the shepherds from beyond the bleachers of Bethlehem to a front row seat at the manger.

You see, also at Christmas, the first will be last. And the last will be first.

Cid



"But Who Do You Say That I Am"

At the time when we remember the birth of the Saviour this question of the Lord Christ stands before us in its great significance for Christian doctrine and life. The confession of Peter in an answer which was "not revealed to him by flesh and blood, but by the Father in heaven" has been indicated by the Lord Himself as the foundation of His Church. This answer is directly connected with the gospel of Christ's Incarnation.

In our modern world the validity of creedal or doctrinal statements is often approached from the direction "Is it relevant?" rather than from the direction "Is it the Truth?" The question: "Is such a statement a clear expression of all that the Scriptures teach?" is exchanged for the question: "What is the relevance of scriptural data in the life of man?"

In spite of the fact that the word "relevant" is frequently used in a strange way, we cannot neglect the point especially when it comes to the gospel of the "Two Natures of Christ," God and Man in one Person, which is undoubtedly found in this confession of the disciples. It becomes more and more the experience of faithful believers, not the least among a younger generation, to find themselves asking questions about what they have been taught and are being taught to believe. They do not doubt in the strict sense, but they are faced with the question not whether their beliefs are true, but whether it makes any difference one way or the other.

This question is highly important when we come to the remembrance of the coming of the Saviour of the world. An answer must be given to the question whether it matters in the actual business of living that I believe in One Who was God and Man in the same Person, or "simply" believe in Jesus Who was sent into the world by His Father because He so loved the world that He sent His Son (John 3:16). Why is it so important to listen to and to read about elaborate arguments in the discussions around the Incarnation? Why should we try to make it intelligible that God was incarnate in Christ? Is it really necessary to know all this for a happy life of members of Christ and of His Church?

If such questioning becomes more widespread, and there are indications that such is the case, it suggests that there is a need to learn "how to give account of what we believe."

On the other hand it must be admitted that these questions are real and reasonable; they cannot be stopped by quoting a few decisions of Councils in the early centuries of the history of the Church or by repeating a series of doctrinal statements from our Confessions. There must be something behind all the debates and arguments about the Two Natures of Christ. Strange as it may sound, the questions which are being asked in our days of the "Why — and — Wherefore of

the Incarnation and of its bearing on actual human need . . . are very similar to those that were continually being asked and debated by the divines in the Patristic age and through the Middle Ages." To this we may add that the same questions were in the minds of the members of the National Synod of Dort (1618-1619) when they had to deal with the Arminian errors and adopted the Canons.

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During the centuries many points were debated and even hypothetical questions were asked, some of which were definitely speculative and unreal. But the question how the Incarnation affects salvation and the life of man is crucial and calls for an answer if we really want to understand what we are doing when we, with the Church of all times and places remember how the Word Who was God became Man.

The Heidelberg Catechism asks at many decisive points summarized in Answer 59: "But how does it help you when you believe all this?" *All this* stands for the Gospel as it is summarized in the articles of our undoubted Christian faith and as it is also expressed in the Nicene Creed: "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made . . . who was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made Man . . ."

In this confession, together with other statements of doctrine we see how it has always been of the essence of Christian orthodoxy to confess Christ as wholly human as well as wholly divine. Since the earliest times the Church has resolutely contended for the full humanity and for the full Deity of the Saviour in all the controversies that arose.

The struggle began in 318 A.D. in the great Arian controversy. He maintained that the Son was not God but the first creature of the Father. He wrote: "There was a time that he was not." He is called "God" but He was not really God. At the Synod of Alexandria, Arius was excommunicated. Shortly thereafter, in 325 A.D., the great Council of Nicea refuted the teachings of Arius officially with other errors that had been propagated. Although this Council did not adopt the Nicene Creed, this confession is an accurate formulation of its decisions.

A little more than one hundred years later the Christian Church was disturbed again by the heresies of Nestorius and Eutychus. It may suffice to mention their error in a very brief form. Nestorius separated the two natures; Eutychus confused them. According to the latter there was a "third nature" which resulted in a God-Man.

The Fourth Ecumenical Council held in 451 A.D. at Chalcedon refuted their teachings and adopted the statement that the two natures of Christ are: not mixed, not changed, not divided and not separated.

This might sound, 1500 years later, quite dull and utterly unimportant. But when we attempt to translate it into simple language it may come alive.

It comes down to this that the doctrine of "the Son of God who assumed the human nature" does not mean that Jesus was not a man but a God. The New Testament witness shows clearly that He was made Man. Moreover, Christianity has never taught that Jesus was "a God." There is no such entity as "a" God. There is only One God. Nor does Christianity teach that Jesus was some kind of an intermediary being, neither God nor man but something in between. Such a mythical kind of being is familiar in ancient pagan religion and Arianism is more pagan than Christian. Nevertheless, the God-Man idea seems to be creeping into the theological

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The Fourth Ecumenical Council held in 451 A.D. at Chalcedon refuted their teachings and adopted the statement that the two natures of Christ are: not mixed, not changed, not divided and not separated.

This might sound, 1500 years later, quite dull and utterly unimportant. But when we attempt to translate it into simple language it may come alive.

It comes down to this that the doctrine of "the Son of God who assumed the human nature" does not mean that Jesus was not a man but a God. The New Testament witness shows clearly that He was made Man. Moreover, Christianity has never taught that Jesus was "a God." There is no such entity as "a" God. There is only One God. Nor does Christianity teach that Jesus was some kind of an intermediary being, neither God nor man but something in between. Such a mythical kind of being is familiar in ancient pagan religion, and Arianism is more pagan than Christian. Nevertheless, the God-Man idea seems to be creeping into the theological

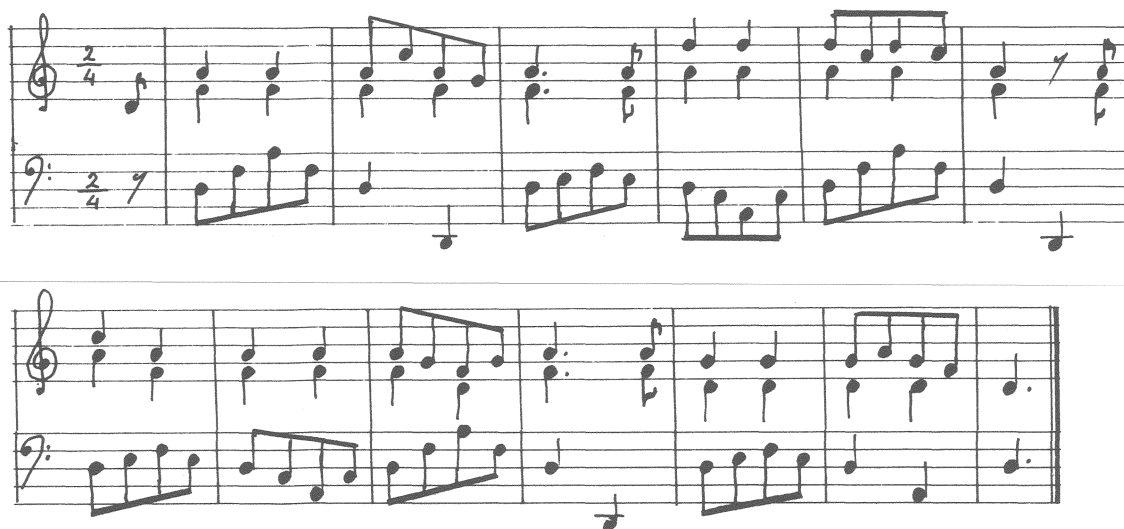
thinking of many modern scholars. The entire matter of "substitution" or "representation" of Christ Who became man to save His people from sins, as it is discussed in Dr. H. Wiersinga's doctoral dissertation, is closely related to this confession of the Christian Church. "Het nieuwe van Jezus ligt niet in de 'menselijke' gestalte (waarmee de 'goddelijke natuur' zich verbindt) als zodanig. Het nieuwe ligt evenmin in de . . . gekonstrueerde noodzaak van de 'twee naturen' voor de twee rollen" (van Christus als God en als Mens).²

In the summary which is added to the dissertation we read: "The relation between Christ and men, or the world can . . . be best described as 'representation.' In Christ the new man is present, without him being a 'substitute' for us or an 'exchange' being involved in the strict sense."³

Incarnation does not mean that Jesus was simply God or the eternal Son of God inhabiting a human body. This would mean that he was not truly human, but that it was a case of God having a "human experience," or taking on a disguise.

This is also more like pagan theophany (the appearance of a god in human form) than scriptural Incarnation. For then we could draw a line between the divine and the human element, so that each was limited by the other. We confess that Jesus is God and Man in one Person, not separated, without boundaries. Further, we do not confess that Jesus began by being a man and grew into divinity. This is another idea that emerged and which is known as Adoptionism. It is found in a new dress even in our present days when people consider the salvation of each individual as his being changed into the

The Wise Men



1. The wise men from the East
Came to Jerusalem.
They asked, "Where is the new-born King?
We've come to worship Him."
2. King Herod was upset
When he was told the news.
He called together in his house
The leaders of the Jews.
3. "Where will this Christ be born?"
King Herod said to them.
The scribes searched in their books and found
That it was Bethlehem.

4. The wise men travelled on.
A star showed them the way
To Bethlehem and to the house
Wherein the Christ Child lay.
5. In worship they knelt down
And as an offering,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense
They gave to Christ the King.

Music and words
Copyright S. VanderPloeg - 1976

divine nature. Scripture, however, teaches that the Christ is the "natural" Son of God and that we are children of God by adoption.

But what then? Do we believe that God changed into man? Is that what "And was made Man" means? That the Son of God was transformed into a human being? Such an idea bristles with errors. This would again be more pagan than Christian. Incarnation has nothing in common with the metamorphosis of mythology. The Deity and humanity of Christ are not successive stages.

To those who know the Confession as being based upon Scripture, these misrepresentations are elementary and their refutation, as taught by history, is obvious. However, this critique of old heresies has its own uses even today. It has happened before that by over-simplification of the doctrines of the Church or by disregarding them, a switch is made to ancient heresies.

* * * * *

Now some people may think and even say that it is a vain and even "conceited" undertaking to penetrate into such a great mystery. And when one considers the facts, the Councils have done their utmost not to undertake such a "vain" work. The Church has enshrined the mystery without explaining it, without even trying to explain. Perhaps that is the reason why these Councils expressed themselves in negative statements, e.g., "not separated." By the Councils' rejection of errors, the mystery which scholars tried to explain was protected. And so the Creeds became "signposts against all heresies" (Athanasius).

God *and* Man! Is the meaning of this "*and*" the "incomprehensible act by which the Word became flesh," as Dr. K. Barth writes?⁴ The Incarnation is indeed beyond our comprehension and yet Scripture gives us the task to endeavour to understand what is revealed to us.

One of the late Bishops of Canterbury once remarked that "if any man says that he understands the relation of the Deity to the humanity of Christ, he only makes it clear that he does not understand at all what is meant by Incarnation."⁵ However, it is not so that the Incarnation is a mystery as a solitary exception among the revealed facts in the history of salvation. It is closely and inseparably connected with all other revealed truths which can only be received in childlike faith. The word "mystery" cannot be used as an "asylum for ignorance."

On the other hand, it must be admitted that God's revelation about Himself and His Son cannot be comprehended in any categories of our finite thought and turned into a common-sense philosophy. But God can be known, as we confess in Article II of the Belgic Confession, from His Holy and Divine Word, in which He addresses us and to which we respond. This does not mean that "God is a Being that may properly only be addressed, not expressed."⁶ We may not be able to express adequately what Incarnation is, but the LORD has made Himself known to us "as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to His glory and our salvation" (Belgic Confession, Article II). His revelation also refers to the mystery of Incarnation. Article VII of the same Confession continues: "The whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in Scripture at large," while Article X ends with the words that Jesus Christ "... is that true, eternal and almighty God whom we invoke, worship and serve."

The very act of worship involves the use of words and thoughts about God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit which are taken from the Word of God. The mystery may not

be expressed in words without contradiction *as far as human logic is concerned*; there may be tension between the descriptions which we make, but a humble listening to what Holy Writ says will not leave us in the dark concerning the question: "Who do you say that I am?" That question is as timely as it was in the days of the first disciples.

* * * * *

The claims made by the Lord Jesus Himself, directly as well as indirectly, are astounding in their implications. He declared His Sonship, with God as His Father which was understood as an assertion of equality with God (John 5:18). This equality was clearly maintained (John 10:30) and Christ regarded the honour due to God as due to Himself (John 5:22, 23).

We find the Lord making assertions concerning His Deity all through the gospels. To confess His name is to be blessed by Him, and to be accepted by His Father in heaven (Matthew 10:32, 33); He identified the word and will of God with His own word and will (Luke 6:46-49, Matthew 7:21-29). When they asked Him whether He was the Son of God, the Son of the Blessed He did not hesitate to give an answer (Luke 22:70, Mark 14:61). At the same time Holy Scripture indicates clearly that He was the Son of Man, born of a virgin, of her flesh and blood, being the True Seed of David (Heidelberg Catechism, Answers 35 and 49).

The early Church, as the Acts of Christ through His Apostles show, centered its teaching upon the Person of Christ. From the first there was a doctrine of Christ (Acts 5:28), even more so than a doctrine of what He had taught. Christ is nowhere presented as a founder of a new religion, but as the Word Incarnate, the Lamb of God, the Suffering Servant, the Prince of Life and the Triumphant Redeemer at the right hand of God.

It is the great documentation, found in Scripture, of the mystery of Bethlehem, that the Son of God, co-eternal with the Father assumed our nature to become our Highpriest "not taking the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12).

From our knowledge of the human life on earth of our Lord Jesus we are inevitably led back to His divine origin on which the meaning of Incarnation depends. "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son," and He Who was born of a woman, born under the Law, lived as He did because He was the Son of God.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." This verse from the gospel according to John deals with the relation between the temporal and the eternal, the relation of the Incarnation to its heavenly antecedents.

In accepting the clear sayings of Scripture we are able to answer the question: "Who do you say that I am?" The answer is: The Messiah, the Promised of the Fathers, the Seed of the woman. The answer, *at the same time* can be: Immanuel, God with us. They are answers from Holy Writ and they are "relevant." The relevance now being and becoming the confession: My Lord and ... my God!

¹ D.M. Baillie, "God was in Christ," p. 158.

² H. Wiersinga, "De Verzoening in de Theologische Diskussie," p. 128.

³ A.W. p. 206.

⁴ K. Barth, "Kirchliche Dogmatik" i, ii, 150 and 176.

⁵ W. Temple, "Christus Veritas," p. 139.

⁶ Martin Buber, "I and Thou," pp. 80ff.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

In Free Flowing Rhythm.

Re-arrangement by Dennis Teitsma.

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee,
O Israel.

2. O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.

Refrain.

3. O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell the people save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

Refrain.

4. O come, thou Day-spring from on high
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

Refrain.

5. O come, thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

Refrain.

*Latin antiphons, 12th Cent., Latin Hymn, 1710.
Translated by John Mason Neale, 1851.*

*Ancient plain song, 13th Cent.
Adapted by Thomas Helmore, 1856.*



*Delegates of General Synod, Coaldale, 1977: Front row (left to right): Rev. J. Geertsema (second clerk), Rev. M. Van Beveren (vice-chairman), Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene (chairman), Rev. J. Mulder (first clerk).
Second row (left to right): J.G. Feenstra, C. Walinga, Rev. W. Huizinga, H.A. Berends, C. Van Seters, Rev. S. De Bruin, Rev. C. Olij.
Third row: (left to right): B.J. Harsevoort, W.H. Bredenhof, J. De Vos, Rev. D. DeJong, Rev. J. Visscher, J. Bol.*

Now we go to something else.

The Church at Edmonton, as mentioned above, came with the request to declare that the Synod Toronto 1974 decided on insufficient ground to discontinue the Committee on Contact with the Christian Reformed Church. If Synod should come to the same conclusion as Edmonton, then, it was requested, a Committee should be appointed by Synod 1977. That to-be-appointed Committee was then to apologize to the Christian Reformed Church for the fact that the previous Committee had been discontinued for insufficient reasons, and should speak in face-to-face contact with representatives of the Christian Reformed Church and explain our objections to the change of rules for correspondence by the Christian Reformed Church, and thus try to remove all obstacles which may exist to real unity.

The advisory Committee came with a lengthy report on that request of Edmonton's, but the Synod was of the opinion that the Committee should go through it again and should make the report clearer, should re-formulate certain parts, and come again with a revised edition.

It happens more often that a Committee comes with a report but that the whole matter is to be reviewed by the Committee after extensive discussion by Synod.

That has its great advantages.

Is it not the experience of all of us that, if one tries to formulate a proposal in a hurry, while the discussions are going

on, a decision may be taken of which we have to say later on, "It was not formulated correctly," or "It did not cover every aspect"?

A hastily formulated proposal may save time, it is also possible that it causes the next Synod to become twice as long-sitting because of defects found in the decision of its predecessor. Then it is better to have another discussion within an advisory Committee.

Once again it proved to be a wise move to send the report back to the Committee for further discussion and clarification. The result was that the revised report, its conclusions, considerations, and recommendations were adopted unanimously.

We do not have the custom that we record in the Acts how many voted in favour of a certain proposal and how many were against. That is irrelevant to a certain extent, for when a decision has been made, it is a decision of Synod, and then we should not start figuring out how much support the decision had. Let me say that in this case, however, I should like to mention the unanimity. Discussions are fruitful when we show a willingness to listen to each other and when we are prepared to weigh one another's arguments. That is being done at this Synod, I can assure you.

In the beginning of a Synod the members have to get used to one another, even though they may have known each other for many years. You never learn to know one bet-

ter than when you have to work with him. Here we are working together, sometimes as sixteen men together, sometimes in the smaller number of four when the Committees prepare their reports.

Once you are used to working together within such a small group, things go much better. And I may say that things are going well at this Synod. That will cause the membership much joy, and I am happy that I'm able to tell you this.

During the discussion about Edmonton's letter, the "Appeal" which was sent to the whole Christian Reformed Church was also a topic for discussion. Generally speaking, there was praise for the work that was done, but there was also some criticism.

In the first place it was remarked that the "Appeal" lacked a "heading," a first line in which the addressees were "greeted." Should there not have been something like "Esteemed Brothers"?

The difficulty was that the addressees were: The Synod, the Consistories, the Members of the Christian Reformed Church. You cannot address them as "brothers," for the female members are also included. If you should say, "Brothers and Sisters," this would not fit a Synod or a Consistory. Thus we just mentioned the addressees, and started right away.

In the second place it was said that a covering letter should have accompanied the "Appeal." Yes, that would indeed have been better, but it was not done and there is little we can do about it right now.

Another part of the agenda that was dealt with was what we usually called here the "Communication Gap." It isn't all that serious, but then we knew what we meant. The Committee that reported on it called it officially "Information Flow."

On the agenda of Synod we find a letter from the Ebenezer Church Burlington, in which a mild complaint is uttered.

One of the Churches sent a proposal regarding admission requirements for the Theological College. I shall not speak about that proposal, for it has not yet been dealt with by Synod. Personally I doubt whether admission requirements are an ecclesiastical matter and whether a Synod should decide about that. I think that it is more a matter for the Faculty with the Board of Governors. Churches should set standards for admission to the ecclesiastical examinations, but I doubt very much that an ecclesiastical assembly should set the standards for admission to an institute for learning. We'll see what Synod says.

No one can deny that the Faculty of the College is very much involved and that it is something which they should have a say in, when proposals are made to change the requirements for admission.

But what happened?

No one apparently bothered to even inform the Faculty officially of the proposal.

Of course, the brethren knew about it, for they do read Church bulletins and they are no strangers in Jerusalem. But having heard of a proposal and having read about it does not yet give one the right to address himself to General Synod, making known his opinions about the matter itself.

The Faculty certainly would not mingle in this affair; yet it concerned them most of all.

The Ebenezer Burlington Consistory requested Synod to urge the Churches that have any proposal regarding the Constitution of the College (and the requirements for admission are mentioned in the Constitution) to send a copy to the Board of Governors and to the Faculty or the Board of

Trustees when those bodies are involved in the matter.

Synod acceded to that request and decided accordingly.

It is already a matter of common courtesy when one informs the person whom a proposal concerns of the proposal and its contents. Too bad that a synodical decision is needed to urge the Churches to show that courtesy! Let's not forget that in the future.

Let's have a word about those admission requirements.

Even from before the day when our College was opened discussions have been going on about the question what the admission requirements should be. In other words: What should be the level of education reached by people who wish to be admitted to the theological studies?

The first steps on the road of training for the ministry were taken by the Synod 1962. As requirements for admission to the studies the Bachelor of Arts degree was adopted by that Synod, and it has remained a condition ever since. There are exceptions. If one has an equivalent degree admission can also be obtained. Those who are over thirty years of age can be admitted without having obtained that degree, but they will have to submit to an admission exam, the requirements of which, however, are not allowed to exceed those for the Bachelor of Arts degree.

Synod 1974 had to deal with a proposal by one of the Churches to do away with that requirement and to have, instead, a preparatory training of two or three years at the Theological College.

That Synod denied the proposal and request and adduced as ground for that, among others, that "Not the Churches are called to provide training from childhood to become acquainted with the Holy Scriptures but the parents." Therein a hint was given in the same direction which was followed by the Synod 1977.

Again we had a request from two Churches to drop the requirement of the B.A. degree as a condition for admission to the College.

Personally I doubt very much that a Synod can deal with those things over and over again. Sometimes you get proposals from Churches regarding points which were decided upon by previous synods without that Church trying even to prove the arguments of previous Synods wrong. Sometimes a matter is just proposed again as if never anything had been decided about it. And I think that the maintenance of the Church Order also includes that we maintain the article in which it says that instructions shall not be written before the Acts of previous major assemblies have been scanned, to see whether there is already a decision about that particular point.

Synod 1977 had to deal with proposals from two Churches regarding that requirement of a Bachelor of Arts degree. Synod decided to keep it as a requirement for admission to our College.

In the proposals mentioned above the suggestion was included to have a two or three year course established at our College which course was then to bring the prospective theological students to the required level of knowledge.

It is quite easy to make such a proposal; it is even easier to think that our present Faculty would be able to find the time to teach such additional courses, assuming even that they would feel capable of doing that. If such courses were to be organized, we certainly would have to appoint at least two more permanent (non-theological) professors, and even then we would have to seek help with others who could take a large part of the load upon their shoulders on a part-time basis. Such a two- or three-year course is not something

which you just add to the normal work-load. It is not a task which you could fulfil as a sort of after-thought, as an appendix to the main calling. It would amount to setting up a complete, though limited in outreach, liberal arts college.

And there came the objection which Synod 1977 adduced as a ground for its refusal to go into that direction: it is not the task of the Churches to provide for such instruction as may prepare students so that they can meet the standards of admission set for our Theological College.

I said that this argument was in the same vein as one of Synod 1974's arguments: education is not the task of the Church, but the task of the parents.

We all agree that it is the task of the Church to provide the theological training necessary for those who wish to enter the ministry of the Word. "By the Church, for the Church" (Voor de Kerk, door de Kerk), that is an adage which has been heard for many, many years.

Thus we all set our shoulders under our theological college and surround it with our love and loving care.

But a liberal arts college? Under whatever name it may be presented, it is not the obligation of the Churches.

During the discussion the situation in The Netherlands was mentioned. At the turn of the century there was a so-called "vooropleiding," ("pre-training"), which officially belonged to the Theological School, as it was then called. However, that "pre-training" was soon separated from the School of the Churches and was made into an independent Reformed High School. Yours truly had the privilege of attending it.

After the Liberation our Netherlands sister-Churches again had to do with that so-called "voor-opleiding," but the situation has returned to normal (as far as we know, at least).

It does not belong to the task of the Churches to provide instruction which may lead to such a level that the requirements for admission to our Theological College can be met. That is the task of the parents. It is the task of the student himself to see to it that he reaches such a level that he can be admitted. The Churches have no calling here, no authority.

* * *

There is in this whole "debate" about the B.A. requirement an element which I do not understand. Or perhaps I do understand it, but if I do understand it, I reject it totally.

I shall not claim that the instruction at the secular universities is so trustworthy and that there are no dangers which threaten our young men and young women who study there. On the contrary, the dangers are many and they come in a subtle form.

But is it more dangerous for our young men who wish to study theology than it is for our young men and women who wish to become a lawyer or a medical doctor or a nurse or a High School teacher in chemistry or to whom the Lord has given special gifts in the field of biology?

Either we have to tell all our young people that they should not go to university because that is "too dangerous" for them (and how do people who did not attend university know that so precisely?) or there is no reason why we should say specifically of those who wish to become a minister of the Gospel that they should be exempt from fulfilling the requirement of having obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree.

I am afraid that, basically, behind that whole aversion against the B.A. degree requirement there is a sort of nature-grace scheme which should have no place in our thinking.

Meanwhile I hope that this point has now been settled. Two consecutive Synods have dealt with the issue. There must be extremely good reasons if it is brought to the fore

again. If no new arguments and aspects are adduced, coming Synods should refuse to deal with similar proposals. And the Churches should not "keep nagging" in the hope that one day they can get things their way. That is put very bluntly, I know, but it is precisely that which our forefathers endeavoured to prevent when they said that the Acts of previous major assemblies should be studied before the instructions were written.

* * *

Let's go to something else.

A matter which will interest our readers greatly is the question, "What did Synod decide about the contact with others? What about the contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, to mention that?"

We had proposals from two Churches to establish a fraternal relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Synod decided to offer to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church a temporary relationship called "ecclesiastical contact." Further Synod appointed a committee with the mandate to be diligent by means of continued discussions to use the contact for the purpose of reaching full correspondence.

Our contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is already "old."

We have to go back all the way to Synod 1962, fifteen years ago.

At Synod 1962 a proposal from Regional Synod Ontario 1961 was dealt with. It was a proposal to take up contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Synod 1962 did not accede to the request of Ontario. The reason why Synod 1962 did not comply with the request was that "the taking up contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as meant in the relevant proposal of the Regional Synod 1961, can only then be recognized as the calling of Synod if it has been established to Synod that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is a community which has returned to the true service of the Lord," and the minor assemblies have not adduced sufficient proof for that.

Synod 1965 apparently did receive sufficient proof to enter into closer contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. A Committee was appointed, and we find reports with the Acts of 1968, 1971, 1974. Extensive discussion took place and the differences in confession and in church government were not swept under the rug: they were discussed openly and frankly.

Can such discussion go on without end? Or should we at one moment or another come to a preliminary conclusion? There are differences in confession and in Church government between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Canadian Reformed Churches. However, Synod was faced with the question: "Can we say that those differences are of such a nature that we are not allowed to recognize The Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ?"

In an extensive reply to our Committee, the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations, stated, among others, the following: "Our experience with you in previous discussion leads us to believe that while you are not altogether convinced that we are identical in doctrine and polity, you are much less convinced that we are nothing more than a sect of the false church."

This very same letter contained also the following passage: "Our errors and failures may be such as to prevent you from entering into a relation of correspondence with us as you have conceived of this relation traditionally. Yet we would ask whether you are really prepared to say of us, on

the other hand, in terms of our witness over nearly forty years and our current testimony in our nation and in the world: that we ascribe more power and authority to ourselves and to our ordinances than to the Word of God, and will not submit ourselves to the yoke of Christ; that we do not administer the sacraments as appointed by Christ in His Word, but add to them and take from them; that we rely more upon men than upon Christ; and that we persecute those who live holily according to the Word of God."

Synod 1977 answered that question.

It decided: "with thankfulness to recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession."

It says in our Confession that the true and false Churches are *easily* distinguished. We have been having discussions with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church now for some twelve years. Synod 1977 was of the opinion that after twelve years of discussions and investigations a pronouncement as the one made was certainly justified.

The above decision does not mean that now all of a sudden all differences have disappeared or are being ignored. On the contrary: Synod continued the Committee for discussions with representatives of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Synod declared that "a sister-Church relationship with The Orthodox Presbyterian Church according to the adopted rules for correspondence cannot be reached at this time." Thus our contact committee is to continue discussions and, possibly, to remove obstacles.

We do not have committees just to meet and talk. When we appoint a committee such as the one mentioned here, it is our purpose that eventual unity shall be brought about and shall spring forth from the discussions. Christ's Churches, Synod declared, "may only entertain contact with others in

such a way that it is directed towards and eventually may result in the unity of the true faith."

If it appears that such a unity cannot be reached, contact should be broken off.

If, on the other hand, it appears that in the search for such unity a certain point has been reached, that should be acknowledged.

That's what Synod 1977 did.

Since we are dealing with contact with others anyway, let's have a look at our relation with Churches abroad.

Not much can be said about that relation except that it was good. Our Committee on Correspondence conducted a lively correspondence with the foreign sister Churches and could report good things about them. Regret was expressed about the fact that no representative of The Netherlands Churches was present at our Synod. In 1974 the Rev. S.S. Crossen was present; this time no one was sent. Too bad. It was decided to have the Canadian Reformed Churches represented at the broadest assemblies of our foreign sister Churches if and when an invitation is received and — when it is feasible. It would be a costly undertaking to have one of our Committee members attend the broadest assembly in Australia! We do not begrudge them a nice trip and a visit to far-away countries, but it must be justified to spend so much. We cannot say that our Committee over-spends. When, e.g. Dr. J. Faber was to visit The Netherlands anyway, he was requested to also represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at the General Synod of The Netherlands Churches. That did not put any financial burden on the Churches here.

Part of the report of the Committee on Correspondence dealt with the Presbyterian Church in Korea, Koryu-Pa. The

Let Your Light Shine Before Men



Music by Dennis Teitsma

JACOB CATS, 1577-1660
Translation: R. Pigot (1860)

Anxious, tempest-tossed and weary,
To the seaman's gladdened sight,
'Mid the night-storm, what so cheery
As the gleaming beacon's light?

Though the wild waves wilder threaten,
Calmer now, he steers his way
To the long-desired haven,
Guided by its friendly ray.

Like unto that beacon, truly,
He of upright heart and mind,
Holding high his light should show the
Heavenward way to all mankind.

Christian! lift your light on high then,
Let it shine o'er all, and show
In this darksome world to all men
How and where that men should go.

Rev. D. De Jong recently visited Korea and also had discussions with the office-bearers and members of the Korean Presbyterian Church. A transcript of his report to our Committee was added to the documents which were available at Synod.

As a result of the Committee's investigations and the Rev. De Jong's report, Synod decided to refrain at the present time from entering into correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in Korea. The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad was charged with the task of continuing and trying to intensify the contact with that Presbyterian Church and to submit a report to the next Synod.

So much about correspondence.

* * * * *

Let's turn our attention to the Bible Translations.

For some years now we have had a committee on the Revised Standard Version. And once again we received a report which did not come with any evidence of unscriptural influences in the Revised Standard Version. Surely, there is criticism on the translation of certain texts, but there will never be a translation which is perfect.

The committee, appointed by Synod 1974 recommended therefore that the Churches be left the freedom to use the R.S.V. and to terminate the existence of the Committee. Yet it was recommended that another committee be appointed to keep studying the R.S.V. so that incorrect translations might be brought to the attention of the R.S.V. Bible Committee which, in the past, has proved that it is willing to listen to criticism and to make necessary corrections.

From a few Churches proposals were received to appoint a committee with the mandate to study the New American Standard Bible and the New International Version. Of the latter only the New Testament is ready, and that would be a partial job, so to speak.

Since we should always be on the lookout for the best possible translation, so as to serve the Churches best, there is nothing against studying other translations. I doubt, however, whether we should have all sorts of study committees. The danger is not imaginary that such committees lead in the long run to a synodically regulated Church life, and for that we should watch out. Besides, much of the task would rest upon the shoulders of just a few who could become overburdened.

This last Synod looked for men who might be able to serve the Churches in this respect and for men and women who are knowledgeable in this field. Thus the Faculty of our College received quite a load in the form of appointments to committees which are to prepare matters for the next Synod. There is one advantage: the matters which have been entrusted to them in combination with some others are mostly matters which are within their specific field of study. That makes it a little easier on them.

Some Churches were of the opinion that in our Confessional and Liturgical Forms all quotations from Scripture should be taken from the Revised Standard Version. Others were of the opinion that the King James Version should be used. Again others sought a solution in a different direction.

If Synod should have decided that all quotations should be taken from the R.S.V., then the Churches would have been bound to the R.S.V., be it indirectly. That applies, of course, to every translation.

On the other hand, it is clear that we should not print a definite Book of Praise without having considered which translation of Scripture shall be used in our Forms.

How long are we to wait for a decision regarding a translation? We cannot expect a decision before 1983. Besides, if

things continue to go the way they have been going, a new translation may appear at the horizon which, according to some, is *the* translation to be used by the Churches; and another study-committee may be appointed which will not be ready with a final verdict within six years. There you go!

We did, however, mention the decision that all the reports which deal with any part of our Book of Praise have to be ready within two years from this coming January 31st.

That has its consequences also for the question which translation of Holy Writ to use.

Synod decided to appoint a committee to examine the texts from Scripture which are quoted in our Confessional and Liturgical Forms, and to see to it that they are given in a correct and up-to-date translation.

That may mean that the committee decides in some instances to take the translation as found in the R.S.V., in other cases they may take a translation from the N.A.S.B., while in again other instances they may give their "own" translation without resorting to any existing translation.

In this manner it is prevented that the Churches are bound indirectly to a certain translation while, on the other hand, a trustworthy translation is obtained so that we do not have to change our Forms again after a few years.

* * * * *

That affects also the Heidelberg Catechism.

Within a few years, we have received two different draft translations of that Confessional Form. Synod 1977 combined the two committees (or what's left of them) and charged that combined committee with the task of providing a definite draft, which should be available in booklet-form by November 1978, one year hence.

In this manner the Churches will be able to use it and to test it by their use. Thus remarks can be made and sent to the Committee which then can still submit its final report about the matter before the deadline of January 31, 1980. And so it can be included in the definite edition of the Book of Praise.

* * * * *

We have to come to a close.

The Press Release of Synod will appear shortly, too, I presume, and then you can read something which has been approved officially, by the "moderamen."

It will not be long before you will receive the Acts either. Already during Synod, the Rev. Mulder sent part of the copy away so that work on it could start right away.

From the above report, however, you will have learned a thing or two.

I have done my best not to ascribe to Synod what was my own conviction in the matters we dealt with, and I think that I have made it clear where I gave my own arguments.

For a good and well-founded opinion about Synod's decisions you will have to wait till you have received the Acts and have *studied* them. Superficial reading and glancing through them won't be of any benefit.

* * * * *

One more thing.

In the past Churches and Church members were asked to send Synod whatever communication they have on *letter-size* paper.

Again we received some documents on legal size paper, foolscap.

Bear it in mind: uniformity facilitates the work.

* * * * *

Thank you for your attention.

v0

Letters to the Editor

To whom it may concern:

It is with regret that I write the following. This is directly addressed to our ministers, who have attended the previous General Synod.

An invitation was extended to them by the consistory, to have one of the ministers delegated to the General Synod, to preach in Edmonton, seeing that Rev. De Jong also attended the General Synod. Apparently none of the ministers (delegates) deemed it necessary to accept this invitation extended to them by the consistory of Edmonton.

Is it not pitiful that elders who have a busy schedule already, in a big congregation, have to prepare themselves to read a sermon (although nothing is wrong with it), while ministers are so close at hand?

We as churches in Alberta are more like isolated from the rest of Canada, and the opportunity to hear a different minister is very seldom. This problem does not exist to that extent in Ontario and British Columbia. I know that the churches in Calgary, Barrhead, and Neerlandia had the opportunity to hear ministers who were willing to help those congregations . . . but why not Edmonton? Several reasons or excuses can be given, but is it not a practice that wherever a General Synod is held, the neighbouring churches profit from it, to hear a different minister?

Personally, I am very disappointed and I hope and pray that ministers who are attending the General Synods in the future, give this serious consideration.

Yours in Christ,
P. DOORTEN
Edmonton, Alberta

1. Synod met from 9:00 a.m. till 9:30 p.m., with breaks for lunch and supper. On Saturdays Synod met from 9:00 a.m. till 12:30 p.m. On Mondays we started at 10:00 a.m.
2. The total hours per week spent in official meetings was 47½ hours. Oftentimes during the lunch- and supper-breaks work was done on finishing or multiplying reports.
3. We were in Coaldale two Sundays: November 13 and November 20.
4. We were told that Edmonton had a minister for November 13 (Rev. Cl. Stam).

5. The only Sunday left was Sunday, November 20.
6. Edmonton was 350 miles away which, even by plane, takes a few hours altogether. A minister would almost have to come back Sunday evening if he wished to be on time for the start of the Monday morning meeting, if he wished to have some sleep at all, that is.
7. Considering all the above, is it fair to write as br. Doorten does?
8. Are ministers the only ones who do not have a right to at least one day off??

vO

Dear Editor:

I would like to comment on the decision taken by the editorial committee to start a "special corner and column for our sisters" (see *Clarion* Vol. 26, No. 22, p. 450).

I am in favour of any changes or additions to *Clarion* in order to make it more beneficial and attractive to its readers. However, I fail to see how this will be accomplished by a feature such as you have described.

Any interested housewife, who wants to improve her cooking or sewing skills, can do so in a number of ways (using books or enrolling in an evening course for example). I strongly feel you would be misusing valuable space in your paper, should you decide to follow through with this idea.

Instead, I *do* feel that there is a need for a column specifically addressing itself to parents and grandparents. The world bombards us with advice on how to bring up our children. We would be foolish to think that among us there is no room for improvement in this respect. Most conscientious parents, struggling with their own shortcomings, know that bringing up children in the fear of the Lord, is not an easy task. Therefore what we need is Reformed advice for parents to assist them in obediently fulfilling their God-given task as Husband/Wife/Parent.

I would like to see this column set up along rather informal lines, where in addition to the articles, parents would be encouraged to share their problems and/or solutions, so that in this manner we can be of help to each other.

Of course, anyone contributing should have the privilege of remaining anonymous.

If you still want to specifically address yourself to the women of our Churches may I suggest topics along the following lines:

1. What is a Christian Housewife?
2. Women's Lib — are we also affected by it?
3. The Marriage Form — What did we promise.
4. Discipline.
5. How to tell your children about God.
6. How to prepare your child for school.
7. Do you talk with your children?

Although these articles would primarily address the women, I'm sure that also the men would benefit from reading them.

In conclusion, if you want to help the women in the Church in their task as wives and mothers, do give us something that the world cannot offer us.

May God grant you all that is needed to continue your work.

IRENE SPITHOFF



Address change for clerk of Edmonton:
c/o Mr. A. Harke
12824 - 120 Avenue,
Edmonton, Alberta T5L 2R1

Declined: REV. Cl. STAM
of Burlington, Ontario to Edmonton,
Alberta.

Address change for clerk of London:
John Heyink
325 Southdale Road East,
London, Ontario N6E 1A2

FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of *Clarion* contains 76 pages and was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on December 9, 1977.

1977 In Retrospect

Since last year's author of the annual review of our church life is out of the country at the moment, the undersigned has been asked — on very short notice — to produce a review of this year that is almost passed. Almost! For at the time of writing this we are still in the month of November although that is almost over too. In other words: no one should expect a year review that mentions everything in its right order, much less one that is complete. At this point I would like to make the suggestion to have the annual review not in the Christmas issue but in the first or second issue after that. The way it is being done now does not quite serve its purpose. For we cannot cover a whole year. Everybody will agree that some things could happen during the month of December that will seriously affect our church life. Why then not wait and give the readers a chance to read a complete review?

PREACHING

The most important thing during 1977 was, of course, the preaching of the Word of God from our pulpits by which we as members are built up in our faith, strengthened and encouraged for our regular daily task in life. That is the fountain from which we draw the energy for life. Preaching implies that there are preachers. During 1977 the oldest of our ministers, Rev. A.B. Roukema, celebrated the 40th anniversary of his ministry. He also reached his 70th birthday on December 1st. We congratulate him and wish him prosperity in the future. Our third oldest minister, Rev. G. Van Dooren, retired from his active ministry in Burlington-East. We also wish him the strength of the Lord to continue in much pastoral work in "his" congregation as long as they are still vacant and also as a lecturer at our Theological College. Dr. J. Faber celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ministry as well as his 25th wedding anniversary. We hope that the Lord will grant him many fruitful years at our College. Rev. G. van Rongen left us for The Netherlands early in January. He has been an asset to our churches and we know that the sister churches over there will benefit from his work. That left the church of Grand Rapids vacant. But the first call they extended was accepted, by Rev. P. Kingma of Smithville in the early spring. However, it is very difficult to "immigrate" to the USA and it has taken longer than anyone expected for Rev. Kingma and his family to get the necessary approvals and permits, etc., to cross the border. By the time you will read this, he hopes to be there or almost! Rev. Van Oene declined the calls to Neerlandia, Burlington-East and Smithers. Rev. J. Visscher declined the calls to Burlington-East, Guelph and Smithers but accepted the call to Cloverdale, B.C. Rev. D. De Jong accepted the call to Calgary and will preach his farewell sermon in Edmonton on December 4th. Rev. C. Van Dam declined the call to Chilliwack. Rev. R.F. Boersema did the same but accepted the call to New Westminster as a missionary to replace Rev. C. Van Spronsen, who is able to consider a call as of January 1st and will return to Canada from Brazil in July. Rev. D. Vander Boom left Toronto and settled in the new congregation of Langley, B.C. Rev. J. Mulder declined the call to London but accepted a call to Toronto. Rev. M. Van Beveren declined the calls to Guelph and Smithers.

Candidate E.J. Tiggelaar declined the calls to London, Guelph, and Smithers but accepted the call to Chilliwack. He will be Chilliwack's first minister. Rev. Cl. Stam was called to the church of Edmonton but declined this call. The church at Coaldale called Rev. J.D. Wielenga of Albany, Australia and the church at Neerlandia also called a minister from Australia: Rev. K. Bruning of Armadale.

VACANT PULPITS?

Fortunately no pulpit will be vacant in our churches even in vacant churches. Some ministers still write sermons for the sermon series under the editorship of Toronto's pastor. I have an idea that more sermons were sent in this year than ever before. Some sermons I have sent in quite some time ago, have not been published yet and I find this encouraging! For there must be quite a choice of available sermons for publication. At least I hope that is the way it is. We have elders in the churches who read a sermon during a worship service in which there is no minister available. We should be thankful for that. However, as far as the church's own pastor is concerned, the pulpit is still vacant. Both in Ontario and in the West there are (or will be soon) six vacancies each, which makes a total of twelve vacancies!

Do we ever remember these churches in our prayers (in the worship services)? The office-bearers there have an extra load to carry not only in reading sermons but also in all the other work which normally a minister does.

FROM CLASSROOM TO PULPIT

At the moment five students are preparing themselves at the College for the ministry of the Word. In 1977 students H. Versteeg and E.J. Tiggelaar graduated from our College. Brother Versteeg was called by the church at Toronto as its missionary to replace Rev. H. Knigge and was ordained as such. Brother Tiggelaar hopes to be ordained as the minister of Chilliwack soon. Both brothers are to be congratulated. They were both married and the burden they took upon themselves must at times have been heavy, although the outcome was rewarding. In 1978 there is no student to graduate. If I am not mistaken that will be the first year that we will have a "College Evening" without a formal graduation. That will then probably also be the first year our professors, lecturers and Governors will not wear their academic garb. Hopefully the speeches to be delivered will be as simple. It would be too bad if more and more people would stop attending because the speeches are too academic for them. Now we will have a regular "Schooldag" for the people and it should be treated as such. None of our professors or lecturers had to interrupt his work by illness or otherwise as far as I know. We should be thankful for that too. They even find time to do something extra. Prof. Ohmann gave a few lectures in the Fraser Valley during the summer months for the benefit of our teachers there. Prof. Faber is giving some lectures for anyone interested. These evening courses are free! So there is no excuse not to benefit from the work of our College. In more than one way it is a college by the people and for the people!

CHURCH BUILDING

Brampton has discussed plans to "relocate" their place of worship. Carman has talked about building a new and bigger church one of these days. Their present building has served them for these last 20 years but is a bit cramped. Chilliwack is still renting a church building for worship services. Edmonton has paid attention to the possibility of a new church building and even thought of calling a second minister! That was of course before they became vacant. Fergus decided to change to a hot water heating system in their church, thus eliminating several problems. Langley is looking around for property on which to erect a church building, while Lincoln is in the busy process of finishing their new church. Our "News Melody," as somebody called it once, is sometimes ahead of the game in announcing that Lincoln's new building was already waterproof, etc., but finally it is indeed that far. The roof has been insulated and shingled, the windows installed, the outside painting completed, furnace installed, etc. Now the only thing to be done yet, is to finish the inside of the building and that will take a fair amount of time. Hopefully the congregation will be able to use the new building before spring. Smithville had a rededication evening, after their church was completely renovated. It turned out beautiful indeed. Smithville also celebrated its 25th anniversary recently.

ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES

Consistory meetings, classes, regional synods were held as well as a General Synod this year. Synod convened on November 8th and adjourned on November 26th. We expect to be informed by others about the decisions of Synod until we receive the official Acts. The convening church for next Synod is Smithville. It was rather disappointing that the sister churches in The Netherlands did not send a delegate to our Synod this time.

MISSION-WORK

Rev. H. Versteeg and his wife travelled to several, if not all, congregations in Ontario and in an interesting way informed the members about the work in Irian Jaya. They hope to leave for the mission field soon. Rev. Boersema spent a few months in The Netherlands, much to his enjoyment. He hopes to go to Brazil early in the year. The church at Hamilton considers sending out a missionary on its own, with the financial help of the classis-churches. Both Burlingtons also plan to send out a missionary together. A few brothers and sisters from the West visited Brazil this year and came back with a lot of information. Brother Bredenhof even wrote a booklet about the mission field there. In the meantime brother and sister B. Vegter are doing their task in Irian Jaya and will be eagerly looking forward to the arrival of Toronto's missionary and his wife.

CONTACT WITH SISTER CHURCHES

During 1977 several of our ministers travelled to The Netherlands. Rev. M. Van Beveren, Rev. J. Van Rietschoten, Rev. Cl. Stam, Rev. G. Van Dooren, Rev. A.B. Roukema, Rev. R.F. Boersema and Rev. M. Werkman all spent some time there, either alone, or with their wives. I myself enjoyed being there after more than a quarter of a century. Church life there was really exciting, I thought. Especially the Ministers' Conference was enjoyed. Imagine meeting over a 100 ministers, several of whom I still knew from long ago. One of them had a speech on "Fundamentalism" which was very thorough and enjoyable. When Prof. Doekes approached me after the speech about the Fundamentalists in North America, I men-

tioned that we have them on our side as far as smoking is concerned. Although not as much as they used to, the (older) ministers still managed to blow around a lot of smoke which did not improve the comfort of being there. It seems that the ties with our sister churches have been drawn a little closer in recent years. At least we don't hear voices like we used to hear sometimes, that advocated or suggested breaking off our correspondence with them altogether. We probably did not realize at the time how much damage was done in our circles via the Dutch paper *Opbouw*. Now that the outcome has become clear in recent years, many of our people here have seen the wrong direction into which this paper was steering them.

From our sister churches in The Netherlands we had several visitors in our midst. Without claiming to be complete I mention the visits of Rev. and Mrs. A. Jagersma, Rev. and Mrs. H.D. Van Herksen, Dr. and Mrs. C. Trimp, Rev. and Mrs. J.H. Vander Hoeven, Rev. L. Moes and last but not least, Rev. M. Jansens, who, I heard, is more or less on his way back to Canada again! The visit of Dr. Trimp has been very instructive for ministers as well as for the congregations. Dr. Trimp delivered a couple of very informative lectures at the College for students and ministers. He also gave a few lectures at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, which were very poorly attended as I have been told. In several of our congregations as well as at the Office-bearers' Conference in Burlington, Dr. Trimp reached the people. This kind of contact can be very fruitful for our churches. Another important visitor this year was the Honourable Mr. P. Jongeling. *Clarion* carried news about his visit extensively. The readers will be familiar with it. Brother Jongeling has done much to make us more aware of our political calling in our country. It was a necessary warning to do something now before the next generation will not be interested at all anymore. As a result, in several congregations societies were formed or are being planned to study the scriptural principles for political life.

Our candidate J. Dejong is still pursuing his studies at the Theological College of our sister churches, in Kampen. He is regularly preaching in the churches there and I heard that his Dutch is improving! He will probably speak it more fluently than anyone of us when he returns.

CONTACT OTHER CHURCHES

Contact with the Christian Reformed Church was made by sending them the (long awaited) Appeal, as decided by Synod Toronto 1974. It is a strong appeal and we hope that all the Christian Reformed people will take good notice of it. I would also urge all our members to study it. It is worth it!

The church at Cloverdale considered resuming possible contact with the Free Reformed Church. More particulars are not available at the moment. The contact with the Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto was terminated by that Korean Church without further information. They now seem to have affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church. Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the USA was changed rather drastically when General Synod Coaldale decided to recognize them as a true Church and to offer them "ecclesiastical contact." If that means that the Westminster Confession was accepted then I expect quite some discussions about this among us in the future. After all, what did the Committees in the past do all their work for, if the differences in the Confessions are not first cleared up? Just read previous Acts of our General Synod and you will see that there is more than meets the eye at first glance. Even the OPC deputies were of the opinion that the divergencies were great enough

to warrant further discussion. But we will hear, no doubt, more about this decision.*

Rev. D. De Jong of Edmonton was in Korea for 10 days to find out more about the problems that have arisen there. It seems that we will have to spend our relief money in a different area.

EVANGELISM

The Good Word has changed hands in this past year. At the same time the policy of what to publish has been changed. Radio broadcasts are now also heard in the Niagara Peninsula at 8:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings. The programs come through loud and clear. The printed messages are available on request and are very suitable to hand out to others, in hospitals, at work or to the neighbours. A meeting to establish a League of Home Mission Committees was held in Burlington recently. Hamilton considers doing some work in the city jail and also supports the "Voice of the Church" financially. As long as we all remember that our *conduct of life* must be *godly*. For it is by our godly walk of life that our neighbour will be won for Christ. Alas, we fall short a lot in this respect. And no amount of organized evangelism will make up for that. As long as our life style is still so much like that of the world, our language sometimes hardly different or perhaps worse, the way of dressing (or should I say un-dressing?) like that of the ungodly, as long as there are still so many seeking life-partners outside the church, as long as mixed marriages are even solemnized in our churches, in spite of all the warning of the Scriptures, and many other things, how do we expect the world to be attracted to the church of the Lord? In the past year a rather extensive discussion went on in the church papers about television. Should we not stress much more the question: Does the use of television help to build up better families that become stronger in faith? Does it help our children to lead a more godly life in this evil world? Every pastor should know a little about the damage it has done and is still doing in various families. All the Reformed education cannot undo that.

EDUCATION

The Fellowship of Canadian Reformed University Students had their regular get-togethers. In Guelph the Immanuel Christian High School was officially opened. Mr. P. Jongeling was also present here. Brampton and Toronto are joining in order to open their elementary school next September. Edmonton also officially opened its "Parkland Immanuel School" although the number of children enrolled is very low compared to the total number of school-going children. Neerlandia also opened its school officially. After the many obstacles they had to clear to even get a piece of land to build on, thankfulness must have filled their hearts. The new building of the "Guido de Brès" High School was also officially opened by Mr. P. Jongeling who did the official ribbon-cutting. Grand Rapids has built the "Dr. K. Schilder School" and hopes to have teachers and students enter through its doors by next September. Summer courses for the teachers were given in the East as well as in the West.

Teachers' Training Centre

Efforts have been increased to come to the opening of a "Teachers' College" where future teachers for our schools will be trained. The Steering Committee met four times this year. They even had some education experts over from our sister churches across the ocean to discuss the set-up, curriculum, etc. We should all realize that all the churches stand to benefit from a Reformed training institute for teachers. First

of all the teachers themselves. Then also the children and via them our families. Yes, the whole church will benefit from it. Therefore we should all put our shoulders (and our wallets!) under it. If we get support from all congregations, the financial burden will not be excessive at all. People who complain about the ever rising costs of education but who think nothing of letting a dollar's worth of cigarettes a day go up in smoke, had better keep their mouth closed (to their cigarettes). Then they will no longer utter such complaints. Let us plead with the Lord to give us what we need so that God's children may be the better trained as warriors in the hand of a mighty man (Psalm 127).

In the Fraser Valley the parents were asked to consider setting up a Kindergarten for the 4 and 5 year olds. Hamilton is considering it also. It is rather strange that till now we did not worry so much about the pre-schoolers' education at the public Kindergartens. Are they less dangerous? These very little ones are very receptive to what is taught. It is better to keep them at home instead of sending them to Kindergartens where the Scriptures do not serve as the basis of all education. Or are our young mothers becoming rather a little lazy.

Time and again they find or make time to organize bazaars and many other activities for the benefit of the churches and schools. But would it not be better and more in line with the teaching of the Scriptures to stay at home and do more with their little children at home? We can do much more for the pre-schoolers at home if we only use our talents and the talents of others if necessary to teach these little Covenant children as parents. I think a lot of problems with children later on stem from the fact that we too easily leave their education to the teachers in school. By instructing our children ourselves, we stimulate the growing of a strong tie between ourselves and our children. There is a danger that our families are disintegrating in spite of all our activities in church and school. If only the families function well, the whole church will benefit and increase in strength over against the powerful and attractive forces of the world and the devil and all his company.

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Yes, what are we doing for them? For those who are mentally retarded? Or physically disabled? What about the blind and the deaf? In Ontario some meetings have been and will be held to find out ways and means to provide also for these children. Everyone should be involved in this work. In *prayer* for them. They need it. Some of them cannot pray themselves. Or did we not know this? Some of them cannot speak. Others cannot hear and so miss out on all the preaching. Yes, brothers and sisters, we have brothers and sisters like that. They are God's Covenant children too. Perhaps the Lord gave *them* this great handicap in order that *we* should learn a lesson! Let us start doing something. Start praying. For them. And for ourselves.

SOCIETIES

The Young People as well as the Men and Women had their meetings and their Rallies or Conventions during the year, with speakers and entertainment. Their real importance lies in the regular study together of the Word of our Lord. It always centers around that Word. Any distraction from it leads to a spiritual decline. May their work continue also in the years ahead.

The Boys' and Girls' Clubs have been active too. This is hard work for the leaders. We wish them all the wisdom and strength they need.

PUBLICATIONS

Premier Printing has put some beautiful books on the market this past year. They have also taken over the ILPB publications. I hope that all will buy their books. There have been members in our churches who always complained about the lack of Reformed literature but who shrug their shoulders with a sneer on their face when you point to the existing books available. They obviously are more interested in less Reformed publications. All the more reason to continue publishing Scripturally sound books. *In Holy Array* appeared regularly, as well as *Clarion* and *Shield and Sword*. Really we cannot complain of lack of material to read.

CHRISTIANS BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

One brother sent me a cheque for \$50.00 to forward to the brotherhood in the communist countries. This is not support for the "Wurmbrand" organization or any other such type of organization. Our sister churches in The Netherlands have ways to help Reformed Christians behind that terrible curtain. It is my pleasure to act as your contact man here to forward your gifts to them. Real help is given, also in the form of Reformed study materials. I hope to write more about it soon. In the meantime, if you want to send any amount, do not hesitate to send it to me. Thank you on behalf of Christians without freedom.

SENIOR CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

Last but not least I would like to mention that the older brothers and sisters find ways and means to alleviate the loneliness at their age. We often under-estimate how hard it is for older people to take an active part in church life. Language problems get bigger as they get older. Hearing weak-

ens and many other reasons cause loneliness in their lives. However, they still have some pioneer spirit in them. With the help of other members of the church they organize their little outings and regular meetings where they invite a speaker and add good entertainment to it. Perhaps we can stress the necessity for all of us to visit our older brothers and sisters more often. If everyone visits them once or twice a year, they will never complain anymore. Are we not all together citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven? They have been citizens of that Kingdom even longer than most of us have. Let us honour and help them wherever we can.

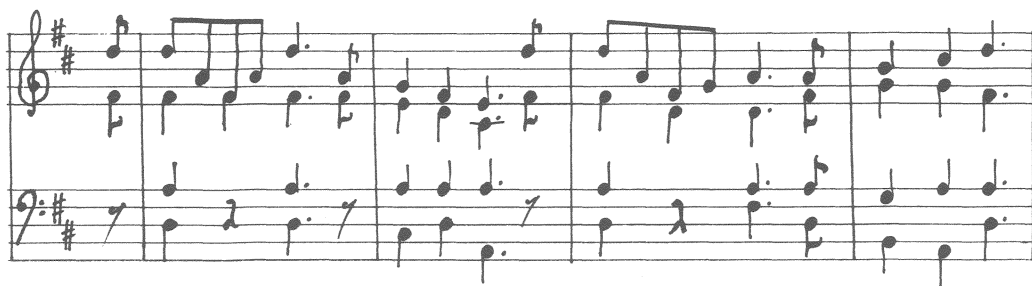
CONCLUSION

Perhaps I have made it too long. Well, there was simply no more time to make it short and more to the point. Let me end with expressing the hope that we all put our trust in our King, Jesus Christ, Whose Kingdom is not of this world. He rules from heaven, at the right hand of the Father, from where He rules over all things. Also over the weather, which we sometimes call "bad" when we receive too much rain or snow, which we sometimes call "disastrous" when the Lord sends a destructive tornado by which one young family of Smithville and one of Lincoln were hit. Does the Lord even send us bad weather? We believe that He makes *all things* work for our good. That was also experienced by these families. The Lord's majesty was impressed on us all. Let it remain that way for all of us.

M. WERKMAN

*NOTE: It would have been wiser and more edifying if our reviewer had waited for the exact text of the Synodical decision instead of basing his remarks on one phone call.
vO

The Herald



1. "Prepare the King's highway," the Herald cried,
"Make straight the crooked path on which He'll ride."
2. The Baptist was the one Isaiah meant;
He was the messenger that God had sent.
3. A coat of camel's hair the Baptist wore,
He stood and preached God's Word on Jordan's shore.
4. From cities round about they came to him,
Confessed their many sins. John baptized them.
5. Then one day Jesus came from Galilee.
He went to John and said, "Please baptize Me."
6. Then from the stream Christ rose, for Him to see
The heavens opened up immediately.
7. A dove flew down on Him and from above
A voice, "You are My Son, the One I love."

S. VANDER PLOEG

Press Release of General Synod

of the Canadian Reformed Churches held at Coaldale, Alberta, November 1977

On Tuesday, November 8th, at 9:00 a.m., the Rev. J. Visscher, on behalf of the Church at Coaldale, called the meeting to order and requested the brethren to sing Psalm 84:1, 6; he read Ephesians 1 and led in prayer. With appropriate words he welcomed the delegates commending them to the Lord and His blessings with a view to the work to be done. Upon his request the Rev. J. Geertsema and Elder J. Devos examined the credentials and reported that they were in good order. After some discussion the report was accepted. Delegation was as follows: from the Regional Synod in Western Canada: the ministers S. DeBruin, D. DeJong, J. Mulder, M. van Beveren and the elders H.A. Berends, W.H. Bredenhof, J. Devos and C. Van Seters; from Regional Synod in Ontario: the ministers J. Geertsema, W. Huizinga, C. Olij and W.W.J. VanOene and the elders J. Bol, J.G. Feenstra, B. Harsevoort and C. Walinga. As officers were elected Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, chairman; Rev. M. van Beveren, vice-chairman; Rev. J. Mulder, first clerk; Rev. J. Geertsema, second clerk. Upon recommendation of the moderamen the Rev. J. Visscher was invited to serve Synod in an advisory capacity. It was decided that mail received after 12 noon on Monday, November 14th would not be dealt with by Synod.

A request of the Foundation for Superannuation that time be made available for a membership meeting on Friday, November 11th was granted. Synod would have no sessions on that afternoon.

Four committees were appointed to advise Synod and to make recommendations regarding that part of the incoming mail that is assigned to them.

From the Free Reformed Churches of Australia a letter was received with good wishes. A similar letter was sent by the Deputies for correspondence of the Netherlands sister churches with the information that they could not send a delegate this time; since they were represented at Synod Toronto three years ago, they now preferred to send a delegate to one of the other sister churches abroad.

A letter offering reduced air fares for ministers and missionaries on certain conditions, was taken note of.

No action was deemed necessary on letters received from the Reformed Ecumenical Synod and from the Presbyterian Church in America (formerly the National Presbyterian Church), since they did not contain any request, except that the Presbyterian Church in America would be informed that Synod took note of the correspondence received from them.

Synod dealt with the matter of "Women's Voting Rights." The Church at Edmonton expressed its disappointment with the decision of Synod 1974 not to grant the request of the Church at Toronto to give women voting rights; the Church at Edmonton requested that a committee be appointed as was proposed by the advisory committee in 1974. Synod considered that Article 20 of the Church Order does not stipulate anything positive or negative about women's voting rights, and that, since unity of practice is desirable, the introduction of women's voting rights by a particular church on its own would be regrettable. And because Synod Tor-

onto 1974 was considered not to have properly completed its agenda in this respect, Synod decided to appoint a committee to make a thorough study of all biblical and church political aspects regarding the matter. By this decision a minority report with the recommendation not to appoint a committee since the churches themselves are competent to study the matter and to bring it to a general synod, could not be voted upon.

A letter of appeal of the Church at Smithville against a decision of Classis Ontario South concerning the pronouncement of the salutation and benediction when an elder conducts the worship service, was declared inadmissible because it had not been submitted to the Regional Synod.

During the sessions a telegram was received from "Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika" with wishes for God's blessing on the work of Synod.

With thankfulness Synod took note of the reports of the Board of Governors and the Board of Trustees of our Theological College. During the past three years all involved in the college had been able to do their work in good Christian harmony; the Faculty could work without interruption. It was decided to give into consideration of the Board of Trustees together with the Board of Governors to buy property for a possible future development of the College. The remuneration of the professors and lecturers received due attention; their stipends were raised to present-day levels. Especially those churches which are habitually in arrears were urged to send their contributions regularly. All churches should also cooperate with the Treasurer in determining the assessment. Synod expressed its concern that the number of students is so small and urged the churches to give continued attention to this need. It was also decided to give into the consideration of the Governors to seek for ways and to encourage the Faculty in cooperation with the Board of Trustees to make our College better known also by the publication of solidly Reformed material in order that also in this way more students be attracted. Upon the request of the Ebenezer Church at Burlington Synod decided to request the churches, in case they send to Synod overtures pertaining to the Constitution of the College, to send a copy of the overture to the Board of Governors in the first place and, if applicable, also to the Faculty and the Board of Trustees, for their information.

A proposal of the Church at Smithers to drop the B.A.-degree as a requirement for admission to the College, and of the Church at Hamilton to create an alternative for the B.A.-degree, were rejected since — Synod stated — it does not belong to the task of the Churches to provide for such instruction as may prepare students so that they can meet the standards of admission set for our Theological College.

The Church at Carman, in charge of the administration of the General Fund, reported that an audit of the books of the treasurer, Mr. H. Veldman, revealed that they were in good order. Those churches which had not yet paid their share, were urged to do so.

The Committee on the Revision of the Church Order re-

ported that it had revised 33 Articles. It was decided to charge the committee to forward to the churches a complete draft along with a brief explanation of the changes within one year and to submit a final draft by January 31, 1980. To this committee a letter from the Church at Edmonton re Article 70, Church Order (solemnization of marriage) was passed on.

Not everyone is aware of the amount of work required before the definite edition of the *Book of Praise* can be published. The committees involved in this work reported about improvements on the rhymed Psalms, about deleting and adding Hymns, corrections and retranslations in the language of the Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms. Synod provisionally adopted a Form for the Ordination/Installation of missionaries (translated from a form in use by our Netherlands sister churches). To the Form for the Excommunication of non-communicant members a First Admonition was added. Three committees were appointed to continue the work for the Psalm and Hymn Section, to correct the text of the confessions, to revise, e.g., the Form for the Holy Supper and the Form for the Solemnization of Marriage, and even to make available the harmonizations of the Psalms and Hymns. Synod did not wish to have the work postponed and charged the committees to have their complete and definite reports ready by January 31, 1980.

Synod dealt with several appeals from the Church at Edmonton. In one case Synod agreed with the Church at Edmonton that General Synod Toronto 1974 should have declared the letter of a brother inadmissible. Synod did not agree with the objection that the words "Although General Synod unanimously agrees with the brethren on the desirability of Canadian Reformed Schools" should not have been made part of the decision of Synod Toronto.

The matter of contact with the Christian Reformed Church was again on Synod's agenda. The first reason was that a committee appointed by the previous Synod reported that they had fulfilled their mandate to send an appeal to the Christian Reformed community. This appeal pointed to the dangerous road the Christian Reformed Church is going by not severing the relations with the synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands.

Another reason for dealing with this matter again was that the Church at Edmonton voiced objections to the decision of Synod Toronto to discontinue the Committee for Contact with the Christian Reformed Church and requested to again appoint a committee. Synod, however, showed that the grounds for the decision in 1974 were not "incomplete" as the Church at Edmonton stated. When Synod 1972 of the Christian Reformed Church discontinued the Committee for Contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches they considered this to be a termination of the contact as such, only to be resumed when the Canadian Reformed Churches should feel the conditions to be conducive for fruitful discussions. The Christian Reformed Church did not terminate the relationship with the synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands but stated (1974) that "appropriate avenues of increased contact . . . can and should be employed to strengthen rather than weaken inter-church bonds" with the synodical Reformed Churches.

With regards to contact with other churches, the Church at Edmonton had sent a letter stating that it did not agree with decisions of Synod Toronto 1974 (Article 20 and 64) not to begin contact with the Presbyterian Church in America and the Free Reformed Church of North-America. Synod upheld the decisions of 1974 and stated that a Synod is not an institution that can be called upon to investigate all potential

church relations without being supplied with such a proof as to warrant the initiation of contact with other churches. A proposal of the Church at Calgary to seek contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, was not accepted for similar reasons since the Church at Calgary had not given sufficient information about that church.

The Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church informed Synod that they had been unable to complete their mandate due to the departure of the convener and the illness of their vice-chairman. However, the committee passed on a copy of a letter from the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church which contained valuable information on the doctrinal matters and matters of church polity. This letter also asked the question whether the Canadian Reformed Churches were prepared to say that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church showed the marks of the false church.

Several churches proposed to Synod to recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Synod, taking into account the statements of previous synods about the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the letter of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations, considered that the divergencies in confession and church polity are to be explained from the different origins of our confessions and the confessions of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; also that our Netherlands sister churches in 1967 had accepted the statement of the Regional Synod of Groningen that the Westminster Confession of Faith is "een voluit gereformeerd belijdenisgeschrift." It was clear to Synod that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church wholeheartedly adheres to the Westminster Confession and that they maintain the rules for church polity as laid down in the Form of Government and that the existing divergencies do not

Het Onvoltooide Lied

*Ik hoor de wereld zingen
van vrede hier op aard.
Maar als ik om mij heen kijk,
dan is haar lied niets waard.*

*Profeet, zeg aan de wereld:
Uw onvoltooide lied
van vrede, zal niet komen
Zo zegt Gods Woord het niet!*

*Wel komt er vrede op aarde
voor die gelovig hoort
komt God straks met Zijn engelen,
zo staat het in Zijn Woord!*

*Profeet, ga profeteren,
vertel: God heeft beloofd,
dat Hij bij elk komt wonen.
Bij elk, die Hem gelooft!*

H.J.R.-V.

(Taken from: *Gereformeerde Kerkbode voor
Zuid-Holland, Zeeland, Noord-Brabant en Limburg.*)

form an impediment to recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as churches of the Lord.

With regard to the relation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with other churches, it was noted that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had repeatedly admonished the synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands for not maintaining the Reformed creeds, thereby honouring the, at that time, existing rules for correspondence, till it was decided in 1973 to terminate the sister church relationship. Although the membership of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod was deplored, it was evident that they are using this membership in a positive way for the maintaining of the Reformed confessions. After 12 years of contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church by means of appointed committees it was decided with thankfulness to recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession.

Synod further considered that the fellowship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church should find expression in an officially established contact with rules defined for practical use. However, since a sister church relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church according to the adopted rules for correspondence cannot be reached at this time, and the term "fraternal relations" is too vaguely defined and too broad for use by the Canadian Reformed Churches, Synod decided to offer to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church a temporary relationship called "ecclesiastical contact" as a basis for further discussion with the hope and intent that eventually full correspondence expressing the unity of the true faith can be established. For this "Ecclesiastical Contact" the following rules were adopted: a. to invite delegates to each other's general assemblies or general synods and to accord such delegates privileges of the floor in the assembly or synod, but no vote; b. to exchange minutes and acts of each other's general assemblies and general synods as well as communications on major issues of mutual concern, and to solicit comments on these documents; c. to be diligent by means of continued discussions to use the contact for the purpose of reaching full correspondence. The Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church received in their mandate also the task to respond to the letter of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations and to discuss and evaluate the relationships of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with other Churches.

The Committee for the Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism reported on substantial work they had done. However, they had not been able to complete their mandate. The new mandate now reads: to revise the second draft translation while taking into account the comments received, and to use the following guidelines: a. adhere closely to the original German text; b. replace difficult and archaic words and expressions if proper equivalents are available in today's English; c. restructure sentences which are too complicated; d. provide reasons when deviation from the German text is necessary on theological grounds. The Committee was also instructed to arrange for publication of the revised draft of the Catechism in booklet form for use in the churches on a trial basis a year from now.

The Committee on the Revised Standard Version reported on the examination of that Bible translation and informed Synod that it had sent a number of recommendations for changes to the Standard Bible Committee. Although our Committee first said that it has been amply proven that all orthodox doctrines can be accurately formulated on the basis of

the Revised Standard Version, it then stated that it is afraid that the Revised Standard Version shows evidence of unscriptural influence. The Committee recommended that the churches be left the freedom to use the Revised Standard Version with discretion and care; further, to terminate the Committee for examining the Revised Standard Version since the work of testing had had sufficient attention. While Synod considered that the Committee had not submitted sufficient proof of unscriptural influence, Synod decided — thereby following the Committee's recommendation — to terminate the mandate of examining the Revised Standard Version on "its faithfulness to the original text and its 'schriftgelovig karakter.'" A new committee was appointed to continue to make recommendations to the Standard Bible Committee regarding improvements in the translation. That committee received the name "Committee on Bible Translations" with the mandate to make a comparative study of the New American Standard Bible and New International Version with the Revised Standard Version and the King James Version in order to determine which translation can be positively recommended for use by the churches. Appointment of this committee was in answer to the request of several churches.

Regarding the correspondence with our sister churches abroad Synod stated that the correspondence had been conducted in a very vigorous manner. Synod decided to continue the correspondence according to the adopted rules with De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika and The Free Reformed Churches of Australia, and to have our churches represented by a delegate at their general synods if invited and when desirable and feasible. Upon the recommendation of the Committee Synod did not grant the request of 16 persons in The Netherlands to terminate the correspondence with De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

Some progress had been made in the contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryu-Pa). The Committee had received information regarding the changes in the Westminster Confession of Faith. The changes are considered an improvement. Proposed changes in the Form of Government had been reported to the Committee by Rev. D. De Jong after his trip to Korea. Synod stated that the question posed by the Committee whether official ecclesiastical correspondence will be beneficial at this time, is to be understood in the light of the meager result due to the language barrier and internal difficulties in the Korean Churches in the past. It was decided to refrain at the present time from entering into correspondence and to charge the Committee to try to intensify the contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea.

The Church at Brampton would be requested to forward a report regarding the finances of General Synod Toronto 1974 to the next General Synod.

The Church at Smithville, Ontario, was appointed convening church for the next General Synod to be held in the fall of 1980.

The Acts of Synod were adopted. The Press Release would be taken care of by the moderamen.

The chairman, Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene, spoke words of thankfulness for the work this Synod was allowed to do. The vice-chairman expressed Synod's appreciation for the leadership of the chairman.

After the singing of Psalm 121 the vice-chairman led in thankfulness and prayer.

The chairman closed the eighth General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

For the Moderamen,
M. VAN BEVEREN, Assessor



News items are published with a view to their importance for the Reformed Churches. Selection of an item does not necessarily imply agreement with its contents.

AN INTERNATIONAL REFORMED SYNOD?

Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The Deputies for Church Correspondence of the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in The Netherlands will formulate proposals to their next General Synod (Groningen, 1978) concerning the possibility of convening a meeting of all Churches with which the Reformed Churches (Liberated) have a corresponding relationship. Such a meeting would have the character of an International Reformed Synod, similar to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES) currently maintained by other denominations. The same idea was considered inopportune after the Liberation in 1944, but the Deputies are of the opinion "that the present development brings this question again to the fore." This "Synod" would involve the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Free Re-

formed Churches in Australia and Africa, the American Reformed Church, the Koryo Pa (Korean Presbyterian Church), the Reformed Churches in Sumba. Possibly other churches in Scotland, Ireland, Irian Jaja, Taiwan, Japan, Ceylon and Brazil would be involved, depending partly on the Dutch Synod's interpretation of "double correspondence."

NEW CHURCH INSTITUTED

Bomakia, Irian Jaja. Recently in Bomakia, Irian Jaja, the first Church resulting from mission work by the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in The Netherlands could be instituted. Six elders were ordained to office by Rev. C.J. Haak, missionary of the Church at Enschede. The Reformed Church of Bomakia shortly hopes to elect deacons.

CONFLICT WIERSINGA CONCLUDED?

Lunteren, The Netherlands. The consistory of the controversial student-pastor Dr. H. Wiersinga, has agreed with the statements made last year by the Synod of the Reformed Churches (Synodical) regarding reconciliation. Dr. Wiersinga's views in which he denies the reconciliatory merit of the sacrifice of Christ, had been rejected by Synod. The consistory now promises to take care that Dr. Wiersinga will not "push" his ideas in his official work. While the majority of Synod felt that the matter was now closed, some members (among them the Christian Reformed representative, Rev. Bouma) regarded the consistory's statement as being quite unclear. The question was asked, "Would Dr. Wiersinga be permitted to spread his ideas unofficially?" The Deputies replied that while Dr. Wiersinga did not need to recall his convictions or be forced into absolute silence on these points, he was certainly not allowed to teach his opinions on the pulpit and at catechism classes.

FIFTH ASSEMBLY PCA

Smyrna, Georgia. The Fifth Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) convened on September 12, 1977. Decisions on several matters on which there seemed no consensus were postponed. No decision was made e.g. concerning the "two office view" and the "three office view," i.e. whether there are basically two offices in the church (elder and deacon) or three (minister, elder and deacon). The Assembly did not oppose the bid of the Associate Reformed Presby-

terian Church (ARPC) to join the NAPARC (North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council). Pulpit exchanges with all the NAPARC churches were approved. Discussions will continue especially with the RPCES and the OPC with regard to possible union. (RES NE).

JAPANESE BROADEN CONTACTS

Kobe, Japan. The 32nd Synod of the Reformed Church in Japan, held in Kobe from October 18-21, adopted the RES Capetown resolutions on race. It also decided to enter into regular correspondence with both the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. This involves the exchange of fraternal delegates (or greetings) at major assemblies and communication on major issues of joint concern. (RES NE).

Consulaat-Generaal der Nederlanden CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

10 King Street E.,
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1C3
Phone: 364-5443

ONDERWERP: OPSPORING ADRESSEN

VERLEGH, Paula Dymphna J.A., laatstelijk woonachtig aan het adres 423 Sherbourne St., Apt. 11, Toronto, Ontario.

PONJEE, Pieter, geboren 2/3/1911 te Rotterdam, op 6 april 1954 naar Canada geëmigreerd, laatstelijk woonachtig aan het adres 10576 - 101 Street, Suite 2, Edmonton, Alberta.

PLUSJE, M.J.N., laatstelijk woonachtig aan het adres 55 Holsworth Crescent, Thornhill, Ontario.

FRANCIS, John Franklin Francis, geboren 25 september 1939, woonachtig te Winnipeg, Canada.

CHILCAT-de KROU, Margaretha Lucia Maria, eerder gehuwd met de heer van HOLT, geboren 10/8/1935, laatstelijk woonachtig aan het adres 1253 Kennedy Road, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada.

BRINK-LEYDEKKER, Sara, geboren 5/2/1930, laatstelijk woonachtig aan het adres 2339 Old Pheasant Road, Cooksville, Ontario, Canada.

VAN HAZEL-HUDSON, L.M., geboren 5/2/1954 te Redcar, Canada. Op 21/4/1977 naar Canada geëmigreerd. Laatstelijk woonachtig aan het adres Jephaststraat 68, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

VAN MOURIK, Abraham, geboren op 15/8/1947 te Sneek, laatstelijk bekend adres in Nederland, Noorderhaven NZ 43, Groningen, Laatstelijk woonachtig in Canada aan het adres c/o Carl Jones, R.R. 1, Cope-town, Ontario.

De Consul Generaal,
voor deze:
R. VAN DER WEL, Kanselier.



Dr. H. Wiersinga

How Do We Avail Ourselves of Having the Old Testament History in Our Bibles? ⁶

5. From the Secession to Prof. Dr. K. Schilder

In our discussion of the Secession and its ministers, focussing on the way of preaching they were used to, we found that taking it all in all one cannot call this their strong point, a real asset.

I hope the reader does not misunderstand me. With all due respect, fully aware of the fact how much we owe to our fathers with their piety and their fear of the LORD — the present writer is fully alive to that, he himself being, both on father's and mother's side, an issue of what is usually called "Oud-A" — these things must be said nonetheless, as the Rev. D. van Dijk did in his speech of 1934, the centennial of the Secession.

"How come?" we may wonder. What was behind it? For one thing: Was exegesis given due attention during the studies at the "Theologische (Hoge) school"?

In the Series Lectionum (Time table) of the year 1855, reproduced in "Tot de Prediking van het Woord des Geloofs" (opposite page 49), we meet, besides Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, two periods Exegesis New Testament, while Exegesis Old Testament is mentioned only once. In the Series Lectionum 1859-1860 four periods Exegesis are given, without any further indication whether the explanation of the Old or of the New Testament is meant. The professors in charge of Exegesis were A. Brummelkamp and Helenius de Cock. We do not know how the workload was divided between the two.

What matters more, however, is the question: How was the subject Exegesis tackled? What about the rules of a sound exegesis and their application? From page 35 of the book we learn a little more about the way Brummelkamp handled it. "There was

no dictation, nor magisterial delivery of the subject. Teacher and students sat together around the table. The teacher at the head of the table, the 'Staten Bijbel' in front of him, the Greek New Testament, ed. Wettstein, later on ed. Tischendorf, in his hand; they had the commentaries which were at their disposal then, Calvin, Bengel, and others, ready at hand. Under the guidance of the teacher, in a dispute, by the method of question and answer, the meaning of the words and sentences was traced and a certain conclusion reached. In this so-called Socratic manner — named after the philosopher Socrates — also the other disciplines were studied in those days.

This is what A. Brummelkamp was used to in Arnhem in his "private college," prior to the establishment of the Hogeschool in Kampen 1854. With Helenius de Cock it may have been much the same. In articles written in memory of him, he is given credit for having been a logical spirit and a quite understandable teacher. In the period the Rev. van Dijk is discussing, those two professors were supposed to set the tone. Although I, for one, wonder: Are they to blame for the shortcomings and failures of the ministers, those who once were their disciples? No sooner has the latter entered the parsonage than it depends on him how he avails himself of the material gathered in the time of his studies.

The standard of exegesis was raised after the professors L. Lindboom and especially M. Noordtzij had been appointed to the New and Old Testament chair respectively. Restricting myself to the latter, judging from the few literary remains, a study on the 68th and the 16th Psalm, we can say that here we meet what we today call exegesis in the proper sense of the word. Taking into account what other scholars, orthodox and modern, had

written regarding the character, composition, and the probable origin or date of Psalm 68, he points out what according to him is the leading idea. Hence it is shown how this leading idea is developed in nine consecutive parts of the Psalm, constituting together a well-structured whole. Thence he comes to the details, forming a clear idea of the Hebrew words, rendering account of what other scholars stated, formulating his own opinion. A valuable asset of this exegete was that he was the first one to take into account and make use of the results of the young science of Assyriology and Archaeology. His son, the later Dr. A. Noordtzij found this out upon entering the University of Leiden for the study of the Semitic languages. He was welcomed there by one of his professors with the words: "Zo, bent u de zoon van die man in Kampen die in potten en pannen geloofd?" So the rumour of his father's interest in the discoveries of archeology had already spread as far as the University of Leiden. Prof. M. Noordtzij was kind of ridiculed for that. The professor of Leiden was not so pleased with the finds of Archaeology. In the state universities of The Netherlands, especially Leiden, what was in those days the modern trend in the Old Testament field — Well-hausenianism — became more and more prevailing. It was represented there by one of its most prominent spokesmen: Prof. Kuenen, a modern, liberal scholar throughout. They Kuenen, Wellhausen, a German scholar, had won their repute especially by turning the Old Testament history upside down in that they placed the bulk of the books of Moses not at the beginning as the Bible does, but, on the contrary, at the end of Israel's history, in post-exilic times. Why?

Well, such an elaborate, detailed legislation with prescripts concerning such a shrine, a priesthood, and a variety of sacrifices was only possible as the outcome of a long development of evolution through which the people of Israel must have gone. As any other nation, the Israelites were supposed to have risen from a sort of primitive stage in the time of the patriarchs (if ever such figures existed!). Via the stage of higher ethical concepts — something new, of the era of the prophets Amos and Hosea; these ideas were laid down in the Deuteronomy code — the people finally reached its acme, its highest level, in the days of

Ezra and Nehemiah, when Exodus and Leviticus were issued.

This disastrous theory, hailed in those days when evolutionism dominated so many a faculty, from geology up to theology, did not go unrefuted, neither in Germany — we mention the names of W. Hengstenberg and J.C.K. von Hoffmann, not forgetting the better known C.F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, whose commentaries are available in English translation (I can recommend them very highly not only to our ministers, but also to our societies for their work) — nor in The Netherlands.

Returning from Germany to The Netherlands, I ask: How about the Dutch theology with regard to this modernist trend? and particularly: How about the Christian Reformed Church (after 1869)? Were there scholars to refute these theories? Or is that expecting too much from our fathers usually belonging to the not-so-well-educated circles of society (as their opponents mocked)? Or did they rather ignore what was going on in the Theological faculties of the state universities as being of no avail to the believer? To my knowledge it was again Prof. M. Noordtjij who made a stand here in a rectorial address in 1907. During his professorship, the windows were opened wider in order to give the students a better insight into what was going on in the scholarly world of that time; of course, not for false-ecumenistic purposes, no, but certainly to this end that the prospective ministers of the Word during their studies might become well-acquainted with the modern trends in the field, so as to be able to meet the difficulties and face the dangers in up-to-date sermons and answer the questions of interested brothers and sisters.

What are up-to-date sermons? Does that mean that all sorts of topical subjects are touched in the sermon? Everything but that, although many (also in our midst) are of that opinion. On the contrary, it is not a sermon filled with actual items, but one in which God's Word is opened so as to appear before our eyes in its majesty and glory, its all-encompassing claims, proclaiming God's sovereignty over life to its widest extent; answering all the questions rising in our hearts.

As we have seen, the Secession focussed too much on man's salvation; I had better say: the salvation of his soul. It took too narrow a view of the

life of the Christian. As far as that goes, the Doleantie meant a progress. Anyway, if we pay due note to the work of the "leaders," e.g., Dr. A. Kuyper, in that which he wrote on the preaching of the Word,¹ Mr. Dr. W. Vanden Bergh, and especially the Rev. J.C. Sikkel of Amsterdam, we see life in all its branches; I mean: social, economic, and political life come into the picture. They realized that the preaching of the Word of God had a wide scope and that nothing was beyond its scope. With a man like Sikkel, the epoch the congregation lived in and all that it brought in its train was heeded in an often unforgettable way.

In how far these principles were put into practice by other, let us say the "average" ministers of the Reformed Churches, united since 1892, is a question hard to answer. Incentives for a good preaching were given anyway. Apart from the prominent men of the Doleantie, the circles who had their origin in the Secession could boast in, I should say: be thankful for, Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck, who in his Reformed Dogmatics did full justice to the Scriptures, those of the Old Testament included. Well aware of the needs of his time, in introducing a Dutch translation of Matthew Henry's Commentary, he wrote in the introduction:

It would be too much to expect this commentary of Henry to satisfy the present needs in all respects. But in this area we are still extremely poor. . . . However much we lament it, we must still live from what the past offers us.²

That is what Bavinck wrote in 1909.

Bavinck's wish for a popular, short, sound, practical, and up-to-date commentary was fulfilled after 1922 with the publication of an indigenous commentary series, the Korte Verklaring. At the same time other exegetical works rolled off the presses: the series "Bottenburg, Schilder's *Christus in Zijn lijden* (1930), J. Ridderbos' *Het Godswoord der Profeten* (1930-1941), and De Graaf's *Verbondsgeschiedenis* (1936).²

In the meantime in the city of Kampen a young man grew up, whose work was to become of great importance for the study of theology, a man who also has given an incentive to a renewed interest in Old Testament studies, I refer to K. Schilder. Given the opportunity to study at the Theologische (Hoge) school of his hometown, he gradually distinguished himself and stood out from the rest of the students by a sort of original approach,

Clarion

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Editor: W.W.J. Van Oene

Co-Editors: J. Geertsema, Cl. Stam,
D. VanderBoom

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OUR COVER

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we may say: a touch of genius, that became perceptible quite soon in oral contributions and the first products of his pen.

The point at issue is: What made the student, K. Schilder, the man the Reformed Churches have known and become acquainted with more and more, the man who gave an impetus to others, e.g., to Prof. Holwerda?

We touch here upon the secret of his life. Such a question is not easy to answer. In a tentative answer I would like to say just this: This child of God first of all was human throughout. Nothing human was alien to him. This applied to all the students of his days and it applies to all of us. Sure; we all agree with that; that is it. It easily becomes a commonplace, a general truth of the Reformed Doctrine the one knows more about by experience than the other.

To the young man K. Schilder, the student, it was not a commonplace though. Schilder was not the man to be content with commonplaces. It implied a struggle, a real struggle. The personal and emotional aspect of this struggle was enhanced by the fact that he was so gifted, talented and sensitive. For a man of his calibre, with his thoughts, ideas, and vision, it involved a struggle that went down to the bottom, the heart of the matter.

Who was K. Schilder? We can tell much about him and talk for quite a while about this particular man, and even quote some passages from sermons or speeches we have heard. We shall not do so now. I'd rather recommend to whomever wants to have an insight into his life the reading of a passage you find on page 10 of the book: **Gedenkt Uw voorgangeren, In memoriam Prof. Dr. K. Schilder, 1953.** In the "Ten Geleide" by the hand of Prof. C. Veenhof we read that Schilder's enormous knowledge of classical and modern languages opened to him the fascinating world of ancient and modern literature. He was like one walking in a wonderland, in a world never dreamt of. It was alarming and fascinating at the same time, especially to **him** who was a deeper, more profound spirit and finely strung personality. With a heart craving for beauty, a spirit thirsting for wisdom and knowledge, a soul before which life's mysteries loomed up, he plunged into this new and amazing world. Like a pioneer, a discoverer, he explored the areas of man's cultural life. He read Goethe's work and understood or

comprehended the Faustine desire. He crept through Dante and tasted the beauty of the **Divina Comedia** down to the bottom. He read and devoured the "Tachtigers." He read and assimilated Nietzsche. He studied Schleiermacher, the epochal theologian of the 19th century. He read and experienced Kierkegaard, another theologian and author, whose ideas were kind of an anticipation of the philosophy-theology of the 20th century. He learned about Dostojewsky and Strindberg. It was not what we call taking cognizance of literature for literature's sake merely. No, in this way he learned man in his desire, his craving for pleasure, power, knowledge, beauty; man in his sin and guilt; man in his loneliness and utter despair. Besides, there was music, the organ.

Justly Veenhof remarks that this young, bright man with his talents might have become a worshipper of beauty in a heathen way; an instrument in the service of a humanist, false prophecy; a crater of a volcano, by which demoniac powers could spout their fire and ashes into the air; to the destruction of mankind.

He **might** have. That it did not happen is because his God, the God of life, prevailed upon him (cf. what Jeremiah says in chapter 20:7) the God Who had destined him and set him apart for a special service in His Church. "Service" — how easily this word is written, but how hard to submit oneself to it. It comes true in the way of self-denial, in the struggle against one's innermost thoughts and desires. This definitely was not a cheap victory, easily gained — so much the more valuable was the victory, a victory of the **God of his life and the life of his church.** Schilder was not an individualist, nor a subjectivist, **however much it was he who was able to speak about sin and grace by experience.** If God's power and majesty were so comprehensive and so great as to overcome and subdue whatever splendour and greatness and pride there was in the world of culture and knowledge, then the majesty and glory of this God ought to be brought out into full relief in his work as a minister and writer in the service of the churches, in order that others who were going through their struggle in life could gain new courage and strength. In this manner K. Schilder, who had been enjoying human and humanist literature, briefly, that which the famous among man had committed to writing, be-

came the man who was deeply convinced of the work God performs and the insuperable influence He exerts **through His Word.** To him God was not a vague notion or concept, but the God of His revelation, where He displayed Himself in His real greatness and beauty. This Word was a power in God's Hand, the Hands of His Spirit; a word of judgment and a word of redemption in Jesus Christ His Son. The man who had revelled in human literature was the man who was going to study the Word of His God to the utmost of his power and talents.

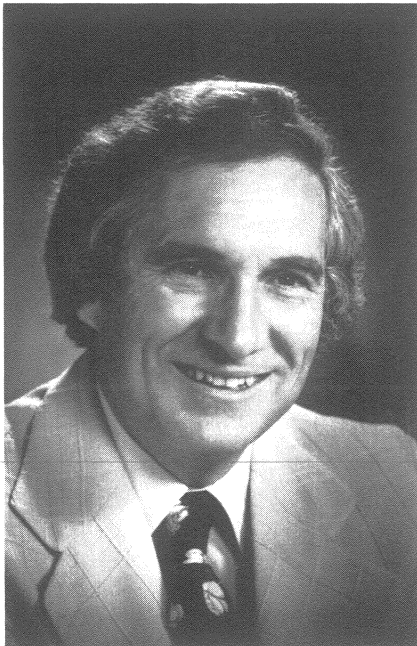
That is why in this article I have dwelt on K. Schilder. He was not what you might call an Old Testament scholar; that is to say, appointed to the Old Testament chair. Nevertheless it was from his new and fresh approach that the study of this particular field was to benefit in the present century. For the Word, the **Word of God** was done justice again in the midst of the churches. And the first part of this Word was the Old Testament. His interest brought in its train a deepening insight in the problems related to the Old Testament in the preaching and life of the Church. In the series **Verzamelde Werken**, Vol. 1 "Preken," we see him take the first steps on the path of preaching the Old Testament.

Sermons on Psalm 22:3, I Kings 19:11-13a, and II Chronicles 30:8 in his first congregation, on Judges 17:13 and I Kings 16:34 in his second congregation, bear witness to his specific approach. The choice of the texts is already relevant: crucial moments in the history of the revelation. Although the categories he applies may be too general once in a while in the opinion of some, we see a man who tries to bring out that which is revealed in the text concerned, a specific text. He preaches on that text, placing this part of God's Word in the midst of 20th century life. He does everything possible to show things in their proper perspective, within the context, and then in the framework of the whole Bible. That was and remained his typical approach from his first sermons and articles on, via **Christus in Zijn lijden**, up to and including his **Heaven, What is it?**

H.M. OHMANN

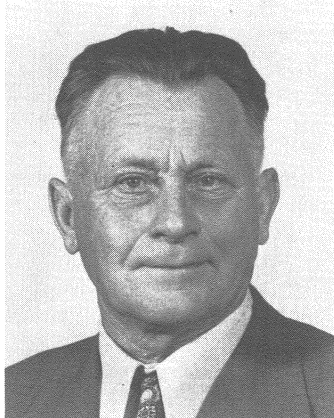
¹ C. Veenhof: **Predik het Woord, 'Gedachten en Beschouwingen van Dr. A. Kuyper over de prediking.** o.c. page 15f.; page 135f.; page 154.

² Sidney Greidanus Th.D. **Sola Scriptura, Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts**, page 25.



I hope that each and every one of you will enjoy your holidays. I hope it will be a time of recommitment to your faith and that you will all experience the true meaning of Christmas.

MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION



Derk Daniels

Br. Daniels was born on March 9, 1909 in Stadskanaal, The Netherlands. In 1952 he emigrated to Canada with his wife and four children and settled in Southern Alberta. There he has remained ever since. For over twenty years he worked at the Canada Research Station in Lethbridge specializing in the area of animal science. Although he retired about 2½ years ago he still keeps up with the latest in scientific research and constantly has his nose stuck in math and chemistry books.

Still, that is not all to be said for our brother. It seems that ever since he arrived in this country he has been busy promoting one cause or another in and outside the congregation. For many years he was this area's correspondent for the Canadian Reformed Magazine (later Clarion) and he saw to it that as many people as possible subscribed to this magazine. Rarely did he accept "no" as an answer. From CRM he branched out into other fields like books, Bibles and records. Yet unlike many businesses that expect the customers to come to them, this enterprise was set-up in such a way that the business came to the customers. Br. Daniels logged thousands of miles bringing his wares to the attention of many. So much so that there is hardly a farmer of Dutch background in Southern Alberta who does not know our brother.

Now that he has officially retired, at least in the eyes of the government, our brother has decided to limit his activities somewhat. Thus the work of Clarion correspondent has been passed on to a younger member of the congregation, Br. J. Selles. This, however, should not give you the idea that Br. Daniels is now going to sit back in a rocking chair and so enjoy his retirement. Not at all. He still has a long list of interests, and projects that will keep him on the go for many years yet. Br. Daniels, thank you for all the work that you have done for CRM and Clarion. May you and your wife enjoy a good retirement and may the Lord continue to bless you.

King Solomon's Molten Sea

Technical Details in the
Biblical Record.

2.1 Of the several English Bible translations available at present, the following will be mainly used in our studies: The King James or Authorized Version (KJV), the Revised Standard Version (RSV), and the New American Standard Bible (NASB). The KJV is the most literal translation of these three. Due to this, it often has a more exact rendering of the technical descriptions of the Molten Sea than either the RSV or the NASB. As far as I can determine the KJV translators generally did not omit or simplify technical details. Therefore the KJV text will be the preferred one for quotations. In I Kings 7:23-26 and II Chronicles 4:2-5 we find descriptions of the Molten, or Brazen Sea as it is also called (KJV). The passage from I Kings 7 follows here in a somewhat simplified form. (The important differences with II Chronicles 4 are shown in brackets.)

2.2 I KINGS 7:23-26 (KJV)

23 *And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.*

24 *And under the brim of it (under it) round about there were knops (the similitude of oxen) compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knops (oxen) were cast in two rows, when it was cast.*

25 *It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, three toward the west, three toward the south and three toward the east; and all their hinder parts were inwards.*

26 *And it was an handbreadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained two thousand baths (it received and held three thousand baths).*

This is by no means the complete Biblical record. In a number of places throughout the books of Kings and Chronicles references to the Molten Sea are found. These will be dealt with later. At this stage only the features important for the mathematical analysis will be discussed.

2.3 WHAT SHAPE

DID THE SEA HAVE?

After choosing the KJV as the translation to be used for the analysis of the sea we should now try to determine the form of this large cast-metal vessel. Was it a cylinder or half a sphere, a so-called hemisphere? Scripture does not leave us in the dark. It is obvious from the description in I Kings 7:23, 24 that the sea was round. Cows, including those shown in ancient pictures, have flat backs. Therefore, in all likelihood, the bottom of the sea must have been flat for proper support. We find this view reinforced by II Kings 16:17 where we read that King Ahaz took the sea off the oxen and put it on "a pavement of stone(s)" (KJV, NASB — Hebrew: *martsepheth*). The RSV has "pediment" instead of pavement. Why the RSV translators used this word is not explained by them, but they find little support, if any. In Holladay's Hebrew Dictionary¹ the translation "(stone) pavement" is marked with a dagger meaning "undisputed." In a more detailed investigation of the RSV text we will return to this problem.

One might argue that a hemisphere can also be supported by oxen or placed on a pavement. However, other means of support would then be required to keep it from rocking. Nowhere in Scripture do we find even the slightest hint of this. Moreover, calculations of the volume of the sea indicate a cylindrical form, as will be shown. Last but not least, casting such a huge hemisphere would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, while a cylinder could be cast relatively easily. This will be explained in a later section. All this has led me to the acceptance of the round, cylindrical form as the only one compatible with the total Scriptural record. This does not imply that the sea was a straight "mathematical" cylinder as the brim was formed "like the brim of a cup." Sharp corners are usually avoided in large metal castings. Therefore at least a slight curvature at the lower edge, where the round sidewall meets the flat bottom, should be assumed.

2.4 THE BRIM

The shape of the brim or rim is indicated in I Kings 7:26. We read there that it "was wrought like the brim of a cup" and then the KJV continues "with flowers of lilies." Except for Young's *Literal Translation*² and the *KJV II* of Jay Green,³ which use the same expression, all other English translations I consulted have "like the flower of a lily" or an equivalent expression. There can be little doubt that "like the flower of a lily" (RSV) or "as a lily blossom" (NASB) is a better translation.

It makes very good sense technically. The brim is first compared with the brim of a cup which, in many cases, has a slight outward curvature. Some teacups for instance have this form. Archaeological finds show that the curved brim was widely used in antiquity. In fact, many kinds of ancient and modern pottery have curved brims. This feature is emphasized in the description of the Molten Sea by a second example; the lily blossom with its outward curving petals. Probably these petals were sculptured all around the brim, a view held by a number of scholars.^{4 5 6}

Possibly, the KJV translators had this in mind when they used the expression "with flowers of lilies."

2.5 THE "KNOPS"

Below the brim, we read in I Kings 7:24, were "knops" (KJV) or "gourds" (RSV, NASB). It is generally believed these knops had no special function but were decorations. There is, however, a problem; in II Chronicles 4:3 they are called "the similitude of oxen" (KJV), "figures like oxen" (NASB) and "figures of gourds" (RSV). The RSV translators changed "oxen" to "gourds," presumably to bring the record of Chronicles in line with that of Kings. This particular difficulty will also be further investigated later. According to the KJV and NASB, in common with virtually all other translations I consulted, there were ten "knops" per cubit. In the RSV this was changed to "gourds for thirty cubits" with a footnote: "Heb. ten." The Hebrew expression is *eser ba-ammah* where *eser* is the number ten and *ammah* means cubit. *Ba* could mean "for" or "per" or "in" or "to," etc.

As there is little difficulty in casting fine detail on bronze casting, ten knops per cubit are possible. The technical details of bronze casting will be dealt with later, but, in the meantime, "ten knops per cubit" will be accepted

as the correct translation and used in our mathematical investigations.

2.6 THE DIMENSIONS OF THE SEA

After reaching the conclusion that basically the Molten Sea was a round cylinder with an outward curving brim, we should now investigate how the dimensions, mentioned in I Kings 7:23 and 26, were determined. The Biblical record appears to be an observer's, perhaps an inspector's description of a finished product. First mentioned is the diameter across the top, "ten cubits from the one brim to the other." This could be easily measured with a line stretched across the top of the vessel. The next mentioned dimension, the height of five cubits, was also easy to measure. And finally in verse 23 we read: "a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about." In other words, the circumference was thirty cubits. But where was the circumference measured? It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to stretch a line around the circumference of a curving brim. The line would slide down the curved brim or possibly slip over the edge and fall inside. On the other hand, there would be no problem in stretching a line around the straight part of the wall, below the brim. A very convenient way of measuring would be with the line held in place on top of one of the rows of knobs. From the text it is obvious that outside dimensions are meant. The sea itself is the object described, not its volumetric capacity which is determined by the inside dimensions. One more dimension is mentioned in I Kings 7:26. We read there that "it was an handbreadth thick." Nothing else is said about the wall thickness, and it is reasonable to assume that wall, brim, and bottom were all one handbreadth thick. Except for the volume of 2000 baths, mentioned in verse 26, no more details are given that will provide additional information about the dimensions.

Do we have enough to draw a simple sketch? The answer is yes, we have all essential measurements. The "brim to brim" diameter (ten cubits) and the height (five cubits) are directly available from the text. Assuming for the time being that the seven handbreadths long temple cubit was used, the thickness equals 1/7 (0.143) of a cubit. For the main body of the vessel, below the brim, we do not have the diameter. As shown above, there are good reasons to believe that the thirty cubit line measured the circumference

of the main body of the sea. Therefore the main outside diameter can be calculated.

2.7 THE MAIN OUTSIDE DIAMETER AND "PI"

As already mentioned in the introduction, to find the circumference of a circle, its diameter must be multiplied by that famous, mysterious number π . In equation form:

$$\text{Circumference} = \pi \times \text{Diameter,} \\ \text{or } C = \pi D$$

Now the question presents itself, "What value of π should be used?" Scripture is silent on this. No design calculations are given. We will simply use the well-known approximation $\pi = 3.14$ at this point.

Re-arranging the above equation, we find:

$$\text{Diameter} = \text{Circumference} / \pi \\ \text{or: } D = \frac{C}{\pi} = \frac{30}{3.14} = 9.55 \text{ cubits}$$

All the required data for a simplified drawing are now available and a cross-section of the Molten Sea can be sketched. It is shown in Fig. 2.1 marked with the dimensions derived above. The sketched curvatures of brim and bottom edge are assumed of course. Decorations in the form of "knops" and possibly lily petals have been omitted.

2.8 CONCLUSIONS

Fig. 2.1 is the result of a straightforward, literal interpretation of the Scripture passages discussed. Whatever is implied, or derived by computation, is not in conflict with the Bible to the best of my knowledge.

But what about that often heard claim: "The Bible says $\pi = 3$ "? There is really no problem. A curvature at the top is in agreement with the Biblical description. Consequently there were at least two diameters. The one across the top, from "brim to brim," the other below the brim and shorter. If the thirty cubit circumference does not belong to the main body of the sea but to the brim — as many interpreters think — the main circumference below the brim would remain unspecified. It does not seem logical to suspect that an author, who also mentions the height and even the thickness of the sea, would omit, what in fact is, the most important dimension of the vessel. Without it the volume cannot be computed with the required degree of accuracy. This also means that it is impossible to say what value for π was used in the design. For

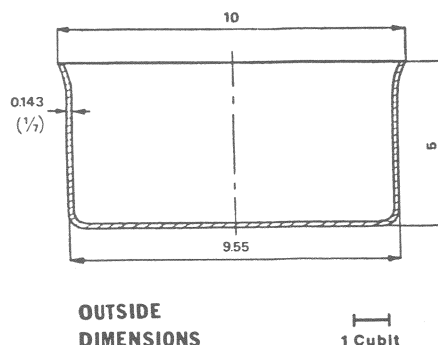


FIG. 2

the time being $\pi = 3.14$ will be used in further calculations. We will have another look at π and the Molten Sea design after solving some other problems. The next one to be investigated is the volume of the sea.

A. ZUIDHOF

NOTE: Some time ago it was brought to my attention that Professor van Gelderen, in his short commentary on Kings,⁷ also assumes that the thirty cubits circumference "was measured a little below the brim, where the circumference was smaller; namely, exactly 30 cubits." (In Dutch this passage reads as follows: "Waarschijnlijk heeft men een beetje onder de rand gemeten, waar de omtrek wat kleiner was, en wel precies 30 el.")

A.Z.

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- 2.3 *King James II Version of the Bible*. Copyright 1971 by Jay P. Green. Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., First Edition, 1971.
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- 2.5 *Harper's Bible Dictionary* by Madeleine S. Miller and J. Lane Miller (Eighth Edition), "Molten," p. 454 (Fig. 273, The Molten Sea from Howland-Garber model of Solomon's Temple) and "Temple," pp. 730-736. Harper and Row, Publishers, New York, 1973.
- 2.6 *Korte Verklaring der Heilige Schrift*, Kronieken II, Dr. A. Noordtziij, p. 85. J.H. Kok N.V., Kampen, 1938.
- 2.7 *Korte Verklaring der Heilige Schrift*, Koningen I, Dr. C. van Gelderen, p. 135, J.H. Kok N.V., Kampen, 1926.

news medley

Due to my absence from the local scene, no news medley was available the other time. To a certain extent I made up for that by giving an extensive report on the dealings of General Synod 1977.

That Synod did have the attention of several writers-of-bulletins. In some instances those writers were brothers who took over temporarily from their minister. Practically every bulletin that I received paid attention to what was done at Synod. Some even commented on specific decisions. There is nothing against that as long as one knows exactly what the decision is and what the grounds are on which it was taken. It would also be advisable to have the report of the advisory committee available, although that is not a necessity. The decisions themselves should be clear and give sufficient grounds.

In the **Family Post** of Lincoln/Smithville, the Rev. M. Werkman writes about the decision which Synod made in the matter of contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He writes, "We will have to wait for the official decision with the grounds." But meanwhile he blasts away at that decision and comes with conclusions and suggestions which just cloud the real issue. That should not have been done, for it brings impure elements into the discussion and it causes prejudice with not a few.

There is an element in his remarks which I condemn. He informs the readers of the bulletin that the decision was made with fourteen in favour and two against. What in the world does that have to do with the issue? Are we determining the value of decisions by the number of members in favour?

It is the experience of the members of this late Synod

that we did not just take a vote to come to a decision. We seriously tried to convince each other. And when, finally, the judgment of the brothers was asked about the point in discussion, this was done only because we had to know whether the proposal could become a decision of Synod. Then it did happen that not all members were in favour. And for the moment, in order to see whether Synod decided accordingly, I marked down the number in favour, the number against, and the number of abstentions. But as soon as it was over, I forgot about the numerical results and everyone should. A decision is a decision, irrespective of whether I was in favor or against.

I do not hesitate to call it most improper to ask how many were in favour and how many were against or, if such a question is not asked, to volunteer such unasked-for information. If one wishes to sow discord, then this is one of the best ways to achieve that.

If one wishes to criticize Synod's decisions, he has my blessing. But let him then do it after having received the complete text of the decision, and after having studied it and weighed all the pros and cons. The Churches are not served by suggestions and hints and questions which lead the thinking of the membership into a certain direction.

That's all I wish to say about it at the moment.

Let me say something good about Lincoln, too.

By the end of November their Church building was weatherproof and the contract for the pews was let. It is expected that the pews will be ready by mid-February 1978, and that the whole superstructure would be available for occupancy towards the end of that month. There could be a delay or two due to unforeseen circumstances, but the end is in sight, which is a good thing.

A few months ago (or perhaps it is even longer ago; we are living so fast!) I mentioned that the cars on the parking lot of the Edmonton Church were not immune to vandalism. Now we hear the same from Lincoln. "The young people will be asked to supervise the parking lot on Sundays so that vandals will be discouraged from damaging cars during the services." The breakdown of law and order also affects the possessions of the Church members. And the worst aspect of it is that it is not specifically because of hatred against the Lord that our possessions are affected. Or is it so that here we have the beginnings of the general hatred and harassment which have been foretold in the Scriptures?

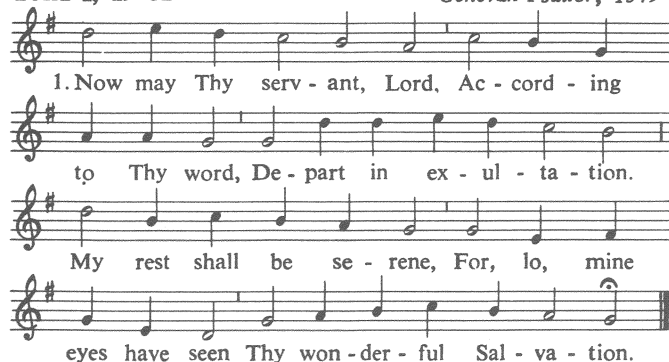
Of the Churches in Southern Ontario we further mention that Watford has now 268 books in their Church Library, that Orangeville also started with newsprint collections, and that in Ebenezer Church in Burlington a "Political Awareness and Activity" society has been established. In the Rehoboth Church, Burlington, some controversy arose about the wording of the sign which adorns the lawn in front of the Church building. I am always using the wrong name, for the official name of the Church is the "Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington-West," a name which, according to most of the brethren, should not be abandoned in favour of "Rehoboth Church, Burlington." I always use the latter "title" and it seems that the sign also contains the name "Rehoboth." It is claimed that that is the name of the Church building, not the name of the Church. However, then it should **never** read: "Rehoboth Church," for the Church is the people, never the building. Then it should always read, "Rehoboth Church building."

As you see, dear reader, you can make an issue out of almost anything. Let me add hastily that the bulletin of the Rehoboth Church (Well, well!) contains the statement that

HYMN 12

LUKE 2, 29-32

Genevan Psalter, 1549



2. Thou *didst* for all prepare
This gift, so great, so rare,
That peoples might adore Thee;
A light to show the way
To nations gone astray,
And unto Israel's glory.
Psalter Hymnal 1957

the brethren there do **not** wish to make an issue out of it. Thus I keep silent about it, for otherwise I might stir something up, and be it far from me to do such a thing.

As our readers may know, the Toronto Church has requested the Rev. H. Knigge to be its representative in a Committee of Contact for the mission work in Irian Jaya. That is a committee which is established in The Netherlands and meets quite regularly to discuss the matters which are related to the mission work. Since "our" field is in that same country, it is understandable that we take part in the discussions.

We should, however, see to it that that committee become not a sort of ruling and controlling board. It happened before that two brethren were sent from The Netherlands to visit the mission posts, not because specific difficulties were to be solved which could not be solved by the workers in the field themselves, but as a sort of Church Visitation. Apparently another such visit is in the planning stages.

Toronto's bulletin tells us, "The . . . consistory agrees with the stand taken by the Mission Board not to take part in this endeavour. The Mission Board does not see the need for a visit of two ministers at this time, since there are no special problems they could deal with . . . The Mission Board is convinced that if anyone should go to Irian Jaya, to help solve problems, it should be a financial expert to set up a proper and effective financial administration."

I am grateful for that stand of Toronto's Consistory's and Mission Board's. Even though cooperation is always advisable, we should retain our "independence" and see to it that the work remains under the "control" and supervision of the Church that sends the missionary.

The last church in Ontario about which I should like to mention something is the Church at Ottawa. The bulletin tells us that a promotion group is to become active to stimulate interest in the Ottawa area. May they succeed in their undertaking.

We move on to the prairies.

In Carman the congregation has been asked what they are willing to offer during the coming three years as a starting capital for a new Church building. I do not know how it is with the seating capacity of the present building, but I would assume that with the children growing up it is pretty crowded right now. A new building with better facilities for societies and catechism classes is indeed needed in Carman. I am certain that they will succeed in having a new Church building within the foreseeable future.

There is one thing which I should tell about Coaldale. And that is that they have a beautiful little organ. In fact, I have more or less fallen in love with it. It is, I admit, dangerous to describe a person when you have fallen in love with that person. Then there is a tendency to exaggerate. I shall not do so, but just say that it is a real Church organ, if you see what I mean. The sound of it reminds one of the organs which are found in the cathedrals in Europe, although the latter are much and much larger. That the sound is much similar to that of those organs is not so strange: I was told that the console is at least fifty years old and that the organ itself is well over one hundred years old. It is surprisingly vigorous for such an old "lady." One should speak respectfully about organs, you see. They have their own personality. This one is more German than French. Sturdy, yet not stout. And now I quit.

We conclude our long and not-so-fruitful journey in the Valley.

A new version of John McCrae's famous poem



50th Wedding Anniversary



January 18, 1978 will be the day on which br. Martin Onderwater, and his wife, sr. Hendrikje Onderwater, nee Smits, will remember how 50 years ago they entered the married state in The Hague, The Netherlands.

Their married life was blessed with ten children, of which two were married already, when the family Onderwater emigrated to Canada in 1952. Soon their married children followed them. Having settled down in New Westminster, B.C., br. Onderwater, like so many other emigrants, had first to take several kinds of jobs before he could take up his original trade again. So he became a head gardener on an estate in Vancouver until his retirement in 1971. Then the Onderwaters found a cozy little place in Abbotsford, where their neatly kept flower garden still speaks of the trade of our brother.

During the fifty years of their marriage sickness and sorrow have not been spared from them. One of their children was taken to the Lord at the age of ten years. Nevertheless they will be the first ones to testify that the blessings of the LORD have been manifold in their life. With their 41 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren they may form a family of 75 members. Don't think that the Onderwaters pass their time of retirement in idleness or isolation. Our brother is a dedicated agent for our magazine Clarion, and a diligent promotor of the publications of Premier Printing. As far as health conditions allow them they love to go for a ride, and to participate in the activities of "De Blijvende Jeugd."



emerged in the **Church News**. The first lines read now, "In Flanders' fields the poppies blow Between the crosses, row on row."

It is alright, as long as we know what you mean, I should say.

The only personal item is that the Rev. M. Vander Wel was taken ill; apparently a recurrence of some kidney trouble he had before. We wish him a speedy recovery and renewed strength to do his work in the Congregation.

As for the rest of the news from the Valley is of a more general nature. The illness of the Rev. Vander Wel and the absence of the Rev. M. Van Beveren who had to attend Synod, left just one minister for the seven Churches in British Columbia. Thus the Rev. D. Vander Boom was flying from the one end to the other. Under such conditions it is difficult to visualize that, the Lord willing, a few months hence all five Churches in the Valley will have their own minister. That will be something from which Houston and Smithers, too, will benefit.

In my report on the General Synod I wrote about recording some of our Psalms, so that others, too, could hear the beauty of our Psalms and Hymns.

The **Church News** contains a plan for the recording of some of the Psalms. They already had a recording company out to listen and to advise about the possibilities. Now a special evening was arranged where recordings would be made. They were to be used for radio broadcasts, but not for the pressing of a record. That will come, however, for "our plans are to do the actual recording during the last two weeks of February when Mr. D. Zwart will be in the Valley to provide the organ accompaniment." That will then be an evening of congregational singing, such as we also can hear on records from The Netherlands.

I am looking forward to the record. I shall certainly buy

one. All the profits which come out of the sales will go towards the High School in the Valley. That alone would be worth the trouble. But I am convinced that the record itself (why not a set of two?) will be very worthwhile to have. Perhaps it can be used for the broadcasts here in Burlington, too. Let us in this respect make another contribution to the true culture of our country.

May I express one wish? I do not know whether Psalm 138 will be included in the program. If it is, would you please see to it that it is sung properly?

Oftentimes or almost all the time when I request the Congregation to sing a stanza from Psalm 138 it goes like this:

"With all my heart will I record

Thy praise, O LORD, — Deep breath and pause — and exaltation;"

That is wrong!

The second and fourth lines should also be sung in "one breath." No pause between the halves of the sentence. That can be seen even more clearly when you read the second and fourth lines of the stanzas 2, 3, and 4.

I'll pay special attention to it, you can be sure of that!

Start practicing. It really won't take that much practice.

At the end of this year of our Lord 1977, I wish to thank all who took the time to read my medley during the past year. May their bloodpressure not have suffered from it. Perhaps it even went down when they relaxed while reading it.

May also this column have strengthened the bond among the membership of Christ's Church.

Whether you agreed with me or disagreed: we all work towards the coming of our Saviour, isn't it? Let's continue in that same way.

"Zalig uiteinde."

vO

A Corner for the Sick

It is our intention to have a corner in this magazine to pay special attention to the sick and lonely brothers and sisters, younger as well as older ones.

We are asked to remember:

MR. K. RIEMERSMA
658 Hillcrest Drive,
Burlington, Ontario L7R 3A7

Mr. Riemersma was in the hospital for 4 months. His leg had to be amputated a month ago; he is home again now but will need a long time to recuperate. By sending him a card or letter we can encourage and strengthen him.

MR. G. FLIER
The Cottage, M.S.A. Hospital
Abbotsford, B.C.

Mr. Flier lives alone and it would be nice for him to know that he has many brothers and sisters in the Lord, with whom he has a bond.

We have been asked to make a Birthday

Calender for the special children in our midst, the ones the Lord did not endow with the gift of understanding.

We would like to mention the names of those children a month ahead of time to give each of you the opportunity to send them a birthday card.

Please send in names and addresses of the sick and lonely (with permission of the person involved) and possibly with some information concerning the circumstances. Please send in the name, address and birthdate of our "Special Children" to:

MRS. J.K. RIEMERSMA
380 St. Andrew Street E.,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 1R1

H.R.

P.S. We are grateful to Mrs. Riemersma for her willingness "to try it." With everyone's cooperation she will certainly succeed to the joy of many brothers and sisters.

vO

Word Search Puzzle

By RENEE VAN OENE

Accountant
Architect
Artist
Babysitter
Banker
Barber
Butcher
Cabdriver
Clerk
Cook
Doctor
Dressmaker
Electrician
Factory Worker
Farmer
Gardener
Hairdresser
Housewife
Janitor

Jeweller
Lawyer
Machinist
Minister
Missionary
Nurse
Painter
Plumber
Postman
Printer
Sailor
Salesman
Secretary
Teacher
Translator
Truck Driver
Waiter
Writer

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

The words can go up, down, diagonal, backwards or across.

Hymn 14

LUKE 2, 8-14

Este's Psalter, 1592



Harmonization by Dennis Teitsma

Nahum Tate (1652-1715)

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the **g**round,
The angel of the Lord came down and glory shone around.
2. Fear not, said he (for mighty dread had seized their troubled **m**ind);
Glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and all mankind.
3. To you in David's town this day is born of David's line
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord; and this shall be the sign:
4. 'The heavenly Babe you there shall find to human view **d**isplayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands, and in a manger laid.'
5. Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus addressed their joyful song:
6. 'All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace;
Good-will henceforth from heaven to men begin and never **c**ease.'

our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Let's first wish each other a blessed and joyous Christmas! What a wonderful time when we celebrate with our families the birth of our Saviour. What a thankful time when we remember that He came to do the will of God for us, and to pay for our sins. Because of the Christ Child in Bethlehem we, too, may be children of God again. Shall we always remember that? Then we will always be thankful!

Busy Beaver *Sylvia Jans* has a Christmas story to share with us.

The Birth of Jesus

One day a Roman king, Caesar Augustus, sent out a messenger. He told the people about a new law which the king had made. Everyone had to go to the city where their parents and grandparents had been born, and pay taxes to the king. So Mary and Joseph had to leave Nazareth to go to Bethlehem, where the great king David had been born. It took many days to travel to Bethlehem, when they finally arrived, it was too late to find a place to sleep. There was no room for them anywhere. All they could find was a stable. That night God sent Mary her baby. She wrapped him in soft, swaddling clothes, and laid him in the manger. That same night there were shepherds in the field, and they suddenly saw a great light. They hid their faces and an angel of the Lord stood in the midst of the light and said:

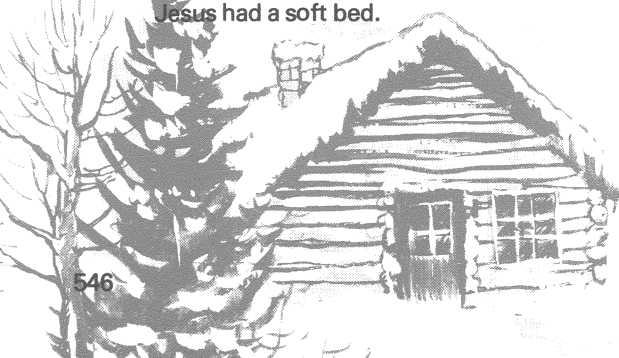
"Fear not, for I bring you good tidings of great joy. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. And you shall find the babe lying in the manger."

That was how Jesus came into the world. What a wonderful day that was. Mary thought of all the things that had happened. Surely this Child must be the most important child ever born. For no son of an earthly king was ever announced so royally, and yet no king ever placed his son in so humble a cradle. God's ways are too wonderful to us.

And now we have a Christmas poem, too! Thank you, Busy Beaver *Carl Dorgeloos*.

Christmas Poem

Jesus was born on Christmas morn,
Jesus was born in a shed,
Where all the animals fled,
Jesus had a soft bed.



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A Christmas Quiz

C _ _ _ _ _
H _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _ R _ _ _
I _ _ _ _ _
S _ _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _ T _
M _ _ _ _
_ _ _ A _ _ _ _
_ _ _ S _ _ _



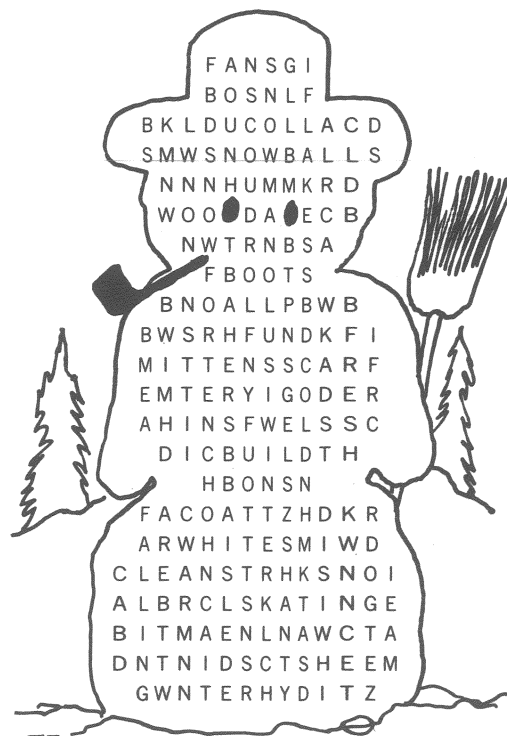
- C — the anointed Saviour
- H — a wicked king who ruled at His birth
- R — a pious priest who was dumb for a time
- I — a prophet who prophesied about the birth of the Saviour
- S — they came to adore the infant Jesus
- T — the mother of Christ's herald
- M — the mother of the Saviour
- A — the angel who announced the coming of Christ and His herald
- S — Jesus' earthly father

Busy Beaver *Ria Hofsink* has a word search puzzle for you. It's called:

The Snow is Whirling

Can you find these words?

boots
build
clean
coat
cold
falling
flakes
fishing
fresh
fun
hat
ice
mittens
races
scarf
shanty
skating
ski
sled
snow
snowballs
snowfort
snowman
warm
white
winter





From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Janetta Gelderman*. We are glad to have you join the Club, and we hope you will join in all our Busy Beaver activities. Thank you for the quiz, Janetta.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Annette Vanandel*. We hope you will really enjoy being a Busy Beaver. Write again soon.

Of course you may join our Club, *Rosemary De Haas*, and welcome. I'm glad you have such a nice teacher, and that your sister can keep you company when you go to school. Bye for now.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Mary Van Raalte*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already, sending in a quiz! Keep up the good work. I hope your Grandpa has a new car by now, Mary.

And welcome to you, too, *Carol Doesburg*. Thank you for your nice letter. Did you get your membership card already, Carol? Be sure to keep it in a safe place!

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Sidney Doesburg*. I hope you will enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Would you like to tell us sometime about your favourite book, Sidney?

Welcome to you too, *Tim Togeretz*. We are happy to have you join us, and we would very much like a story or

poem from you! Talking about poems, did you read *Our Little Magazine* last time?

I'm glad you liked your prize, *Debbie Knol*. And I hope you'll enjoy lots of good reading. Bye for now.

Thank you for your note too, *Nellie Knol*. I hope you're all better and enjoying good reading and quiz-time, too. Write again soon.

Hello, *Helen Vander Pol*. Nice to hear from you again. Thank you for the quiz, Helen. Bye for now.

You did very well on your quizzes, *Mary Van Raalte*. Good for you! I hope you like your little reward, and also the new quizzes today.

I think, *Arthur Pieterman*, you must have more fun at school on rainy days, than on nice days! What with all those fun games to do! Am I right? Thanks for writing, Arthur.

Hello *Ria Hofsink*. Nice to hear from you again. Have you had snow for skiing yet, Ria? Yes, I read in *Clarion* about your new pipe organ in church. Be sure to write and tell me when you are ready to play it. Then I'll want to congratulate you!

* * * * *

Busy Beavers, I hope you enjoy "Our Christmas, Little Magazine" and I hope too, you'll have a very nice holiday from school. Now I'll sign off, but following is a Christmas story just for you!

With love from your,
Aunt Betty.

P.S. Have you sent in your poem(s) for our Poetry Contest yet?



Johnny's Christmas Concert

Recess was over. Mr. Abrams closed the door of the classroom. Bang! With big steps he walked to the front of the classroom. Everyone was watching him. Everyone was waiting. Now was the time! Would Mr. Abrams say so now? It was very quiet in the room.

Mr. Abrams turned to face the class. He smiled a little as if to ask "Why are you all so quiet? What are you waiting for?" All eyes were on the teacher.

Lucy sat quietly with her arms folded, but inside herself she kept saying "Please, Mr. Abrams, let's hurry. Let's start the practice. Let's go to the gym right now! Come on, Mr. Abrams, let's go!"

Timmy started to wriggle and squirm in his seat. He just couldn't wait any longer. Why didn't they go to the gym right now? He looked quickly at Martin across the aisle. Martin smiled and looked back at Mr. Abrams. Oh why didn't they get started now?

"I think you're anxious to start the practice," Mr.

Abrams said. All the heads nodded, yes! yes! And Timmy wriggled even more with all the excitement.

"All right then. Do you remember how we go about it?"

All the heads nodded yes again.

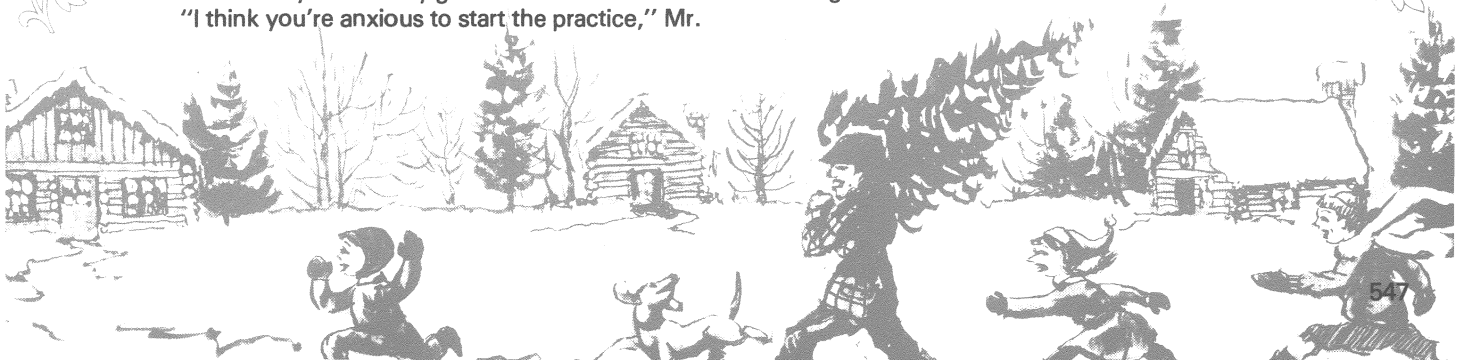
"Sir, we file into the gym and sit at the front on the right," said Anna. Oh how she hoped to get permission to get started, right now.

"And we all know our places, sir," piped up Timmy, trying to help.

"And the boys stand with their hands behind their backs, and the girls in front," said Patricia. She was always very neat.

Mr. Abrams said,

"I'm happy you're all so helpful. Did you all review your texts last night? Now, this is how . . ." And then he gave some last directions.



But somebody was not listening. And that somebody was not very excited, either. It was Johnny. Oh yes, he knew his texts. Alice had seen to it that he learned them. And Daddy had listened to Johnny say them, just last night, while he was shaving. Daddy had been in a hurry. Mommy would be waiting for him in the hospital. Mommy was all alone in the hospital. No not alone, Daddy had said. The nurses took good care of Mommy. And better still the Lord looked after Mommy there, too. And Mommy was getting better.

"And remember," Mr. Abrams was saying. He was looking straight at Johnny. Johnny sat up very straight. He listened very hard now to the teacher talking about the singing, and the practice, and the concert. But Mommy wouldn't be able to come to the concert. She wouldn't hear their beautiful singing, and their speaking choir. She wouldn't hear Johnny recite the glorious tiding of the angel to the shepherds

Mr. Abrams was saying,

"Let's line up then. Row one." Johnny hadn't heard at all what the teacher had been saying. He looked at Mr. Abrams. And Mr. Abrams was looking at him. Everyone was sitting up very straight. They were all so eager to get to the gym. Other classes could be heard in the hall, too. The whole school would soon be in the gym to practice for the concert.

"Row two may go," came Mr. Abrams' voice. Oh and now he was coming right toward Johnny. Johnny sat up very straight again. How he hoped Mr. Abrams wouldn't ask what they had been talking about.

"Row three."

And then to Johnny Mr. Abrams said,

"Where were you, Johnny?" Johnny looked quickly at Mr. Abrams' face. He didn't look very angry.

"Row four may go. Aren't you looking forward to the concert?"

Johnny looked down at his desk.

"Yes sir," he said, softly.

And then Mr. Abrams said,

"How is your mother, Johnny? Your turn row five." Mr. Abrams stood looking down at him.

Johnny stayed in his seat while his row lined up.

"She's getting better, sir."

"Will she be able to come to the concert tonight?"

Johnny's head sank lower.

"No, sir."

"She would be proud to hear you recite the angel's message, Johnny," the teacher said. "You can still recite it for her, you know. But now we'd better go."

Johnny walked quickly to the end of the line. Paul, his friend was waiting for him there.

* * * * *

Paul craned his neck to see what was going on in the gym.

"Everybody's here, Johnny!" he whispered loudly.

Everybody was very excited. There was twisting and turning and giggling and whispering. And above it all, Mark, who was in the highest grade, played a merry tune on the piano.

The principal came forward and all fell quiet. After all, it was a very important occasion. Tonight all the parents would be there. It was serious business this practice!

Marching neatly in a row the Grade Ones took their turn first. They had learned their carol very well. And they recited beautifully even when Bobby, the biggest boy in the class made the loudest mistake. They looked so pleased and happy up there. It seemed as if they didn't want to go back to their seats again!

Now it was time for Mr. Abrams' class to come forward. Patricia who was always neat, was already standing, ready to lead them to the front in their proper order. Johnny's heart beat faster. He was in the front row, remember? He had to recite carefully, and clearly the angel's joyous tidings to the shepherds.

The whole class had taken their places. Mr. Abrams was standing in front of them. He smiled a little.

"Ready?" Then the signal. The speaking choir began,

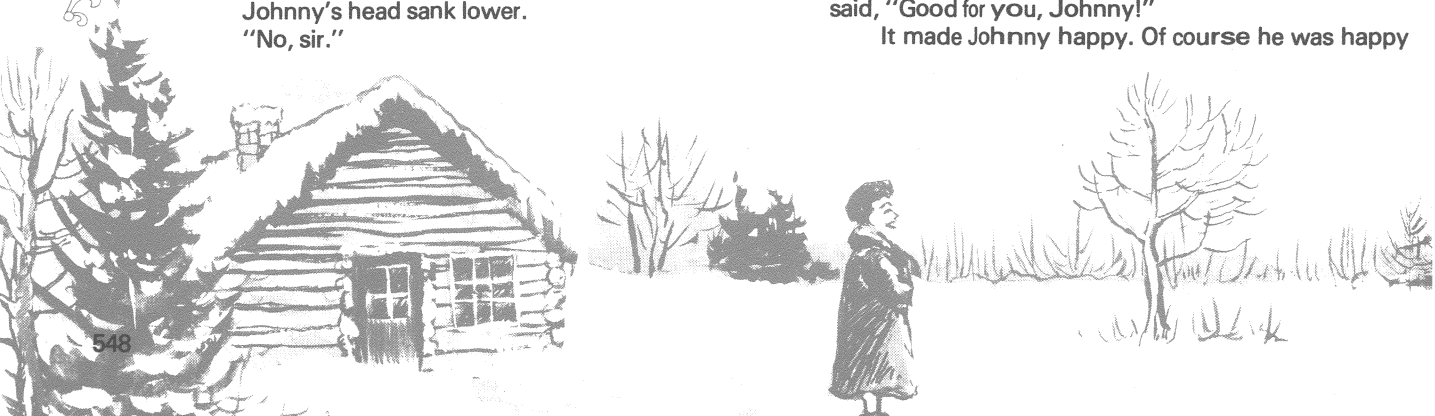
"And there were shepherds abiding in the fields" Their voices rose and fell as one voice, until they came to the part where the angel appeared. Now Mr. Abrams looked straight at Johnny, and Johnny spoke right to the people at the very back, just as the teacher had told him,

"Fear not, for behold I bring you glad tidings. . . ."

And so they recited the story of the birth of our Saviour. Neatly they filed back to their places, and Mr. Abrams nodded in approval.

As Johnny walked past the teacher, Mr. Abrams said, "Good for you, Johnny!"

It made Johnny happy. Of course he was happy



Mr. Abrams was pleased with his work. But something was missing. Someone would be missing tonight. Tonight when the real concert was, all the parents would be there — except Mommy. Of course Daddy would be there, and Alice and Jo-Ann. But still . . . Johnny listened quietly through the rest of the concert.

They sang the last joyful carol together. The concert was finished. The principal said he was pleased, pleased that the children had shown how rich and joyful God's people were, especially at Christmas. And, he said, would they try even harder tonight? Everyone laughed. Then the lunch bell rang.

Johnny was standing in front of the picture window. He was watching for Daddy. He was wishing Daddy would hurry home with news from Mommy in the hospital. And then they would go to the concert.

A pair of headlights turned into Johnny's street. Was that Daddy? Johnny watched, his heart beating faster. No, the car drove past the driveway.

Johnny was ready to go. His Sunday shirt was tucked neatly into his Sunday pants. He was watching another car drive by when his younger sister Jo-Ann came into the room, too.

"Look, Johnny, a clean hankie from Alice to put in your pocket."

Johnny stuffed the thing into his pocket and together they watched for Daddy.

Jo-Ann looked up at Johnny.

"I'm glad I can go to your concert, Johnny."

For a moment Johnny didn't say anything. He just looked down the dark street wishing Daddy's lights would turn into the drive.

"I'm glad you can go, too. But don't you think Mommy wishes she could go, too? When Daddy tells her he's taking us don't you think she'll be lonelier yet in the hospital? And she won't hear me recite the angel's glad tidings."

"But I will," spoke up Jo-Ann. "And Daddy and Alice. That's three people, you know."

"I know," said Johnny.

A car slowed down before the drive. Johnny watched as the car turned in, and then with a shout he ran to the door with Jo-Ann on his heels. They held the door for Daddy — a smiling Daddy, with a grin from ear to ear.

"Guess what?" Daddy was saying.

"What, Dad, what?" Johnny was jumping up and down in front of his father.

"Listen, Johnny. Listen, Jo-Ann," Daddy went on. And even Alice came running to hear.

"Mommy is coming . . ."

"Hurrah!" shouted Johnny.

"Mommy is coming home the day before . . ."

"Hurrah!" shouted Johnny again.

"Let me finish, fellow," said Daddy laughing, looking around at the three happy faces.

"The doctor said if nothing goes wrong Mommy may go home the day before Christmas."

Johnny couldn't wait any longer.

"You know what, Dad? You know what? Oh Dad, then we can have our own concert right here at home. We'll have . . ."

Daddy pointed at the clock.

"Look, fellow! First things first. We're very thankful Mommy's so much better, but now it's time for your school concert. Where's your coat?"

Johnny dashed to get it. Then he came running back in his excitement.

"Dad, we can have the concert for Mom right here, can't we? Jo-Ann knows the songs and I . . ."

Daddy took him by the hand and they all crowded through the door to get into the car. Johnny was still talking and busily planning.

"And Dad I can teach Jo-Ann the texts. She knows them a little bit already, and we can stand in front of the organ. And we'll stand very straight, and Alice can play and . . ."

They were all laughing now they had been given such happiness.

"And it'll be a concert just for Mom, eh Dad? And Mr. Abrams already said I could recite the angel's message for her, and then it'll really be Christmas, eh Dad? Really!"

The school was just ahead. Around the corner, into the drive they went. There were so many cars, so many people. Johnny was still talking all the way into the school.

"Mr. Abrams was right, eh Dad? I can still recite for Mom . . ."

"Listen fellow, you have to do a good job, now, tonight," Daddy warned.

"Oh I will, Dad, I will. Because, you know why Dad? Because tonight will be like a practice for our real concert for Mom at home. And I'll . . . Don't forget, Dad, I'm in the front row, okay?"

And then Johnny dashed off down the hall to his class. He couldn't wait to tell Paul and Mr. Abrams about Mom, and about his concert. Oh he just knew it would be the best concert ever, ever, ever.



A Letter from the Publisher

Again this year, 1977, it has been our pleasure to publish our magazine, *Clarion*, on a regular basis, and also in an enlarged format. We hope to continue to broaden the scope of the magazine in the year which lies ahead of us. The continuous growth in the number of subscribers, as well as the increase in revenue from advertising, enable us to maintain the \$19.50 subscription rate for 1978. We are sure that you will be happy with this, as we are. To Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, editor, and Rev. J. Geertsema, Rev. Cl. Stam, and Rev. D. VanderBoom, co-editors, we wish to express our sincere appreciation for the work they have done for *Clarion* this year. A tremendous amount of time is spent, week after week, writing articles for our magazine. A word of thanks is due also to all other contributors, as well as the correspondents for our magazine, not to forget the staff at Premier Printing. We look forward to your cooperation in this work also in the coming year.

For many years now already, a number of people have devoted time to translating and editing study outlines for Almond Branch. To them also we would like to say a heartfelt thank you for their persistent effort and dedication.

The publishing of Reformed literature demands and has our attention continuously. In cooperation with the Inter-League Publication Board (I.L.P.B.), we are endeavouring to develop the work of translating and publishing. However, the task of translating and editing is difficult and very time-consuming. A number of books are presently in the process of being translated and should become available in the not too distant future. To make our publications known outside the circle of the readers of *Clarion*, the brochure which you received, containing a brief description of each book and a list of all the study outlines, (which Premier Printing took over from I.L.P.B. this year) was also sent to approximately 2000 addresses in the U.S.A., England, Australia, and other countries of the world. It is gratifying to see orders for these books by Reformed authors coming in from places such as Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island, and countries like Switzerland, Nigeria, Australia, England, Korea, and the U.S.A., to name just a few. It is indeed a rewarding and stimulating experience.

May in these and all our other activities and enterprises, the Name of our Lord be honoured and glorified and His Church edified. May He grant us the peace and prosperity required to continue our work in His kingdom also in 1978. And to all the readers of *Clarion*: May our God surround you with His abundant blessings.

G. KUIK

Ere Zij God

Ere zij God, ere zij God in den hoge, in den
hoge, in den ho - ge. Vrede op aarde,
vre - de op aarde. In de men - sen een wel - be -
ha - gen. Ere zij God in den hoge. Ere zij
God in den ho - ge. Vre - de op aar - de,
vre - de op aar - de, vre de op aarde, vre - de op
aar - de. In de mensen, in de mensen een welbe -
hagen, in de mensen een welbehagen, een welbe -
ha - gen. Ere zij God, ere zij God in den
hoge, in den hoge, in den ho - ge. Vrede op
aarde, vre - de op aarde, in de men - sen een
wel beha - gen. A - - - men, A - men.