

Clarion

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Wittenberg, Geneva, and Heidelberg (III)

We have seen that Luther and Calvin were in agreement in their opposition to the theology and practices of the Roman church by their return to the Scriptures as the only norm of faith and worship, and therefore also by their confession that salvation is by faith in Christ's sacrifice alone.

What then were the differences between the two reformers? In discussing them I will make frequent use of the Heidelberg Catechism, because some of the major divergencies can be explained with reference to that confession. For the Heidelberg Catechism was born not only out of the struggle between protestantism and Roman Catholicism, but also out of that between the adherents of the Reformed and of the Lutheran teachings.

I should say something about the origins of this Catechism. As you probably know, Lutheranism established itself in the larger part of Germany and in the Scandinavian countries. Calvinism spread from Switzerland to France, Belgium, Holland, Scotland and England, to certain areas in eastern and central Europe, and also to a number of states in Germany itself. Among these German states was the Palatinate or, as it is called in Dutch, the Paltz, a country situated in the Rhineland. The capital of the Palatinate was Heidelberg, and its ruler, from 1559 to 1576, was Frederick III, often called Frederick the Pious, who was indeed one of the most religious rulers Germany knew at the time.

When Frederick came to the throne protestantism was already widespread in the Palatinate. Lutherans, Melancthonians and Calvinists had been appointed as professors to the University of Heidelberg and served as minister in the various churches. Disagreements had developed among Lutheran and Reformed theo-

logians, however, especially in connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Frederick wanted peace in the churches and invited theologians of both sides to discuss the differences. The result of this discussion was that Frederick himself wholeheartedly embraced Calvinism. And he stuck to it, in spite of severe attacks by various Lutheran princes and theologians.

Immediately after the discussion in question Frederick ordered that a Catechism be drawn up for the instruction of the church members. This became the Heidelberg Catechism. It was completed in 1563. The largest amount of work on it had been done by two Reformed theologians, Zacharius Ursinus, professor at Heidelberg university, and Caspar Oliveanus, minister of the Church of the Holy Ghost in Heidelberg. Both were quite young. In fact, practically all the reformers were young when they began their work. Luther had been 34 when, in 1517, he issued his Ninety-Fifth Theses. Calvin was 27 when he published the first edition of his famous work *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* and started his life's work in Geneva. Ursinus and Oliveanus were 28 and 26 respectively when they wrote the Heidelberg Catechism. But they had studied under Calvin, Beza and other reformers, they knew the works of all the major protestant theologians, and they knew their Bible. So did their Prince, Frederick III. Frederick was greatly interested in the work on the Heidelberg and when it was completed he called a conference or "synod" of church superintendents and preachers to judge it. When it was accepted it became a best seller, overnight, and was translated into various languages, including the Dutch one. The first Dutch translation saw the light as early as 1563. It was, and still is, widely regarded as one of the most influential, and also as one

of the most beautiful, catechisms produced during the time of the Reformation. Its history in following centuries is also of great interest. I want to say something about that later.

First, however, we must return to the differences between the teachings of Luther and Calvin. One important difference was in their interpretation of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Here Luther stayed much closer to the Roman view than did Calvin and most of the other reformers. He did not take over the entire Roman Catholic interpretation. Rome had taught transubstantiation; the bread and wine ceased to be bread and wine and became the real body and blood of Christ, which the priest offered up to God as a repetition of Christ's sacrifice. Luther rejected the idea that the mass was a sacrifice, and he also opposed the doctrine of transubstantiation. Yet he felt that the words of Christ, "This is My body," must be taken literally. And so he developed what has become known as the doctrine of consubstantiation: the bread and the wine do not change, yet Christ's real flesh and blood are present in, with and under the elements of bread and wine. To clarify this concept Luther used the example of iron that is put into the fire; it remains iron, yet it also partakes of the fire. Because Christ then was really and bodily present in the sacrament, the people who participated in the Lord's Supper ate and drank Christ's actual body and blood, and by doing so they received grace and forgiveness of sins. Luther added, however, that forgiveness can be had only by faith, so that unbelieving and unrepentant communicants did not receive this blessing.

Few reformers agreed with Luther's views about the Real Presence. A Dutch lawyer, Cornelius Hoen, studied the question and became convinced that the words, "This is My body," must not be taken literally but figuratively or symbolically. Christ had also said, "I am the door," and "I am the true vine," and that also was taken in a non-literal sense. Hoen wrote a treatise on the Lord's Supper and sent it, in 1521, to Luther, but Luther would have nothing to do with it. Then, in 1523, it was sent on to Zwingli, the Swiss reformer at Zurich, who did use it in developing his interpretation of the sacrament.

And Zwingli's views influenced those of John Calvin, who came to

Geneva in 1536, some years after Zwingli's death. Calvin was in full agreement with Zwingli's rejection of consubstantiation, and also with his view that a distinction must be maintained between the sacramental sign and that which was signified by it. He did not say, however - as Zwingli had often done - that the Lord's Supper was primarily a meal of remembrance. For to say that is to ignore the fact that God *gives* something in the sacrament. Calvin was convinced that in the Supper the believers have a real communion with Christ, also according to His humanity; that they partake of His body and blood - although in a spiritual sense and with the mouth of faith - and that thus, through the working of the Spirit, they are incorporated into His body which is in heaven. How this happened he could not explain, but that it was so he believed on the authority of the Scriptures. Calvin's teachings in this regard have been briefly, but clearly, summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism. I am particularly thinking of question and answer 76, where it says that to eat the crucified body of Christ and to drink His shed blood is "not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and the death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the forgiveness of sins and life eternal, but, further, also to become more and more united to His sacred body, by the Holy Spirit, who dwells both in Christ and in us, so that, though Christ is in heaven and we are on earth, we are nevertheless flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones, and live and are governed by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul."

What were the major differences here between Luther and Calvin? In the first place, Luther's teachings could lead to the idolatry of the bread, as had happened in the Roman church. It is true that Luther forbade such an "adoration of the host," but the tendency nevertheless developed in the Lutheran church to treat the bread as something sacred, no crumb of which was allowed to fall to the ground. Furthermore, and in spite of his emphasis upon faith, Luther retained something of the magic-materialistic interpretation associated with the doctrine of tran-substantiation, which had given support to so many other corrupt practices and false beliefs in the Roman church. And finally, Luther based his teaching of consubstantiation upon the principle of the

ubiquity of Christ's body - that is the belief that Christ, according to His human nature, is omnipresent, and is therefore also present on earth. He in fact denied, in other words, the literal truth of Christ's ascension into heaven and the fact that He remains there, at the right hand of God, the Father, until He shall come to judge the living and the dead. It was certainly also with a view to these Lutheran teachings that the Heidelberg Catechism confessed, in various places that according to His human nature Christ is no longer on earth, and that it emphasized the comfort which this gives us (see, e.g., Lord's Day XVIII, especially question and answer 49).

Luther and Calvin differed not only in their interpretation of the Lord's Supper, but also in that of the sacrament of baptism. It took Luther some time before he had developed his views on this sacrament. Believing in the necessity of faith he had, at first, tried to retain the distinction between the sacramental sign and that which it signified, but later he put less stress on this distinction, as he had also done in the case of the Lord's Supper. The water in baptism too acquired supernatural qualities, it became a "divine, heavenly and sacred" element, and the sacrament conferred forgiveness of sins: he who comes forth from baptism is, according to Luther, "truly pure, without sin, and wholly guiltless." From here it was only a short step to the declaration of the "ordinary necessity" of baptism for salvation, - even though Luther continued to emphasize that without the Word, and without faith in the Word and its promises, the sacrament is of no profit.

Calvin agreed with Luther's emphasis upon faith, but opposed his close identification of sign and substance, as Zwingli had also done. The Swiss reformers went back to the covenant teachings of the Bible and confessed that the children of believers must be baptized because they are, with their parents, included in the church and covenant of God and heirs of the promises. I do not have to go into the Reformed teachings on this sacrament. They are well known to us from the form of baptism used in our churches, and from the section on baptism in the Heidelberg Catechism (Lord's Days XXVI and XXVII).

In a comparison of Lutheranism and Calvinism we cannot confine our-

selves to the sacraments. There were other differences, and although there is no time to speak about them all, I want to touch upon a few of them. In some cases the differences were to a certain extent a result of the circumstances under which the reformers worked, and of the manner in which they had come to their break with Rome. Luther had come to that break as a result of a desperate fear of damnation. His great and overwhelming question had been, for many years: How can I find a merciful God and escape everlasting damnation? The answer he had found in the biblical revelation of Christ's sacrifice, on account of which God justifies sinners and accepts them as His children. All is grace. Luther's teachings on salvation were wholly biblical. The fact remains, however, that for him and for his followers one of the major concerns continued to be this quest for personal salvation. This led to a somewhat individualistic attitude, and also to a strong emphasis upon the religious needs of man. It is probably one of the reasons why many Roman traditions and practices were retained in church ritual and ceremony and in church furnishing. It also helps to explain, I think, why the sacraments, which for Luther were instruments of grace, continued to occupy such a central place in the Lutheran church.

If Luther's emphasis then was upon the search for man's salvation, Calvin felt that this should *not* be the believer's preoccupation. Calvin was convinced that our salvation is not *our* business, but God's. Our concern is to be His servants, to work in His kingdom and unto His glory, and that in all spheres of life. What Abraham Kuyper once said: "Daar is geen duimbreed in geheel het mensen leven waarvan Christus, die aller sovereign is, niet zegt: Mijn!" is far more in the spirit of Calvinism than in that of Lutheranism. It is true that the Lutherans also have done much in the cultural and social life of the nation, yet they often tended to be far more "quietistic". And this is particularly so in the field of politics, both in Luther's time and later. It is one of the criticisms which German Lutherans nowadays levy against themselves that in majority they remained so passive under anti-Christian governments, and that they allowed a man like Hitler to come to power.

This passivity, however, is also a result of another divergency between

Luther's and Calvin's teachings, namely those concerning the relationship between church and state. Luther would probably have preferred a greater amount of autonomy than his churches achieved, but he needed the help of the rulers too desperately. And while the Calvinists maintained that Christ was the head of the church and that therefore no dominion by man was to be allowed, neither in the form of an ecclesiastical hierarchy nor in the form of governmental dominion, Luther permitted the rulers to play a role in the affairs and government of the church, and so contributed to the church's subservient position under the state. Furthermore, Luther was most emphatic in requiring obedience to the civil authorities, and until the end of his life he warned against the evils of armed resistance, even against a ruler who threatened the very life of the church. Calvin however, while agreeing with Luther about the requirement of civil obedience, stated also quite strongly that the government is *under* God, and that a prince or magistrate who forces his subjects to go against God's commandments has to be withstood. If, for example, a ruler sets himself up against the Gospel, then resistance is not only allowed, but it is required. This is what the Calvinists did in France, in Scotland, and also in the Netherlands, where the Spanish king Philip II tried to root out the Reformed religion by fire and by the sword.

Although I have by no means exhausted the topic, I have to come to a conclusion. Before doing so, however, I want to return once more to Heidelberg and the Palatinate, and that in order to say something about the history of the Heidelberg Catechism in the country of its birth. I will do that by quoting from the work of two German ministers who worked in the Palatinate some time during the previous century.

The history of the Heidelberg Catechism in the Palatinate had by no means been an undisturbed one. After the death of Frederick III the Reformed churches in this country went through many struggles and tribulations. When Frederick died a Lutheran ruler came to the throne, who tried to suppress the Reformed religion. Somewhat later Roman Catholic princes or conquerors took, for a time, control of the country and attempted

to do the same. And when, by the early nineteenth century, after the French Revolution, freedom of religion was proclaimed and the threat of religious persecution ended, the situation continued to be dangerous. For this was the time when Christianity was under attack by the forces of rationalism and "liberalism", and the churches in the Palatinate did not escape these attacks. Attempts were made to unite Lutherans and Reformed and to provide the newly united church with a handbook of instruction or catechism that was more up-to-date (that is, more in tune with the modernistic views of the day) than the old Heidelberg Catechism.

The Heidelberg, although at times it had been forced "underground", had survived during the earlier persecutions, and by the middle of the 19th century it was still remembered by some people. This appears from the memories of the two ministers to whom I referred.

One of these ministers, the Rev. Thelemann, became in 1851 pastor of one of the churches in the Palatinate. He was against the new rationalism and wanted to teach the scriptural confession, also to the children in his catechism classes. This is what he wrote about his experiences:

"It was in the year 1851 that I was minister of the congregation at Billigheim . . . in my native country the Palatinate. And my problem was, how could I teach my pupils from the rationalistic Catechism? I found a way out, because it was permitted to use, with that new Catechism, my own book of instruction, from which I could dictate to the children. Originally the congregation had been Reformed, and according to the "Union" the confessions had to be kept "in reasonable honour." So it was with a good conscience that at the first catechism class I began to dictate to the children from my own booklet the confession of the "only comfort", the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism.

"After some time I noticed that several children no longer wrote down the questions and when I asked them why, they answered: Reverend, we have it in print, why then do we have to write it? It appeared that when the children came home and learned by heart that which had been dictated to them, the older people began to remember and knew that they had heard it before. And when it appeared

that everything was from the Heidelberg Catechism the children looked in the attics and among old papers, and the result was that this old book of instruction came to the fore in all possible shapes and forms.

"It was in the same congregation that I found the Heidelberg, which had so long been forgotten, with a poor widow, who was dying, and I found it not among the old papers, but in her heart. The woman showed that she had knowledge of God's Word, and when towards the end I pointed, with the words of the Catechism, to the only comfort, she immediately took over and prayed the entire answer of the first question, and that quite accurately."

Rev. Thelemann related that in another part of the Palatinate, in a region where 300 years earlier Frederick III had had one of his hunting castles, he had experienced a similar revival of the old Heidelberg after the introduction of the new catechism. Here also it took place in a congregation that had originally been Reformed. In that region, Thelemann wrote, "it is customary that the children sleep with their grandparents in the back part of the house. I noticed during family visits that at night, in bed, before they went to sleep, the old people taught their grandchildren . . . the questions derived from the Catechism and discussed these questions with them. And during the catechism classes I could clearly notice where such a home catechism instruction had taken place."

The other minister, professor Plitt, who served a congregation in the city of Heidelberg itself, also told that during this period it was especially the older people who remembered the Heidelberg Catechism. "In that congregation," he wrote, "I came to know many old men and women whose eyes were radiant when during illness or at their deathbed they were reminded of the first question. Most of them still knew it, from their childhood, by heart. Many said that as children they had never quite understood it and that they had found it very difficult to memorize, but now they thanked God that they knew it, and they prayed it for their comfort and strengthening in faith. The later generation, which had no longer been brought up with the Heidelberg, did not have such an anchor. The older ones, to whom in their youth the treasures of the Heidelberg had

been communicated, had seen the passing of many new philosophies without being affected by them. They stood upon a foundation that no flood could wash away . . ."

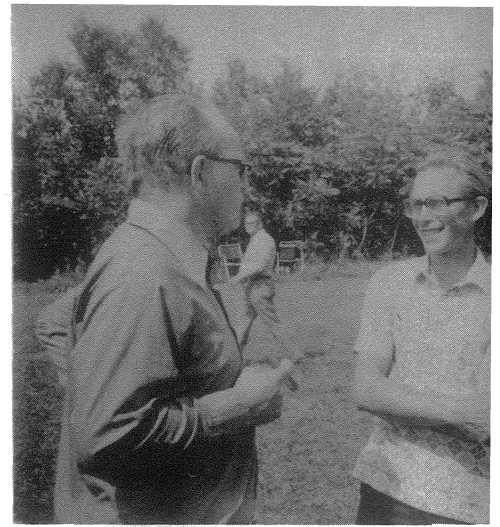
Why have I been reading this to you? Because it summarizes one of the points I wanted to make in speaking about the history of the Reformation.

The Roman church declined because it turned away from the Scriptures. The Lutheran church declined for the same reason. And the Reformed churches too have done so, time and again. For the church cannot live if it ignores the Word of its Lord; if it forgets that that Word is its anchor and foundation.

The history of the church therefore contains a serious warning, also for us. For we, as members of the

church, old and young, are living under the same threats as those which existed in the middle Ages, and at the time of the Reformation, and in the 19th century - and, indeed, throughout the ages. The dangers have always been there, and today they are as great as they have ever been. We are warned, therefore, to hold on to the only anchor given to us, and to be diligent that also our children, and our children's children, know of that anchor. For our covenant God has warned that He will visit the iniquities of the parents, who depart from His commandments, upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. But He has also promised that He will show mercy unto thousands of them that love Him, and keep His commandments.

F.G. OOSTERHOFF



MISSION DAY in Kelso Park, Burlington, on Monday, Sept. 3, 1973.

Rev. H. Knigge talking with Prof. J. Faber.

ested and want to know how the work develops. Many brothers and sisters come to shake hands with Rev. and Mrs. Knigge.

After the official program everyone enjoyed the lunches which were taken along or were prepared on the spot. The turn-out was a little less than we had expected. Maybe the very hot weather was one of the reasons that some stayed home.

We may conclude with the announcement that the schedule of Rev. Knigge's visits to the cooperating Churches will be published as soon as possible. Consistories will be contacted about available dates.

D.V.

mission news

ONTARIO MISSION DAY

Members of all the cooperating Churches in Ontario were invited to a Mission Day, which was held on Monday, September 3, 1973.

During the last weeks of August it was not certain whether Rev. Knigge and his family would be in time to attend this meeting. However, word was received that they would arrive at Toronto Airport on Thursday, August 30, at 6:50 P.M., flight 425. At that time the first members of Toronto's congregation started to assemble in the drab arrivals-hall of Terminal 2 at the Airport. That evening many things seemed to go wrong. The information on close-circuit T.V. screens was incorrect because the computer system broke down. Many people were running around unable to find their arriving relatives or their luggage. We kept our heads cool, drank some coffee, and waited for things to happen. Our patience was rewarded; the Knigge family came through the doors and the official welcome took place. Some of the brothers showed their ability as porters and carried the luggage to the waiting cars. After their tiring trip the family was speedily transported to their home: 203 Churchill Ave., Willowdale, Ontario (phone 222-5288), which was rented for them

by the Board of Mission and furnished by the congregation.

Under a bright sky members of many congregations in Ontario made their way to Kelso Park in the Burlington area, where the Mission Day would start at 10:30. It took some time before everyone had found a spot with some shade and had installed themselves. At around 11:15 Rev. VanderBoom opened the meeting. With the assistance of a "voorzanger" Psalm 87 was sung. It sounded beautiful against the background of trees. After some brief introductory remarks on the Scripture verses read from Matthew 24 the Knigge family was welcomed on behalf of all present and Rev. Knigge was invited to take the mike to deliver his speech. He stressed that Mission is more than bringing relief to people in their physical and financial needs, but that it is and remains our task to teach them their spiritual needs and the misery caused by sin. He also elaborated on the dangers of renewed tribal religion and told us something about disturbing developments on the Mission field, which he called assaults of Satan.

He had a very attentive audience. This shows that our people are inter-



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Hoek van Holland

Herzien Ondertekeningsformulier in de Christian Reformed Church.

Na de vakantie nemen we de draad weer op. Een vorigemaal schreef ik over de bezwaren die Dr. H. Boer en Ds. J. Vriend hadden ingebracht tegen het ondertekeningsformulier, zoals het is vastgesteld door de synode van Dordrecht 1618-19. Wij bespraken hun boude bewering dat geen enkele ambtsdrager in de Christian Reformed Church het formulier kan ondertekenen zonder op onderscheidene punten een geestelijk voorbehoud te maken. Omdat het ons in de ondertekening van de belijdenisgeschriften om de *inhoud* der confessie gaat, zijn we op enkele zaken ingegaan, bijv. art. 35 en 36 NGB en antw. 80 HC.

Een van de belangrijkste punten ben ik voorbijgegaan. Zowel Dr. Boer als Ds. Vriend gaven duidelijk te kennen dat zij niet (langer) instemmen met de belijdenis aangaande de verwerping, zoals die in het eerste hoofdstuk van de Dordtse Leerregels door de gereformeerde kerken is geformuleerd.

Sinds Dr. G.C. Berkouwer zijn dogmatische studie over de verkiezing Gods publiceerde (1955), is het steeds meer duidelijk geworden dat hij en zijn invloedrijke school van oordeel zijn dat de gereformeerde belijdenis aangaande de Goddelijke verwerping - DLR I, 15 - niet is te handhaven. Zelfs Dr. Polman en Dr. Runia, om maar te zwijgen van Dr. Kuitert, zijn Berkouwer daarin gevolgd.

Ook Ds. Vriend spreekt zich uit tegen de belijdenis, dat niet alle mensen zijn verkoren, maar sommigen niet verkoren, of in Gods eeuwige verkiezing voorbijgegaan, namelijk die welke God naar Zijn gans vrij, rechtvaardig, onberispelijk en onveranderlijk welbehagen besloten heeft in de gemene ellende te laten waarin zij zichzelf door hun eigen schuld hebben gestort, en met het zaligmakend geloof en de genade der bekering niet te begiftigen.

Hij is van oordeel dat de Dordtse Leerregels in hun structuur de invloed vertonen van een bepaalde theorie van oorzaak en gevolg. Hij bemerkt een "crackling tension" tussen I, 5 en I, 6. In het eerstgenoemde artikel

lezen we dat de oorzaak of schuld van het ongelof geenszins is in God, maar in de mens. Het volgende artikel zegt volgens Ds. Vriend "that the explanation of unbelief lies in God's decree." De verklaring van het ongelof zou dus liggen in God's besluit. Ds. Vriend concludeert dat het ongeloflijk is dat iemand beide uitspraken tegelijkertijd zou ondertekenen zonder enig geestelijk voorbehoud te maken.

Nu moet allereerst worden opgemerkt dat de omschrijving welke Ds. Vriend van DLR I, 6 geeft, onjuist is. De belijdenis geeft geen redelijke "verklaring" van het ongelof. Zeker, zij spreekt de Schrift na dat al Gods werken Hem van eeuwigheid bekend zijn en Hij alle dingen werkt naar de raad van Zijn wil (Ef. 1:11). Naar Zijn eeuwig besluit vermurwt Hij de harten der uitverkorenen; Hij *laat degenen die niet zijn verkoren*, naar zijn rechtvaardig oordeel, *in hun boosheid en hardigheid*. Deze zgn. infra-lapsarische spreekwijze accentueert de verantwoordelijkheid van de mens. Het zelfde artikel spreekt dan ook van de diepe, barmhartige en evenzeer *rechtvaardige* onderscheiding der mensen, zijnde in evangelijske staat des verderfs.

De belijdenis geeft geen "explanation of unbelief" en van een "crackling tension" tussen de artikelen 5 en 6 is dan ook geen sprake.

Vervolgens zou ik willen opmerken dat Ds. Vriend in zijn weergave van I, 15 onvolledig is. Hij geeft weer dat het artikel zegt "that it is God's good pleasure . . . not to bestow a saving faith upon the non-elect." Maar het artikel spreekt allereerst over het *rechtvaardig* welbehagen: God heeft besloten sommigen in de gemene ellende te laten waarin zij zichzelf door hun eigen schuld hebben gestort. Men geeft een deterministische of fatalistische mistekening van de belijdenis van Dordt, indien men zulke uiterst belangrijke elementen uit de belijdenis weglaat of naar de achtergrond dringt.

Tenslotte zij herinnerd aan het Besluit van de Dordtse Leerregels. Daarin verzet de synode van Dordt zich tegen hen die het volk hebben willen wijsmaken: dat met haar - de Gereformeerde leer - geleerd wordt,

dat God door het blote en loutere goeddenken van Zijn wil, zonder enig opzicht of aanmerking van enige zonde, het grootste deel der wereld tot de eeuwige verdoemenis voorbeschikt en geschapen heeft; dat de Verwerping op gelijke wijze de oorzaak der ongelovigheid en Goddeloosheid zou zijn, gelijk de Verkiezing is de fontein en oorzaak van het geloof en van de goede werken.

Opnieuw vragen wij ons af waarom Dr. Boer en Ds. Vriend die zich tegenover niet-Gereformeerden zo uiterst hoffelijk willen betonen, hun eigen Gereformeerde belijdenis zo onwelwillend lezen. Ds. vriend beweert: "The Canons . . . have been framed . . . under the influence of a certain theory of causation which colors everything." Maar geven de Dordtse Leerregels daar zelf zoveel blijk van? Is er niet het duidelijk blijk dat zij bij hun gerechtvaardigde strijd tegen het humanisme van de Remonstrantse ketterij en bij hun opkomen voor de souvereiniteit van God, de *verantwoordelijkheid van de mens* niet uit het oog hebben verloren? Het lijkt me een mistekening van de Dordtse Leerregels wanneer Ds. Vriend beweert dat volgens deze belijdenis de *verklaring* van het ongelof ligt in het besluit Gods.

Ter voorkoming van misverstand wil ik deze artikeltjes over het voorstel van Dr. Boer tot vervanging van het ondertekeningsformulier niet beëindigen zonder vermeld te hebben wat de synode 1973 van de Christian Reformed Church heeft besloten.

We moeten immers onderscheiden tussen *voorstellen* die op het agendum van een synode worden geplaatst en de *besluiten* die door de synode zelf worden genomen. Het was goed kennis te nemen van de voorstellen; zij geven een indruk van wat er in een kerkengroep leeft; kennisneming ervan kan het meeleven met de besluitvorming vergemakkelijken. Maar natuurlijk houden we de kerken allereerst aan haar eigen officiële papieren.

Welnu, de synode 1973 besloot enkele wijzigingen goed te keuren maar de uiteindelijke bekrachtiging van deze veranderingen in het ondertekeningsformulier uit te stellen tot de synode van 1974.

Welke zijn deze wijzigingen? Gemakshalve plaats ik ze naast elkaar, de oude tekst en de voorgestelde wijziging:

Oude tekst

Wij beloven derhalve, dat wij de voorzeide leer naarstig zullen leren en getrouw voorstaan, zonder iets tegen deze leer, hetzij openlijk of heimelijk, direct of indirect te leren of te schrijven.

Nieuwe formulering

We promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same by our public preaching, official teaching, or writing.

* * *

En indien het zou mogen gebeuren, dat wij na dezen enig bedenken of ander gevoelen tegen de voorzeide leer of enig punt derzelve kregen, beloven wij, dat wij het noch openlijk noch heimelijk zullen voorstellen, drijven, prediken of schrijven; maar dat wij het vooraf aan de kerkeraad, classis of synode zullen openbaren, om door deze geëxamineerde te worden.

Toevoeging

After revealing such sentiments to the Consistory, Classis or Synod for examination, we shall have the freedom to discuss and defend these sentiments publicly, except in our preaching or official teaching, always with a spirit of meekness and love, and we understand that the church as the body of believers may openly reflect upon them until the matter has been conclusively adjudicated by Consistory, Classis or Synod.

Wanneer we de veranderingen overzien, blijkt het dat zij vooral één zaak betreffen. Zij is deze: in het oude, onder ons geldende ondertekeningsformulier is bepaald dat een dienaar des Woords nimmer het recht heeft iets tegen de aangenomen leer der kerken te leren of te schrijven. Krijgt hij bezwaar tegen enig punt der leer, dan kan hij dit bezwaar in de kerkelijke weg kenbaar maken, maar ook daarna is het hem niet geoorloofd publiek zijn afwijkend gevoelen naar voren te brengen.

De nieuwe formulering maakt onderscheid tussen prediking of officiële leerwerkzaamheid enerzijds en publieke discussie anderzijds. Versta ik de bewoording wel, dan betekent zij

dat een dienaar des Woords, wanneer hij eenmaal zijn afwijkend gevoelen aan kerkeraad, classis of synode heeft kenbaar gemaakt, geheel vrij is het in publieke discussie - bijv. in de pers of op vergaderingen - naar voren te brengen en te verdedigen.

Dr. Boer kreeg niet wat hij wenste: een geheel nieuw "Ordination Covenant". Maar dank zij de steun van enkele mindere vergaderingen werd een bepaald element, door hem naar voren gebracht, in het ondertekeningsformulier opgenomen.

Dr. Boer was immers van oordeel dat het ondertekeningsformulier een hiërarchische trek vertoonde. Hij betoogde dat de procedure van het aanbrengen van een wijziging een hiërarchische trek zich openbaarde: "The Form of Subscription is predicated on a hierarchical structuring of the church . . . In the process of creedal revision we are more hierarchical than the Roman Catholic Church itself."

U kunt de redenering verstaan: behoren de belijdenisgeschriften niet aan de kerk, het lichaam van Christus?

Toch kunnen we de tegen-vraag niet terughouden: Waarom heeft Dr. Boer dan geen bezwaar gemaakt tegen de herziening van de kerkorde in de CRC? Geeft zij niet voet aan een hiërarchische tendens? Waarom spreekt men opeens van gevaren van hiërarchie en komt men op voor de rechten door Christus aan Zijn lichaam geschonken, juist als het om deze zaak van de binding aan de belijdenis gaat?

Bovendien: school er in de oude formulering juist niet een goede bescherming van de rechten van de gemeente van Christus? Is de strakke binding aan de belijdenis, waarbij een dienaar des Woords niet zijn eigen particuliere ideeën kan uitdragen ten koste van de aangenomen belijdenis, niet een bescherming tegen wat Groen van Prinsterer niet alleen *leer-vrijheid* maar tegelijk *hoordwang* noemde? De gemeente van Christus wordt gedwongen allerlei redeneringen aan te horen, die tegen de door haar op grond van Gods Woord aanvaarde belijdenis indruisen. Zeker, in de nieuwe formulering wordt onderscheid gemaakt tussen prediking en officiële leerarbeid enerzijds en publieke discussie anderzijds. Maar wat zal dat in de praktijk anders betekenen dan dat een dienaar de vrijheid neemt om afwijkende meningen bijv. in de kerkelijke pers te gaan uitdragen?

Is er nu zoveel tegen in te brengen dat de Gereformeerde Kerken zeiden: Indien U bezwaar voelt rijzen tegen de aangenomen leer, dan mag U als dienaar des Woords dat in de kerkelijke weg naar voren brengen (U bent het zelfs zedelijk verplicht, indien U van oordeel bent dat de belijdenis het Woord Gods niet zuiver naspreekt), maar dan moet U het ook aan de kracht der waarheid overlaten om zichzelf aan de gewetens op te leggen en intussen geen publieke propaganda voeren voor afwijkende gevoelens inzake de leer? Is daar niet Schriftuurlijke wijsheid in zulk een afspraak en een bezorgheid voor de rechte vrede en eenheid der kerken?

'k Vrees dat de verandering in het formulier de Christian Reformed Church in verwarring zal brengen en dat de gebondenheid aan de Gereformeerde belijdenis - die toch bij sommigen al zwak is, gelijk uit de betogen van de voorstanders van vervanging van het ondertekeningsformulier m.i. duidelijk blijkt - er niet door zal worden versterkt.

En dat is dan nog zacht gesproken.

J. FABER

Church News

Called: to the Church at Brampton:

REV. C. VANDAM

of Neerlandia, Alberta.

* * *

ADDRESS CHANGES:

Clerk of Bethel Canadian Reformed

Church at Toronto

Mr. G. DeBoer

9 Kersey Crescent

Richmond Hill, Ontario

* * *

Rev. G. Van Rongen

3167 - 68th S.E.

Caledonia, Mich. 49511 U.S.A.

OUR COVER

The scene on our cover photo is five miles west of Smithers, B.C., on Highway 16: Hudson Bay mountain with Cathelyn glacier in the centre. The picture was submitted to Clarion by George Hofsink. Yes, that's his wife Susie in the foreground.

news medley

The two missionaries who were sent out by the Churches in Canada are both here at the moment. The Knigge family arrived safely, as you may learn from a "report" by the Rev. D. Vander Boom, and the Van Spronsen family was also safely guided by the Lord. We had the privilege of meeting both missionary couples: Rev. and Mrs. Knigge during the Mission Day in Kelso Park in Burlington, and Rev. and Mrs. Van Spronsen when they surprised us with a brief visit. The Church at Lincoln had succeeded in getting them both here to inform the congregations of Lincoln and Smithville about the work being done in Brazil, and that's how they took the time to come to Fergus. When you see the missionaries and when you talk with them, the work comes much closer, and this can only be an advantage. Meanwhile: both missionaries have a busy time ahead: they will visit the cooperating Churches and tell about their work, answer questions, revive the interest in their work, and thus return, we hope, strengthened and encouraged by having met the brethren and sisters.

For the sending Churches it is also a golden opportunity to discuss matters orally instead of by means of letters or maybe tapes. Undoubtedly some rethinking will have to be done, especially with a view to the work in New Guinea: the Rev. H. Knigge's work there will come to an end when he returns next time.

Now that we are speaking of ministers anyway, we mention that the Rev. C. Van Dam has been called by the Brampton Church. We do not know the reasons for that nor of any decision in this respect. It will be (or: has been) a difficult decision to make, since the call came within two years after the vacancy in Neerlandia was filled. However, every decision to either accept or decline a call is a difficult one.

The bulletins of Barrhead and of Neerlandia both tell us the reason why Calgary will receive a minister only next July. Neerlandia wrote: "Because of studies for a Master of Theology degree, he will be installed D.V. next July." The previous time I wrote that it is strange; now I say that it is wrong. In the Netherlands, too, it happened sometimes that a candidate wished to continue his studies. But then he published that and declared that he could not consider a call due to continued studies. That was proper. But here we have a case in which a Candidate is declared eligible for a call, presents himself to the Churches, prays for a call, receives a call, and then, for reasons of continuation of his studies, postpones an ordination for almost a year. On the other hand, there is a Church that desires a minister from the Lord, undoubtedly prayed for one, was thankful when a call was accepted, but then says: We don't need him till about a year from now. Meanwhile, another call might have been extended and a minister have been received within a few months. Who knows. I hope that we shall not ever see something like that again in the Churches.

The Rev. J. Geertsema resumed his work after the holidays, having overcome the effects of his operation; but the Rev. H. Stel could not do so. The condition of our

brother has not improved but, on the contrary, worsened. May he be aware of the prayers of the whole brotherhood, of the one large Family, and find strength and consolation in the faithfulness of our God and all-sufficiency of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Turning to activities in the midst of the Churches, Barrhead reports that the services in Nursing and Old Age Homes went surprisingly well. They will have their turn once every ten weeks. Thus the Church is a light, spreading the Light.

Burlington-West applied for a permit for their planned Church building, and expects to be able to call tenders soon. The agreement which existed between Burlington East and West will expire this coming January 1st, since it was made for three years. That will affect the services and who conducts them. It is time that Burlington West receives its own meeting place, although there was a good cooperation and relationship between the twins during the past three years.

This cooperation also appeared when a combined meeting was held, where the Rev. G. Van Dooren spoke on "Do We Have Only Half the Truth?", an introduction on the work of the Holy Spirit and the claim that we lack the "second blessing", namely the gift of tongues and everything connected with it.

Burlington East also finally had its parking lot paved "after many years of gravel and mud". Now it will have to be seen, of course, whether everyone will park neatly between the lines.

Outside problems are not the only problems Churches have to cope with. There are some "inside problems" too. Lincoln, at least, did have one. "The fly problem during our Church services can be solved with leaving the outside doors closed," they wrote. Personally, I doubt it very much. We have the doors always closed, and screens in the windows. But the flies seem to have a special preference for the man in the pulpit. I hope that, for next year, someone will come up with a definite solution.

Edmonton has its pipe organ. The Consistory decided to purchase it after having heard the Congregation. "The Thing" - as it was called irreverently - was unloaded from the truck that brought it by volunteers who showed much enthusiasm. Now everyone is looking forward, of course, to the installation of The Thing. It will be a joy to sing once it starts "speaking".

I was struck again by the false dilemmas that are sometimes thought up in order to kill a project or to stall a thing. According to the **City Guide** the Consistory rejected such arguments as: "Does not the Korea-Fund have priority?" Others apparently pointed at Home Mission, etcetera. I always get a funny feeling when I hear such arguments. They always make the impression on me as if people are looking for something to stall or kill a project. It reminds me of arguments which we hear nowadays in more than one pitch, arguments which claim that we should not invest so much money in buildings but spend it on "home mission" and other projects deemed worthwhile. Can we, it is sometimes said, not meet in private homes or rented halls and sell our Church buildings, using the money received for them to spread the Gospel? There you have another false dilemma, as it is a false dilemma to put the Congregation before the choice: either a pipe-organ or support Korea. I wholeheartedly agree with Edmonton's Consistory when they rejected such arguments as irrelevant and immaterial in this respect. And as for the support

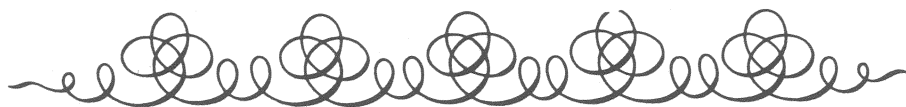
for Korea, there is much activity going on in Edmonton in this field, in which they are, in turn, helped by other Churches and organizations.

In the Fraser Valley a committee collected clothes and money to send to Hungry. They received word that those goods were received with gratitude. It is understandable that only **good** clothes are accepted for shipment, when we learn that for a 22 lb. box the cost is \$8.50.

Undoubtedly, the rising cost of living was the reason why Abbotsford's Consistory mentioned that "Remunera-

tion of ministers who preach in Abbotsford is reviewed." Some are of the opinion that no remuneration should be given, only the travelling expenses. If that were the custom, I would not say anything about it. But it is customary - and, I am convinced, correct - to remunerate a visiting minister. Then Abbotsford's action is to be commended. In some instances this remuneration is still the same as some fifteen years ago. Not in Abbotsford, I gather.

And on this happy note we close the gate. vO



Church Life Overseas

Circumstances have prevented me from contributing regularly the last few weeks. This does not mean that nothing happens overseas. Apart from the shorter news items of ministers being called and installed, the life in our sisterchurches goes on. During a brief stay in the Netherlands I was able to meet with some of our brothers and sisters. The time, however, was too short to contact those I would have liked to meet.

In the meantime the position of the "alarmed" has been very much in the news. I pursue this matter because it is a well-known fact that there are not only alarmed ones within the synodical Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland but also within the Christian Reformed Church.

During the last months *Nederlands Dagblad* has published interviews with a number of alarmed ministers. These interviews were organized after some had made statements and suggestions in Dutch magazines. One of the suggestions made in May by Rev. J. van Mechelen in *Waarheid en Eenheid* was: "I would prefer a unification of the entire 'Gereformeerde Gezindte' (all people of Reformed persuasion), but I think that we cannot count on the Reformed people within the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (de Gereformeerde Bond) nor on the Christelijke Gereformeerden (in Canada called: the Free Christian Reformed). That is why I think we should contact the Liberated Reformed Churches." In that same

article he asks a pertinent question: "Why does the so-called majority of Church members not protest, why don't they hear anymore when untruths are proclaimed and why are they so enthused, as long as it (truth or untruth) is delivered in an arresting and fascinating manner. Most people do not have the spiritual knowledge or energy to resist." He would suggest that the alarmed and the liberated-Reformed people could and would find a basis for contact and discussion.

Since that time much has happened. On May 15 there was a talk show on T.V. in a dialogue concerning the alarmed. One of the participants was prof. Augustijn, who said that the "time of ecclesiastical discipline concerning doctrine is past, provided one is convinced of the good intention of those who have a different opinion." Incidentally, I have never heard about any heretic who said of himself that he had evil intentions.

History shows that heresies have had a disastrous effect in the Church. Prof. Augustijn's idea is, as prof. H.N. Ridderbos expressed it: A dialogue-Church. He calls this a typical product of an intellectual-theological freedom-ideal which has lost touch with the real Church. Prof. J. Kamphuis wrote an article about this talk show in *De Reformatie*. He mentioned two specific points: "The core of the discussion was not the motives behind 'being alarmed', but the direction which the

synodical Churches have taken and the way in which that develops," and "there is the fundamental problem that, to save the truth, orthodoxy is organized without giving an answer to the question concerning the Church of Christ".

This development led *Nederlands Dagblad* to organize interviews with six alarmed ministers and to invite prof. J. Douma to give a "finalizing and evaluating comment". You will understand that *CLARION* cannot publish these interviews, and isolated quotes will not help us either. In the next issue I will attempt to summarize the remarks about these interviews and his evaluating comments.

"The Children GOD Allows" [Psalm 128, Book of Praise].

As of August 1, 1973, parents who are going to have more than three children will be punished. This decision was made by the authorities in Singapore. People are lured into the snares of unfaithfulness to the Lord's commandment with the tempting bait of money.

- When you have four or more children you will receive children's allowance for three only.
- The cost for delivery of the fourth and following babies and the cost of hospital care will be almost doubled.
- People with more than three children will be moved to the bottom of the waiting list for living quarters.

Talking about persecution! It is not as bad here, some may say. In the meantime it is disturbing when it seems that believing children of the Lord are anticipating such measures already. No wonder when the authority of Genesis 1 is declared doubtful.

D.V.

Co-operation

Recently a few roads in our town were the scene of much activity. From early morning till late at night big machines took large bites of old pavement, soil, and rocks, deposited them into waiting trucks which then hauled it off to some other place where they dumped it to go back for more.

When we were about to leave on holidays, a machine was "drawing" a neat curb on both sides of the new roadway: it was one continuous line. A day or two later some men appeared with powersaws, and cut that long line into sections. Double work, I thought.

After our holidays we enjoyed the smooth new pavement, laid during our absence; we also admired the new sidewalk which the children would be able to use on their way to school, no longer forced to walk on the side of the travelled portion of the roadway.

But a few days ago I saw something which made me feel bad. Men, armed with sledgehammers, were busy smashing parts of that new sidewalk and tearing up certain sections of it. Mind you, those were carefully marked sections, and the men saw to it that they stayed well within the lines shown by the markers. Yet they ruined what had been made only a few weeks ago: the pieces were carried off by waiting trucks . . .

When they fill it in again, it will never be exactly as it was before. Time, effort, and money could have been saved if that which they were going to do now had been done before the sidewalk was laid.

Oftentimes we see it being done: Hardly has a road been (re)surfaced, when the gas company comes, makes a hole in the new pavement, puts in a pipe or a connection, fills it up again, puts some asphalt on it, and continues, to make another hole somewhere else.

A few weeks later the watermain appears to need repairs or replacement: men move in and tear up the pavement, repeating the process just completed by the gas company. That afternoon I drive over a big bump in the beautiful new road; three days later there is a dip, for the soil is settling. It jars me just the same.

I started thinking about the advantages of cooperation, and then cooperation right from the beginning on.

Much can be achieved in the midst of the Church of Christ. But the sad thing is that oftentimes so many stay behind and first wish to see how things will develop. Once they see it works, they join and come with their (oftentimes valuable) suggestions. Which may mean that things have to be changed which could have been set up correctly right from the beginning, if they had been there to help build it.

If all cooperate from the very beginning, all aspects can be considered, and possible later (costly) correction be avoided.

Cooperation means not only cooperation in matters of financial help; it includes advice, the contribution to the discussion in which all angles of a matter are being examined.

When all members put their efforts into and their shoulders under a cause, much more can be achieved and in a much better way.

Remodelling a house later on always costs more and causes more inconveniences than building it right away as it should be. Thriftiness oftentimes is an enemy of thoroughness and wisdom. That's the conclusion to which several Churches will have come, Churches that thought that they would save a few dollars when cutting a few corners and using some cheaper materials with the erection of their Church building . . .

Building a school building with the ultimate number of classrooms, even though the finishing of some of those rooms is postponed till later, does not lay as heavy a burden upon the membership as adding rooms later on, for which walls have to be knocked out, etcetera. Besides: it will always remain visible that the work has been done in stages.

In many instances it was the only way in which the work could begin. But also in many instances that was the result of the fact that only part of the Congregation cooperated. The others did not do their utmost to serve with advice and financial aid.

Also in this respect the children of this world are oftentimes wiser in their own generation than the sons of light. It is good to learn from that. The Lord Jesus told us to learn from that.

Others see that too. Recently the idea was propagated by a member of

the Christian Reformed Church that they should carry their own risk and together finance eventual loss to Church property caused by fire, hail-storm, etcetera, instead of paying thousands of dollars annually to insurance companies.

I would not know whether that would be feasible. We do already something in that line by our Superannuation Fund, and it would be well worth the effort to see whether and where further cooperation is possible and could benefit the Churches in their federation.

But the main task and the hosts of possibilities are in the local Church. There we must start.

When we are that far that we lay the pavement, let us make sure that it does not have to be broken up again because someone forsook his duty before it was that far. vO

Where is . . .

Upon my request for documents concerning the origin of the Canadian Reformed Churches I also received some information from brother P.H. Wildeboer in Orangeville regarding a letter which was started by those who travelled on the same boat on which he and his family made the trip to Canada.

He told me that there existed a sort of "general epistle", passed on from the one family to the other. Each family added some news about their own experiences, about the Church life in the place where they were living, and any such additional information as might be deemed important. Then they sent the letter on to the next family. Gradually it became almost a book.

However: WHO has this letter now? It is an invaluable source of information and it would contribute much to the knowledge of the early history of the Churches. Maybe the one who has it now has all but forgotten about its existence. Maybe the one who received it last has already passed away and left it to his children.

Please, look among your old papers and documents whether this letter is there. And when you find it, send it to me. Postage will be repaid. If you wish to have it back, it will be returned in due time.

DO IT NOW, for once! vO

COMMUNICATION

- from the Provisional Board of the Canadian Reformed High School-Association of Ontario

Dear brothers and sisters,

You will no doubt be aware that efforts have been made and are being made to come to the establishment of a Canadian Reformed high school in Ontario.

Here is a short rundown of what happened so far. In 1971 a group of our Church members approached the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies asking for support to get this 'thing' started. They were advised, however, to do the preliminary work themselves, whereupon a first meeting was called together of representatives of the various school societies or other interested persons. At this meeting in November 1971 a steering committee was appointed to look into various cost and feasibility aspects. The report of this committee was adopted and distributed among our people, whereafter the steering committee made visits to various congregations to seek support (a few congregations are still to be visited during the coming fall season).

It was felt, although not all visits could be made yet, that the work should go on meanwhile and for that reason a meeting was held on May 5th of this year in Burlington, where the steering committee was discharged to make place for a Constitutional Committee, which received the mandate to draft a concept Constitution and By-Laws. Their work was done with due dispatch and the result was adopted in a slightly modified form in two final meetings held late June and early July.

It was also decided to forge ahead in order to keep this effort moving, and for that reason a provisional board was appointed, although it was realized that this appointment can only be of a very temporary and tentative nature, several members having no official mandate for this purpose from their local supporters as yet. These members have accepted their position, stressing the provisional nature of this body and in the express understanding that the local supporting groups should elect permanent delegates this fall.

In recent months copies of the drafted Constitution and By-Laws have been distributed in several Ontario congregations. This 'first edition' is still very simple and non-specific in certain technical or organizational areas and we realize that further revisions and expansions will be needed. If you wish to comment on it or suggest improvements,

please write to our secretary: H. DeVries, 376 Park Road North, Grimsby, Ontario. On September 28, we have scheduled our second meeting as provisional board in Burlington. Would also those Ontario congregations not yet represented send one or, if possible, two delegates?

It should hardly be necessary to stress that we believe our efforts to be scriptural in the fullest sense of the word, according to Deut. 6, Psalm 78, and so many other places. It is therefore our firm conviction that we can count on *all* our Church members. We need your support in

all the congregations of Ontario. We also need your prayers. And the prayer of the congregations, and for that reason we venture to appeal to our ministers as shepherds of the flocks to remember this cause when called upon to lead the congregations of the Lord in prayer and worship.

We trust that future information can be conveyed to you by your own local representatives.

Yours in the Lord,

J. Schutten & A. VanEgmond,
Smithville.

H. DeVries & D. VanAmerongen,
Lincoln.

H. DeBoersap & J.B. Ludwig,
Burlington E.

C.Y. Nobel & H. Vis, Brampton

J. Gelderman & L. VanZandwijk,
Burlington W.

Classis Ontario North

CLASSIS ONTARIO NORTH held on Wednesday, September 5, 1973, at Toronto.

1. After opening on behalf of the convening Church, examination of credentials, and constitution of Classis, the agenda is adopted.
2. A special word of welcome is spoken to the Rev. H. Knigge, who is also present. The chairman also mentions that the Church at Brampton extended a call to the Rev. C. Van Dam, that the Rev. H. Scholten will retire, and points out the importance of our College.
3. On the basis of the auditor's report the treasurer, bro. C. Van Esch, is honourably discharged of his work in the year 1972/1973, and commended for the manner in which he kept the books. The Churches will be requested for this year to contribute \$2.00 per communicant member, also with a view to the forthcoming General Synod.
4. In reply to a proposal of the Church at Toronto re voting privileges for female communicant members, Classis decided to advise the Church at Toronto to directly address itself to the forthcoming General Synod, since this is a matter which concerns a general policy in the Churches.
5. Classis having read the letter of the Church at Burlington-East re the grounds for the decision of Classis Ontario North held on June 20, 1973, in the matter of the appeal by brs. J. De Koning *et al.*, decides to receive this letter as information.
6. Church Visitations are arranged.
7. The following preaching arrange-

ments are made for the Church at Ottawa: April 21: Rev. D. Vander Boom, May 12: Oly, June 2: VanOene, June 23: Van Dooren, July 14: VanderBoom, Aug. 4: Oly, Aug. 25: VanOene, Sept. 15: Van Dooren.

8. Delegates to the forthcoming Regional Synod are: Revs. C. Oly, D. VanderBoom, G. VanDooren, and W. VanOene; Elders H. Aasman, H. Bouwman, H.J. Endeman, H. Van Veen. Alternates: Rev. H. Knigge, Elders J.D. Ganskeole, H. Oosterveld, J. Tenhage, J. Van Bodegom.

Other appointments are made, namely Church Visitors, Examiners, etc.

9. Advice is given in a matter of Church discipline.
10. To a question to that effect it is answered that, to the knowledge of the brethren, there is no provision that Deputies ad art. 49 shall be present at a colloquium.

The desirability is expressed not to convene Classis in a week in which there is also a holiday. As a rule, Classis shall be held on the Thursday in the second week of March, June, September, and December.

11. The next Classis will be held on Thursday, December 13, at Toronto, at 9:00 A.M. Rev. C. Oly will be chairman, D. VanderBoom clerk, and G. Van Dooren assessor. Orangeville is convening Church.
12. Acts and Press Release are read and respectively adopted and approved.
13. After Psalm 147, stanzas 1 and 6 have been sung, the chairman leads in prayer.

By order of Classis,
W.W.J. VanOene, Clerk i.t.

Business & Economics

INDEXING THE PERSONAL INCOME TAX TO OFFSET INFLATION

Bill C-193, passed by the House of Commons on July 5th, 1973, contains, among many other provisions amending the Federal Income Tax Act, an item which will affect the 1974 taxes paid by all individual taxpayers, i.e. the proposal to index personal income tax calculations to offset the effects of inflation. Yet, this subject is probably little understood by the bulk of the people who will be affected by it. In fact, the provision does not come into effect until Jan. 1, 1974, because, as finance minister Turner stated, "this proposal is a major innovation in tax philosophy and practice . . . it will take some time for people and governments to adjust to it." I shall attempt here to help that adjustment by describing briefly why this indexing is necessary and how it will probably work.

Why Indexing?

To illustrate the need for indexing let us take as example Mr. John Brown who is married and has a seventeen year old son. In Table A we see the calculation of his income tax. Of the \$8,500 he earns in 1973 he must pay tax on \$4,950 which totals \$1,259 leaving him \$7,241 to spend. In 1974 he gets a raise of 8% or \$680 just to offset a rise in the cost of living which, for this example, is also up 8%. Assuming the same tax rates are in effect, he now pays \$1,462 in tax and can spend \$7,718. Note, however, that the amount of tax he pays goes up \$203 or an increase in tax of 16% rather than the 8% raise.

*John Brown
Calculation of Income Tax*

	1973	1974
Taxable Income Before Deductions	\$8,500	\$9,180
Personal deductions	3,550	3,550
Taxable Income	4,950	5,630
Federal Tax	965*	1,120**
Provincial Tax (30.5% of federal tax)	294	342
Total Tax	1,259	1,462
Income Available After Tax	\$7,241	\$7,718

* \$555 plus 21% of the amount in excess of \$3,000

** \$975 plus 23% of the amount in excess of \$5,000

Put another way, of his \$680 raise he receives only \$447 - in actual fact a raise of only 6.6%. But prices in general have gone up 8% so that he does not even keep up with inflation. This fact can be seen by converting the 1973 dollars to what they would be worth in terms of the 1974 dollar. (If prices go up the dollar goes down in value). The calculations are made in Table B.

*John Brown
Calculation of Income Tax in 1974 Dollars*

	1973	1974
Taxable Income before Deductions	\$9,180	\$9,180
Taxable Income	5,346	5,630
Total Tax Paid	1,360	1,462
Income Available After Tax	\$7,820	\$7,718

We see here, by looking at the actual income that he

has available, he does not even break even but sees his income reduced from \$7,820 to \$7,718 in terms of 1974 dollars.

The reason for this inequity is found in the "progressiveness" of our tax system. That is, as our incomes go up we pay a higher rate of tax on the increase. For instance, in 1973, we must pay on our first \$500 of income 15% tax but on the next \$500 we pay 18%, the next \$1,000 we pay 19% and so on. In our example, John Brown paid a top rate of 21% before his raise. But his raise, although it was only enough to offset inflation, put him in a higher tax bracket in which he paid 23%. In this way, although the amount of his income remained exactly the same in terms of what it would buy, the government, without passing new tax legislation, was able to increase its share of Mr. Brown's income. Because of this built-in inequity government revenues in total go up significantly during inflationary periods. Such increases occur automatically without new parliamentary approval.

How It Works

To resolve this unfairness, John Turner, our minister of finance, lifted a plank from the Conservatives' election platform and has piloted through parliament the proposal to index the tax calculations. The idea, although new to Canada, is not totally new since a variant of it is in use, at least in the Netherlands, if not in other countries.

The method automatically adjusts all dollar amounts given in the tax law for effects of inflation by means of the Consumers Price Index (C.P.I.) In actual fact, the tax-payer will probably not see these adjustments since the Department of National Revenue will each year prepare new tax tables taking these adjustments into effect.

To be specific, the 1974 regulations for our example would automatically be adjusted using the C.P.I. as follows. Assuming a 1973 C.P.I. of 100 and 1974 C.P.I. of 108, John Brown's personal deductions will become:

$$\$3,500 \times \frac{108}{100} = \$3,780$$

Similarly the relevant marginal tax class will now be adjusted so that instead of 23% on amounts in excess of \$5,000 the rate will be 23% on amounts in excess of \$5,400 ($5,000 \times \frac{108}{100}$).

The calculation of his tax will then appear as in Table C.

*John Brown
Revised Income Tax Calculation 1974*

	1973	1974
Taxable income before deductions		\$9,180
Personal deductions		3,780
Taxable Income		\$5,400
Federal Tax		1,053
Provincial Tax		321
Total Tax		1,374
Available Income		\$7,806

Available income will now be approximately equal to

1973 income as adjusted for price changes (Table B-\$7,820) so that under the revised plan John Brown will not have his purchasing power reduced merely because of the tax effect. Or, instead of only a 6.6% increase, he has now received approximately an 8% increase in his after tax as well as his before tax income.

Adoption of this provision has therefore begun the

process of making our tax system neutral as far as inflation is concerned. The government now no longer becomes an automatic beneficiary of inflation - at least as far as personal income taxes are concerned. As we shall see in a future article, the same is not true, however, as it concerns government debt or corporate income tax.

J.M. BOERSEMA

Timothy School Opens Its Doors

HAMILTON - September 4, 1973, was not just another first school day. For many children and parents in Hamilton it was the culmination of years of struggle and prayer. There was great joy in the hearts of many when two boys and three girls cut the ribbon at the ceremony that took place during the evening to mark the official opening of Timothy Canadian Reformed School.

After the building committee chairman, Mr. T. Vanderhout, handed over the key to the principal, Mr. E. Gosker, a stream of people went into the school to inspect the classrooms. It was obvious from the reaction of children and adults that they were not disappointed as they eagerly went from room to room and inspected all the facilities.

"Timothy" is a five-room school situated some distance behind the Cornerstone Church. Built by G. & G. Hart Construction, it uses the same brick as the church, symbolizing the unity between the two. The three finished rooms are colourfully decorated with drapes and there is carpeting in two of them. The office and staff room are also very attractive. Truly a place in which to enjoy working and studying. As we toured the school, two of the words most frequently heard were "beautiful" and "prachtig!"

One can only admire the optimism of the school society in building a school this size. Present enrolment is 38 pupils, divided between two classrooms. The principal is Mr. E. Gosker, formerly of Smithers, B.C., and the primary teacher is Miss H. Schuller. A third teacher, Mrs. T. Ludwig, will be assisting in the primary grades.

The official ceremonies were marred only by the absence of the chairman of the board, Mr. J.J. Kuntz, who became ill. His enthu-

siasm, dedication, and much hard work was gratefully acknowledged and the hope expressed for his speedy recovery.

After touring the school people were invited to the church building to participate in a programme of celebration. In his "commencement address" Prof. Dr. J. Faber began by quoting Psalm 118:23 - "This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes," a psalm which I am sure was echoed in the hearts of his listeners.

Addressing himself to the topic "Reformation and Education", Dr. Faber showed how the two are closely connected in the history of the Church. Since the earliest days of the Reformation attention was paid to the education of the children and the need to establish this upon the basis of God's infallible Word. Luther had to struggle against the influence of philosophers such as Aristotle in the school curriculum. In his words, "... this dead heathen has conquered, obstructed, and almost succeeded in suppressing the books of the living God."

Schools had both a temporal and a spiritual purpose, according to Luther: to equip children for the office of believer and to make "men able to rule well over land and people, and women able to manage the household and train children and servants aright".

It was stressed that the teaching of the Bible is an important part of the curriculum although it should not supplant the task of family and church in their teaching. The Word of God must become a part of every subject studied. Bucer and Calvin saw the foundation of the school as such in the covenant of God and in baptism and they emphasized the kingdom of Christ.

In his closing remarks Dr. Faber

expressed the prayer that "the teaching and instruction may be in the line of the Reformation, as far as that line was in accordance with God's infallible Word; that there may be found unity between church, school, and home; that there may be found unity in the curriculum taught. This unity is the unity of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Congratulatory messages were delivered by Mr. G. Woudenberg on behalf of the consistory of the Hamilton Church, by Mr. W. Wildeboer of Orangeville on behalf of the League of Can. Ref. School Societies in Ontario, and by Mr. L. Hoogerdijk of Fergus on behalf of the Can. Ref. Teachers' Association.

In a closing speech the principal, Mr. E. Gosker, said that "Timothy" would not be a popular school since it goes against the spirit of ecumenism in our age. It will be met by the contempt and indifference of the modern world and its tolerance of differing life views. This is a time in which there is no respect for elders. It is the "age of the child", in which parents ask their children what they should do and what they should say to them. But we are going to listen to our elders, to the fathers of the church, to Paul and Timothy. We are not ashamed of our ancestors but, instead, want to keep on their ways. This will make it hard on the children sometimes because it will mean that they have to discipline themselves to go on the way of the LORD. That is the responsibility of the school as well as of the whole congregation - to educate them in God's way.

II Timothy 3:14 and 15 - "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

H.J. LUDWIG

our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

It's really fall, isn't it? I hope you're enjoying the sunshine and the beautiful fall colours and smells!

Are you going to preserve a little of the beauty of fall for later? You can! Just put some pretty coloured leaves in your Bible or some other big book.

Do you remember last year I told you how to preserve leaves and make leaf prints? Maybe you keep the back issues and could read it over again.

And how about pressing flowers? Have you ever tried that?

* * *

I know you're waiting anxiously for the results of our Contest. Never fear, I'll let you know just as soon as I can. But as I'm writing this some of the last entries may not have reached me yet. And we want everyone to have a chance. Right?

Well then, next time I will announce THE NAMES OF THE WINNERS. I promise!

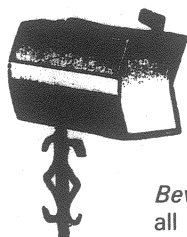
In a way, you know, I wish this contest would never end! I keep on receiving all kinds of beautiful pictures and poems and letters. I like it!

* * *

Time for Birthday Wishes. The Busy Beavers and Aunt Betty wish you health and happiness, God's care and guidance every day of your next year! I'm always thankful too, aren't you, that we can look back on a year during which the Lord cared for you and spared you again.

Happy Birthday to all these Busy Beavers.

Marcia Boersema	Oct. 2	Geraldine Heemskerck	16
Michael Krabbendam	2	Carl Oosterhoff	18
Cathy DeJong	7	Clarence Oosterhoff	19
Anita Tenhage	7	Carolyn Paize	23
Irene Vande Burgt	8	Catherine De Vos	24
Marian Van Dyk	8	Jeanette Bikker	28
Diane Beukema	10	Henny Krabbendam	28
Harriet De Jonge	10	Melanie De Gelder	29
Johnny Ganskoele	11	Patsy Linde	29
Bernice Louwers	14	Grace Bosscher	30
Hendrika Plug	15	Joyce Welfing	31



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Beverly Schouten*. I hope your sister's arm is all better again. Sounds to me as if you've had a nice busy summer, too. Happy birthday on the 26th, Beverly!

Hello, *Brenda Vanden Bos*. Congratulations on your

new twins! They are quite big already, aren't they? Bye for now.

How do you like your new teacher, *Patricia Barendregt*? I would just love to see your beautiful garden. Thanks for the quiz, Patricia.

Thank you for your nice fish story, *Margaret Vanden Haak*. Don't worry about the poem, Margaret. If you can't write one, just read lots of nice ones.

Was your mother pleased, *Ena Beyes*, with the changes at your house when she returned? You really must have been busy. But you weren't alone, were you?

What interesting sights you've seen this summer, *Eileen Bartels*! How is your BIG puzzle coming along?

Thank you, *Cathy Wendt*, for your game and riddles. You always have something to share with the other Busy Beavers. And you really have had lots of company this summer, haven't you?

Hello, *Johanna Van Dam*, nice to hear from you again. Did you enjoy your summer job?

Thank you for the poem, *Margaret Eelhart*. It said in pretty words exactly how a kitten is. Write again soon, Margaret.

You must have been busy too, *Irene Van Oene*, making up all those entries for our Contest! I'm glad you've had such a good birthday and did so well in swimming.

Hello, *Betty Ann Vander Meulen*. I hope you and your grandmother are both feeling much better. Glad you liked the wedding so much, and that you all passed. Write again soon, Betty Ann.

You must have been busy too, *Mary Vande Burgt*, making those beautiful pictures to enter in our Contest. I'm glad you've had such a nice summer. And I hope you'll keep on joining in all our activities because we are proud of Busy Beavers like you.

* * *

Would you like to try the quizzes our busy Busy Beavers have sent in?

Try matching the answers to the questions in this quiz from *Patricia Barendregt*.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Who was the happiest girl in the world? | Judas Iscariot |
| 2. Who was the brother of Mary and Martha? | 40 days and 40 nights |
| 3. Who was the son of perdition? | Mary |
| 4. Who baptized Jesus? | Lazarus |
| 5. How long did Jesus stay in the wilderness? | John the Baptist |

And we have some riddles for you from *Cathy Wendt*!

1. What turns but never moves?
2. The more you take from it the larger it gets.
3. As long as I eat, I live; when I drink I die.
4. Two legs sat upon three legs. One leg knocked two legs off three legs. Two legs hit four legs with three legs.

Answers to riddles:

1. milk, 2. a hole, 3. a fire, 4. A man on a three-legged stool milking a cow. The cow kicked him and he hit her with the

Could you figure out the puzzle last time? Here is the answer:

Cross you are, cross you be;

Cross; too cross, you are to me?

Everybody knows the sayings of course! Here they are:

1. A miss is as good as a mile.
2. A penny saved is a penny made.
3. Two heads are better than one.
4. The early bird catches the worm.
5. Hunger is the best sauce.
6. Better late than never.

7. Make hay while the sun shines.
8. Hast makes waste.
9. A stitch in time saves nine.
10. Many hands make light work.

So long for this time, Busy Beavers!

Yours,
Aunt Betty.

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The Almond Branch provides, by means of a periodical (5 issues per year), study material for the societies of the Canadian Reformed Churches. You are urged to subscribe, and make use of these valuable study-aids.

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8 outlines by Rev. H.D. van Herksen

NUMBERS, outlines on the fourth book of Moses, by Rev. Prof. H.M. Ohmann, present volume (4).

In addition to these outlines Almond Branch has published articles and speeches which are also suitable for discussion at society meetings. Among the topics falling within this category that have been or soon will be published are: Education and Upbringing in the Old Testament; The Place of the Confederation of Churches in Scripture and History; About "Free" Women and "Pious" Lords; Christian Liberty; Covenant and Baptism; Family Planning; Youth in Confrontation with the Present Times; Scriptural Data Concerning Induced Abortion; Women's Suffrage in the Church; Edification of the Congregation and Home Visitation; Church in the last Judgment; Pop-music and the Family; etc., etc.

Subscription Rate: \$3.75 per year. Group subscription [societies]: 20% discount or \$3.00 per year.

Engaged:

NEL VANDERMEER

and

GERRY HART

August 25, 1973.

631 Scenic Drive R.R. #2
Hamilton, Ont. Lynden, Ont.

Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Knegt are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter:

ELSA

to

BERT HOPMAN

September 1, 1973.

Box 354, Smithville, Ontario.

Thankful to the Lord who made all things well, we announce the birth of our daughter:

SARAH NADINA

August 6, 1973.

Iepo and Ann Vanderwoude
(nee Van Egmond)

A sister for:

*Kenneth, Wayne, Martin
Simon and Anna-Lynn.*

R.R. 1,
St. Ann's, Ont.

"With gratitude to the Lord, we hope to celebrate the 40th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents:

ROELOF GRIT

and

CHRISTINA GRIT - nee Winkel

on October 5, 1973.

2 Samuel 7:29a

Brampton: Klass and Valerie Grit
*Christine, Ralph, Michael,
Cheryl, Joanne*

Aurora: Lucas and Gayle Grit

Erin: George and Swansie Knight
David, Louise, Greg

Orangeville: John and Harma
Margaret and Lorraine

Willowdale: Bill and Geraldine
Marie, Valerie, Lisa

R.R. #4 Grand Valley, Ontario.

LEAGUE OF CANADIAN REFORMED
WOMEN SOCIETIES IN ONTARIO

INVITATION

To attend our 12th Annual Convention

to be held D.V. Wednesday, October 10, 1973 in the Canadian Reformed Church, Orangeville, Ontario.

The morning session starts at 10:00 a.m. Introduction by Mrs. I. Jonker of Orangeville on:

*Perseverance of the saints.
(Volharding der heiligen)*

For home study: see Page 455, Book of Praise.

After lunch, at 1:30 p.m. the Reverend C. Oly hopes to speak on:

*Our Christian Family Life Today
(I Cor. 3:21) For all things are yours.*

For home study: check with your local society.

The morning meeting will be in the Dutch language, with English in the afternoon meeting.

For the ordering of tickets, and road directions, check with your local societies.

The Board of the League of
Canadian Reformed Women Societies.

With gratitude to the LORD, we hope to celebrate the 35th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents:

BRUIN VAN HUISSTEDE

and

CAROLINA CORNELIA VAN HUISSTEDE

nee - Van Kuil

on September 21, 1973.

Their thankful children:

Burlington: John and Helen VanHuisstede

Brampton: Chris and Caroline Nobels

Burlington: Hank and Gerda De Bruin

Farmington, Mich.: Vicky Schultz

Burlington: Bill and Evelyn Horsman

Fergus: Brian and Marlene VanHuisstede

Guelph: Joost and Judy VanHuisstede

Vancouver: Nick and Phyllis VanHuisstede

Guelph: Bill VanHuisstede

Guelph: Jeanne VanHuisstede

and fourteen Grandchildren.

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