

Clarion

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Kung Deposed

It does not happen very often that the name of a theologian appears on the front page of the world's leading newspapers. While the papers still write about the deposed Shah of Iran, the deposed Kung of Tübingen also receives full attention. Letters to the editors take sides; either they uphold the authority of the church and especially the pope of Rome, or they fervently plead for academic freedom and the right of a theologian to teach and write according to his conscience. In our local newspaper one reader proposed that the pope be impeached and a Lutheran pastor defended the authority of the church. Also our readers may be interested and intrigued by the question: What do Reformed observers think of the latest development in the Roman Catholic church? But before we try to answer that question as far as *Clarion* is concerned, let us first introduce the theologian who is in the centre of the discussion. Who is Hans Kung?

Born in Switzerland in 1928, he studied at the German College in Rome, at the Gregorian University, at the Institut Catholique and the Sorbonne in Paris. He became dean of the Catholic theological faculty of the University of Tübingen in West Germany and served as one of the official theological advisors to the Second Vatican Council.

Kung established himself as a brilliant young theologian with the publication of his dissertation in 1957. The book is entitled *Justification. The doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection* (Eng. tr. 1964). The title shows that the book deals with a topic that is dear to each and every Protestant, by comparing the leading Protestant theologian of the twentieth century and Roman Catholicism. Was the justification by grace alone, through faith alone, not the issue which was chiefly responsible for the division between Rome and Reformers in the sixteenth century? And was Karl Barth, also Swiss-born, not the grandmaster of Protestant theology?

In his dissertation Kung first described Karl Barth's theology of justification. He did so in such an accurate manner that Barth in a charming letter to the author wrote that "you have adequately covered all significant aspects of justification treated in the ten volumes of my *Church Dogmatics*, published so far, and you have full and accurately reproduced my views as I myself understand them." This was surely no slight compliment and it assured Kung a place among the heralds of the new spirit of ecumenicism in the Roman Catholic church. For Kung attempted to establish a substantial similarity between Rome and Reformed theology. In the second half of his book Kung accomplished his great creative task: the reconciliation of the Roman Catholic and Protestant positions. The amazing aspect of his dissertation was that Kung accepted the beliefs so important to the Reformers, for example, that justification is the work of God and not of man; that man of himself has nothing to offer; that he is justified by faith alone and by no merits of his own; that the justified Christian remains at once a just man and a sinner; and that glory for man's justification is due to God alone. In a brilliant endeavour Kung tried to show that these truths are present and even central in

Roman Catholic faith and theology. Our readers will understand that Kung had to re-interpret the teaching of the council of Trent, the council of the counter-Reformation that condemned the teaching of Luther, Calvin, and the other Reformers in the sixteenth century. The young scholar showed himself to be a master in this re-interpretation art. He was of the opinion that others had not taken into account the polemic tendency of Trent and the deepest motives of the church of Rome. The doctrine is always clothed in the forms of expression of a certain age and in these time-conditioned forms we are to search for the real intentions. Truths have, on both sides, been neglected and obscured. But the truths which unite Roman Catholicism and Protestantism are, according to Kung, much more significant than the truths which divide.

It goes without saying that this book and these conclusions caused amazement on both sides of the dividing line. Karl Barth wrote that if what this book had presented was actually the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, he certainly must admit that his view of justification agreed with the Roman Catholic view. He might very well have to hasten to the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Trent to make a contrite confession, "Fathers, I have sinned." The question, however, was whether Kung had interpreted the doctrinal pronouncements of Trent in the right manner. Barth's letter of January 1957 already pointed in this direction. He wondered how Kung could explain the fact that all this remained hidden so long, and from so many, both outside and inside the Roman Catholic Church. And he asked: "Did you yourself discover all this before you so carefully read my *Church Dogmatics* or was it while you were reading it afterward?" I will not now enter into the debate around the interpretation of the dogma of justification in the Council of Trent. Let it suffice that I am of the conviction that Kung underestimated the place given by Trent to the so-called free will of man and overevaluated the function that it ascribed to faith. Nevertheless — or possibly just because of this — Barth hailed Kung not only as an undaunted son of Switzerland but as a true Israelite in whom there is no guile. "Do not content yourself with the fine beginning you have made in this important search. It will certainly take quite the effort . . . to make somewhat plausible to us matters like Transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Mary, and the infallible papacy . . ."

It was captivating to see Kung at work in the following years. Especially the important "happening" of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) made him study, lecture, and write about the church and its structures. His book *Structures of the Church touches* such questions as: How infallible are papal and conciliar decisions? Have Luther and Calvin nothing to say to Roman Catholics on the question of infallibility? What are the limits of papal infallibility? It often took my breath away when I read Kung's courageous statements. The reader was sometimes reminded of the young Luther. The steady stream of books and pamphlets —

among others *The Theologian and the Church*, 1964, now a timely topic for Kung — showed a certain radicalization. It became evident in Kung's great book *The Church* (1967) and especially in the treatise *Infallible? An Inquiry* (1970).

In his ecclesiology of 1967 Kung dealt with the church as it is and with the coming reign of God. The church is in the service of the reign of God. As far as the fundamental structure of the church is concerned, Kung approached the church in a trinitarian manner: it is the people of God, the creation of the Spirit, and the body of Christ. Under the heading "Dimensions of the church," Kung described that the church is one, catholic, holy, and apostolic. The Roman Catholic character of Kung's ecclesiology is evident from the fact that he, unlike the Scottish and Belgic Confession, does not speak of the marks of the true church. The modern term "dimensions" replaces the word "attributes," but — how impressive it may be from the viewpoint of a dogmatician, and how intriguing, because of the fresh approach, compared to other Roman Catholic handbooks — the whole treatment showed that Kung did not accept the Reformed emphasis on the absolute authority of Holy Scripture as the rule for doctrine and life of God's church. Nevertheless, one of the dogmaticians of Calvin Seminary, Dr. A.A. Hoekema, wrote: "I wish John Calvin could have lived to read this book; I think he would have rejoiced in it" (Calvin Theol. Journal, V, 1. 1970, p. 114). This abundant praise was certainly also caused by what Kung wrote about the offices of the church. He stressed the priesthood of all believers and the character of ecclesiastical office as ministry. Office in the church does not mean dominion but service. In this framework was also placed what Kung called "the Petrine power and the Petrine ministry." A Petrine office, Kung asserts, is, of course, not exactly the same thing as the papacy. The papacy has developed by political factors and under the crucial influence of forged documents. The East rightly rejected the monarchical, absolutist, centralized church which had gradually developed in the West. Kung does not wish to deny the achievements of the papacy in preserving the unity of the church but comes, nevertheless, to the conclusion that the development of a centralized church with absolute means was only possible at the cost of dividing Christendom. The First Vatican Council took place in an atmosphere of anti-Gallicanism and anti-liberalism. Moreover, Kung stresses that in 1870 this council defined the infallibility of the pope only as a special aspect of the infallibility of the church. Even in the view of Vatican I, papal primacy is by no means an arbitrary absolutism, but it is rather limited.

It is remarkable that Kung in his book about the church precisely followed the program and method of his dissertation in 1957. He tried to re-interpret the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church in such a manner that it would be acceptable for Protestants and Greek Orthodox people. Also the rather unpalatable doctrine of the infallibility and primacy of the pope had to be re-interpreted. Therefore Kung stressed that the pope exists to serve the church. "The church never exists for the pope, the pope always exists for the church." The pope too could be a schismatic. The Roman Catholic church is not "saddled for better or worse with a pope, even if he acts in a way contrary to the Gospel." Very surprising is the way in which Kung dealt with three questions: Are there grounds for assuming the primacy of Peter? Was the primacy of Peter something that was to continue? Is the bishop of Rome the successor of the primacy of Peter? It reminded me of Herman Bavink's

famous saying that Rome makes eternity hang on a cobweb. Kung arrived at this meager negative conclusion: "the ministerial primacy of a single person is not contrary to Scripture A primacy of this kind is not from the very start in opposition to Scripture." It is clear that such a conclusion does satisfy neither the Reformed nor the traditional Roman Catholic believer. In the meantime Kung made sharp remarks: If the pope completely fails to fulfil the Petrine mission, what use to him, what use to the church is all the "apostolic succession"? The pope of the First Vatican Council was not far behind many of his medieval predecessors as far as a sense of spiritual domination was concerned. In the council itself he identified himself with ecclesiastical tradition, branded the representatives of the opposition as his enemies and imposed his personal views on the council by not precisely fastidious means. Why not walk the way back, from this primacy of dominion to the old primacy of service and ministry? "Without this renunciation of power the reunion of the divided Christian Churches is as impossible as a radical renewal of the Catholic Church according to the Gospel."

These were some of the observations and objections that Kung made in his book *The Church*. They were directed against the power position of the pope. Most interesting to the Reformed reader were the passages in which Kung dealt with Scriptural data. He described the attitude of the apostle Paul towards the congregations. Paul never abused his authority. "If in the course of time the Petrine ministry has become too much of a Petrine dominion, then it is not least because Paul was not regarded as highly as Peter." But also Peter, the modest fisherman, would not have recognized himself in the picture of "the prince of the apostles." Kung succinctly showed from the gospels the truly human Peter; misunderstanding, making mistakes, failing his Lord. The three great promises to Peter are balanced by three serious failures. Matthew 16:18 is followed by Matthew 16:22f. "Get behind me, Satan." Luke 22:32 is followed by Luke 22:34. As soon as in his self-confidence Peter overestimates himself and no longer puts his whole trust in the Lord, then the hour of cock-crow is not far off. And John 21:15 is followed by John 21:20ff.: "What is that to you?" So there are things which do not concern Peter. It strikes us that Kung precisely takes the three passages on which the traditional Roman Catholic theology tried to base the primacy of the pope. He shows that they "are accompanied in counterpoint by three passages the dark tones of which balance, if not obscure, the bright tones of the three Petrine texts."

Although it is completely clear that the curia in Rome followed Kung's development with scrutiny, his book received the *Nihil obstat* and *Imprimatur*. They are a declaration by Roman Catholic church officials that a book is considered to be free from doctrinal or moral error. I often wondered why this book had passed the ecclesiastical censure. Did it serve a purpose? Roman Catholics and Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox were engaged in ecumenic dialogue. They tried to find a common ground with respect to the "Petrine office and ministry." Did Kung's book still fit within the Roman Catholic strategy? Be that as it may, Kung's development would not halt. He was almost inevitably driven to the following step: the re-interpretation, or rather denial, of the infallibility of the pope. Whatever Rome could accept, the publication of *Infallible?* (1970) was unforgiveable. It set the

Continued on next page.



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.

Fund raising activities have been undertaken to enable the MAF to replace the NOMAD plane which exploded last year in Irian Jaya. *Tot aan de einden der aarde* of December 1979, reports the result of the action in The Netherlands to date:

"At the moment when this copy is being written an amount of more than Fl. 630,000 has been reached. We know that not a few actions are going on as yet and still will have to be completed. The requested Six Hundred Thousand Guilders will be exceeded by a wide margin. . . . Thanks to your willingness to contribute it will be possible to enable the MAF to purchase another plane."

Fifty-seven schools contributed a total of Fl. 80,705.61.

WASHINGTON (RNS)

A United Methodist minister who is a practising homosexual has had his right to continue in a parish position upheld by the denomination's "supreme court," the Judicial Council.

In its semi-annual meeting here, the nine-member council declared that the United Methodist Discipline pro-

vides that "every member of an annual (regional) conference in full connection (membership) is eligible for appointment to a charge so long as the annual conference continues the member in good standing and in the effective relation."

The ruling involved the Rev. Paul Abels, pastor of Washington Square Church in New York City's Green Village.

While critics of Mr. Abels have noted that the United Methodist Principles state that the practice of homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching," the Judicial Council noted that paragraphs 420 and 451 of the denomination's Book of Discipline assure an appointment to all ministerial members who are "in full connection" and "in good standing." It added that a minister can lose such standing only by action of his or her annual conference. (CN)

WASHINGTON (RNS)

Exclusion of women from the priesthood "cannot be sustained on either logical or historical grounds," a group of Roman Catholic biblical scholars have concluded after a major three-year study.

The report of a task force of the Catholic Biblical Association directly contradicts the 1977 Vatican declaration which ruled out women priests as a violation of tradition and of Christ's example. (CN)

The Communist party youth organization in the Soviet Union is deplo- ring the latest "craze among our young people." Its publication, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, noted that they are wearing crucifixes around their necks and sporting Jesus T-shirts. The Communist youth organ acknowledged that "church-going is spreading among the young" and urged a renewed anti-

religion campaign "to dissuade the young from doing so." (CT)

The Banner of December 21, 1979, adds the following particulars:

The Moscow Communist party newspaper carried an article accusing the Russian church clergy of trying to reverse the "irreversible" decay of religion in the Soviet Union by attempting to corrupt the youth with religion. It voiced displeasure about young boys and girls taking part in such rituals as baptisms and church weddings and "following the bad fashion of wearing little crosses."

"Such flirtation with religion and with God, and fascination with religious rituals is not an innocent thing," the article stated. "The younger generation must be protected from religious influence, and atheistic education must be improved."

The Communist party Central Committee has recently urged party members and the Young Communist League to increase the fight against "religious prejudice." *Pravda* had complained that there were not enough films and television programs with anti-religious themes and that popular science programs on television lacked an "atheistic element."

Soviet officials currently tell foreign visitors that old women are the only people who attend church services. However, reports indicate that parish churches are frequently packed with young couples, especially during baptism days or on saints' days.

(Grand Rapids) On a vote of 50-47 the Presbytery of East Toronto of the Presbyterian Church in Canada refused to license Mr. Daniel MacDougall for ordination. The applicant, a graduate of Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, indicated that, while being able to affirm the Ordination Vows and to work with ordained women, his conscience did not permit him to participate in the ordination of women as ministers or elders.

Those opposing Mr. MacDougall's application argued that his stance might lead to an attitude of discrimination against women. Those supporting him argued that since he could answer the ordination questions affirmatively the Presbytery had no right to deny him licensure. The decision will be appealed and stands to become a test case on the issue. (RES NE)

EDITORIAL — Continued.

machine into motion that led to the deposition of Kung as Roman Catholic theologian.

Although we as Reformed people should not forget another development of Kung — namely, towards liberalism with respect to Holy Scripture and especially with respect to the doctrine of Christ, a development which we not only deplore but abhor — the deposition of Kung also shows again the un-Christian power position of pope and curia in Rome. Christ is the only universal Bishop and the only Head of the Church and, therefore, no peace with Rome.

J. FABER

vO

Book Review

The Search for Christmas (Het Kerstfeest van twee domme kindertjes), Three Little Hunters (De Wilde Jagers), Footprints in the Snow (Voetstapjes in de Sneeuw), The Pig under the Pew (Van de Boze Koster), My Master and I (Fik), by W.G. VandeHulst. Little books for little children from Paideia/Premier Printing. Price \$1.50 ea.

As the reader can guess, these are translations of Dutch books for little ones, written by the well-known W.G. VandeHulst. Some of you may recognize the Dutch titles. It is still a pleasure to read them. And it must be an even greater pleasure to read them to the little ones at home. We have good Christian booklets here.

The Search for Christmas and also *Footprints in the Snow* are Christmas stories. I like the latter better, for it is more real. The former is about two little children, very little, the one poor, the other rich, who both go out into the cold to find the Christmas baby. They get lost in the woods and find out that the baby was born long, long ago, and the end is that they both "asked Jesus to come and live in their hearts." The title is not correct I think. It is not so much a search for "Christmas," but rather for the "Christmas Child." To make a remark of criticism: In *My Master and I* the Dutch word *dom* (I guess) is translated by "stupid." This is one of those words used so often in daily life; you find it also in Bible translations. But, probably precisely because of the frequent use of it, I do not like it too much, and would rather have the word "foolish" or something like that. But that does not take away that I can heartily recommend them. And the price cannot be an objection.

The Uninhabited Island (Pim, Frits en Ida: Het Onbewoonde Eiland), Gnomes and Princes (Pim, Frits en Ida: In het Sprookjesbos) by Godfried Bomans.

Also here we have to do with two little booklets for little ones — it says for from six to eight years of age. The humour of Godfried Bomans can be found in them. In both we have the adventures of two brothers, Fred and Ted, and a neighbour girl, Ida. But they are not books with a clear Christian message, even though the former speaks about "Christmas" and the "Christmas story" as the "best story anybody ever told." It is rather a positive humanistic message. Therefore, I cannot say these are wrong books (although I

still do not like to go to a circus), but they miss that strong Christian message which VandeHulst relays in his books. *Gnomes and Princes* is a mixture of reality and fantasy, to which I do not object. The drawings by Rien Poortvliet are a pleasure to look at. The price is only \$1.95.

The Little Girl and the Big Bell (Van een Klein Meisje en een Grote Klok), The Night before Christmas (Jantje van de Scholtenhoeve), The Window in the Roof (Ergens in de wijde Wereld), The Old Man and his Dog (Thijs en Thor) by W.G. VandeHulst.

The Lost Photograph (De Verloren Foto) by Willem G. VandeHulst, Jr.

These are also little books, published by Paideia/Premier, but for somewhat older children, especially the last three, which are a little bigger as well. The price of the first two again is only \$1.50, while the other three cost only \$1.95 — no money for such good booklets.

Again they are moving, well-told stories, with a message, a good Christian character, upbuilding, written by the Master Story Teller. The last book is written by W.G. VandeHulst Sr.'s son. This son has also illustrated all the books. And he did a marvelous job. If you want to give your children or grandchildren of eight years of age and older a good book, you can give them one or more of these. They definitely will enjoy reading them. Some of them I enjoyed when I was young. And reading through them again still is an enjoyable experience. We can congratulate the publishers with these books for children, and hope that they will have many reprints.

Scout - The Secret of the Swamp (Snuf de Hond), Scout - The Haunted Castle (Snuf en het Spookslot) by Piet Prins. Hard cover \$4.95, Paper \$2.95.

Also these two books, published by Paideia/Premier, are translated from the Dutch, written by Mr. P. Jongeling, or: Piet Prins. They are the first two in the Scout series and are for boys (and girls) of ten years of age and up. I hardly have to recommend these. Many probably are familiar with the Dutch books. We can be thankful that Paideia/Premier has undertaken the translation and publication of these books as well. It is enjoyable, good, edifying reading for the youth. One may say that sometimes a prayer for help in a difficult situation comes a little too easily, because the dangerous situation is partly the consequence of uncautiousness. But then we must not

forget that these books are meant for boys (and girls) who are not all that old yet. And what I like in the books of Piet Prins in that history is always such an important element. Young readers get an idea, in this way, about what has happened in the past; as, for instance, in the days of the Reformation of the 16th century. The first book tells about Tom and his dog, Scout, and his friends and relatives in the days of the Second World War. The second book tells us about the same people, especially Tom with dog and friends on a vacation trip after that war, helping to solve a smuggler problem. The translation, as far as I can judge, is good. But one wish I have: do not translate "graag" again with "I bet." Christians are not supposed to bet. Other than that: wholeheartedly recommended.

J. GEERTSEMA



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The Orthodox Christian Reformed Church

On November 19, 1979, a small group of people, formerly members of the Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Listowel, Ontario, organized themselves as a Church of Jesus Christ. This action was taken as an act of faith, believing that their Lord, the Lord of the Church, had called them to this action. The new congregation consists of six families, fifteen communicant members and nine non-communicant members.

In organizing, this congregation reaffirmed its commitment to the three Reformed Confessions: the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort. As its Rule of Order it has adopted the Church Order as it was held by the Christian Reformed denomination prior to the revision of the 1960's.

The organizational meeting also chose two elders and one deacon by free ballot. The men, elders P. VanderLei and Jacob Thalen, Sr. and deacon J. Thalen, Jr. were ordained into their offices on Sunday, December 2, by the Rev. Harry Van Dyken, who conducted the worship service.

The congregation does not intend to be a competitive body in the midst of the churches. It intends, rather, to be a living body of Jesus Christ, positively endeavouring by His grace to serve Him and worship their covenant God, the LORD.

Why did this happen? It happened simply because these members of the Church of Jesus Christ were led by the Spirit to the conviction that the fight against the world is an active one and that every congregation and each member is engaged in that battle; and because of the conviction that events have transpired, actions have been taken in the Christian Reformed Church which, in their conviction, will ultimately result in that the Word of God is no longer the supreme Ruler and Guide. It is their prayer that there may come that kind of turning around which will cause that prophecy to become incorrect.

While looking for a more permanent place of worship, this congregation at the moment worships the Lord at 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. in the facilities of Club 86, about ten miles east of Listowel on Highway 86.

The name was chosen by the membership of the congregation to indicate its desire and endeavour to remain true to the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Yet it indicates a meaningful expression of continuing as Christian Reformed, realizing that the real basis of unity is the Three Forms of Unity, mentioned above. The choice arises out of a conviction that the Christian Reformed denomination at present is no longer true to its history and name.

The membership desires to honour as brothers and sisters those who differ, even differ strongly with them on the above matters and course of action, and prays that those who do differ now will yet respond in like manner.

With thankfulness to the Lord we acknowledge a letter from another young family with three children requesting to be admitted as members of our local Orthodox Christian Reformed Church.

The newly formed Orthodox Christian Reformed Church gives thanks to the Lord when we remember the help and advice from the Rev. VanOene, and from the Canadian Reformed Church at Fergus. We thank the brothers and sisters in Fergus right heartily for the manner in which they have

been receiving us into their midst. Be assured that we shall not forget their Christian love.

*With Christian Greetings
For the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church
at Listowel, Ontario
JACOB THALEN
PETER VANDERLEI*

POSTSCRIPT

It was some months ago when we were contacted by some members of the Bethel Christian Reformed Church at Listowel. Some events had taken place there. The Rev. Harry Van Dyken's request to his Consistory to give him time to inform the congregation fully about the various issues in the Christian Reformed Church so that ultimately a responsible decision could be made whether or not to continue as part of the "denomination," was denied. It was clear, thus the Rev. Van Dyken stated to his Consistory, that the life of a local Church is so much intertwined with the lives of the other Churches within the federation, that one simply cannot deny that a local Church is co-responsible for the position that is taken and the actions acted out in regard to the Bible, our only infallible revelation from God.

The Consistory asked him to exercise patience and with them to present a protest and appeal to Synod by way of Classis. (The Christian Reformed Church does not have Regional Synods.) He accepted that and did all he could to assist the Consistory and the Classis to present a meaningful protest and appeal. He also did what he "could at Synod's last meeting."

What was the result of that and some fifty or sixty other protests and communications?

The result was, as Rev. Van Dyken put it, "that Synod declared that it would study for two more years that which it had already studied for ten. Synod's answer to all the protests which maintained that the 1977 Synod's action regarding women in office was contrary to Scripture was another study committee. It is exceedingly difficult to explain this action in any other way than as a decision which would gain two years time for the churches to get used to the decision of 1977. The 'Verhey case' is even worse. Synod came very close to commending Dr. Verhey for the work he has done in coming to conclusions which have been demonstrated to be contrary to the Scriptures."

As a result of this whole situation, with a view to an astounding lack of knowledge and to the fact that "much that is done by the denomination is written in language that is hard even for trained men to understand," the Rev. Van Dyken felt that he could not continue as a minister within the Christian Reformed Church.

* * * * *

Without going into the whole history, I mention that we were contacted by some of the brothers and sisters who agreed with the Rev. Van Dyken, who were very much concerned about the whole situation within the Christian Reformed Church, and who were convinced that the time for action had come.

The older ones among us remember how difficult it was to decide exactly *when* the moment for action is there. On

the one hand, one cannot shake off his responsibility towards the other members of the Congregation; on the other hand, one is not permitted to allow the deterioration to continue and finally to engulf everyone. When is the moment there to put the others for a choice?

That was exactly the situation in which the Listowel brothers and sisters found themselves.

In many respects their situation is the same as was the one of those of the "concerned" in the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands in 1944/45; the only difference is that, because of suspensions and depositions in those years, the situation was clearer and that the decision was somewhat "easier" than it is today in the Christian Reformed Church.

In Listowel some brothers and sisters decided that the time was there now. That was a courageous decision. The Association of Christian Reformed Laymen may then have written in a publication in 1978, "Because of these actions the CRC can no longer honestly be called a confessional church. The CRC has lost the marks of the True Church as given to us in the Confession of Faith, Article 29 The ACRL believes that the time for action has come It is our prayer that our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Church, may send Reformation among us," until now we have not seen any *action* to bring about such a reformation.

We do not cast any stones. Only those who have not gone through the agony of a reformation will know exactly what should be done. Those who have felt the pain and have known the sleepless hours and nights are a little more careful. They are also aware of the fact that a reformation, a true reformation can and should *never* be *planned*. You can plan a *reform*, you can never plan a *reformation*. You can only follow from step to step where the finger of the Lord points you to go.

That does not mean that you do not have to consider carefully every step that you take. On the contrary: you have to weigh and consider and to see to it that you do not forget the others without letting yourself be held back or slowed down in the path of obedience.

* * * * *

The brothers and sisters in Listowel were also faced with that question.

We may say that they "discovered" the Canadian Reformed Churches. Of course they had heard about them, but what did they know about them? Although some of them had been office-bearers, they were never informed of the appeals which we sent to the Christian Reformed Church in 1963 and 1977.

All this has changed, even though it was not a sudden conversion, so to speak.

They were now faced with a dilemma: What to do? Either institute a Church in Listowel or join one of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the neighbourhood? In the case of instituting a Church in Listowel, what should be the course of action? Should they remain on their own, re-instituting the Christian Reformed Church in Listowel, going back to before the decisions regarding Church Order, "Nature and Extent" of the authority of God's Word, back even to before the decisions of 1946 and following years regarding the Canadian Reformed Churches and their sister Churches in The Netherlands, or seek affiliation with the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches?

The decision was made to institute a Church in Listowel, which they named the Orthodox Christian Re-

formed Church, thereby expressing that they wish to continue in the old path, the path of the Scriptural doctrine, continuing the Christian Reformed Church, but going back to the point before the deviation from the Reformed doctrine and practice began.

Since they have expressed agreement with a passage which was written in the *Fergus Church Herald*, I insert that passage here.

They will try to institute a Church in Listowel and hope (and expect) that this will have quite some impact on the Christian Reformed Church there and in other places, that many more will reject the course which is being followed by the Christian Reformed Church, and will return to the obedience in Christ. Then they see the perspective that the thus re-formed Churches will seek unity with the Canadian Reformed Churches which they have learned to know also through the contact which we have had now for four or five weeks. In this way they will acquit themselves of their responsibility towards their fellow-members. Let us remember them in our prayers, for such a union would be an answer to a long-standing prayer. It would be exactly that for which we have been hoping ever since the day when it appeared necessary to institute the Canadian Reformed Churches. It would also be exactly what we aimed at with the appeals which we sent to the Christian Reformed Church in 1963 and in 1977. May the Spirit of the Lord work a general return. What a joy that would be!

* * * * *

The Orthodox Christian Reformed Church in Listowel has been instituted. An "appeal" to the members of the Christian Reformed Church in that place is being prepared.

The Consistory realizes that there is a danger in following this course. If and when there are more places where a reformation occurs, and when those Churches form a federation — that is what they hope for — there is, of course, the danger that the whole "movement" simply results in another federation and "Church-group" which happily continues alongside all the others which are already in existence. Seeing that danger, the Consistory declares in the above published letter that "the congregation does not intend to be a competitive body in the midst of the churches," just another group added to the many which already exist.

The present course of action has been chosen because of the responsibility which they feel towards the members of the Christian Reformed Church in Listowel and towards the Christian Reformed Church as a whole. They feel that they are not in the way of the Lord if they simply say "Good-bye" without trying to convince the other members of the Christian Reformed Church of the necessity to follow them on the path of obedience. They bear in mind the command which we find in Hebrews 12:15: "See to it that no one fail to obtain the grace of God; that no 'root of bitterness' spring up and cause trouble, and by it the many become defiled." They wish to get them all along on the way of reformation.

That will take time; we do not know how much the Lord will use their efforts to convince others. We leave that up to Him.

This much is certain: that these brothers and sisters need and "deserve" our prayers and support, much more than all those who may utter a word of protest now and then, but lamely and obediently continue in the tracks which have been drawn for them by a hierarchy which will never

Continued on page 14.

Blessed are You as the End is at Hand

(Ordination and Inauguration of the Rev. B.J. Berends)

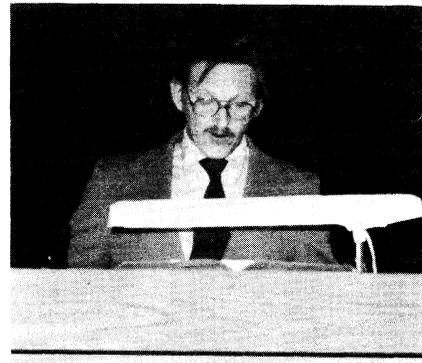
Candidate B.J. Berends and his family received a hearty welcome the evening before his installation as minister of the Church at Winnipeg. The congregation expressed their welcome and joy with a varied program of presentations, song, and music. Children of the Immanuel Christian School presented their best wishes with pictures, maps, and poetic advice. A few ladies of the Women's Society also helped him to know his way around by poetically describing all the members of the congregation, so the minister knows who to see for what, and what to expect from whom. They presented him a beautiful book on the City of Winnipeg. The Men's Society added one on the Province of Manitoba, informing the new minister, as well as certain others, about their activities. Each member of the Young Women's Society took a turn in expressing the usefulness of their presents, which varied from snow shovels, crazy carpets in winter, to insect repellent and Noxema in summer. In order to keep dry during our famous spring floods, even a plastic pantie was accepted in good faith. All their indispensabilities were given after singing in chorus a new song: "Welcome to the dominee." A representative of the Young Men's

Society appeared well informed about br. Berends' past in his welcome speech, adding an invitation to a representative of their hockey club, who proudly declared br. Berends member of their team, presenting him with an official shirt bearing his name and number 100. Also three brothers vacationing in The Netherlands joined by sending a telegram of welcome.

In between all these presentations, we were entertained with the performance of the choir, the children's choir, as well as a duet and violin, organ and clarinet solos. "Thee, O God, yes, Thee we praise, and we give Thee thanks, O LORD" (Psalm 75).

The next morning, on Sunday, 30th of December, 1979, the congregation attended, as usual, but anew, a worship service conducted by the Rev. J. Van Rietschoten. The theme of his sermon on Revelation 1:3 was: "Blessed are you, 1) who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, 2) who hear and keep the words of the prophecy, for 3) the time is near."

We were reminded on Nehemia 8:1-8, when God's people gathered as one man to listen to Ezra. He publicly read the prophecy, the revelation of our God, and with his helpers made clear what was said and gave it meaning, so



Mr. John Jissink, chairman of the consistory. Welcome . . .

that it could be understood. Also Timothy was exhorted to attend to the public reading of the Scriptures, to preaching and teaching, as he was gifted to do. Blessed are those ministering angels who serve those, who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 2:3). Even though not every word is always understood, for example by children, those who hear and keep the words of the prophecy are blessed. Scripture shows, for example, that Mary did not quite understand everything, but those things she kept in her heart. Those at Berea, who eagerly heard Paul and Silas, went home and examined the Scriptures to see if what was said was correct (Revelation 3:11). The reason for this comforting admonition was compared with the urge Manitoba farmers display in the spring. To expect fruition or result, they must make utmost use of the short growing season. The first opportunity is eagerly used to start seeding, for the time is near, the time is short, compressed, every minute is precious. Preach, teach, hear, and keep the words of the prophecy, because the time is near.

The ordination of the Reverend B.J. Berends followed according to the form for that purpose. It was a moving event for every one present. With the minister, also the elders and the Rev. S. De Bruin laid their hands upon brother Berends (cf. I Timothy 4:14). The congregation sang afterwards "I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD, I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the house of the LORD — in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord" (Psalm 116).

In the afternoon the Rev. B.J. Berends delivered his inaugural sermon. After reading also Romans 12, the ser-



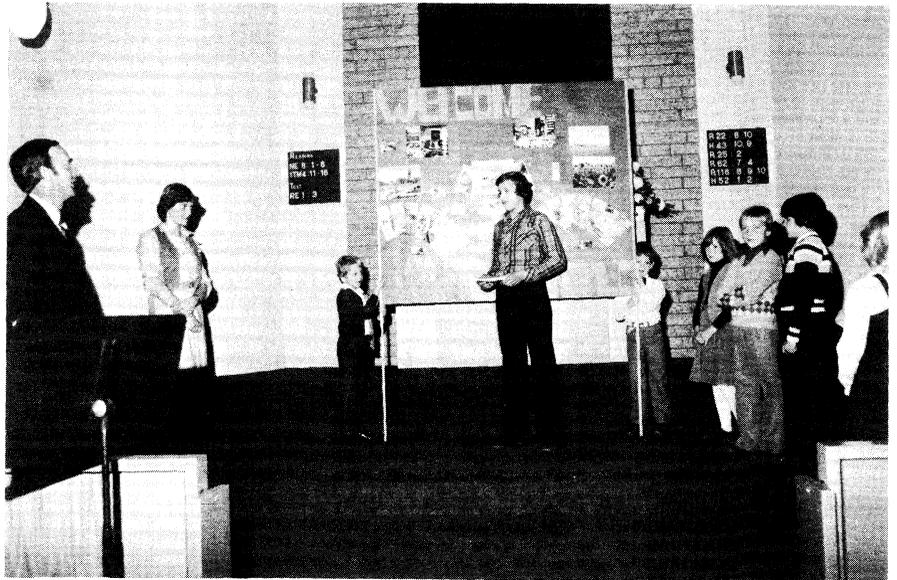
The Young Women's Society add some humour to the evening.

mon was based on I Peter 4:7-11 with as theme: "Now is the acceptable time to serve our God; 1) in expressing His love among the saints, 2) in using His gifts for the Church, and 3) in glorifying His Name through Jesus Christ."

In these last days, that is now, we are to be clear minded and sober, not living in fantasy-land, so that we can approach God's throne in prayer. Our service of extending love towards each other can cover many sins. The gifts each of us received from God, are therefore to be used to the benefit of the saints (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21). As stewards or caretakers of the gifts, granted in God's varied grace, each one is to do his utmost to strive for the goal and to fulfill the purpose of this service, which, in Christ Jesus, is the glorification of God's Name. Knowing His revelation, thank Him for His favour. Praise the LORD.

After the service, the retiring chairman of the Consistory, Mr. J. Jissink, presented congratulatory messages received from the Churches at New Westminster, Barrhead, and Calgary, as well as one from the family Stel. They shared our enjoyment and wished us and our minister the blessing of the Lord. The Rev. S. De Bruin spoke on behalf of all the churches in our classical region and especially the Church at Edmonton adding his personal wishes as well. The Rev. J. Van Rietschoten, who functioned as our counsellor during more than a year and a half vacancy, spoke also on behalf of the Church at Carman. He reminded us of our close and increased relationship and gladness they shared with us. The Rev. B.J. Berends voiced our thanks to all well-wishers, as well as to civil authorities, by whom we enjoy freedom and peace to proclaim God's Word. He especially expressed his gratitude to his wife, children, and the 22 relatives present from the Fraser Valley, for supporting him in word and deed to reach this challenging beginning. Winnipeg, rather the Church at Winnipeg, God's children, Christ's holy Congregation experienced a marvelous, joyous, and fruitful day. The renewed experience of love towards each other, serving the community of saints, encouraged and enlightened by the proclamation of the Word of God and His gift of a shepherd and teacher cannot but stir us to rejoice in the Lord and thank Him for His grace.

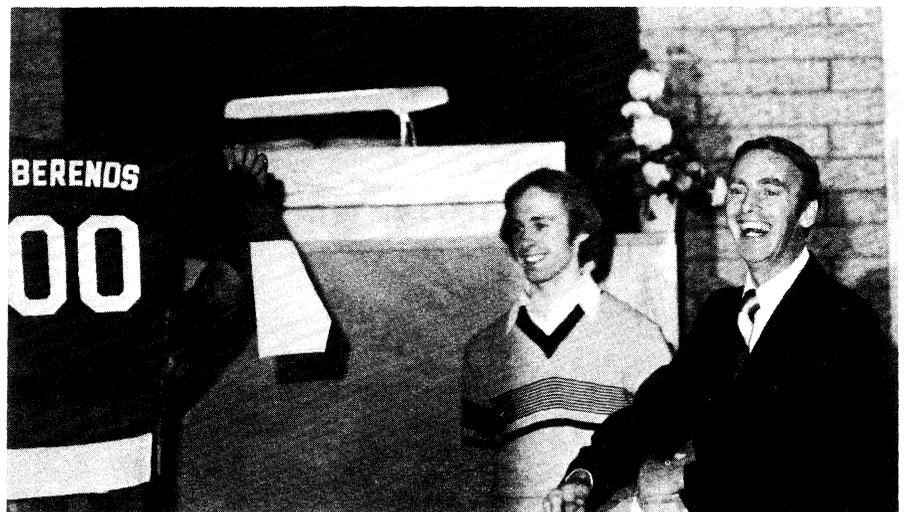
D. TEITSMA



Students of the Immanuel Christian School extend a hearty welcome to the Berends family.



A spontaneous handshake by Mrs. Ellen Shpak and Rev. B.J. Berends concludes the Women's Society presentation, while Mrs. B.J. Berends, foreground, and Mrs. Betty Raap look on.



Raymond Kuik (behind shirt) presents Rev. B.J. Berends with hockey shirt No. 100. Pete Weessies of the Young Men's Society looks on.

League of Canadian Reformed School Societies

Meeting of November 30, 1979 in the John Calvin Canadian Reformed School at Burlington.

So far the League has never published much on their activities. Since many of its discussions and conclusions do concern many more persons than the School Boards present or associated, it was concluded that we should make ourselves and our activities more known to the general public within the federation of our churches. It was decided in September 1979 to publish certain matters, with the reasons "why and how" included. The following matters, discussed and decided November 30, 1979, may be of interest to you.

1. Advertising and Contract dates for Staff in our Schools.

For years there was a "Gentleman's" agreement that *in normal circumstances* no Board would advertise for Staff before February 1, and contracts should be signed by March 1.

It was always felt that as School Societies we should not "compete" for

staff by "beating" others to it with early advertising, also not with extra attractive salaries. There is enough room left for honest competition.

However, some School Boards may not have been aware of such a "Gentleman's" agreement, and commenced advertising sooner. Then others who were badly in need of teachers were "forced" to do the same.

Since your League has no authority to give directives, but comes only together to agree *together* on certain matters, we can only publish the conclusions of the November 30 meeting supported by "input" from Staff members and Boards.

1. In general, teachers are not ready to consider a position for a term ahead if a present term has only started a couple months ago. So please, no advertising too soon

2. While advertising is in progress, a certain teacher may see an opportunity for promotion, challenge, or simply a change. So please don't put advertising dates and date of contract signing too close together

3. However, the Board for reasons of staffing and budget do not like to see the whole procedure "dragged on" without any conclusion. The League believes this will not serve anyone, be it the School Society Members, the Boards, or the Teachers.

For this reason the Board members present agreed on the following schedule.

1. No advertising before January 1.

2. Contract signing before April 1.

We do hope that all those involved will agree on the wisdom of such a conclusion. May we exhort all Boards to abide by this agreement. May we ask all teachers to ignore any approaches at an earlier date. May we all show that it is beneficial to have such an agreement as brothers and sisters.

The second point discussed and accepted was to make the A.S.C. a standing Committee of the League for one year at least (until December 31, 1980).

What is this A.S.C. all about?

About the Advisory Committee for Special Children (ASC)

At its November 1979 meeting the League of Canadian Reformed School

Societies in Ontario passed a motion to accept the *Advisory Committee for Special Children* as a standing committee, subject to review December 1980. This Committee (hereafter to be called the ASC Committee) has been functioning independently since September 1977. It may surprise some people why the ASC Committee has been working quietly behind the scenes for so long. Actually, it is debatable whether the ASC has always been so low-profile. After all, it distributed its first Newsletter in February 1977 to all teachers in Ontario, and in June 1978 held a public meeting with principals and special education teachers of our Canadian Reformed Schools in Ontario. It is true, though, that the actual work of the ASC Committee has been done rather inobtrusively. This is because the Committee wanted to spend sufficient time to try out its concept on some of the schools, so that, when it was ready to "go public," it would be speaking from experience and some support base.

The main involvement of the Committee has been to consult to some of our schools on special cases. The idea of consultation is not that the Committee would come up with all the answers, or even provide direct help, but more to provide the school with different perspectives and other possibilities for helping a child with problems. When schools have referred such problem cases to us for consultation and discussion, the parents have always been informed, and the referring school will share feedback with the parents. Until now the ASC Committee has not been able to consult directly with parents, but this may become more of a possibility with extra funding from the League. The consultation service has apparently met with success, and several board members and teachers have been able to attest to the importance of something like the ASC Committee in our midst. This kind of testimony from teachers, Board members, and the well-prepared submissions by the ASC Committee itself has been a great help in the League deciding to put its support behind the ASC Committee and to help it to become more established.

One of the objectives of the ASC Committee is to provide a fairly broad approach to the problem of the "special child." While it has started to work with the schools, the Committee feels a real challenge in trying to make

Continued on page 14.

Church News

Called:

from Hamilton, Ontario

REV. W. HUIZINGA

to Albany, Australia.

* * *

The Committee for Correspondence with Churches Abroad reports that Rev. L. Moes, who is planning to visit Canada this winter, is a minister in good standing in our Netherlands sister churches.

* * *

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Canadian Reformed School Society of Winnipeg,

Mrs. W. Schriemer

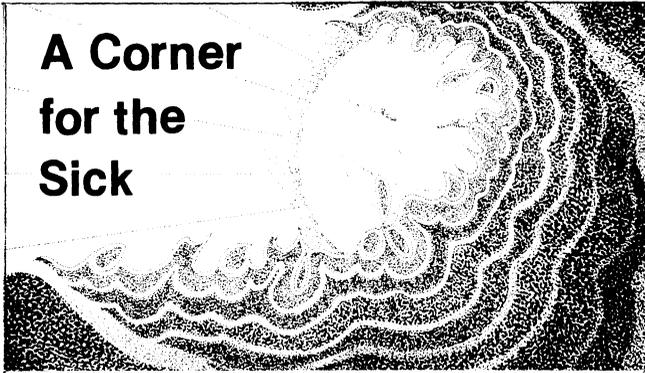
From:

Box 115, P.S. Transcona,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2C 2Z5

To:

215 Rougeau Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2C 3Z9.

A Corner for the Sick



Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?

Mark 4:40

The disciples of the Lord Jesus were actually so afraid they thought they would perish! Jesus was in the same boat with them, on the lake, during a storm. Why should they be afraid? Physical danger existed, the boat was filling up with water, and they were desperate. But, Jesus was asleep!

The disciples had seen many miracles which the Lord Jesus performed, and they had listened to many sermons. Still, they lost faith! Do we not sometimes experience this same fear?

We may notice how the Lord Jesus prepares the disciples for every situation in life. They will have to be strong when the Lord is gone from them physically. In this chapter we see how the Lord teaches them to look away from themselves. Is He not the Master of the universe? Even the water and winds obey Him!

With us it is the same. Everytime anew we have to learn to look to Christ. When we neglect to read His Word, or when we get so anxious about our daily existence, we lose hope and will experience this same fear: "Lord help me; otherwise I will perish."

We may also lose our confidence when we focus our eyes on people, if all that matters to us is what they are thinking or saying about us. In all our difficulties (and who among us does not experience some kind of frustration), we will have to learn to look at Christ, at His infinite love and faithfulness. Calvin, in his Institutes of the Christian Religion, writes that the life of a Christian is never without prayer, and that the pious mind will always rise and be able to say with David (Psalm 23): "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me." He also writes that unbelief does not reign in the hearts of believers, but they are assaulted from without.

We may be comforted with these words which the Lord Jesus spoke to Peter in Luke 22:31, "But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail."

We may be assured that in our greatest temptations we may know for sure that Christ has delivered us from the evil one, and He is always at our side to deliver us again. Let us look to Christ in confidence and assurance of faith and confess with the author of

Psalm 27: Though a host encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear,
Though war arise against me,
Yet I will be confident.

From Mr. and Mrs. Breukelman we have received a thank you note for all the cards Alan received for his birthday. I quote: "The response was simply overwhelming. One family sent him a large envelope with pictures of farm animals. Young People's groups responded, as well as "Jeugd van Vroeger" groups. Cards were received even from Australia and Brazil. In addition to that, Alan and Beverly received a card every month from a family. The children really enjoy this! Special thanks to them! All the cards and pictures are put in an album and looked at and enjoyed from time to time."

Thanks to all the brothers and sisters, but above all to our heavenly Father Who in this way also remembers His children.

We have at the same time received a request from the Breukelman family:

CHRISTINE BREUKELMAN

Box 666, Coaldale, Alberta TOK 0L0

Christine is an eight-year-old sister of Beverly's and Alan's. Her birthday will be on January 7th, and she will be eight years old then, the Lord willing! She lives at home, but attends school with five other, handicapped children. She is cute, affectionate, and at times mischievous. Her favourite hobbies are listening to lively music and looking through her brother's and sister's picture albums. She has no speech at all yet. Shall we send Christine lots of birthday cards, brothers and sisters, so she can start her own album?



Teacher Lora Heister and Christine Breukelman, Coaldale, with color concept.

HANK ORSEL

2435 Second Street, Apt. 510,
Burlington, Ontario L7R 1E5

Hank is still collecting stamps for his mother, who in turn saves the stamps for the Bible Society. Hank hopes to celebrate his 49th birthday on January 27th, the Lord willing!

Shall we remember him and send him many birthday greetings? He really appreciates this!

* * * * *

If you know of anyone sick or lonely, send your request, with some information about the circumstances (please write age also), to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma

380 St. Andrew Street E., Fergus, Ontario N1M 1R1.

news medley

From faraway Australia I received a letter with some remarks about the word “forestudy” and I think that we should show that we appreciate such contributions. Therefore I quote part of that letter. The writer also deals with a sentence from article 27 of our Belgic Confession, and I’ll say a few words about that, too. Let me rather copy the whole letter instead of taking only part of it. Here it comes.

In a recent *Clarion* I read some comments about the use of the word “forestudy.” At the time I gave it little attention, but later on it occurred to me that I might react to it. However, I could not find the article again and so I address this to you, hoping you can pass it on to the right address. At the same time I can also pass on to Canada a question which I’ve had for some years now about, what in my opinion, is an incorrectly translated sentence in one of the articles of the Belgic Confession, in the *Book of Praise*.

First the “forestudy.” This seems to be a not very well translated word for the Dutch “voorstudie.” In Australia we use the word *prestudy*, which probably comes from *prep-study* or *preparatory study*. Maybe *pre-study* is not nice either, however, it is better than “forestudy” in my view. We also know the word “*prep-class*” (*voorbereidingsklas*) here, and *prep-room* as used in a science area of a laboratory. To you the judgment!

Concerning the Belgic Confession article, I refer to article 27 which speaks of Jesus Christ the King, . . . *which without subjects He cannot be*. I think this should be “which cannot be without subjects” or “*who cannot be. . .*” This agrees with the French text which Rev. Vonk quotes in a footnote in his book on the N.G.B. Maybe some authority can give it more detailed examination, if you think it worthwhile. . . . Several people here read the *Clarion* with interest.

That is the letter.

As for the word “*prep-study*” or “*pre-study*,” I think that that is to be preferred far above the word “forestudy,” which — in my view — still is not proper English. I doubt that “*pre-study*” comes from “*prep-study*,” but I would go for the word “*pre-study*” as the proper translation of “*voorstudie*.” And that is the last word I say about it, unless someone comes up with definite *proof*.

Concerning the second remark, I am not in a position to speak as an “*authority*” on this point. I can only say how I understand it. The French text (according to “Schaff”) reads here “*qui ne peut être sans sujets*.” That is indeed to be translated by “*who cannot be without subjects*.” However, I do not think that the English text “*which without subjects He cannot be*,” is all that far out. The meaning, as I understand it, is: Which (namely “*an eternal King*”) He cannot be without having subjects. In other words: He cannot be without subjects, for He is an eternal King. Is that not the same as the French text has it, be it that the English version as we have it is not a literal translation? I must admit that I do not understand why our English texts has it the way it does have it. Perhaps Dr. Faber could enlighten us on this.

In any case: thanks for the letter and for the encouraging words. It is good to hear from the brotherhood throughout the world.

Let us with the further news start somewhat closer to home. We begin with the Church at Lincoln and shall work our way to the West via, via.

Starting on a particular Sunday, “on recommendation of the consistory, you will be met by two friendly ushers, standing in the hall of the Church building.” It was especially the fact that the ushers will be friendly ones which drew my attention. Otherwise I might have overlooked this small item. However, the task of the ushers is not all that small. Hear what is expected of them.

As most of our Church members do not need help for finding a seat, feel free to ask for assistance, if the need is there.

As well, the ushers will be responsible for welcoming guests to our services. They will ask them to sign the “*Guest book*,” hand them a *Book of Praise*, and show them a place to sit. They also will ask those guests whether they have a place to stay between services, and if needed, help will be offered.

The Lincoln Church will have a bulletin of their own — as I mentioned before — and designs have already been received for a cover. In due time we shall be able to tell you all about it, we hope.

Hamilton has chosen Brazil as the country to which a missionary will be sent. That is undoubtedly a reason for joy for those missionaries who are working there already. It will also render things somewhat easier for the missionary which Hamilton will send there. The Consistory has already appointed a committee for the calling of a missionary. It is good to see that, now that the decision has been made, the work is not delayed. May Hamilton soon find someone willing and able to be sent out.

The Hamilton Consistory decided “to eliminate the collections for the building fund and, instead, hold collections for mission aid.” It is well-known what I think of all those camouflaged collections for “the Church,” among which also collections for “building funds” occupy an important place, and for that reason I am happy with the above decision.

The Rev. W. Loopstra — Hamilton’s bulletin tells us — is still in the hospital and the back-trouble has still not been cured. We wish our brother much patience and express as our heartfelt desire that he may see his health restored completely or at least to such an extent that he can move around without being hampered by pain and discomfort.

No more particulars have to be mentioned concerning the Ontario Churches; thence we move on to Manitoba.

Carman’s bulletin contains a lengthy explanatory article dealing with plans for a new Church building. I have tried to understand plan A and plan B, and to visualize a few aspects, but I gave up: if one has not seen the drawings, it is too hard to find one’s way in the terminology and descriptions. One thing stands out clearly in my mind: Carman has not come back from the decision to build a Church building which is to seat some four hundred people. That gives me the shivers, for it means a congregation with a membership between five and six hundred, which I consider to be far too large for one minister and for a good and healthy congregational life. But I think that I can make such remarks for as long as I live without much immediate success. Yet I shall not refrain from doing it; I deem the point too important to keep silent about it.

The Carman Consistory also decided to change the time of ordination of elders and deacons from January 1st to

the first Sunday in June. "This will give the new elder more time to prepare himself for the home visit season."

Our journey to Edmonton leads us to Coaldale first.

The Deacons of Coaldale apparently need more income than what they are receiving. They informed the Congregation of that. Between brackets: I think that the deacons in not a few Congregations are happy that they are called upon more often to extend help. There were years during which in most Congregations the moneys were collected and for the larger part contributed only to an increase of the monthly balance.

Many Congregations have been waiting even for word from the Deacons that more is needed.

The Coaldale Deacons make this known in the following manner:

Expenses over receipts: \$367.82 per month. That is approximately \$1.00 per month for each member. That is only 12½ cents for each member per sermon. In case there are five Sundays in a month, it is only 10 cents for each member per sermon.

What struck me there was that the break-down of the amount is not calculated per "service" — as is done usually — but per "sermon."

And now we move on to Edmonton.

The *City Guide* has a new design on the front cover. The back page is printed now with information about Church life and activities. Secretaries and meeting times of various societies are included. Permit me a remark about a very small sign that has been inadvertently omitted with most societies. It should have read "Girls' Society" instead of "Girls Society." The name "Ladies Society" and "Men Society" is to be changed into "Ladies' Society" and Men's Society." Especially when printed covers are used, these little things should not be forgotten. In Dutch the name is "Mannenvereniging" but in English it is "Men's Society."

More about that design on the front cover. We see a corner of the wall of Jerusalem as it is described in Revelation 21:10-27. (Between brackets: sometimes I read in bulletins that an introduction shall deal with a chapter from RevelationS. The name is: the Revelation to John.) We look at that corner somewhat from below. I had to think of Psalm 48 when I saw the drawing. To the right we see two of the gates and to the left we see only one. Jerusalem has twelve gates, isn't it, three on each side, and they are open day and night. The city is "bathed in light." The wall (and the city behind the wall) makes a very solid impression: there is strength and safety in and behind those walls, even though the gates are never closed.

A few organists left Edmonton, and therefore others are encouraged to apply for the "job" of organist.

We have enjoyed our organ for many years and a lot of our teenagers have been given the opportunity to play it. . . . Yes, young folks, you guessed it, we want to be reimbursed, not in money, but by phoning me and simply saying, "When may I play in the services?" . . . No need to fill in application forms — a phone call is quite sufficient. Realize however, that the pay is fantastic, i.e. satisfaction in doing your bit for the Church. To explain the latter with a lot of pious words is superfluous, don't you think?

I hope that many of the young members phoned our brother and will in this manner use their gifts and talents in the service of the Church. The pay is indeed fantastic. We all have the obligation to use our talents in the service of the Lord — that's what He gave them for, didn't He? — and we have to

do so wholeheartedly and unreservedly. It should be considered a great privilege when we are permitted to use our gifts for the edification of the Church. In the world people are not prepared to do anything unless the question has been answered first of all: "What do I get for it? What's the pay?" In the Church those things are an abomination. Would the Lord have given us gifts in order that we should leave them unused, or in order that we should use them only when we get paid for using that which the Lord has *given*?

On the other hand: the Congregations are also to remember that playing the organ well requires many hours of study and of regular practice. An organist may have to subscribe to magazines and he certainly has to buy music every time to keep up his skill and not to come every time anew with the same pieces to play. Our Consistories will do well when they include a regular item "Organist. . . . \$. . ." in the budget. That is NO PAY; it is only a token of appreciation, and that's what organists need: that they are appreciated, and that such is shown.

We move on to British Columbia.

The Houston Consistory decided to send a letter to the Smithers Consistory with a proposal that the two ministers in the Bulkley Valley should receive the opportunity to exchange pulpits at regular intervals. Such — the Consistory argued — would be beneficial both for the Congregations and for the ministers.

Smithers responded to that.

Letter from the Church of Houston proposing regular pulpit exchange between the two Churches. It was decided to accept the proposal and to have regular pulpit exchange every six weeks with extra exchanges permitted during festal seasons and "emergency cases."

I do not know why some Churches see anything magic in that number of six weeks. I, for one, would rather see an exchange every month. That would, in my opinion, be more beneficial than once every six weeks. However, better something than nothing, I would say. It is gratifying when the benefit of such an exchange is seen. And it is very important when the possibility to do it is there.

In Smithers a Christmas celebration was held with the Native Youth Club, their parents, relatives, and friends. There were also plans "to give parcels to approximately 13 families we have close contact with." The Congregation was asked who would be willing to make up such a parcel. "The Home Mission Committee will provide you with a Children's Story Bible to be included in the parcel as well." Further, "Christmas Messages will be delivered throughout town."

While I am typing this (Dec. 5) the doorbell goes, but no one at the door except a parcel on the steps containing various surprises from moose to chocolate!

In order that no one may receive a wrong impression, I mention that the above lines were written by the Rev. Van Spronsen. Moose-meat is not all that abundant in Southern Ontario. It is a long time ago since I tasted moose meat. I found it a little dry. Since our column "A Pinch of Salt" seems to have died (with "School Crossing" and "Food Information") I should like to ask our readers in the Smithers area whether they have ever tried to mix moose hamburger with beef hamburger (the cheapest kind) at a ratio of 5:2, and how that was received by the diners. We did it sometimes with horse hamburger and beef hamburger when there was still a horse butcher on Edmonds close to the Kingsway in Burnaby. Forgive me this brief excursion.

We shall turn to some more serious things.

Drifting down south, we get to Chilliwack first.

It was brought to the attention of the Consistory that the Mennonite Brethren Church people are open to a new bid on the Chilliwack Central Church building because they have acquired some property. The treasurer will reconfirm the pledges with the members of the Congregation and the Committee of Administration will work out the details of a new offer and report back to the Consistory.

Later on we read,

The Committee of Administration recommends to the Consistory to make a new offer. . . on the property, with the provision that the pews, the organ, the sound system and the other furnishings are left in the building.

The Consistory agreed to that, and the offer was made. I am not aware as yet of any reply that our sister Church received, but I admire their audacity: lock, stock, and barrel.

Langley, too, is busy with plans. The Consistory received two sets of drawings for the design of a Church building, "with an explanatory letter, handed out to Consistory members a few days previously," and they were given into discussion.

After a short coffee break the discussion on these plans is concluded. It is unanimously decided to adopt one of the presented designs in principle as a church building for Langley. This design will be recommended at a meeting with the Congregation which is scheduled for December 19, 1979.

We are being kept in suspense, as you can see. I can tell you that I am just as impatient to know what has been decided and what it will look like as you are. I'll try to tell you more next time.

Let us conclude with New Westminster.

A visit was scheduled to Surrey Memorial Extended Care facilities, where the Rev. Van Dam was to speak. The young people were urged to come to sing and, afterwards, to talk with the patients who always appreciate such gestures and activities.

— We would also like to inform you that we have sent out — invitations to the immediate surrounding neighbourhood

to invite them to our Christmas morning worship service and their children to the program after the service.

That is all I have to tell you this time about events and happenings within the Churches.

May I close this medley with wishing all the brothers and sisters the blessing of the Lord in the year 1980, the year which we have begun in His Name and fear and which we intend to complete to His glory. From many places we have received cards with wishes. Our wishes in this place go out to all. "Blessing and favour to all of you." vO

The Orthodox Christian Reformed Church

— Continued from page 7.

reverse itself and who invite our cooperation in all sorts of ventures. It becomes more and more difficult to understand how some among us can cooperate so apparently wholeheartedly with persons who do not show any intention of following the path of obedience which the brothers and sisters in Listowel have chosen.

However, it is not the first time in the history of the Church that so little came from those from whom so much was expected.

* * * * *

We express the wish that many in the Christian Reformed Church may return to total submission to God's Word, that one infallible Word, to complete and faithful adherence to the Reformed Confessions, and that in this manner a unity may be achieved for which we have been working and praying from the moment on when the first immigrants came to Canada from the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands which had returned to the freedom in Christ.

If more particulars become available about developments either here or at other places, we shall keep our readers informed. We deemed it good to comply with the request to have the above letter published, also for the information of our people. — vO

School Societies — Continued from page 10.

the "Special Child" the business of all of us. With this kind of motivation the ASC Committee, along with the League, will endeavour to make important linkages with other groups and organizations, such as the Association for the Handicapped, the Canadian Reformed Teachers' Association, ministers, and office-bearers. Eventually, there might be good reasons for placing the ASC Committee under a governing Board which would be representative of all of these groups and thus have less of a direct tie with the schools, as is currently the case.

The question might be asked why the ASC Committee is now affiliated with the League. One reason is historical, and the other reason is practical. The ASC Committee is actually a brainchild of the *Special Child Report* which was commissioned by the League in

the Spring of 1975 and finally published in January 1977. As was mentioned above, the ASC Committee started off in September 1977, and in October 1978 made its first submission to the League. This submission was made around funding and also to explain the concept of the Committee which, in turn, would be discussed by the various member-school boards. While it has taken a full year for the League to reach a decision concerning ASC, it has now rightfully taken the Committee under its wing, and will play an important role in shaping its future progress, and establishing a meaningful role among us. The practical reason for affiliation with the League is that the Committee is in desperate need of some funds so that it can launch a broader appeal and develop some of its other projects. Any funding will, of course, be applied responsibly and the

Committee will be required to present a proper budget which will need to be approved by the League and its member-boards.

In the coming months we hope to be hearing more about the work of the ASC Committee, and the Committee will be looking for any ideas from the Canadian Reformed community at large. The key to the success is that the needs of our special children are best served when a lot of us become involved in a co-ordinated effort.

Anyone wishing to receive complimentary copies of the *ASC Newsletter* should contact (Mrs.) Marg Vander Boom, 344 Henderson Road, Burlington, Ontario L7L 2P7. There are still some copies of the *Special Child Report*. These can be obtained from Mr. J. Gelderman, 491 Karen Drive, Burlington, Ontario L7R 3J2.

JAN GELDERMAN

PRESS RELEASE

of the Regional Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Western Canada, held on October 30 to November 2, 1979 in the Canadian Reformed Church Building at Smithers, B.C.

1. On behalf of the convening church at Smithers, the Rev. C. Van Spronsen called the meeting to order on Tuesday, October 30, 1979 at 8 p.m. He requested the delegates and audience to sing Psalm 87:1 to 5, he read the same Psalm, and led in prayer. He then explained the circumstances which led to the convening of this Regional Synod; he welcomed the delegates and audience, and expressed the hope that that Synod will be fruitful and faithful to the Lord.

2. The credentials were examined and found to be in good order. The delegates from Classis Pacific were: for the ministers, the brothers D. Vander Boom, C. Van Spronsen, and J. Visscher; for the elders, the brothers R. Fennema, J. Vanderhorst, and J. Vander Linden. The delegates from Classis Alberta-Manitoba were: for the ministers, the brothers S. De Bruin, J. Van Rietschoten, and J.D. Wielenga; for the elders, the brothers L.M. Toet, T. Vandenbrink, and C. Veldkamp.

3. Synod was declared constituted. For the executive officers, the following were elected: Rev. D. Vander Boom as Chairman, Rev. S. De Bruin as Vice-Chairman, and Rev. J. Visscher as Clerk.

4. With some changes and additions, the Provisional Agenda was adopted.

5. Overtures.

A) A letter was received from the Church at Abbotsford with the request that "the Regional Synod add the following clause unto its Regulations" namely: "In case a minister has been appointed as delegate to a forthcoming General Synod, and by his acceptance of a call to a church outside the district of this Regional Synod has been released already by Classis from his duties before this General Synod is held, then this minister shall leave the execution of his appointment to his alternate."

The grounds for this request were:

a) "After having been released by Classis because of his departure for a church outside the district of the Regional Synod to which he belonged,

this minister cannot be considered to be representative anymore for this Regional Synod.

b) The possibility should be ruled out, that this minister, by having entered into the district of another Regional Synod, could be delegated by that Regional Synod as well for the same purpose.

c) Whether in the above mentioned case a minister has to give his place to his alternate, should not be left to the discretion of this minister himself, but should be regulated by the authority which has sent him."

This request was supported by a letter from the Church at New Westminster. After some deliberation, it was decided to accede to this request and to add the above clause to the Regional Synod Regulations.

B) A letter was received from the Church at Barrhead with a proposal "to decide that future Regional Synods will be held in Calgary, Edmonton, or in South British Columbia in order to eliminate (diminish) travel expenses and loss of wages."

In relation to the above, a letter of support was received from the Church at New Westminster, and a letter of opposition from the Church at Smithers.

This proposal was not adopted.

6. Correspondence.

Appeals with enclosures were received from the Church at Neerlandia. A) A letter of introduction to these appeals was read. After some deliberation, the following decision was made: "Regional Synod takes note of the introductory letter of the Church at Neerlandia and receives as information only those statements that correspond directly to the official letters, Acts, and appeals and to matters dealt with already in Classes Alberta-Manitoba."

B) The first appeal was against the decision of Classis dd. March 14/15, '78, Acts, Art. 11c "to instruct the Church at Neerlandia that her request to 'promise to refrain from this kind of preaching' and 'to apologize for it' must be withdrawn forthwith."

In relation to this Appeal, the following was decided:

Regional Synod having heard: the request of the Church at Neerlandia to Synod to judge:

a) that Classis March '78 erred in acceding to Rev. D. De Jong's request, thereby *ipso facto* pronouncing that Neerlandia's request was unscriptural and illegitimate and therefore should be withdrawn forthwith, using as grounds Art. 5a of the Acts of previous Classis October '77.

b) that this same Classis erred when it admonished the Church at Neerlandia for "not having abided by the decision of the previous Classis, as She has promised on the basis of Art. 31, C.O." c) that this same Classis erred, when it instructed the Church at Neerlandia "That her request 'to promise to refrain from this kind of preaching' and 'to apologize for it' must be withdrawn forthwith."

Regional Synod observes:

1. Neerlandia adduces as ground for this request, that according to Neerlandia, Classis March '78 based its decision on an erroneous interpretation of Art. 5a, Acts Classis October '77;

2. Art. 5a, Acts Classis '77 reads: "that the Church of Neerlandia should not have requested Rev. D. De Jong 'to refrain from this kind of preaching in the future,' before having attempted to clear up the alleged confusion caused by three sermons held by Rev. D. De Jong in the Church of Neerlandia";

3. Neerlandia states in its Appeal, that Classis October '77 only made a pronouncement on the timing of Neerlandia's request to Rev. D. De Jong;

4. Classis March '78 read the decision of the previous Classis in Art. 5a as an instruction to the Church at Neerlandia to withdraw its request to Rev. D. De Jong forthwith;

5. the decision of Classis October '77, Art. 5a is preceded by a) Rev. D. De Jong's request (consideration b.) "That a minister in the Canadian Reformed Churches can only be bound to preach as demanded by the Classical Subscription Form."

Regional Synod considers:

1. that the formulation of Classis October '77 decision Acts Art. 5a lacks desirable clarity and left room for misinterpretation.

2. however, that a text, if ambiguous in itself, must be interpreted and understood in its context — *in casu*: in the light of the Classical considerations;

3. that Neerlandia reads the decision of Art. 5a without due regard of the context in consideration b.;

4. that Neerlandia's interpretation of Art. 5a lets Classis state by implication, that a church has the right to request of a minister to refrain from a certain kind

(or any kind of preaching), as long as this Church makes an attempt at the same time to clear up the controversy between itself and the minister concerned;

5. that the interpretation of Neerlandia of Art. 5a, therefore, is in obvious conflict with Art. 5, consideration b., which, contrary to the implication of Neerlandia's interpretation, states the fundamental rule which Classis wants to be adhered to, namely, that no minister may be bound beyond that to which the Classical Subscription Form binds him;

6. that therefore Neerlandia's interpretation of Art. 5a, makes Classis October '77 contradict itself, and is for that reason clearly the wrong interpretation.

7. that the wrong timing of the request qualifies the request as illegitimate at that time when it was made;

8. that in connection with Consideration 5b, the proper time would have been the moment that Neerlandia comes with proof at Classis that Rev. D. De Jong preached in conflict with the Classical Subscription Form.

Regional Synod judges:

1. that although the formulation of the decision of Classis left room for misinterpretation, Classis March '78 nevertheless gave the right interpretation of Art. 5a, Acts October '77.

2. that Classis March '78 had no need to provide ground of its own, as previous Classis had already provided the necessary ground in Consideration b. for a decision in the same matter.

and Regional Synod decides:

not to accede to the request of the Church at Neerlandia in its Appeal No. 1.

C) The second appeal was against "the Classis of Nov. 7/9 '78 (Acts) Art. 20, Classis decides in conclusion, not to grant the request for revision to the Church at Neerlandia on the above mentioned grounds."

Since the Classis in question dealt with the above request in four points, the Church at Neerlandia followed the same order in this second appeal.

In relation to this second appeal, Synod decided:

Appeal 2, point I

Regional Synod having heard:

the request of the Church at Neerlandia to Synod to decide

a) "Synod judges that Classis of November '78 was in error when it rejected the request of the Church of Neerlandia for revision of the decision of the previous Classis March 78;"

b) "Synod judges that Classis November should have substantiated the statement that Neerlandia's request for revision was unfounded and Classis was not convinced. As given, the grounds are insufficient and superficial."

Regional Synod observes:

1. Classis November '78 rejected the request of Neerlandia to decide, that the decision of the previous Classis "to accede to Rev. D. De Jong's request was taken upon insufficient proof, without hearing the Church at Neerlandia."

2. Classis November '78 adduces as ground for its rejection of this request that "Classis is not convinced by the reasoning of Neerlandia."

3. Neerlandia in its request to Synod claims this ground to be insufficient and superficial.

Regional Synod considers:

1. that there is no evidence in the Acts that there was a request of Neerlandia to be heard by Classis in accordance with what has been agreed upon in the Subscription Form. If Neerlandia would have desired to be heard, it should have made a submission to Classis against the preaching of the Rev. D. De Jong on the basis of the Classical Subscription Form.

2. by Classis' statement that it was "not convinced by the reasoning of Neerlandia," Classis judged that Neerlandia had not proven, that Neerlandia nevertheless should have been heard.

3. that the Church at Neerlandia in its Appeal fails to submit to Synod the reasoning it used in its Revision Request to convince Classis that it should have been heard.

Regional Synod judges:

1. on the basis of the Acts October '77 Art. 5, Consideration b. and Decision a., that the decision of Classis November '78 was correct;

2. that the ground of Classis November '78 in itself cannot be judged to be insufficient or superficial;

3. that Synod cannot judge whether in that *situation* the grounds were insufficient or superficial, as the Church at Neerlandia has not submitted to Synod the reasoning it used in the Revision Request.

Regional Synod decides:

not to accede to the request of Neerlandia in its Appeal 2, point I.

Appeal 2, point II

Regional Synod having heard

the request of the Church at Neerlandia to Synod to decide

a) that Classis November '78 was in error when it rejected Neerlandia's request for revision of the interpretation of Art. 5a by Classis March '78;

b) that Classis November '78 failed to lay the proper basis for its decision and grounds, by not showing an analysis of Neerlandia's claims in its considerations and observations;

c) that Classis November '78 was in error when it provided as ground for its decision a further expansion on an already erroneous interpretation of Art. 5a.

Regional Synod observes:

1. Classis November '78 adduces as ground for its decision: "When the Church of Neerlandia in its letter post stamped December 29, 1977, began to attempt to clear up the alleged confusion, it was still asking of Rev. D. De Jong what Classis had said it should not have done before attempting this."

2. Neerlandia adduces in its present Appeal to Synod as ground for its request, that Classis November '78 used, as grounds for its decision, an erroneous interpretation of Art. 5a Classis October '77.

3. Neerlandia states in Consideration b. (Appeal 2, point II) that Classis November '78 expanded on the erroneous interpretation of Art. 5a, as if that article meant, that Neerlandia was instructed to first withdraw her request to Rev. D. De Jong and then to begin to attempt to clear up the alleged confusion.

Regional Synod considers:

1. the interpretation of Art. 5a by Classis March '78 must be considered correct. (See Synod's decision re Appeal 1.)

2. the alleged expansion on the interpretation of Art. 5a does not change the basic principle, laid down in consideration b. of Art. 5a by Classis October '77, that requests of the character made by Neerlandia to Rev. D. De Jong, cannot be made before both parties have attempted to clear up the confusion, with as result either that Neerlandia is satisfied or turns to Classis with a complaint that Rev. D. De Jong goes against the Three Forms of Unity.

3. that upholding this basic principle must be considered a proper ground for the decision of Classis.

Regional Synod judges:

that the grounds on which the Church at Neerlandia bases its request is invalid.

and Regional Synod decides:

not to accede to the request of the Church at Neerlandia in Appeal 2, point II.

Appeal 2, point III

Regional Synod having heard

the request of the Church at Neerlandia to Synod to decide, that Classis November '78 was in error when it declared that "Conclusion 3 of the request for revision by the Church at Neerlandia re Art. 11c Acts of the previous Classis, is unfounded," thereby refusing to remove the unjust stain from the Church at Neerlandia.

Regional Synod observes:

that both Classis November '78 and the Church at Neerlandia in its appeal agree, that positive agreement with this requested judgment requires positive agreement with the decisions made on the previous judgments.

Regional Synod considers:

that Synod already has judged the Classis interpretation of Art. 5a to be correct.

Regional Synod judges:

that the Church at Neerlandia, however unwittingly, indeed failed to abide by Art. 31, C.O.

Regional Synod decides

not to accede to the request of the Church at Neerlandia in Appeal 2, point III.

Appeal 2, point IV

Regional Synod having heard:

the request of the Church at Neerlandia to decide, that Classis November '78 erred in upholding the instruction to the Church at Neerlandia to withdraw her request forthwith, on the ground of the erroneous interpretation of Art. 5a; further to decide, that both Classis March '78 and November '78 infringed upon the rights of the Church at Neerlandia, when these Classes instructed this Church to withdraw her request to Rev. D. De Jong.

Regional Synod observes:

1. that the Church at Neerlandia in this request returns to the so-called erroneous interpretation of Art. 5a, which point has been dealt with by Synod (see above);

2. that the Church at Neerlandia considers her rights to be infringed upon by the instruction of Classis to withdraw her request to Rev. D. De Jong.

Regional Synod considers

1. that the rights of a church are not unconditional, but are restricted by the duties which that church voluntarily accepted when it joined the Confederation of Churches;

2. that the right to request to refrain from preaching, is restricted by what has been agreed upon by the Classical approbation of a minister's call, by the Church Order, and by the Subscription Form;

3. that Classis October '77 made the contents of what has been stated in consideration 2 (above) the basis of its decision, that the Church at Neerlandia should not have requested Rev. D. De Jong "to refrain from this kind of preaching."

Regional Synod judges:

1. that Classis did not infringe upon the right of the Church at Neerlandia, but reminded her of her duty.

2. that both Classes March '78 and November '78 used the proper basis for the instruction to the Church at Neerlandia to withdraw her request to Rev. D. De Jong, namely, the decision of Art. 5a of Classis October '77, which was based on its consideration (b) "that a minister in the Canadian Reformed Churches can only be bound to preach as demanded by the Classical Subscription Form."

Regional Synod decides:

not to accede to the request of the Church at Neerlandia in Appeal 2, point IV.

Appeal 3

Regional Synod having heard:

the requests of the Church at Neerlandia that

a) "Synod judges that Classis Alberta/Manitoba of April 17/18, '79 erred in deciding 'That the preaching of Rev. D. De Jong concerning church and the communion of saints is in accordance with the Three Forms of Unity and as such the doubts of the Church at Neerlandia were unfounded.'"

b) "Synod judges that the matter between the Church at Neerlandia and the Rev. D. De Jong is not just a view related to the Confessions but concerns the Confessions directly."

c) "To inform the forthcoming Classis Alberta/Manitoba of these decisions and send a copy thereof to the Church at Neerlandia."

Regional Synod observes:

that the background of the above is:

a) Art. 13, observation 4 of the Classis Alberta/Manitoba, April 18, 1979 which reads "that the Church at Neerlandia also adduces for its decision to close the pulpit, the persistent and increased doubts concerning Rev. D. De Jong's views of church and communion of saints, with consequences for his stand on the education of the youth of the

covenant and the necessity for all believers to join the Canadian Reformed Church";

b) Art. 13, consideration 3 of the Classis Alberta/Manitoba, April 18, 1979 which reads "that a distinction must be made between the Confession of the Church (accepted by the churches as binding on the churches) and various views, which, though related to the Confession, are not part of the Confession";

c) Art. 13, consideration 4 of the Classis Alberta/Manitoba, April 18, 1979 which reads "that Classis, after thorough examination of the correspondence between Rev. D. De Jong and the Church at Neerlandia has found no deviation from the Three Forms of Unity in the teaching and preaching of Rev. D. De Jong";

d) that the Church at Neerlandia states that "From the correspondence about Rev. D. De Jong's sermons (and his sermons on L.D. 21, Q. and A. 54 and 55 which were allowed into the discussion by Rev. D. De Jong and Classis) we learn that Rev. D. De Jong views the communion of saints wider than the Church. That he promotes this view in his sermons and uses his view to admonish the Congregation to a cooperation with believers outside the church on the basis of the confession of the communion of saints"; (observation d) Appeal, Church at Neerlandia)

e) that the Church at Neerlandia claims that "the view, that the communion of saints is wider than the church, posits an invisible church beside the true church as confessed in Articles 27-29 of the Belgic Confession" (consideration a) Appeal, Church at Neerlandia);

f) that the Church at Neerlandia claims that "to admonish the congregation to cooperation with believers outside the church (however, general and ill-defined this admonition may be) on the basis that these believers, although outside of the church are yet within the Communion of Saints, constitutes a command to the congregation with the force of 'thus says the Lord'" (consideration b) Appeal, Church at Neerlandia);

g) that the Church at Neerlandia claims that "to use the confessional term 'Communion of Saints' loosely for so-called interdenominational activities is robbing the confession of the Communion of Saints of its confessional contents as apposition to the 'Holy Catholic Church'" (consideration c) Appeal, Church at Neerlandia);

h) that the Church at Neerlandia claims that (e) (f) (g) "warrant the conclusion that the doubts of the Church at Neerlandia concerning the preaching of Rev. D. De Jong indeed concern the Confession of the church directly and are not merely related thereto" (consideration d) Appeal, Church at Neerlandia);

i) that the Church at Neerlandia claims that "the teaching of Rev. D. De Jong, that the Communion of Saints is wider than the church, posits an invisible church beside the true church as confessed in Art. 27-29 of the Belgic Confession, and in Heidelberg Catechism L.D. 21, Q. and A. 54 and 55. Since neither Scripture nor Confession know of an invisible church besides the church, Rev. D. De Jong's teaching is on this point contrary to Scripture and Confession" (ground a) Appeal, Church at Neerlandia);

j) that the Church at Neerlandia claims that "Rev. D. De Jong's using his view on the Communion of Saints as wider than the church to admonish the congregation to a cooperation with believers outside the church on the basis that these believers are nevertheless within the Communion of Saints, is an overstepping of the boundaries of Scripture and Confession and a laying upon the congregation an *opinion* rather than the Word of God, *yet* with the force of the Word of God" (ground b) Appeal, Church at Neerlandia);

k) that the Church at Neerlandia claims that "the doubts of the Church at Neerlandia concerning the teaching of Rev. D. De Jong on the church and Communion of Saints were warranted" (ground c) Appeal, Church at Neerlandia).

Regional Synod considers:

l.

a) that Rev. D. De Jong teaches that the Communion of Saints is as broad as the holy, catholic Church. See his sermon on Lord's Day 21, Q. and A. 55 "what it all comes down to, congregation, is, that not *one* true believer *is* excluded from this Communion of Saints, and *may* be excluded from it, nor may exclude *himself* from it" (p. 24) and "so the saints, that is all the believers, all and everyone, have been made by the Spirit of Christ as constructive and cooperative members in the Body of Christ" (p. 25);

b) that the Rev. D. De Jong teaches that "we must be so careful with all kinds of man-made distinctions concerning the church, like visible and invisible church, and the church as an

organism or as the Body of Christ, over against the church as an institute e.g. The church is under construction, you cannot see her in her full glory yet; but that does not mean that what you see on the construction site of this world is the visible church while somewhere else there is the invisible church. You don't say that about that half-finished apartment building either, do you? You don't say that that half-finished building is the visible apartment building, and that somewhere else there is the invisible apartment building" (Sermon on L.D. 21, Q. and A. 54, p. 9).

This quotation indicates that the Rev. D. De Jong is opposed to the teaching of an invisible church.

c) that the Church at Neerlandia does not show how and in which way Rev. D. De Jong's teaching about the Communion of Saints posits an invisible church.

d) that the Rev. D. De Jong teaches that "it is a sin before Christ's face when brethren in the Lord do not have sweet communion in the union of which we sing with Psalm 133 (Sermon on L.D. 21, Q. and A. 55, p. 30); thereby indicating that he does stress the necessity of a visible unity of all believers in the local church, "at the Lord's own table."

II.

a) that the claim of the Church at Neerlandia that the Rev. D. De Jong teaches that the Communion of Saints is wider than the church, appears to rest on the misunderstanding on the part of the Church at Neerlandia of what the Rev. D. De Jong really preaches; namely, that the Communion of Saints is as wide as the holy, catholic church (see consideration 1a and 1b);

b) that the Church at Neerlandia contends that it is "not preaching according to the Catechism" and that the meaning Rev. D. De Jong puts into the words of the Catechism is foreign to the Scriptures when he says: "But if we really believe the Communion of Saints, then this is such a reason for deep sorrow to us, that *instead of denying* the Communion of Saints with the other believers who do not go with us, *we practice* the Communion of Saints with them by employing our gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and salvation of these *other members*" (Letter of the Church at Neerlandia to Rev. D. De Jong, May 11/78 with a quotation from Rev. D. De Jong's sermon on L.D. 21, Q. and A. 55, p. 30, 31);

The Church at Neerlandia fails to supply any proof that the Rev. D. De Jong's preaching is not according to the Catechism or that the meaning he puts into the Catechism is foreign to the Scriptures;

III.

a) that the admonition to acknowledge the Communion of Saints with true believers outside of the Canadian Reformed Church, and to practice this communion, may not be construed as an admonition to cooperation with said believers in all kinds of inter-denominational activities;

b) that the Church at Neerlandia does not substantiate the charge that the Rev. D. De Jong admonishes the congregation to cooperation with believers outside the church in all kinds of inter-denominational activities;

IV.

that the Church at Neerlandia is correct in stating that the Rev. D. De Jong's view concerns the Confessions directly; however, the Church at Neerlandia does not substantiate that Rev. D. De Jong's view of the Communion of Saints is in conflict with the teaching of Scripture and Confession, especially the Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. 21, Q. and A. 55.

Regional Synod judges:

that Classis Alberta/Manitoba of April 17, 18, 1979, did not err in deciding "that the preaching of Rev. D. De Jong concerning church and Communion of Saints is in accordance with the Three Forms of Unity and as such the doubts of the Church at Neerlandia were unfounded";

Regional Synod decides:

that it cannot accede to the requests of the Church at Neerlandia in Appeal 3, decision a), b), c).

Regional Synod also decides:

to inform the forthcoming Classis Alberta/Manitoba of the above decision on Appeals 1, 2, and 3, and to send a copy of the same to Rev. D. De Jong and the Church at Neerlandia.

7. Reports.

a) A report was read from the Church at Neerlandia on its inspection of the archives of Regional Synod - West. These were reported to be in good order. Synod took note of this with gratitude.

b) A report was read from the Deputies ad. Art. 49, C.O. The Rev. D. De Jong and Rev. J. Van Rietschoten reported that they attended part of the Classis Pacific of January 10, 1978, to supervise the peremptory examination of Mr.

E.J. Tiggelaar. They also attended part of the Classis Pacific, October 17, 1979, to supervise the peremptory examination of Mr. G.H. Visscher. In both cases the Deputies reported that they could give favourable advice.

c) A report was received from the Church at Coaldale re — the Audit of the book of the Treasurer of Regional Synod - West. This report was received with gratitude.

d) A financial report was received from the Regional Synod Treasurer, br. H. Lubbers. This report was received with gratitude and br. H. Lubbers was discharged from the work done.

8. Appointments.

a) As deputies ad. Art. 49, C.O. for Classis Pacific, Regional Synod appointed the Rev. M. Vander Wel and Rev. D. Vander Boom with alternates the Rev. J. Visscher and Rev. C. Van Spronsen (in that order).

For Classis Alberta/Manitoba, the Rev. D. De Jong and Rev. J. Van Rietschoten with alternates the Rev. S. De Bruin and Rev. J.D. Wielenga (in that order).

b) For the archives of Regional Synod - West, the Church at Edmonton was appointed.

c) For the inspection of the Regional Synod archives, the Church at Neerlandia was appointed.

d) As Treasurer for the Regional Synod - West, br. Harry Lubbers was appointed, as well as the Chairman of the Consistory of the Church at Coaldale (Rev. J.D. Wielenga).

e) For the Audit of the books of the Treasurer of Regional Synod, the Church at Coaldale was appointed.

f) For the position of governors of our Theological College, Regional Synod nominated the Rev. D. De Jong, Rev. D. Vander Boom, and Rev. J. Visscher, with alternates the Rev. M. Vander Wel, Rev. J. Van Rietschoten, and Rev. J.D. Wielenga (in that order). N.B. These brothers are nominated to be appointed by the General Synod 1980.

g) As delegates to the General Synod 1980 to be held in Smithville, the following brothers were elected: For the ministers, the Rev. S. De Bruin, Rev. D. Vander Boom, Rev. J. Visscher, and Rev. J.D. Wielenga, with as alternates the Rev. C. Van Dam, Rev. M. Vander Wel, Rev. C. Van Spronsen, and Rev. J. Van Rietschoten (in that order). For the elders, the brothers E.C. Baartman, C. Hoogerdyk, A.H. Lubbers, and M. Hooimeyer, with as alternates the brothers W. Van Assen, A.W. De Leeuw, G. Dam, and P. Vander Gugten (in that order).

9. Arrangements were made for the next Regional Synod - West. This Synod will be convened by the Church at Neerlandia in the early Fall of 1980. The place is to be determined by the convening church.

10. A question period was held, but no questions were asked.

11. Censure ad. Art. 43, C.O. was not necessary. This was noted with gratitude.

12. The Acts of Synod and the Press Release were read and adopted.

13. The Chairman, Rev. D. Vander Boom, thanked the brothers for their cooperation and Christian fellowship,

and expressed the hope that the decisions made by this Regional Synod will be to the welfare of the churches and to the glory of her Lord Jesus Christ. He also thanked the convening church for its hospitality, and especially the sisters of the congregation who served the needs of the members of this Synod "in such a fantastic way." He then read Psalm 23, led in prayer, and requested the singing of Psalm 122:3. After this the Regional Synod of Western Canada was declared closed.

For the Regional Synod - West
S. De Bruin,
Vice-Chairman

PRESS RELEASE

of Classis Alberta-Manitoba, held at Edmonton, Alberta, on December 4-6, 1979.

1. Call to order by Rev. J.D. Wielenga on behalf of the convening church; he requests the singing of Psalm 146:1, 3, reads Matthew 24:3-14, and leads in prayer.

2. Credentials are examined and found in good order. The Churches of Barrhead, Edmonton, and Neerlandia have an instruction. Classis is constituted. The following officers are appointed: Chairman - Rev. D. De Jong; Vice-Chairman - Rev. J.D. Wielenga; Clerk - Rev. S. DeBruin.

The Agenda is adopted.

3. Peremptory Examination of Candidate B.J. Berends of Hamilton, Ontario, who accepted the call to the Church at Winnipeg, Manitoba, a. Sermon, on Genesis 22:1-14 (Examiners: Rev. DeJong, Rev. Van Rietschoten). b. Exegesis Old Testament: II Chronicles 27; Isaiah 6 (Examiner: Rev. Van Rietschoten). c. Exegesis New Testament: I Corinthians 1 and 2 (Examiner: Rev. DeBruin). d. Knowledge Holy Scripture (Examiner: Rev. Wielenga). e. Doctrine and Creeds (Examiner: Rev. DeJong). f. Church History (Examiner: Rev. Wielenga). g. Ethics (Examiner: Rev. Van Rietschoten). h. Church Polity (Examiner: Rev. Wielenga). i. Deaconology (Examiner: Rev. DeBruin).

4. After favourable advice of the Deputies ad Art. 49 C.O. the Rev. D. VanderBoom and Rev. M. VanderWel, Classis declares that the examination was successful. The Chairman addresses Candidate Berends, requests the singing of Psalm 134:3, after which the

Vice-Chairman leads in prayer of thanksgiving.

5. Candidate B.J. Berends signs the Classical Subscription Form.

6. Classis, on request of the Church at Winnipeg, approves the call of Candidate B.J. Berends, finding the relevant documents in good order. Rev. J. Van Rietschoten is requested to represent the Classis' Churches at the ordination of Candidate B.J. Berends on December 30, 1979, in the Church at Winnipeg, Manitoba.

7. The Church for Auditing the Books of the Treasurer, failing to present a report, is requested now to report at Classis March 1980.

8. Report of the Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry. Taken note of. The Committee is discharged.

9. Report of the Committee for Aid to Needy Churches is discussed. Classis decides to grant to the Church at Calgary the support requested. The Committee is charged to provide next Classis with an alternative method of raising funds for the purpose of Aid to needy Churches.

10. Correspondence: a. from the Archivist: request to have all matters of Classis submitted for filing on letter-size paper. Request granted.

b. from the Church at Smithers: Provisional Agenda for the Regional Synod, Smithers, October 30, 1979, with two Enclosures. Received for information.

c. from Regional Synod Smithers, October 30, 1979: the decisions of Synod regarding the Appeals of the

Church of Neerlandia against decisions of Classis Alberta-Manitoba in March 1978, November 1978, and April 1979. Classis takes note of the decisions of Regional Synod.

d. from the Church at Neerlandia: information that this Church intends to appeal the decisions of Regional Synod - Smithers, October 30, 1979 at next General Synod. Classis takes note of this information.

e. from Rev. D. DeJong: informing Classis that the Church at Neerlandia made it impossible for him to fulfill his classical preaching-appointment in the Church at Neerlandia on July 29 and October 21, 1979.

Classis decides as follows:

having received the following information from Rev. DeJong: "here-with I inform you of the fact that it was made impossible to me by the Consistory of the Church of Neerlandia to fulfill the appointments made by the previous Classis for the Church of Neerlandia and on the request of this church";

observing that 1. the Church at Neerlandia had requested and received pulpit supply from Classis; 2. the Church at Neerlandia failed to request Classis not to appoint Rev. DeJong, stating reasons;

considering that a Church may not refuse the pulpit to a minister in good standing in the Churches without giving account to Classis;

decides that the Church at Neerlandia erred in refusing Rev. DeJong the pulpit on the Sundays concerned.

11. The Churches at Barrhead and Neerlandia request Classis to arrange pulpit supply in their vacant churches; the Church at Neerlandia requests per instruction not to appoint Rev. DeJong for preaching in the Church at Neerlandia.

Classis decides as follows:

having heard the statement which the delegates of Neerlandia were instructed by their Consistory to make, reading: "that Classis not appoint Rev. DeJong, for we cannot take back our request to Rev. DeJong 'to refrain from this kind of preaching'";

observing 1. that previous Classes have decided that the Church at Neerlandia should not have made this request from Rev. DeJong, which classical decisions have been upheld by the Regional Synod of Smithers, October 30, 1979; 2. that the Church at Neerlandia has informed Classis that it will appeal the decisions of this Regional Synod at the next General Synod;

3. the voluntary promise, made by Rev. DeJong in the interim situation not to touch in his preaching on the issues the Church at Neerlandia appears to object against;

considering that the Church at Neerlandia, seeing Rev. DeJong's promise, has not provided a legitimate ground for its request to exempt Rev. DeJong from appointment for preaching in the Church at Neerlandia;

decides not to grant the request of the Church at Neerlandia.

12. On the ground of the previous decision Classis can only deal with the request from the Church at Barrhead for preaching arrangement. The following arrangements are made: December 16: Rev. J.D. Wielenga; January 20: Rev. D. DeJong; February 24: Rev. S. DeBruin; March 30: Rev. J.D. Wielenga; May 4: Rev. D. DeJong.

It is further decided that the ministers of Manitoba shall also preach in the Church at Barrhead on the Sundays preceding and following classical meetings.

13. Appointments.

a. Convening Church for next Classis, scheduled for March 18, 1979, the Church at Edmonton;

b. suggested officers for next Classis: Chairman - Rev. J. Van Riet-schoten; Vice-Chairman - Rev. D. De Jong; Clerk - Rev. J.D. Wielenga.

c. Committee and Deputies as per Regulations: Treasurer - Br. E.C. Koning, Jr.; - Church for auditing books - Edmonton; Church for the Archives - Edmonton; Church to inspect Archives - Barrhead; Church Visitors - the ministers within the classical region; Committee for Examinations - Rev. DeJong and Rev. Van Rietschoten; Committee for Aid to Needy Churches - Br. C. Poppe, Br. W. Gortemaker, Br. P. Groenwold; Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry - Br. C. Veldkamp, Br. S. Tuininga, Br. T. VandenBrink; Deputies for contact with the Government - For Alberta: Rev. De Jong, For Manitoba: Rev. Van Riet-schoten; Examiners: Sermon - Rev. D. DeJong and Rev. J. Van Rietschoten; Exegesis Old Testament - Rev. J. Van Rietschoten; Exegesis New Testament - Rev. S. DeBruin; Knowledge Holy Scripture - Rev. J.D. Wielenga; Doctrine and Creeds - Rev. D. DeJong; Church History - Rev. J.D. Wielenga; Ethics - Rev. J. Van Rietschoten; Church Polity - Rev. J.D. Wielenga; Deaconology - Rev. S. DeBruin.

Personal Question Period is held.

15. Censure according to Art. 43 C.O. is held.

16. Acts and press release are adopted.

17. Singing of Hymn 46:1; Rev. DeBruin leads in prayer; Classis is closed.

For Classis,
J.D. WIELENGA

PRESS RELEASE

Board meeting of the Canadian Reformed High School Association in Ontario held on November 26, 1979.

1. The meeting was chaired by br. J. Schutten, our President. We sang Psalm 98: 1 and 2; the chairman read Psalm 98 and led us in prayer.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting were adopted.

3. Agenda is approved.

4. The report of our Principal, Dr. F. G. Oosterhoff, is read. There was no change in enrolment. In case of heavy snow forecast, or when our buses do not run, local contacts will call all parents. We were happy to note that our "drop out" rate and absenteeism is very low.

5. The locals in Brampton and Toronto are requested to give us two nominees out of which the Board will make an appointment to the Education Committee.

6. The social evening for Board members and Staff was set for January 18, 1980. Br. L. Rosema will arrange this.

7. Br. H.F. Stoffels, our Treasurer, is concerned with the low increase in membership. Our costs keep going up and we should have more members to carry the load. Considerable time was spent on this. Br. Stoffels was requested to write an appeal in our local church bulletins.

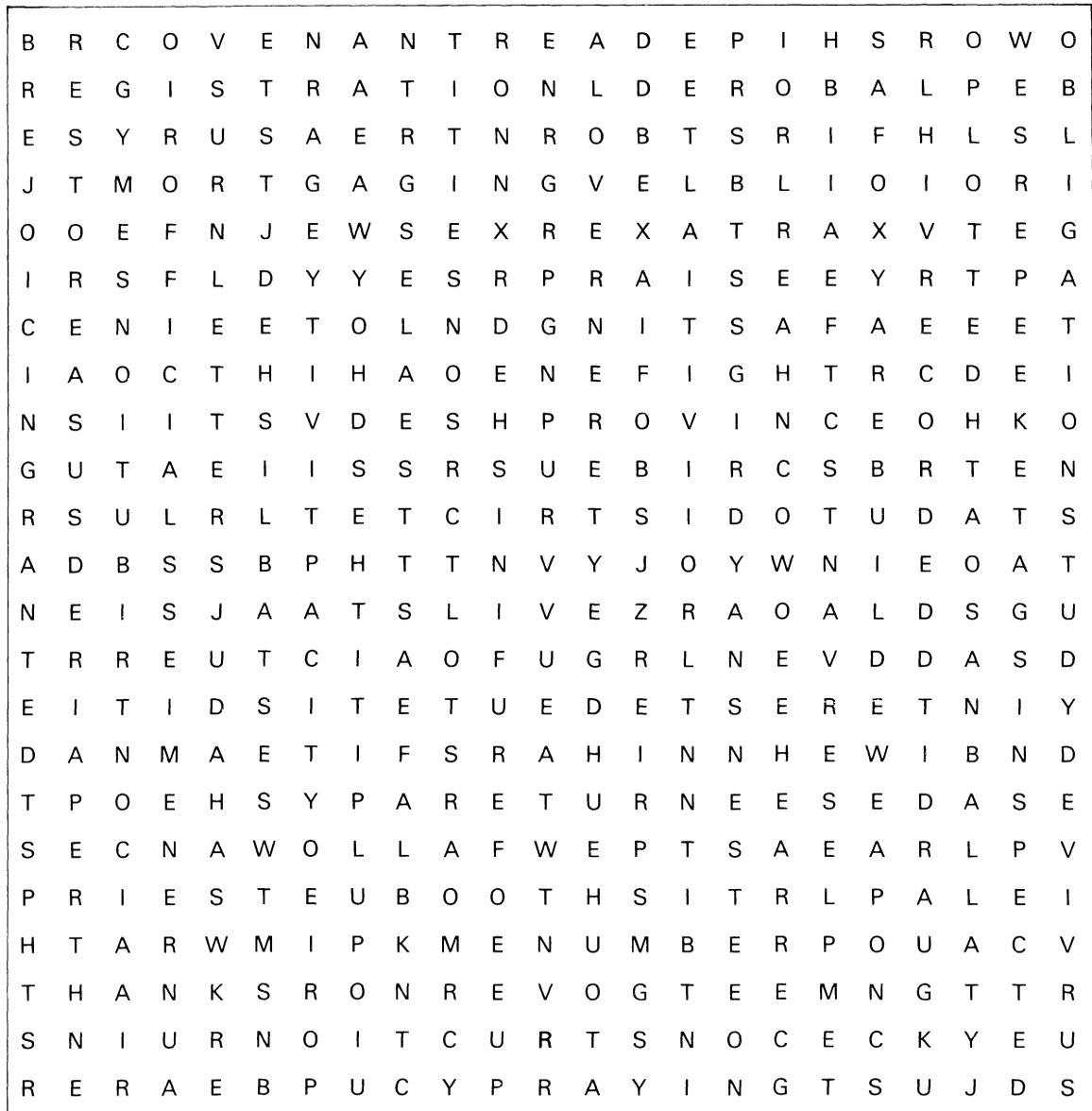
8. We have a problem with transportation from the Toronto-Brampton area. Our Transportation Committee will deal with the Bus Company about this matter. While our Lincoln bus was being repaired the parents from Lincoln organized to take the students from and to school. The Board appreciated this.

9. The next meeting was set for December 17, 1979.

For the Board,
ARIE J. HORDYK

Word Search — Puzzle No. 59

NEHEMIAH



- | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| allowance | district | genealogy | Judah | number | read | study |
| Artaxerxes | | governors | just | | rebuild | survived |
| | enemies | granted | | | recorded | Susa |
| Beyond the River | established | guard | | oath | registration | temple servants |
| book of the law | exile | | labored | obligation | rejoicing | thanks |
| booths | Ezra | hear | letters | officials | repaired | tithes |
| breaches | | holy | live | | restore | treasury |
| build | fasting | | lots | plotted | return | |
| | feast | inspected | love | praise | ruins | weapon |
| captivity | fight | interest | | praying | sad | wept |
| city | finished | | meet | priest | Sanballat | worshipped |
| construction | first-born | Jerusalem | men | promise | scribe | wrath |
| contributions | first fruits | Jews | mortgaging | province | seal | |
| covenant | | joy | | pulpit | sons | |
| cupbearer | gatekeepers | | | | | W. DIEK |

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Here we are at the beginning of a brand new year. At the beginning of a brand new decade — the 1980's! Do you ever wonder what will happen in this new year? Some people like to guess. But we don't know. Only the Lord knows. Other people make New Year's resolutions. They want to do what's right in the New Year. Did you make a New Year's resolution, too? That's fine. I hope you'll stick to it. If you didn't make a resolution, think about this:

"Jesus bids us shine with a pure clear light,
Like a little candle burning in the night.
In this world of darkness we must shine,
You in your small corner, and I in mine."

The Lord Jesus said to His disciples and to us: "You are the light of the world."

So we have to let our light shine. "I'll be a sunbeam for Jesus," the song says.

Of course we have to remember "He will ever help us, if we shine."

But now I still have a question for you.
How can we let our light shine?
Do you know?
What do you think?

Here is a little January poem for you from Busy Beaver *Marcella Veenman*.

I like tobogganning.
Down the hill I go.
With a face full of snow!

Isn't that how it goes? Have you been having lots of fun in the snow, too? Maybe during your holidays, too. Why not write and tell us about your holidays and how you have fun outside, now or during your holidays. We would all love to hear from you. Here's the address:

Aunt Betty
Box 54,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Gerald Schutten*. We are happy to have you join us, and hope you'll really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Have you received your membership card already, Gerald? And did you enjoy your holidays? Write again soon.

And a big welcome to you too, *Emma Bosma*. Will you write soon and tell us a little about yourself, Emma? Bye for now.

Hello, *Gwendolyn Van Esch*. Thank you very much for the picture and the poem, and the brain teasers, too. Would you like to join the Busy Beaver Club, Gwendolyn? Just write and tell me, and I will send you the membership card. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already sending things to share with the others! Bye for now.

Are you planning to visit your sister in Barrhead sometime, *Miriam Bosma*? That will be quite a trip! Thanks for your letter, Miriam. Write again soon.

Thanks for your very nice card, *Carl Dorgeloos*. It was nice to hear from you again. It was too bad, Carl, but I received your entry for the Drawing Contest too late. Next time try to be a little earlier, all right? Bye for now, Carl.

How was your report card, *Marcella Veenman*? And did you enjoy your Santa Claus party? Thanks for your card and good wishes, Marcella. And also for the idea for the Christmas puzzle. The Busy Beavers will enjoy doing that!

QUIZ TIME

Winter Word Search Puzzle

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

Can you find each of these words?

goal	scarf
puck	snowsuit
game	toboggan
snowfort	sled
rosy	boots
ski	mitten

Gospel Time Table

1. The hour when the bridegroom approached the ten maidens. _____
2. The time the angel appeared to the shepherds at Bethlehem. _____
3. The hour the Son of Man will come again. _____
4. The day the repentant thief met the Lord Jesus in Paradise. _____