

# Clarion

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# “Body” or “Flesh”?

In his articles about the Second Draft Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, published in *Clarion* of January 1977, the Rev. G. VanDooren made some remarks with respect to the questions, “Did the continued Committee read its mandate correctly?” and “Were their self-adopted guidelines in complete harmony with what two Synods plus the Committee from 1971 to 1974 had done?” He answered these questions in the negative. He added some detailed criticism, in which he also compared the second to the first draft translation. Because Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff, the Rev. J. Geertsema and I were involved with this first draft, I should be modest and cautious in my reaction to the second draft but now that the Rev. VanDooren has challenged the professor of Symbolics to make some remarks, I cannot restrain myself from doing so. Apart from my membership of the first committee and my teaching position at our Theological College, great interest in the confession of the catholic church compels me to join the discussion.

First of all, I would like to deal with the text of the so-called Apostles’ Creed. Possibly some readers remember that I objected against the insertion of the word “Christian” into the text of the Apostolicum in the first edition of our complete *Book of Praise*. I have gratefully noticed that the Committee on the translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, of which the Rev. G. VanRongen was convener, in spite of the fact that immediately after the publication of the *Book of Praise*, this minister had applauded the insertion of the word “Christian,” now returns to the original text: “I believe a holy catholic Church.” This action is in agreement with a decision of Synod Toronto 1974 and it shows that among us open discussion is fruitful. There is willingness to listen to each other and learn from each other. Encouraged by this experience we now turn to a following phrase in the Creed: “The resurrection of the *body*.” Here the Committee proposes to read: the resurrection of the *flesh*. The report remarks: “This is according to the original: ‘of the flesh’ and not ‘of the body.’”

The Rev. VanDooren objected: “Sure, the original German has ‘Fleisch,’ but . . .” (*Clarion*, January 29, 1977). Although I agree with the objection that we should not unnecessarily isolate ourselves from other English speaking Christians, I do not think that the Rev. VanDooren is accurate in his argumentation.

First of all, when the Committee refers to “the original,” they do not mention the original German. The original of the text in the Old Roman Form — a “forerunner” of our Apostolicum — was probably not even Latin but Greek. Both in the Greek and Latin originals of the phrase it reads “the resurrection of the *flesh*.” Here the second draft is right. In the meantime, this does not completely decide that the Committee is right to propose a change of the old English text “the resurrection of the *body*.” For what is the case? From many sides objections have been brought forward against the use of the word “*flesh*.” One of the latest instances is H.N. Ridderbos in his standard work *Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1975, pp. 548ff.). G.C. Berkouwer in his book on *The Return of Christ* had denied that the words “resurrection of the flesh” are un-Pauline. Dr. Ridderbos, however, is of the opinion that the confessional expression “resurrection of the flesh” is not in harmony with the Pauline usage and would not be possible in it. “Flesh,” even when it is not used in the sense of sinful existence, always has the meaning of that which is only temporal. It denotes man in his weakness and mortality. “Body,” on the other hand, typifies man as he has been created by God, for God’s glory, and to His service and therefore as he is raised from the dead and saved by God.

Although Ridderbos and Berkouwer agree that this is a question of usage and there need not be a *material* difference here between “resurrection of the body” and what the Church means by “resurrection of the flesh,” our interest is raised. Is the word “flesh” in this respect un-Scriptural or at least un-Pauline? And should our Dutch sister churches have to consider

a change of their text: “Ik geloof de wederopstanding des *vleses*”?

We are in the happy situation that a student of Dr. Berkouwer wrote a thesis about our topic: *The Resurrection of the Flesh. A study of a confessional phrase*. by Lynn Boliek (Amsterdam: VanCampen, 1962). Let us turn to this dissertation for some background information. Boliek’s first chapter deals with “Resurrection of the flesh in the Apostles’ Creed.” Though not a New Testament phrase, the expression *resurrection of the flesh* appears early in the second century in both the West and East. About the year 97 A.D. Clement of Rome translated Job 19:25, 26 with the words “Thou shalt raise up this flesh of mine.” The expression “resurrection of the flesh” entered into the Jerusalem and other creeds in the East, and it is common to many of the writers of the second century.

If we ask for the doctrinal background of the expression, we are led to think of the struggle against Gnosticism. Already the apostle Paul warned against the two teachers Hymenaeus and Philetus, who by saying “the resurrection was already passed” made shipwreck of the faith of some (II Timothy 2:17, 18).

Gnosticism was drenched with a dualism between spirit and matter; the material world as such is despised and therefore also the human body. In the doctrine about Christ this Gnosticism was docetic: it taught that the Son of God had not really and truly come in the flesh. In the gospel and in his letters, the apostle John time and again warns against this heresy and boldly proclaims that the Word has become *flesh*. See John 1:14, I John 4:2, 3, and II John 7. In our so-called Nicene Creed we confess that the Son of God for us men and our salvation, came down from heaven, and was *incarnate* by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man. In this word “incarnate” the reality of His becoming *flesh* is stressed. His was not an apparent body, but truly and really He became *flesh*. Already Polycarp, a student of John, wrote to the Philippian:

*Continued on next page.*

# Covenant Education 2

## IV. PLACE OF EDUCATION IN THE COVENANT

So far much mention is made of "covenant" and "Christ," but what about "school" or education? What role does education play in the covenant?

As Deuteronomy 6:4,5, which we just quoted, declares, covenant people may and must love the LORD everywhere, always, and with everything they have. It is a radical, comprehensive demand for loyalty in love.

This applies to the family. God covenanted a people: infants, toddlers, teenagers, young and old parents, and pensioners. Moses taught Israel the covenant

so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and commandments . . . all the days of your life and that your days may be prolonged (Deuteronomy 6:2).

### "BODY" OR "FLESH" — Cont'd.

"For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist . . . and who says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the firstborn of Satan."

One can imagine that over against Gnosticism the word "flesh" as indication of the reality of the facts of redemption spread, so to speak, from the confession about Christ's incarnation and crucifixion to the confession about His resurrection and return, and that the parallel between *His* resurrection and that of the believers brought about the phrase "I believe the resurrection of the *flesh*." But was this "spread" of the word "flesh" from incarnation to resurrection warranted? What about the objections phrased by, among others, Dr. H.N. Ridderbos and the Rev. G. VanDooren? What, for example, about the text: "I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God . . ." (I Corinthians 15:50)? And if those objections can be met, should we then, with the Second Draft Translation, return to the original Greek and Latin text of the Apostles' Creed, or nevertheless maintain the present English text? I think, this is material enough for a following article, the LORD willing.

J. FABER

That the covenant involves the family unit is evident in God's command that parents

teach them (the covenant ways) diligently to your sons.

Literally, imprint on your children the love and loyalty to the LORD your God. Let it make an unforgettable impression on them so that nothing can erase it. Teach them by a "show and tell" method. Show them by your own life so that your telling and talking may be reinforced and not undone.

Teach them *diligently*. There is so much ordinary talk. Teach them by means of instructing, stimulating, disciplining, and encouraging, so that the children love the LORD. That takes concentrated effort.

In the home, on the road, in the bedroom, and at breakfast table, that is, in the morning, during the day, and in the evening, teach them. For the covenant words must leaven their personal, family, and societal life.

Of course, you need not always talk about the Bible. You understand what God intends here.

This is so very important that you must take pains never to forget it. Therefore, figuratively speaking, tie this commandment as a string on your finger and as frontlets between your eyes. Never travel without it. As a woman first puts on her jewelry before she goes out, so the covenant people should put on this adorning jewelry. Without love and loyalty to God, they should have that bare and naked feeling.

In order to please God, education must be covenant-education. Children belong to the LORD God, too. How often does God not call them "MY children"? Bring them up accordingly then in the ways, teachings, and light of MY covenant with you. In that covenant book God outlines the curriculum for their education.

Today, you and I witness a tremendous increase in knowledge as God unveils it to man. As a result, the limits of time and knowledge compel parents to send their children to school. Yet parents made vows for the entire upbringing of their covenant children so that they love the LORD God. The LORD asked that. That brings us to:

## V. THE NEED FOR COVENANT-EDUCATION

Where do you send covenant children for schooling? Some people argue in favour of government-established, controlled, and supported schools. Such schools promote the true unity of the community and nation. They allow for a high standard of education. They also solve the problem of the indifference of many parents and others to education. And they alone can provide the huge sums of money needed to erect suitable buildings and to pay adequate salaries.



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These then are some basic points in the argument for governmental schools.

Governmental schools are a recent development in history. In the hands of revolutionary or communistic governments they wield tremendous influence on a nation.

But is a government primarily responsible and obliged to take care of education for the children? Is that natural? Is that biblical? Moreover, will state education not need to remain non-religious and non-prejudiced in matters of faith and a world-and-life view? Does our pluralistic society with its many religions, "faiths," philosophies, and outlooks not demand a general, all-inclusive approach to education which offends no one? Of course, neutrality is a myth. Christ said that he who is not positively for Him is against Him. Education which is not positively for Christ, but only lukewarm towards Him at best, opposes Christ and his children.

Well, what about church-education or church-schools then? Looking back into history one finds that the church acted as foster-parents in educating the children. During the colonial period in Canada churches established schools and colleges. Many churches still champion schools which are established, controlled, and financed by the church. That such schools safeguard a religious training in accordance with the expressed convictions of the parents and church speaks in their favour.

But again, does the Bible give warrant to the church to enter this field?

The oldest historical position is that God entrusted the parents with the education of the children which He gave to them. In Deuteronomy 6 we read how the LORD gave the parents the responsibility to teach their children diligently to love the LORD in everything. Various parts of the covenant book stress the many-sidedness of the teaching and training which parents were to give their sons and daughters. Read Proverbs, for example.

God revealed that the children belong to Jesus Christ, their Lord and Saviour. Jesus called them children of the kingdom of God, or covenant children. As part of God's people they are special, distinct, chosen, and holy to Him. They are his own possession. "You parents," God says, "see to it that you bring them up as such in the totality of their life."

As a result Reformed people have worked for, promoted, and supported education which is parentally supported and supervised. Such education is based on God's covenant words of life as the parents confess it in their creeds.

Luther and his successor, Melancthon, Bucer, Zwingli, and especially Calvin in Geneva, promoted and established institutions of learning in the sixteenth century during the great reformation. In these schools the Book of the Covenant stood central, unifying all education.

Allow me to offer one glimpse into our historical past, our Reformed heritage. In The Netherlands, during the first half of the 1800's, the state controlled education. You know that in 1834, under the leadership of Rev. H. De Cock, there was a separation from the unbelief and liberalism of the Dutch State-Church and a return to God's Word. As a result, the parents actively fought for covenant-education, too, since the existing schools had also become liberal.

In the province of Drente in a town called Smilde, such a school was started in 1834 even before the offices were instituted in the separated church. Forty children attended. They had only one good Reformed teacher. But local officials smelled a rat, they said, and investigated this suspicious place. In the back of the labourer's house, they found eight benches and two tables supplied by parents. Students brought textbooks while the teacher supplied pens and paper. Together in the same area they saw pigs in pig pens, cow stables, calves, layers of straw, a pile of peat and other flammable material, along with a stove. They learned that the parents alternated in offering free board for the teacher. In addition he received \$0.25 per week per child as a salary!

As you can tell, these parents had deep convictions. To obey the LORD's demands for His children, they paid dear sacrifices, though most of them were already poverty-stricken.

To add to the problems, the government declared the school illegal. The district school-supervisor wrote:

I consider the establishing of a new school a rebellious movement against the existing order of affairs, and deem it therefore necessary that some measures be taken to oppose it in a serious way.

Since the state monopolized education, the parents were hamstrung. The law clearly stated,

No elementary school, no matter under which name, may exist or be established anywhere, without the express approval of the appropriate regional, rural, or civic government after firstly and duly submitting information and seeking the considerations of the school-supervisor of the district of the local school-commission.

Though private schools could be allowed after legal permission was received, government officials frowned on it and opposed it. For ten years the Reformed parents faced a stone wall of opposition.

After five days of operation the school in Smilde had to stop. The teacher was fined fifty guilders (two-thirds had to go to the local public school!). The public schools were good enough according to the officials and they saw no need for private schools. By 1845 all Reformed schools had been closed by government opposition and persecution, though the parents registered complaints, appeals, protests, and petitions. It was a long, hard struggle before the doors stood open again.

Today our provincial government allows private schools to operate, though you parents must give a double sacrifice, paying both public and private education. You do it willingly, happy that you may and can do it. For the LORD gives the:

## VI. BLESSINGS OF THE COVENANT EDUCATION

From the positive viewpoint of God's good news, you may fashion the still soft clay of young hearts and minds. At this school, teachers instruct the children in the Book of the Old and New Covenant, which focuses on Christ, as the foundation of all true education. In every subject you teach them to love the LORD their God to Whom they belong.

"What a Father you have, children!" you may say in science as you unfold the wonders of His creation.

"What a Governor!, Who in Christ governs all history and all affairs towards a glorious end-goal," you say in history class.

"What a King!, Who made man to be king endowed with a complex brain which can order, reason, and systematize," you say in arithmetic.

"What a LORD!, Who wants fellowship with man, and so gives man the gift of speech and language," you say in language class.

What a blessing! In close cooperation

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## "GRASS" (I)

This is a true story. It happened possibly on your block, when a mother was cleaning up the wilderness of her teenage son's bedroom. She found a curious-looking, sweet-smelling, dried-out weed casually thrown in a corner under the bed. Now mother knew that her son was a fervent botanist, but by some stroke of her excellent intuition, she confronted her son with the weed just the same, asking him what it was. After a slight, noticeable hesitation, the boy answered, "Grass, what else?"

True, it could have been many other things, but it was, indeed, "grass." Or if you wish: tea, hay, pot, cannabis sativa, marijuana.

A common scene? The young lad is Canadian Reformed. And the parents are shocked. Usually, you see, this happens to the kid next door, and one can shake his or her head at the atrocities of others, but such is unexpected at home. Especially because the boy gave no cause for suspicions (other than being somewhat listless and disinterested lately) but was generally punctual in all outward duties. Even our pastor, I heard, was not displeased with his efforts at catechism.

"Grass, what else?" The boy seemed genuinely surprised at his parents' display of dismay, because smoking pot was "the thing to do." Everybody does it, just like everyone drinks, smokes cigarettes, eats, and sleeps. Certainly, the young man professed not to overindulge in the stuff, but really, he saw no harm in occasionally using the drug. He tried to comfort his mother with the wisdom that grass was only a soft drug, and not a hard drug like heroin or morphine. It wasn't addictive, he claimed, and he was not dependent on it at all. The lad even quoted leading chemists, doctors, and philosophers who taught that marijuana is a highly successful means of "broadening your vision," a harmless momentary relief from our tiresome, modern society.

We like to think that drug usage, and, for example, alcohol abuse are not found in our ranks, but this example suffices to prove that we are only a "step" away from the world and that Satan is effective also among us. How many of our young people use or have used marijuana? How many of our people drink regularly to the point of intoxication? In

# Circumspection...

our Dutch sister-Churches an organization was set up recently, through the efforts of, among others, a br. P. Haima, former detective of the narcotics brigade in Groningen, to help brothers and sisters who are drug-addicts or alcoholics. So the problem is being recognized and tackled there by experts. The whole idea is sobering in itself.

Do we recognize it here in this country? Our little world can be shattered by one trace of weed. The danger is still imminent that usage of drugs like marijuana will be legalized and sold, for example, in government controlled stores, like liquor stores now. What is to be our stand against this?

We must distinguish, of course,



between the various types of drugs which are being sold and used. Also, there are degrees in addiction, and we can distinguish between strong physical addiction and light psychological dependence. Physical addiction is determined by the "tolerance factor," which means that the user continually demands larger quantities of the addictive material, until the body is saturated and breaks. Most alcoholics and heroin-users ("junkies") know they are committing suicide, yet they will not stop. Psychological dependence is apparent in gross frustration and maddening uneasiness when the drug is not avail-

able. Tranquilizers and cigarettes fall into this category. And when physical and psychic addiction are both present, there's grave trouble!

There are the "hard drugs," like opium, morphine, and heroin, extracted from the "papaver somniferum," known centuries ago in India. These drugs induce an euphoric condition ("that floating feeling"), a pleasant but fully deceptive sense of well-being, which even removes the awareness of pain and discomfort. For this reason, morphine is often used as a painkiller for those terminally ill (e.g. of cancer) and is tolerable in carefully controlled dosages. But the "junkie" is in a terrible physical and mental state, enslaved by his suicidal craving.

There are the "barbiturates" (sleeping-pills and tranquilizers), synthetic drugs in use only since the beginning of this century, which can bring people to a deep state of senselessness. We also know of stimulants like amphetamines and cocaine ("coke"), in use since the second World War, which have a strong effect on the central nervous system. Unlike the barbiturates, these drugs stimulate to greater activity and confidence and were used by war-pilots, for instance, during their long, tiresome flights over Germany. Since the user is working above his natural capacities, he is "draining" his body and winds up in a state of sheer exhaustion and apathy. Cocaine was used by the Indians of South and Latin America on their long travels through the mountains, and is presently highly esteemed among the modern "Jet Set" of Europe and America.

Another category is formed by the hallucinatory drugs like hashish, marijuana, and LSD. These drugs also affect the nervous system, especially changing the sensory perceptions of sight, hearing, and smell. People see more than and differently from what there really is, and have "visions" and other imaginary experiences. Marijuana is known since 2737 B.C., already mentioned in a pharmaceutical book of the Chinese emperor Chan Nung. The letters LSD are the initials of a chemical discovered in 1938, so potent that it causes a

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# “I Pledge You My Troth”<sup>2</sup>

## MARRIAGE AND TROTH

“Therefore,” Genesis 2:24 reads, “a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.” “So,” the Lord Jesus concluded, “they are no longer two, but one flesh,” and He added: “What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6). Olthuis derives from these texts that “marriage is a mutual, permanent, exclusive, one-flesh union between husband and wife, characterized by troth or fidelity” (p. 20). Or, as it is expressed: “Marriage is a partnership of troth” (pp. 20, 21). Although Olthuis realizes that “few people are consciously aware of troth,” that “even the term is unfamiliar” (p. 21), he prefers the word troth to the word “love” (p. 20). As a matter of fact, “the key concept in marriage is troth” (p. 20), and so it is to “the intimacy in family and friendship” (p. 21). His book is intended to be “a plea for the recovery of troth.”

The reason for this preference is that this “old English term for truth, faithfulness, loyalty and honesty” (p. 21), “involves,” in addition to loyalty, “trust, love, devotion, reliability” (p. 20). Olthuis is apparently of the opinion that the word “love” does not imply all that, or at least is not understood by people in general as implying all that.

Whether the use of an unfamiliar word will improve this situation seems questionable to me, the more so because the meaning of troth is difficult to learn from the one time that it is used in the New Testament in the form “betrothed” (Luke 2:5). The abundant use of the word “love” in the New Testament teaches, however, that love, if it is worthy of its name, is more than romantic love, that it includes all that the word troth expresses, and more than that, since its biblical use clearly indicates that true love is rooted in the love of God. Personally for these reasons I prefer the word “love” to “troth.” My main objection, however, is not against the word “troth” as such, but against the unqualified use of it.

When, at a wedding ceremony in which the old form is used, the moment has arrived for the exchange of vows, then the couple makes specific

vows. The groom promises never to forsake his wife, to love her faithfully, to maintain her, to live in holiness with her, and to be faithful and truthful to her in all things according to the holy gospel. The bride, in turn, promises to love her husband, to be obedient to him, to serve and to assist him, never to forsake him, to live in all holiness with him, and to be faithful and truthful to him in all things according to the holy gospel.

Troth involves, according to Olthuis, that “a husband can count on his wife and she on him,” but that is a far cry from the specified promises of the Form. Not just an old Form, but Scripture, as we saw, calls for these promises.

## MARRIAGE, STATE AND CHURCH

On the ground of his view of marriage as a partnership of troth instituted by God, Olthuis submits that, although both state and church have a task with respect to marriage and married people in legal recognition of the marriage and in protecting it against outside encroachments on the one hand (p. 49), and in proclaiming God’s command and promise for marriage and in calling the couple’s response to them on the other hand, it is not the state nor the church but the LORD Himself Who marries the couple “in their vowed promise of troth” (p. 50).

I agree with the limited task of church and state in this respect, but it surprised me, therefore, to read in the same context that although “the state itself should not become a marriage counsellor . . . it should make sure that genuine marriage counselling is available for marriages in crisis” (p. 49). This has to be done via subsidy to the various faith communities (p. 49). It also surprised me to read that pastors and elders should resist the temptation “to be judgmental and punitive” in their counselling, since condemnation does not help (p. 50). I would say that if the task of the state is restricted to the protection of marriage against outward encroachments, it certainly should not get involved in marriage counselling, not even indirectly, which concerns the inside of marriage. And I would also say that if it is the task of the church to proclaim God’s command for marriage, it is her task as well to maintain God’s command in admonition and, if necessary, in disci-

pline, when this command is trampled under foot.

## MIXED MARRIAGES

Olthuis writes that, different from the past, the term “mixed marriages” is hardly used anymore. Personally he does not have any use for it either if it concerns a marriage between a Baptist and a Lutheran, or a Roman Catholic and a Presbyterian. The only instance in which he wants to use the term is in the case of “a marriage between two people with different visions of life’s meaning,” “the true mixed marriage” (p. 58).

This view is quite a change indeed; it is however anything but an improvement. Does the Word of God, wherein marriage should be rooted, not speak about the necessity of the unity of faith for married couples by calling for marriages “in the Lord,” and is the church not one of the articles of our Christian faith? As a practising minister, I have seen over and over again the trouble and grief brought on by marriages wherein no church unity was found. I have also seen the alienation from the church of the LORD which often followed, and the breakdown of marriage with which it all ended. It is an extremely dangerous thing for a true and happy Christian marriage to treat the belongings of the couple to different churches as a thing which does not really matter.

## DISTORTIONS OF MARRIAGE; DATING

Proceeding from marriage as a fellowship of troth, Olthuis rightly rejects so-called marriages without a licence, and premarital intercourse. Speaking about dating, he mentions the advantage of it, in that it gives young people the opportunity to learn to know each other, but he also warns for the dangers. “However, anyone who has dated much, knows that it is often a highly manipulative and exploitative game with only one rule: give some to get more” (p. 55). This word of caution should be taken to heart.

## MARRIAGES OF NON-CHRISTIANS

I cannot go along with Olthuis when he writes that non-Christians, who pledge their troth and who love each other, in that sense “give honour to Christ and bow before his Word in spite of themselves” (p. 62). Whatever does not proceed from faith is called sin by Paul (Romans 14:23). It implies that no pledge of troth or love can make up for the lack of faith and that no honour to Christ is given. That

makes the exhortation to marry in the LORD so extremely glorious.

#### THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

I am at a loss when Dr. Olthuis calls the seventh commandment "an Old Testament way of restating the Word for marriage," contending that "it is not a prohibition at holding down man's evil sexual lusts, but a positive protection for full troth fulfillment" and suggests that this commandment today would be quite different. It completely eludes me why the form of the seventh commandment would be exclusively Old Testamental, and why it would mean something else than it says. I know that each prohibition implies a positive commandment. However, that does not eliminate the prohibition. As to that, the Heidelberg Catechism offers a better interpretation of this commandment than is offered here. And it is not getting any better when, as a New Testament substitute for the Old Testament commandment, the reading is suggested: "Keep the troth in marriage" or even, "Have fun in marriage." Remembering Olthuis' warning against "the sex and funstyle of courtship" (p. 56), it surprises me somewhat to find the New Testament version of the seventh commandment presented in a literary form which reminds one of it.

#### ADULTERY AND MARRIAGE BREAKUP; DIVORCE

Adultery covers, in Olthuis' opinion, "all the ways in which infidelity can take place in marriage" (pp. 62, 63). This is true. Think only of the word of the Lord Jesus: "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

This truth, however, becomes an untruth if the conclusion is drawn from it, as Olthuis does, that all kinds of infidelities, which cannot be healed anymore, become a reason for the dissolution of marriage. He writes, "Once the marriage is dead, the family, friends, church and state only acknowledge this sad fact" (p. 65). The state ". . . issues a writ of divorce" (pp. 65, 66). "The church too must acknowledge the fact . . ." (p. 66). "If the church refuses to recognize the death of a marriage, it multiplies the sin by hypocritically maintaining an "empty shell" as a marriage . . ." In other words, the policy for the church in case of divorce — for that is what is meant by the death of a marriage —

is: Hands off! The only exception to this rule is the case in which a couple, going through the divorce procedure, would not acknowledge their sin in the breakdown of their marriage. For the rest they are to be left alone, and they are free to re-marry with the blessing of the church (p. 60). They are free to do so, and not exclusively the innocent party in case of adultery by the other party, followed by a divorce. In the first place there is, Olthuis feels, not something like an innocent party. "Marriage is such an involved and intimate relationship that neither partner can claim to be 'innocent,' both morally and legally" (p. 67). The most Olthuis will allow is that "one party is more innocent than the other" (p. 67).

In the second place, Olthuis does not accept that adultery is a biblical ground for divorce today and, consequently, for re-marriage of the party against whom the adultery has been committed. Maybe you wonder about the word of the Lord Jesus: "But I say to you whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity and marries another, commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9; cf. 5:32). Did the Lord not say with His "except" that, as different from all other reasons which were used by the Jews and are used today, unchastity or fornication is indeed a ground for divorce?

This side reference to the possible necessity of divorce, (Olthuis replies), indicates that Christ recognizes divorce as a reality. However, (he continues), these words, which appear to be directly related to the situation of that time, should not be used as grounds for divorce in every age (p. 70).

So, though once upon a time there might have been a biblical ground for divorce, that is not the case anymore. Because of this lack of biblical grounds, every divorce should be recognized for what it is, namely, the death of the marriage.

I cannot but totally disagree with this view and with the interpretation of Jesus' word, "except for unchastity," as a timebound pronouncement which has lost its validity for today. There is no indication whatsoever in text and context which would justify such an invalidation of the word of the Lord because of the alleged timebound character of it. On the contrary, the Lord Jesus turns against the divorce-for-every-cause-practice of the time and, with an appeal to God's ordinance of the beginning and consequently of the present, points to the indissolubility of marriage. That's the

rule. The only exception to it is fornication. Far from being timebound, therefore, the word of the LORD is fully up to date and we should leave it that way. That whole concept of timebound words of the Lord Jesus and of His apostles is extremely dangerous. It will, if we do not watch it, take the word of the LORD from us and saddle us with the words of theologians who may mean well but who in the meantime do not do well.

#### REMARRIAGE

Olthuis is right when he gives the warning to be careful in drawing general conclusions from a very special situation as is indicated in I Corinthians 7:10-16 (p. 70). I differ with him in the matter of remarriage. Olthuis does not feel that a remarriage of persons who are legally divorced is wrong. In my understanding of Scripture, such a remarriage is only allowed for a person whose divorce was the result of adultery or fornication by the party with whom this person was married. For the rest, a remarriage is not allowed for the simple reason that the divorce was not justified. When I say not justified, I do not refer to the law of the land. For as far as the law of the land is concerned, one can divorce one's wife or husband for almost any cause nowadays. I refer to the law of God, as interpreted by the Lord Jesus according to what was in the beginning. There is, as we saw, according to that law only one lawful reason for divorce, namely, unchastity. To remarry in other cases than that is not starting a new life but committing another sin with the intention of continuing in it. With Olthuis I believe that "God's grace is big enough to forgive divorce and the sins involved" (p. 71), but I do not believe that God's grace is so big as to allow replacing an old sin by a new one. The Lord Jesus, after pardoning the woman seized in adultery, did not say to her, "Go ahead, marry someone else." He said: "Go, and do not sin again" (John 8:11). We should take care that we speak as the Lord spoke and that we do not speak — let alone act — as an unscriptural law, geared to the demands of a permissive society, speaks. We should take all the more care because the danger of conformity to this world is very real — so real, actually, that when it comes to divorce and remarriage, the law of the land seems more familiar than the law of God. So far about this second part of the book.

L. SELLES

# press review

## AN ARCHEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY IN SYRIA.

The CHRISTIAN BEACON of January 13, 1977, gives information about the discovery of an old city in northern Syria. The first part of that article reads:

The Tell Mardikh Tablets change the course of history and also Biblical history (as seen by many scholars, J.G.). It all came about when a large mound, called a Tell, located in northern Syria, was dug into by two expert archaeologists of the Italian Archeological Mission of the University of Rome. The mound covered 140 acres and rose to a height of 50 feet. Excavations were first undertaken in 1964. It was not, however, until 1968 that a statue to the goddess Estar (In the Bible: Ashera or Ashtoreth) was uncovered with an inscription bearing the name of the lord of the city of Ebla. This identified the Tell.

In 1974 the first archives were dug into which contained 42 tablets. One was a school tablet containing personal names. The big discovery came in 1975 when two other rooms of the king's palace, a portion of the palace library containing 15,000 tablets, was uncovered.

In 1976 as the story broke over the world another 1600 tablets came to light for the first time. The two leaders of the Italian Mission were Professor Paolo Matthiae and Dr. Giovanni Pettinato.

Dr. Pettinato, in his article in the May issue of the *Biblical Archaeologist* calls it "The Royal Archives of Tell Mardikh-Ebla." His featured quotation . . . concludes, "15,000 tablets, many in a previously unknown West Semitic language akin to Hebrew, reveal a lost 3rd-millennium Syrian empire as large as that of Sargon the Great (the Assyrian king who lived around 725 B.C.). A stunning challenge to the primacy of Mesopotamia in Ancient Near Eastern history and in the

cultural genesis of ancient Israel." Just the beginnings, and those fragmentary, are available.

Dr. Pettinato reports that 1000 personal names are attested at Ebla, and he writes: "Many of these names occur in the same form in the Old Testament, so that a certain interdependence between the culture of Ebla and that of the Old Testament must be granted." Their learning was of a high order.

The language of Ebla which was semitic is actually different from, but closely related to, Hebrew. Dr. Pettinato has named it "paleo-Canaanite," and he says,

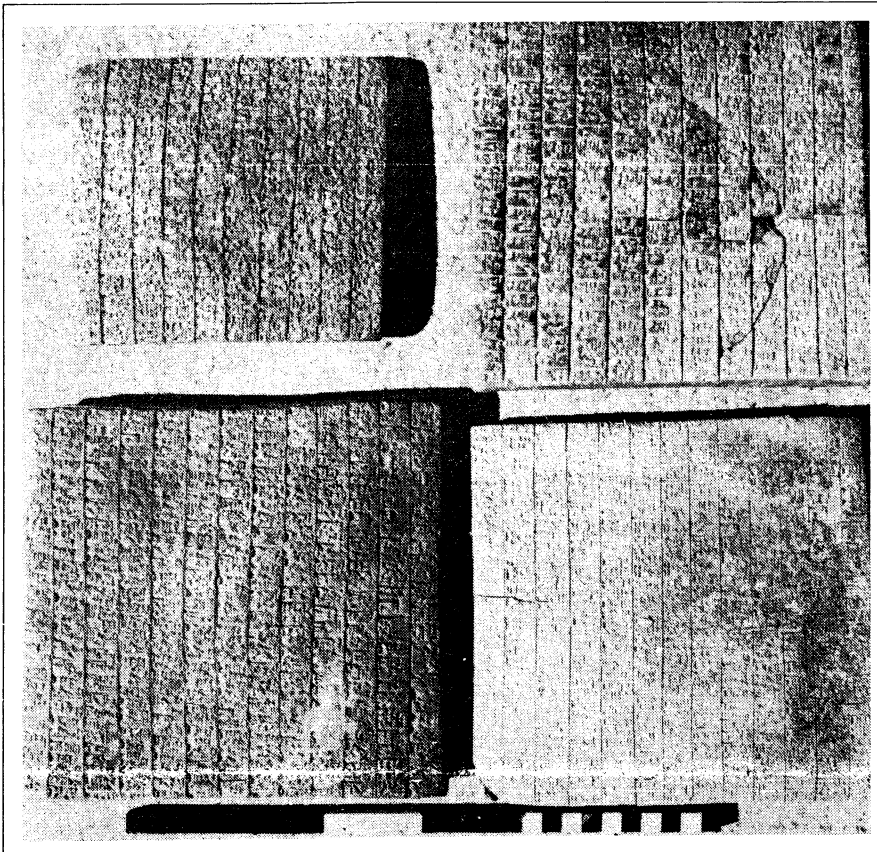
It should be stressed that Ebla furnishes the oldest vocabularies of recorded history. Those heretofore attested belong to a period five hundred years later . . . . [The] Ebla archives date 2400-2250 B.C. . . . Of particular interest to students of the Syro-palestinian archeology, as well as of the Old Testament, is the 3rd millennium documentation at Ebla of cities hitherto epigraphically attested in the 2nd-1st millennia B.C., such as Salim, the city of Melchizedek, Hazor, Lachish, Megiddo, Gaza Dor, Sinai, Ashtaroth, Joppa, etc.

And in another accompanying article in the same issue of the same paper we read the following quotations from a letter of Dr. David Noel Freedman, connected with the University of Michigan, and director of the Schools of Oriental Research, to Dr. Carl McIntire, leader of the ICCC:

Curiously in the Ebla tablets, Damascus is mentioned in connection with the five cities of the plain . . . . Prof. Pettinato has already revealed that he has tablets in which the five cities (Sodom, Gomorrah, etc.) of the plain which are mentioned repeatedly in the Bible are listed in the same order in which they are listed in Genesis 14; at Ebla they are described simply as cities with which Ebla has commercial relations, so we must be on the far side of the biblical tradition as reflected say in Genesis 14, when these cities were apparently flourishing trade centers, receiving goods and sending money to Ebla.

This new archeological discovery is very interesting. It is possible that we shall gain some more knowledge also regarding the historical background of the patriarchs, which, perhaps, can help us to understand better some details of what we read in Genesis. So far we can be happy with this discovery and wait for what it will bring into the open in the coming years.

However, we had better not have our expectations too high. In the issue of the CHRISTIAN BEACON that pre-



Here are four of the tablets found at Ebla. Their size may be judged by the centimeter ruler at the bottom of the picture. Each small square is equal to one centimeter (2.54 centimeters equals 1 inch). The writing is precise and indicative of an advanced society. (Photo courtesy "Christian Beacon" — Vol. XLI, No. 48.)



ceeds the above-mentioned one, Dr. McIntire writes the following comment: After having mentioned that in much Sunday school material promoted by the (American) National Council of Churches the children are taught that the Bible is full of myths instead of giving history, he remarks:

What the Higher Critics have done to the Bible in destroying its acceptability as truth is beyond calculation. Now the Tell Mardikh tablets have come to light in God's providence. David Freedman, perhaps the leading Biblical archeologist of today, says, "There can be no question about the existence of authentic third millennium historical traditions in the Bible, with explicit correlations with the Ebla tablets . . . ."

The liberals cannot be expected to pursue this field (of assuming myths) with any zeal since the finds at Ebla are demolishing the whole structure of their thought for the past 75 years. The Bible believing Christians are the ones who should be avidly interested in these developments and be desirous of further explorations.

What is said here is exaggerating the meaning and importance of the discoveries. In the past more spectacular archeological excavations have been made. They compelled the liberal Bible scholars, adhering to the "Higher Criticism," to assume that there is more historical truth in the Old Testament and that there are fewer myths than was thought before, but also earlier this did not turn liberals into "Bible-believing" scholars, and the finds of Tell Mardikh will not either.

In recently published commentaries on Genesis (one in the Anchor-Bible series, and one in the German series "Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament) the authors "believe" the historicity of Abram as well as of the five cities in the plain and what we are told about it in Genesis 14.

Archeological finds, which — in a way — prove the historicity of what God tells us in the Bible, cannot "make" believers. Fortunately, our faith does not depend on those finds either. Dr. McIntire does not say this, I know. But the way he writes about these finds gives the impression that now the (final) proof of the truth of the Bible is given; and that something like this discovery is just what we were waiting for. And that is not so. The Bible is true in all things, with or without proofs from archeology or other sources. The Bible is true, because it is the Word of God and says so itself.

J. GEERTSEMA

## Thank You, ARIE SMOUTER



One of our hardest-working local correspondents, Mr. Arie Smouter, Burlington, had to give up his work for *Clarion*, as well as all other work.

It has pleased our heavenly Father to lead Arie in the way — as Paul describes so strikingly — of "destroying the earthly tent we live in." But "we are always of good courage, because we have a building from God, eternal in the heavens" (II Corinthians 5).

This "good courage" was always visible in Arie's life. The first several years here in Canada, having to provide for a large family, were certainly not easy in more than one respect. Yet, Arie sang himself out of those troubles with his beautiful voice.

And next to working hard, he had always time for something extra, whatever it was, in the local Church, or (and that concerns "us" as the people of *C.R.M.* and later *Clarion*) for the membership at large. In Burlington everyone knew him as the man of *C.R.M.*, *Clarion*: for winning new contributors, getting their money, their names (and their money) for ads in the Christmas issue, and for selling the books published by us.

It would be impossible to figure out how much time, how many miles this brother, who was a mailman in the Old Country, has spent as "our Mailman" in Burlington.

Thus he contributed, not just for *Clarion*, but for the Kingdom of Christ, with whom he may be soon now, because the medical opinion is that our brother is on the "last stretch" to depart and be with the Lord.

We publicly express our heartfelt gratitude for all that the Lord has given us in our brother. And now that he has come this far on the journey through this life, we wish him a great deal of that "good courage," while also praying that the LORD may grant him and his family all they need now.

Here is one of those "old faithful ones," of "the workers of the first hour." May our young generation take example from such dedicated workers.

Publishers and Editorial Staff.

### COVENANT EDUCATION — Continued from page 100.

tion and harmony with the home and church, you may contribute towards an education which leads covenant children on to the new paradise. There God fulfils the new covenant. The fellowship of the covenant reaches its climax. Then the children will see the God Whom they studied and Whose deeds they memorized.

. . . they shall be His people, and God Himself shall dwell among them . . . the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bondservants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face . . . (Revelation 21:3; 22:3, 4).

You have the blessing of using The Covenant Christian School to lead children in a positive way to the dawn

of the land of covenant fellowship where all things are new.

Congratulations. W. HUIZINGA

\* An address delivered at the official opening of the Covenant Christian School of the Canadian Reformed School Society of London and District on November 19, 1976.

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# Herman Dooyeweerd

(1894-1977)

Now that the God of life has taken Herman Dooyeweerd away from this earthly scene, also *Clarion* should give a short "In Memoriam." The ways of the men of the reformational movement in The Netherlands during the thirties went at least parallel: Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd, the founders of the philosophy of cosmonomic idea, were as sympathetic-critical heirs of Abraham Kuyper as Schilder and Greijdanus were. Although the leaders themselves did not seem to meet too often and did not really study the details of their respective scientific labour, in their students they found their links: young ministers as Holwerda and Veenhof, Francke and Tunderman had their place in the Association for Calvinistic Philosophy as well as in the circle of redemptive-historical preachers. Herman Dooyeweerd, born at Amsterdam, studied at the Free University, defended a thesis in the faculty of law under the leadership of Fabius, became Adjunct-Director of the Abraham Kuyper Foundation and founder of the organ "Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde" — in which he wrote about the idea of law, "de wetsidee" — and was appointed as professor of the Philosophy of Law in 1926. Together with his brother-in-law, Dr. D.H.Th. Vollenhoven, he developed the philo-

sophical system of which his major work "De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee" (3 vol., 1935-36) became the Magna Carta. During the fifties it was translated under the title "A New Critique of Theoretical Thought."

When I try to delineate in a few sentences the significance of Dooyeweerd's philosophical work, I would like to draw attention to the way in which he described the development of Western philosophy. He saw this ruled by four basic motives of a religious nature. These four religious basic motives have obtained a socio-cultural power in the history of Western civilization. The first is the Greek form-matter motive. The second is the radical biblical basic motive of creation, fall into sin, and redemption by Jesus Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit. The third is the scholastic motive of nature and grace. The fourth is the modern humanistic motive of nature and freedom.

We now pass by the question what the term "motive" exactly means and also the question whether what Dooyeweerd calls the biblical basic motive is an abbreviated and diminutive confession. I would like to express deep gratitude for the way in which Dooyeweerd taught to discern the spirits in philosophy and to classify all kinds of thinkers. If we, for instance, in our study of modern Western philosophy know of the ambiguity or inner contradiction of the motive of nature and freedom, we will find traces of this motive in the works of humanistic philosophers. I am almost inclined to say that Dooyeweerd's significance in this respect is more negative than positive; he taught us to discern false philosophy and in his line Zuidema has given us more good material to test the spirits to see whether they are of God. The readers understand that this negative aspect of Dooyeweerd's work is in reality a very positive asset.

As far as Dooyeweerd's own philosophical system is concerned, we cannot go into any detail now. He distinguished different aspects of God's creation and although it is questionable whether he was not influenced in this respect by non-Christian philosophers after Kant — a reason why we should be cautious to elevate Dooye-

weerd's system almost into infallibility — we may be thankful that he taught us to ask for the exact nature of modalities and structures. We should not make a hodge-podge of what God has created in great and grand variety.

It is to be deplored that Dooyeweerd never sifted the heritage of Abraham Kuyper thoroughly enough. Schilder's criticism of Dooyeweerd concerned the pistical function — the modality of faith — and the uncritical manner in which Dooyeweerd took over a sharp distinction between the "Church as an institution" and "the non-institutional manifestations of the supra-temporal body of Christ" in the line of Kuyper. Dooyeweerd did not really respond to this criticism and did not make any major changes in his philosophical system. Sometimes we have the impression that although he was aware of the office of all believers, he did not let Holy Scripture penetrate his thinking directly, but in matters of faith, confession, and church he simply followed the Kuyperian pattern he had accepted in his youth.

In the days of the liberation in the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands it became manifest that this was not only a matter of theoretical thought without any influence upon Christian life. For although Dooyeweerd, especially as man of law, detested the way in which Schilder and others were deposed from their ministry and also protested against the synodical actions, he nevertheless separated what he saw as his task in God's kingdom and the concrete calling with respect to the gathering of Christ's congregation. Afterwards there was a development into a more generally Christian movement — not without influence of modern ecumenical thought — and here in Canada we have seen how under his guidance a *Reformed* movement, initially based on the Three Forms of Unity, was broadened into an association for the advancement of *Christian* scholarship.

We thank the God of life for everything He has given to His people in this world in the person and the work of Herman Dooyeweerd in accordance with His Holy Word. We express the hope that the good elements may find their way also in English speaking countries and that the ongoing work of reformation may sift out that which is not according to God's Scriptures. Basically it would be in the line of Herman Dooyeweerd himself.

J. FABER

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## CIRCUMSPECTION — Continued.

*different experiencing of one's own body. Today there are many chemicals similar to LSD.*

*"Grass, what else?" You see, there are many other possibilities from hard drugs to mere stimulants like nicotine. Our Canadian Reformed friend has not indulged in the worst drug. At least so it seems. It could indeed have been much worse! But still the boy made a grave mistake. For the difference between grass and heroin is one of degree, not of principle.*

*Any immediate intoxicant is forbidden to God's people. That's point one. Besides, marijuana isn't so innocent as it seems or as some claim. Marijuana is extremely dangerous. But we'll look into that, D.V., next time. Till then.* Cid.

# Sound the Trumpet

INTR \*TRUMPET

CHORALE

CLOSING

\* \*Serves as an interlude between stanzas.

1. Sound the trumpet; beat the drum.  
Finally the day has come.  
God remembered Israel.  
He sent His Son! Emmanuel!  
Sent His Son! Emmanuel!
2. Clap your hands and raise your voice.  
There is reason to rejoice.  
See what God for us has done.  
He sacrificed His only Son.  
Sacrificed His only Son.
3. In the steeple ring the bell.  
For we have good news to tell.  
Jesus died on Calvary  
That we may live eternally!  
We may live eternally!
4. Tell the story; spread the Word,  
Spread the kingdom of our Lord.  
East and West and South and North  
Jesus is King of all the earth.  
He is King of all the earth.

Music and Words Copyright  
S. VanderPloeg, 1976

## Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Mr. Editor:

It is in respect to an article in *Clarion* (Some Apology!) Volume 26, No. 3, that I write this letter.

I do so with hesitation, since I do not want to "add coal to the fire." After thinking about this article for a week and after much "soulsearching," I've come to the conclusion that I would be amiss if I did *not* comment on this article and it is therefore not on the spur of the moment, that I am writing. In fact, I would rather *not* do so. First of all I wish to make it clear that: 1. I am not writing to defend the Rev. De Jong's "Apology," since he is quite capable (if given the opportunity — and if he so desires) to defend himself and 2. That I'm all in favour of helping each other (also in our magazine) to stay on the "straight and narrow," as was done in the discussion about the desirability of T.V. ownership. The question however, is: How do we do this? In an earlier issue of *Clarion* (January 15, 1977) it was suggested, in a letter to the Editor, that the Rev. Van Oene exercise "some restraint when commenting on local church news items." I would like to sug-

gest that this restraint is also necessary when he comments about the Rev. De Jong's "Apology." From the context of the whole article it is quite obvious that the Rev. Van Oene did not contact the Rev. De Jong, before inserting this article in *Clarion*, as to *why*, the Rev. De Jong felt that an apology was necessary. This becomes clear when the Rev. Van Oene writes that he "heard" that, (although perhaps not literally) the same speech was delivered as the one which *he* has in his possession. Even if the Rev. Van Oene had been absolutely sure of what he "heard," should he (and could he) not have contacted the Rev. De Jong to find out what the facts and circumstances were before publishing an article about this matter? If this contact had been made it would, perhaps, not have been necessary to write the article. Is it necessary between brothers of the same House, and Office bearers at that, to "wash the dirty linen" in public? I don't think so. I further think that the Rev. Van Oene's "style" of writing leaves something to be desired. Even, if and when, he would be right in principle, there should be a different "tone" to our admonishing of one another. Several accusations were made, among others that "the sheep are lead astray." And then the

insulting quotation marks around the word pastor. To end this letter I would like to ask a few questions:

1. Are we walking as children of the light and can that light be seen when "outsiders" (even non-Christians) read our magazine? (I *know* that they *do* read it.)
2. When our young people read our magazine, do they see in the way we "walk" what the fruits of the Spirit are? Namely: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control. Do they also see it, that we do not provoke one another? Galatians 5.
3. Even, if one of us *is* overtaken in any trespass, (Galatians 6) can we, who are spiritual restore this person in a spirit of gentleness, also when writing articles in magazines (regardless who the author is) and do good to all men, as we have the opportunity, and especially to those who are of the Household of faith?

If these questions can be answered in the affirmative amongst us, it has been well worth the effort, to write my (first) letter to the Editor and I'm sure I'll sleep easier at night.

With sincere brotherly greetings,  
BILL VOGELZANG  
Barrhead, Alberta.

# news medley

There are quite a few particulars in the personal field. I refer especially to the persons of the ministers of the Gospel.

In the first place: the Rev. G. VanDooren has informed the Consistory of Ebenezer Church in Burlington that he wishes to retire from active service, effective May 17, 1977, the day when he and Mrs. VanDooren will take off for a holiday in the Netherlands, the Lord willing.

It will have been a difficult decision to make and the request for release from active service will not have been made lightly. Our brother is already half a year past the age at which a person is generally allowed to retire. I shall quote the manner in which the Consistory made it known to the Congregation via the bulletin.

"You will all realize that this decision by our minister was, indeed, a decision after much prayer, thought and consideration.

Our minister's main reason is that the conviction has grown in him that he can no longer do full justice to his double task: pastor of the Ebenezer Congregation and lecturer at our Theological College. To quote from his own words, 'When one gets older, the pace of one's work gets slower and the congregation should not suffer under that.' Secondary, our minister stated that with the years and energy the Lord will grant him, he can **then** better concentrate on his part in training young men for the ministry, which is as we all know, of primary interest for our Churches in general."

Having listened to the manner in which the Consistory informed the Congregation about the above mentioned decision, we also give the floor to the minister involved.

"This decision was taken after much thought and prayer, and with a view to what would be best for the congregation. Those who know me (and I think you do), will understand that this decision did not come easily or without heartache. We have so 'grown together' in 21½ years! But better not wait till I might have to stop completely, but give consistory and congregation ample time to look for a successor. Staying here in Burlington, and remaining your minister, I will gladly remain available for whatever I can do, and is asked of me during the vacancy. Thus for all parties involved, there will be a period of transition which, I pray, will not cause any harm for the congregation. May the LORD, who knows what we need, and who does not depend on man, in His own way and time provide for what our fathers in such a case called 'the man of His counsel.' "

I do not have to elaborate on the above decision. Our brother knows what I think about it and he also knows that I am convinced that it is a very wise decision. The Lord willing, he will have four more years at our College (seventy being compulsory retirement age for that function) and now he will have ample time to fully dedicate himself to that task without the pressure of a Congregation behind him. I add our wishes to those expressed already: May the Lord grant the Rev. G. VanDooren ample strength and health to bring that task, too, to a close.

In the second place I should like to mention that the Rev. L. Moes apparently spent some weeks in the Fraser

Valley, having a short holiday. I did not see his name on the list of ministers conducting services, but perhaps that was an unexpected bonus. He did make himself available for the broadcasting work, however, and declared his willingness to record some brief messages (as did, by the way, the Rev. A.B. Roukema during his stay in the Valley). Did I not tell you that there would be quite a few pieces of information about persons, specifically the persons of ministers?

When I saw the amount of the total budget of the broadcasting committee for 1977 I was amazed to see that the budget for this work alone is already as much as the whole budget of the New Westminster Church was for 1953!

As for the usefulness of the work of broadcasting, that is always difficult to determine. However, a survey of the radio station which beams the Sunday morning broadcast into the homes, hospitals, and jails, revealed that on the average some 12,000 people are tuning in to it. I do not know how they figure that out, but it will be correct according to statistical data, I presume.

We return for a moment to the personal sphere.

That applies then to the work in Brazil and what is to be done there. The Mission Committee of New Westminster proposed to call a second missionary for the work there, a proposal which was adopted by the Consistory.

The brethren who visited the mission field attended part of a Consistory meeting and reported extensively on the conditions in that field. Then we read,

In their report they draw attention to several needs:

A. A teacher for the instruction of the children of the C. Van Spronsen and J. Kuik families;

B. A helper for br. Kuik for the year 1978 following the departure of Rev. Van Spronsen;

C. Establishment of an elementary school;

D. Possibility of renting land to supplement food for the people and to help them make themselves self-sustaining.

As we can see: there are still many plans and the needs always seem to grow the farther we get with the work. The one thing leads to the other. How blessed are we when we are able to bring glad tidings to those far away and when we can also help them in other respects so that they can experience in every field the liberating truth of the holy Gospel.

The living conditions sometimes take unexpected turns, too. Would you complain about the price of gasoline going up every time? Then you should read what the Rev. C. Van Spronsen writes about the actions of the Brazilian Government! That's a way of getting money!

"In the near future expenses will be higher since a form of rationing will be introduced shortly, in the form of a compulsory interest-free loan to the government for all gas consumed. One will have to pay Cr. 2,00 per litre in advance by means of coupons available at all banks. Gas will then only be sold on coupons. This 'loan' is to be reimbursed after two years without interest or monetary correction. In practice it will mean that gas will cost Cr. 7,00 per litre or \$2.63 per imperial gallon. But, like Brazil's president said, it is better than not having any gas at all!"

Even though our gasprices went up another five cents per gallon, it still is a far cry from what the brethren in Brazil have to pay for it. Then you certainly will think twice before starting the car to drive to the corner grocery store!

I would like to mention one more personal thing. Most of us will already know that Mr. S. Van Rensen of the Netherlands passed away. Many immigrants met him and were guided by him on the path which, to uninitiated people, was so slippery and full of suspected pitfalls. Especially

during those first years, when precious little was known about the conditions in Canada and when would-be emigrants had no idea of the distance involved the help which Mr. van Rensen gave was very valuable. It behooves us to remember him also in our press.

Some more news from the Valley.

The Senior Citizens Home Society will have some contact with the consistory of the Langley Church. The willingness is there with the brethren and sisters to cooperate as much as possible, but the difficulties may come from the side of the authorities. The problem will be the severance. As far as that goes, we, too, here in Fergus have experienced those difficulties when we wished to sever some five acres of land which we purchased for the school. No Sir! I must admit: it was agricultural land and that is at a premium nowadays with all the urban sprawl and expanding industries.

In Cloverdale carpet will be installed between the pulpit and the pews, we read. Will that result in absorbing some of the organ sounds? Too bad that you can tell only after you have installed such carpet.

In Abbotsford the Committee of Administration will investigate further the improvements which will have to be made to the (old) Church Hall and eventual erection of a new building. They will need it, for their Churchbuilding has no basement: they were still using the old building for meetings, nursery, etcetera. One advantage: the children could cry as loudly as they wished, it would not disturb concerned mothers listening to the sermon: they didn't hear it anyway!

Chilliwack organizes an office-bearers conference, which is scheduled for April 12, where the Rev. R.F. Boersma will speak.

Smithers enclosed a sketch of the projected organ and I must say that it looks excellent. The instrument will contain a total of 545 pipes of which 36 made of wood (oak) and 509 are metal (alloy of tin and zinc). I do not know where I heard that, but I vaguely remember having heard that the best organ pipes are made of palmwood which seems not to shrink or warp. Anyone who can enlighten us on this topic? From the organbuilder word has been received that the pipes have been shipped from England and that he expects to have the organ playing in his shop by the end of August. Start counting the days!

"Any lady wishing to get in shape before summer or just to have some fun" is welcome in school every Monday evening. They will have to "bring their own sneakers." The Young People's Societies will take care of a dinner. Yield and profit? For the Organ Fund. A good way to make money for a good cause.

When you come to think of it, there are hundreds of ways to make some extra money for worthwhile causes, especially our schools. Want a tip? In Guelph a sister offered to fill out the Tax Returns for members; she is going to charge for that and then will donate that money to the school. I pass it on in case you had not yet thought of that. And if any of our readers invents a new scheme, just let me know and I will pass it on for the benefit of all.

In Edmonton, the Consistory discussed the training of office-bearers. "Regarding the training of office-bearers it was decided to appoint a committee to develop a curriculum for a course to be held four times a year." Further, the Consistory "declares itself in favour of the minister upgrading his studies. Possibilities are looked into." That is a good and nice thing when a Consistory sees the need for a minister to

keep abreast of the developments in the field of theology and such can only be to the advantage of the Church. There were times when (extraordinary) men could speak with authority about almost every topic; in our days it takes the dedication of a lifetime to become well-acquainted with even a small area of one particular field of study.

I could quote extensively from the Neerlandia School bulletin, but that is not within my province, although I like to be kept informed. Let me, therefore, just quote from the Church bulletin that the Consistory remains active in seeking to have the vacancy filled.

A big jump will bring us to Toronto. I presume that the sound system will have been purchased by now and, perhaps, already have been installed. It will help not only the brethren and sisters who are hard of hearing but also those who may have trouble with speaking understandably. It can, namely, also be used when a meeting is conducted in the parish hall and when someone who is not used to speaking in public is to address the assembled multitude.

I did already tell you, I think, that the Brampton and Toronto School Societies have merged. It is their intention and aim to open a school in September 1978. Another school where teachers are needed! We do need a teachers' college badly. Perhaps we shall publish some more about that in due time.

From the Rehoboth bulletin we quote the following words, "Conception and birth cover only short periods of time; upbringing takes twenty years." Many young people will not agree with that, of course, for they may think that at fifteen they know already more than enough and no longer need parental guidance and instruction.

Of Ebenezer Burlington we spoke already before and we have nothing to add at the moment.

In Orangeville a band was formed quite a few years ago and this band showed remarkable improvement in the course of the years. They were also strengthened by some members from the Fergus Church who travelled the twenty miles every Thursday evening, rain or shine. But now the alarm is sounded. If they do not get more members, there seems to be no alternative left than to dissolve the band. That would be too bad. I hope that their cry for help has resulted in the acquisition of new members and the return of old ones.

Is it not a sad thing when there are only very few in the midst of a Church who are interested in music and then good music? O yes, the young people are interested in music alright! They don't even have to hear two bars of a song and they already are humming along, for they know what the song is and what is coming. How many, however, of our young people are genuinely interested in **good** music and in playing an instrument? Usually, where they attend public highschool, there is a possibility of joining the band and learning how to play a trumpet or clarinet or violin. Huge sums of money have been invested in the choicest instruments. Let our young people make use of them. And where they can attend a Reformed Highschool, let us there do our utmost that music be taught and that the students become proficient in playing at least one instrument. One does not have to be a virtuoso to enjoy music.

Smithville will have a rededication meeting for the organ on March 1st, long past when you read this. Perhaps we get an extensive report. And pictures?

The school society declared itself 84% in favour of individual support of a Teachers' College and 16% in favour of

Continued on page 115.

# Liberated . . . also today?

It has been 32 years ago since Prof. Dr. K. Schilder read the "Acte Van Vrijmaking en Wederkeer" on August 11, 1944 in The Hague. That was the moment in which the Liberation of the Reformed Churches became a national historic fact. Certainly those present and those throughout the land who were sympathetic to the Reformed cause were relieved and grateful for such a liberation out of the heretical and hierarchical tendencies which had been manifesting themselves for so long already in the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. Perhaps they were also somewhat apprehensive, for it was such a relatively *small* group which liberated itself, and in many hearts most likely the question arose, "What will the future bring these few liberated Churches?" There was also faith, I'm sure, that the Lord would continue His work and protect His Church, moving on towards the final Day of glory.

Now, after 32 years, we do know to some degree what that future did bring to the Liberated Churches. And until now (I presume), most people who spoke to you on the topic the "Liberation" were themselves *personally* involved in it. Some speakers probably themselves had been suspended from office, and that certainly is no small matter. However, I belong to the second generation of liberated people, and my involvement is for a great deal through upbringing — also a strong emotional bond — but certainly a less *personal* involvement than through actual experience. My knowledge of the Liberation is based on documents, books, lectures, and conversations and certainly not derived from "having been there." And maybe for that reason alone I'm somewhat more "justified" to judge than those who were so deeply and personally involved, for the danger of being "rechter in eigen zaak" is overcome only in the continuance and progression of history.

Besides, the lack of personal experience in this forces me all the more to place the Liberation into its *historical context*, comparing it with such other main events as the Secession of 1834, and the Doleantie of 1886 and following years. It even drives to a comparison with the Great Reforma-

tion, for the question has been asked, "Are our churches rightly a continuation of the *Reformed* churches as they again came to be in the Great Reformation?" Is it indeed not through careful comparison that we understand the significance and the effect of historical events?

The Liberation was quite an event. For most of us — if not *all* of us — it is true that this event has determined our life. Even here in Canada, the existence of the Canadian Reformed Churches is an undeniable result of that Liberation, and our ministers have always clearly pointed that out, cf. A.B. Roukema, "The existence of the Canadian Reformed Churches is understandable only from a firm knowledge and understanding of their origin and background, that is: from the origin and history of the Liberation of the Church in The Netherlands during World War II" (*Take Your Stand*, Outline 2, ILPB).

However, there is the danger that the more we are removed in *time* from the Liberation, the less we still understand its significance and implication. In our case here in Canada especially, because the immigration process has widened the gap even more with our historical, cultural, and ecclesiastical background, and since the Liberation was at the time a specific "Dutch" matter, the danger is not imaginable that some might forget its importance for our *Canadian* Reformed Churches today.

*The purpose of this introduction, therefore, is to bring to mind again the SIGNIFICANCE of the Liberation for the life of our CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES today.* To achieve this goal, we'll have to look at a number of historical facts, the Liberation itself, the historical development in general *after* the Liberation, and even especially concern ourselves with *reactions* to the Liberation. For in the reactions to and estimations of a thing, we often come to understanding its real significance.

## THE LIBERATION

First, a few remarks about the Liberation itself, and indeed a few only, for I need not go elaborately into the facts leading up to the Liberation, or the points involved, or the process of Liberation itself. There is not *much*

English literature on this subject, but what there is, is of excellent quality and quite suited for the purpose of understanding what exactly went on. I may refer you especially to: A.B. Roukema, "The Vrijmaking," articles in *In Holy Array* (January-October, 1964); idem, "The Canadian Reformed Churches, Their Origin and Calling" in *Take Your Stand* (ILPB, 1967); H. Van Tongeren, *Mandate Maintained* (Vonkenberg Study Aids); and also W.W.J. Van Oene, *Inheritance Preserved* (especially pages 33-45).

From these (and other) publications, we may notice a few essential facts. The Liberation did not deal with unimportant, peripheral matters, but indeed was occupied with crucial matters in the life of the church. It was a liberation from *doctrinal* heresies, i.e., from the unscriptural statements and human-theological statements (especially from Kuyperianism) which began to overrule the Scriptural confession because of decisions of Synods. You will remember, these decisions specifically touched items such as baptism, regeneration, and the significance of the covenant.

Then it was also a liberation from Church-political *hierarchy*, especially from *synodical* hierarchy which became apparent in self-continuation, self-determination of the agenda, even suspending local office-bearers by synodical letter. This combination is not new or surprising: in order to defend *heresies*, often *hierarchy* must be called upon. Where the one is found, usually the other follows.

Therefore we may say: in the Liberation the Churches were again restored to their Christian freedom, bound only to God's Word, maintaining a federation of independent Churches which observe and accept a mutual order. And here already the main historical *question* must be asked, a question which will become quite decisive later on: What essentially was this Liberation? All agreed that it was a sad happening, for longstanding bonds were cut. But was it an illegitimate situation? Was it a *Reformation*, a return to obedience, worked by the Spirit, or just a fraternal fight, and therefore wrong?

## NO MORE PAINS?

Of course, the Liberation did not mean the *end* of all troubles. On the contrary, Scripture teaches us that, after such a "liberation," Satan returns with renewed strength and determina-

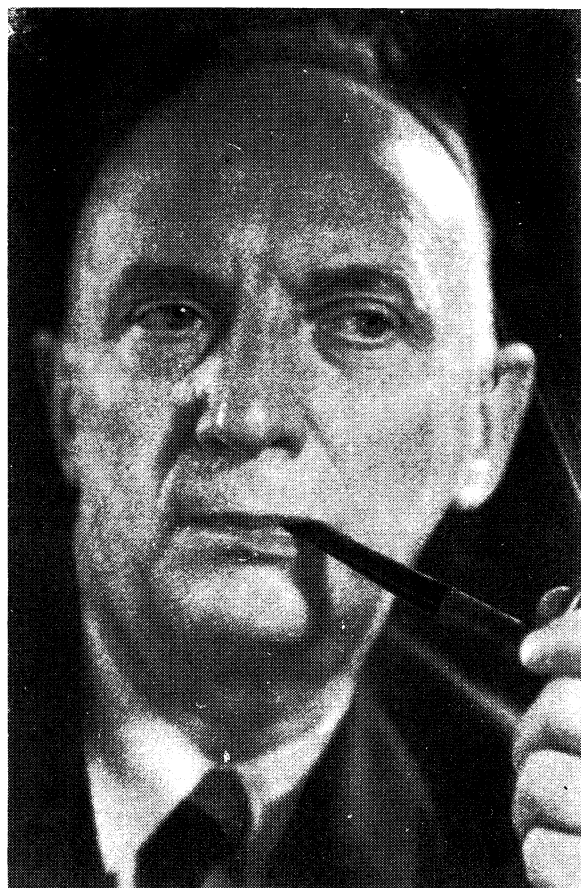
tion to take in a house "empty, swept, and put in order" (Matthew 12:43ff.).

If we look at previous happenings (of a similar nature) we notice even how soon troubles and difficulties develop in liberated or reformed churches. In the year 1571 a beginning was made with a *federation* of Dutch Reformed Churches at the Synod of Embden. That beginning was excellent; the churches agreed to a federation that was anti-hierarchical (even anti-dominocratic) and at the same time opposed to an independentism which disregarded all true federative cooperation, and stressed the so-called "freedom of the sovereign people" (cf. J. Kamphuis, *Zo Vonden Wij Elkaar*, page 19ff.). You might say, "quite a start" for a young federation of churches, with built-in guarantee of smooth operation. But soon the problems arose, not because the *structures* are wrong, but because people misuse the structures. Difficulties arose especially between the Remonstrants (Johannes Wittenbogaert, who already avoided the doctrine of Reprobation in 1584, and Jacobus Arminius, who soon after commencing his studies was influenced by Aristotelian and Pelagianistic teachings) and the *contra*-Remonstrants (especially Franciscus Gomarus), and we know how these conflicts resulted in the Schism of 1618-19 at the Synod of Dordrecht (cf. J. Reitsma, *Geschiedenis van de Hervormde Kerk in Nederland*, page 247ff.). At the Synod of Dordrecht, the Remonstrants were sent away. So only half a century after Embden, after many conflicts, when finally a Synod could be convened, a *major* split was realized, because the Remonstrants undermined both *Doctrine* and *Church Order* (cf. J. Kamphuis, *Kerkelijke Besluitvaardigheid*).

And even after this liberation or reformation, there were plenty of difficulties. After the initial spiritual renewal, resulting from the many positive decisions of the Synod of Dort, disputes arose especially between the professors at the various universities (I mention only Maccovius vs. Lubbertus and Voetius vs. Descartes).

When, finally, after many turbulent times, another major historical event had come about, the Secession of 1834, it did not take long before dissensions and animosity again caused splits in the Reformed Churches. In March 1836 a first Synod was held at Amsterdam (and the Church Order of Dort was adopted in place of the rules

PROF. DR. K. SCHILDER  
... during the period he  
was "underground."



imposed by the monarchy in 1816), but at the Synod of Utrecht in 1837 (only one year later) the matter of the Church Order (and underlying principles) caused so much disagreement between de Cock and Scholte that certain churches even decided to form a separate federation (cf. J.C. Rullman, *De Afscheiding*; and J. van Raalte, *Wat was de Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland?*). A remark of J. Reitsma struck me (o.c. page 486): "The afgescheidenen had enough meetings, but they just couldn't agree." How difficult, indeed, were those first years after the Liberation of 1834.

And after the Union of 1892 (another major event in "our" Church History) problems again quickly arose, mainly centred around the systematic teachings of Dr. Abraham Kuyper concerning election, the covenant, presumptive regeneration, and baptism. All this resulted in the so-called "Formula of Pacification" set up in 1905 (cf. R.J. Dam, B. Holwerda, and C. Veenhof, *Rondom 1905*). And, in turn, wrong interpretations of this decision of 1905 contributed to the conflicts which led to the Liberation of 1944.

We notice many renewals, liberations, and reformations (whatever you

wish to call it), but also an *ongoing struggle* to preserve the truth, to remain with the original starting-points, to struggle against ever-returning deformation. Reformation apparently is an ongoing process. "He who thinks to stand, must see to it that he doesn't fall"; this Scriptural principle certainly has proved itself in the church-historical developments of the last centuries.

#### THE BALANCE

So there they stood, in 1944, declaring that the legitimate continuation of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands was to be sought with the Liberated Churches. The Scriptural confession was maintained, the Scriptural Church Order preserved. The balance was *sad* in many respects, for only relatively few had liberated themselves and liberation meant a definite *isolation* from the majority with whom one once was united. But the balance also gave reason for *joy*: the heritage was preserved, and more was won than was lost. The Lord had opened eyes for wrong developments and opened hearts for subsequent action.

Considering the past, there was room for gratitude and reason for *faith* that the Lord continued the history of His faithful church. But there was also

— considering the past — no cause for false optimism. The return to the old form also meant a return to the old struggle: to be and to remain what they had again become, *Reformed* churches.

### THE ONGOING STRUGGLE

What, then, is the history of the Liberated Churches after 1944? What are the *main* events to be noted briefly? The first thing to note is that (as after all reformations) the churches soon came to consolidation of the *federation*, although, as usual, not without the “growing pains” of such a process. This consolidation also caused a lot of internal confrontation, even outright conflicts, especially when the confessional basis retained in the Liberation had to be defended against deformation in many political, social, and educational institutions, and the necessity of “own” Reformed organizations became more and more imperative. In 1948 already, Prof. Dr. K. Schilder wrote, “We will come to face the question how confessional faithfulness will let itself be combined with political or social symbiosis,” a question which was brought to the foreground more and more as ecclesiastical deformation escalated general organizational deformation in The Netherlands. Indeed, a foremost question, crucial in the later discussions and conflicts (cf. G. Van Dooren, *CRM*, Vol. 17, No. 3, in “Gewoon Gereformeerd Blijven”: “the most important factor to explain the present struggle in The Netherlands”). How, and to what extent (if at all), can people practically cooperate in diverse important organizations, when they principally start out from a different confession and cannot agree on the *basic* issue: the gathering of the Church of the Lord? This question, I feel, became all the more urgent, not only because through the teachings of K. Schilder we learned to discard the Kuyperian theory of the pluriformity of the church, but also because in the post-war years the general deformation in the land escalated greatly and many organizations once based on Reformed principles deviated within relatively few years to unReformed starting-points. The surge of socialism will also have been an important factor which more and more determined the growing “isolation” of the Liberated Churches.

There is an *interaction* here. The Liberated Churches had been set on the path of reformation once more,

while at the same time many others were moving towards deformation and humanism. Especially after 1950, there were different *directions*. And this difference in direction is to be understood from out of the *Church*, for there lie our springs, our fountains (Psalm 87:7). The Liberated churches came to understand more and more that if there is no unity in the *first* things, there can be no true and lasting cooperation in other areas of life. In this regard I cannot fully agree with what Rev. D. De Jong once wrote (in *CRM*, February 25, 1967) that “the discontinuation of cooperation with members of other churches did *not* take place because they belonged to other churches; this discontinuation took place because they did not want to know about the reformation of the political and social life according to God’s Word.” I’d say, the one thing is a result of the other. If we will not be Reformed in the one thing (membership of the Church and service of the Lord), we will certainly not seek reformation in other things. Although we must indeed look for organizations which we could perhaps support in some way, we must set priorities, however: organizational unity can only be real unity if it is a result of ecclesiastical unity.

What others have termed “radicalism” or “exclusivism” often was result of not seeing their own deformation, because modernism is as radical as the Reformation. Anyway, this question of cooperation (*samenwerking*) became a “hot” issue, and in some respects still is today, also in our Canadian Reformed Churches.

### SAMENSPREKING

Another matter which almost immediately caused difficulty was the “samenspreking” — the meetings organized to restore church unity — especially when the Synodical churches started to set up certain “replacement formulae” to make re-unification possible (1946, 1949), formulae which at first glance seemed to remove the resolutions of the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht. This started a migration of ministers and members from the Liberated Churches back to the Synodical churches (cf. the matter of B.A. Bos and the conferences in Oosterbeek, the departure of first-hour people like Rev. Bosscha and Rev. van Otterlo). These replacement-formulae, however, did not factually change a thing, and the Synodical churches did not

really reform. Rev. A.B. Roukema mentioned a few of the real facts: the suspensions were not withdrawn (even though the grounds were said to have been removed), the basic contents were not sacrificed, and the whole concept of “considered regenerated” was upheld (*In Holy Array*, September 1964).

It is known that K. Schilder and others did not want these meetings with Synodical deputies if first no clear policy (“voorafgaande situatie-tekening”) was given. This objection of Schilder was not shared by all, apparently; compare Rev. G. Van Dooren (*CRM*, Vol. 17, No. 3): “I have never really agreed with the rejection of the *samenspreking*.” Rev. Van Dooren compared the *samenspreking* with the famous disputes in the time of the Reformation (“Godsdienstgesprekken” between Calvin and others, for example), but that does seem somewhat forced, because those were *personal* disputes between theologians, and the Synodical Synod which is an *ecclesiastical* assembly has appointed *deputies* to by-pass the Liberated Synod and deal only with the *local* churches and consistories. K. Schilder rightly was quite afraid that the liberated churches would internally be driven apart by this approach of the Synodical deputies, and he wrote, “We have been liberated not to be overruled by the Synods, but not liberated to be *isolated* from the Synod” (cf. R. van Reest, *De Braambos*, page 37ff.). Besides, the difficulties were not just *local* (plaatselijk geslagen breuken) as the Synodicals tried to make out, but national, and this ambiguous approach (which entailed no recognition of the right of the Liberation) was in my opinion correctly refuted. “Zion shall be delivered through *righteousness*,” and it was correct to ask for clarification of policy, for there must be integrity and honesty in meeting one another. *Samenspreking* should not contain a forgetting and burial of the basic issues, for then it is futile from the start (cf. K. Schilder, *Schriftoverdenkingen*, III, page 379ff.).

It is this matter of *Samenspreking* which will later prove to be a major reason for outright conflict and eventually lead to the publication of the so-called “Open Brief.”

*To be continued.*

Cl. STAM

\* *Speech delivered at the annual League Day of the Mens’ Societies in Ontario, Saturday, October 10, 1976.*



# Chats on Politics

## MY SON'S A SOLDIER, TOO!

No, the above statement does not apply to me. It is a (translated) line from a poem which I recall from my elementary school days. It was a poem about an old woman on whom a soldier had been quartered. Instead of trying to get away with as little as possible and letting the young man know that he was not very welcome, she gave the soldier the best possible treatment. He slept in the best bed, sat in the easiest chair, ate the choicest morsels, was placed closest to the fire, briefly, the old woman spoiled the young man.

She did not listen to his weak protests but waved them aside with the repeated invitation, "Eat, soldier!" "Warm yourself, soldier!" "Rest well, soldier!"

The last line of the poem gave the explanation why she bestowed so much loving care upon an unknown young man. It came as a sigh: "My son is a soldier, too!" Apparently she hoped that someone else would bestow the same motherly care upon her son which she now showed to the young man who had come in under her roof.

\* \* \*

I don't know why, but I had to think of that old poem — which, perhaps, was no more than a rhymed story and did not really deserve the august title of "poem" — when pondering the question put in a letter, whether we would do well when enlisting in the armed forces (and, I add, in the federal or provincial police forces) when we cannot be assured that we can approve of the line followed by our Government in the matter of foreign diplomacy (or domestic measures).

The answer to that question will be decided by an answer to another, underlying question, namely, whether it is our duty or even in our province to judge every move made by the Government before we decide either to do what we are told to do or to refuse because we have come to the conclusion that the Government is wrong.

Is it the God-given duty of a soldier to go and investigate first whether it is true that in a certain house in a besieged city the command-post of the

enemy has been established before he sets his gunsight or programs his projectile to hit that specific building?

\* \* \*

A few years ago I wrote a brief article dealing with the question whether there can indeed be "selective objectors," soldiers who refuse to serve in one war and who would be willing to serve in another war because they are convinced that the latter is justified whereas they consider the former unjust and unwarranted. I did and still do maintain that a war as such is the sole responsibility of the Government (bound as it is by the Constitution and whatever other laws there may be!) and that it is the responsibility of the subjects, i.e. the soldiers, to see to it that *in* that war they do nothing which the Lord has forbidden.

Citizens lack the necessary knowledge to form an adequate judgment about all issues. Common citizens do not have the authority or obligation to do so either. It is their responsibility to "give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's" as long as Caesar does not ask that which is God's. A conflict of conscience does not arise when a subject is ordered to do something with which he disagrees or which he considers to be wrong; a conflict of conscience arises only when he is ordered to do something which the Lord has forbidden or when he is told not to do what the Lord his God has expressly commanded him to do.

We do not have conscription. Does that make any basic difference? Does the calling to prepare oneself for the defense of the country begin only when the Government orders all men of certain ages to report for duty? And would it only in those cases be correct to wear the uniform?

We are not born as patriots. We are not born as anything, for that matter. We do not have any "inborn ideas": all we know today we have learned; we have been *taught* that we must fear God, honour the king, love our country, and if we had not been taught that in the right manner, we would not only not have known it, we even would have been marching in the front ranks of the hordes of revolutionaries.

\* \* \*

"Obedience does not mean automatic agreement," it was said. Rightly so!

I would like to expand that a little and also to turn it around, in this manner: "Agreement is not the necessary condition for obedience either!"

The duty to obey is modified by one thing only: the expressed will of God.

Thus I would willingly let my son go into the armed forces, even without conscription.

I would let him go into the R.C.M.P. or into the O.P.P., with the very same willingness, I am happy to know that there are brethren serving in all those forces.

As a policeman I might be ordered to go and arrest someone. I do not have to investigate whether that man is guilty or not, whether the arrest is warranted or not. That is something which will be investigated by the proper authorities. If it should be an unjust arrest, that is not my responsibility; it is the responsibility of those who gave me the order.

The firing squad that executes a convicted murderer does not have to investigate the matter to convince themselves that the man indeed committed that crime; nor do they have to make certain that the man who is hidden under the black hood is indeed the convicted murderer. All that is the responsibility of the proper authorities. If they err or deceive the people, that is their responsibility.

No one should reach for what is not in his province.

The way which John the Baptist showed to the military men in his days is still the proper way.

We have no right to lay a heavier burden on anyone.

vO

## Church News

Declined: Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene  
called by Smithers, B.C.

\* \* \*

Change of Address:

The new address of the clerk of the American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A., is:

A. VanderSluis  
4437 Bremer S.W.,  
Grandville, Michigan, U.S.A. 49418

Newsletter # 15

Dear brothers and sisters,

At the end of each year one tends to look back to see what happened in the year almost past. When we do that here in Manggelum (Mgl.) we can say that there is much reason to be thankful, thankful to our LORD Who has given men, willing to preach the Good Word in Irian Jaya. I do not specifically think of missionaries (for which we should be thankful, too, of course), but I think especially about the guru-evangelists and gurus, who often do their work under circumstances which we would not call ideal. We hope that also in the year of our LORD that has now begun your prayers will accompany them.

The work of mission in Mgl. and surroundings has received another dimension this year, and we hope and pray that all the work being done here may be to His glory. We are looking forward to the one that is trained in the preaching of the Word of God, and hope that it may be His will that this year the people of Mgl. may receive a shepherd and teacher.

Our Father has blessed us with much health and happiness in the past year, and therefore we praise His won-

**CORRECTION**

A letter, inserted in the article "Stewardship" in the first issue of this volume, was signed only by (Mrs.) E. Jans-Groenveld. Inadvertently, the name of Mr. G.J. Jans was omitted. Our readers are requested to take note of this correction.

\* \* \*

The last two sentences of Conclusion 1 (page 67, center column) in the article "Do You Know Wycliffe?" should read as follows:

Among them of course you will find a few individuals who come closer to our Reformed position. Nevertheless, there are also those who take a much more radical position, spiritualistically and evangelically than Wycliffe in general.

derful Name. Our wish is to continue in His service as He leads us with His Holy Spirit.

On the 6th of December (Monday) we left for Kawagit to attend the guru course. Something about this course: A discussion was held each day about Matthew 5 and part of chapter 6. Mr. Ben van der Lugt also spoke on "200 years America," which was received with interest. It was not a busy course, due to the fact that Reverend Zandbergen was in Sentani (close to Jayapura), while Ben was still recovering from malaria. The 11th we went back to Mgl. again. Because the gurus were still in Kawagit I again had the opportunity to lead the services in Mgl. on Sunday the 12th.

On December the 13th we invited the Kepala Desa (Head of the area) and the Kepala Kampong to our house to speak about paying for the land used by the mission. The area for two mission homes and the strip site was given to us for one axe and a machete (equal to the wages of six weeks work).

December 16th we received our crate and one of our six drums, the first part of our long awaited outfit. It didn't take us long to unpack them of course! Five drums are still in Kouh due to a shortage of plane connections. We hope to have them all before the end of January; but here you never know . . . .

Our first Christmas in Mgl. has been a day with the people. At 10 a.m. we gathered on the area beside our house to have a field day. The people enjoyed it very much. Especially the three-legged race (which was new for them) had them literally rolling on the ground with laughter. Of course there were prizes. It lasted till approximately 1 o'clock and about half of the people returned home with a little gift, like a piece of soap, a box of matches, some nylon, beads, etc.

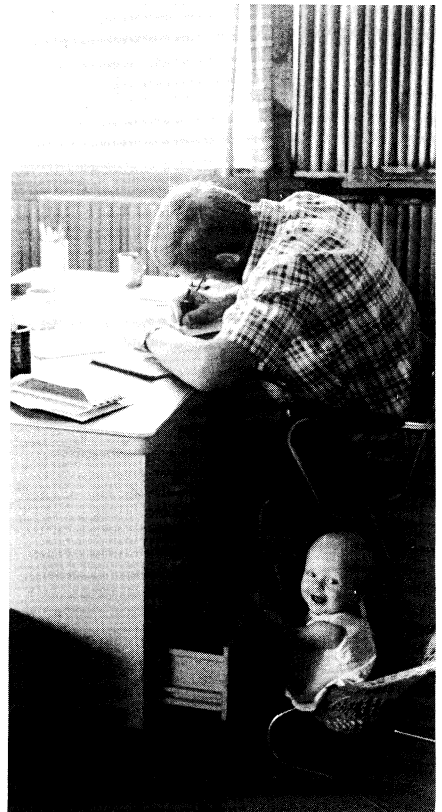
In the evening there was a church service — our first lamp lit evening service — which was very well attended: approximately 200 people. Guru Obed Pekey opened the evening and we sang several Christmas carols.

Guru Yohan Bakai told the Christmas story. Unfortunately, at times it was raining pretty hard, so that it was difficult to hear him. The people were listening fairly attentively, however, and we hope that the message of Christmas may not be forgotten.

After the service some of the people gathered in the new school building to do some folk dancing. Just the outside walls and roof were up, so there was plenty of room. It is mostly a rhythmic walking behind each other in a circle. Every so often one of the participants calls out an order to stop or begin walking, or turn around, walk on the spot, etc. We made an agreement with the Kepala Desa not to make it too late and at the appointed time everyone went home. Without this hint they might've gone on till daylight.

The next morning we had more people in the church than we've ever had before. In the afternoon service the attendance was back to normal

Also in December we made a more definite start on clearing the strip site. First the path was lengthened. It now measures 555 meters. We can go no further, for the path ends up at right angles to a small stream. Present-



Emily in the study with Dad.

## GUIDO DE BRES HIGH SCHOOL

OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE.\*

Meeting of the Board of Directors held on February 15, 1977.

Chairman, J. Schutten opened the meeting. Minutes of the December 20, 1976 meeting were approved.

Our principal, Dr. Oosterhoff reported that enrollment is 215.

She also explained the difficulty in communication of last minute closing of school in cases of bad weather. Advertising for additional staff will be placed in *Clarion*. At our next meeting Dr. Oosterhoff will propose a 2 year, a 4 year, and a 5 year program.

The proposed salary schedule will be referred to the Education Committee for recommendation.

The Board decided to instruct the Building Committee to add four classrooms to the structure. The treasurer was authorized to pay the balance owing to Timothy School.

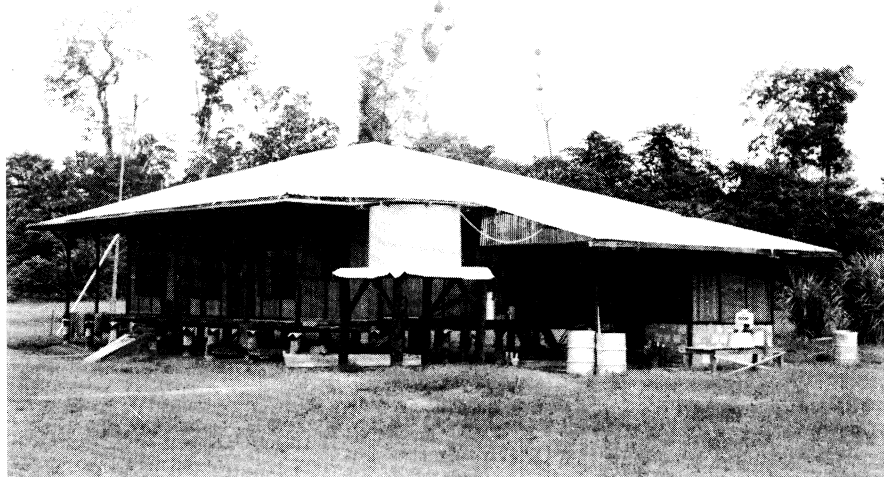
The treasurer reported our finances to be in good order.

Br. Nobel resigned after being with us for two years.

Next meeting will be held on March 21, 1977.

For the Board,  
ARIE J. HORDYK, Secretary.

*\* Although the above press release is of regional interest, yet we believe that all our readers would wish to be kept informed about what is going on here and there. We shall gladly publish also reports from other parts of the country. Ed.*



*Our house in Manggelum, with watertank*

ly we have a worker (a Christian) from Kawagit who supervises the work being done on the strip. This man — his name is Karet — has also helped Reverend Knigge during his first visits to Mgl. His presence here means that full time work can also be done on the strip, rather than just the time that I could spare to go and work there with others.

Several pictures have been sent up, so that hopefully you will be able to get some impressions of the people here and the way they live.

Friday, the last day of 1976, we

went to Kawagit to celebrate the beginning of the new year with those present there.

In the new year ahead we will try to keep you up to date with what's happening here, and if at any time you feel like asking something . . . we appreciate any questions, remarks, reactions.

Till we meet again; yours in Christ,

BRAM and JOANNE VEGTER,  
ZGK Manggelum,  
c/o MAF Sentani,  
Irian Jaya, Indonesia.

### NEWS MEDLEY — Continued from page 109.

doing it via the Society. As I said above, perhaps we shall publish a little more about such an eventual Teachers' College, but I am afraid that, when it will have to be supported on an individual basis and not by the societies as such, there will be much trouble getting the money in. We see it with the Mission Aid, at least in Ontario. I read in more than one bulletin appeal upon appeal to contribute the requested amount, for the share has to be paid to Toronto, and there is no money because the members simply forget to put their cheque into the receptacle for that purpose or they don't feel like it. Once you have taken certain responsibilities upon yourself, I think, these responsibilities should be borne in organized form. Corporate responsibilities should be borne in a corporate manner. Generally speaking I am in favour of personal action and personal contribution; but when you take such burdens upon yourselves, then everyone should be equally responsible; otherwise it becomes a matter of preference, of being interested, of seeing the necessity, of hobby. And that it is a matter of necessity, that is something which becomes very clear

when we look at the pages with advertisements published by school societies: "Teachers Needed!"

As for Mission Aid, Chatham decided to accept a proposal instead of the regular collection for the needy to have a collection for Mission Aid one Sunday per month. That was, as everyone will understand, a proposal which was supported by the deacons themselves.

We started off with some personal matters. Let's close with one too.

The latest **Family Post** tells us that the Rev. M.C. Werkman can preach only once per Sunday for the time being. During the month of February several tests were to be taken in Hamilton, but the result is not yet known. We express the wish that our brother may see his health restored completely so that he can again fully do the work which he loves.

This, then, has to be the end of our fortnightly meeting. See you in two weeks time, the LORD willing. vO

**P.S.** It must be that I'm getting old and start forgetting things. I was kindly reminded of it that Barrhead, too, does not practice the "handshake" before and after the service. I should have remembered. Sorry. vO

# Calculator Complications

Christmas time is nearing, and surely one of the most popular gifts sold will be the pocket electronic calculator. Scientists and professionals may desire a calculator for their work, businessmen for their sales and minor bookkeeping, housewives and laymen for their finances, and students for easing their Math homework. The effect that this small, ingenious machine will have on the lives of the foregoing people will not be insignificant. Since I am a teacher, my major concern in this article will be with the last group, the students, because they will eventually become the scientists, businessmen, and housewives, etcetera.

The electronic calculator has risen to popularity in a way that has been matched by only a handful of other inventions. Five years ago, when models similar to today's were introduced, they were simplified and very expensive. (Today's \$50 calculator did cost \$500 in 1971 and was considered a bargain!) With the perfection of microtechnology, tiny etched "chips" (each replacing thousands of transistors) were used. These "chips" tremendously increased the number of operations or functions (such as addition, multiplication, square root, etc.) that the calculator could do. At the same time, the "chips" helped to shrink the calculator from desk-sized to pocket-sized. The "chips" were mass produced, and this brought the calculator's price down to where it was easily affordable. Today we hear of the calculator: "Everyone has one!" and even, "You can't do without one!" Thus, what was originally invented for the use of scientists, the calculator has now become every man's toy. Yet, the calculator, in spite of its merits, could stunt the educational development of our students.

Granted, the calculator is a very useful tool. It provides a quick and exact way of doing calculations, when properly used. When shopping in a grocery or drug store, one can quickly calculate the answer to the question: "Which is the better bargain?" In the home, the calculator gives a defense against computerized bills and bank statements; these can now be checked. For the *mature* student, problems never before answerable are now

easy. (For example: "How many molecules make up one cup of water?") Since the calculator gives answers to such problems so readily, the mature student eagerly tackles them. The result of this willingness to tackle difficult problems is that he becomes more critical and discerning; he no longer simply accepts many "facts" but now tests their reliability. This testing may even sharpen his estimating powers. It is for these reasons that the calculator is clearly viewed as being useful.

Unfortunately, the calculator is less easily seen as being dangerous when misused. Excessive and unnecessary use of the calculator can lead to a slowdown of the mental processes. The growing dependence on the calculator leads to an addicted, slothful brain. (Example: — to the wife: "Mary, where's my calculator? The paperboy is here and I don't know how much change I should get back from my ten dollars.")

For students, this dependence also produces a blind faith in the calculator. They become unable to solve even the simplest arithmetic exercises (and they were called exercises for a reason!) without their handy calculator. This dependence may first start with the more difficult long division (e.g.  $0.783 \div 294.1$ ), but soon the student needs the calculator to find that  $11 - 8$  is 3 (or was that 2?). The student's early dependence on the calculator makes his later Math courses involving factoring and other "combinations" of numbers extremely difficult and frustrating even *with* his calculator. The reason for this difficulty is that the student views the calculator as a sourcebook for all mathematical information (facts). This method of fact-finding takes more time than simply remembering or thinking out the answer. For simple problems involving addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication the brain is still the fastest calculator. Even for more complex problems involving, for example, trigonometry, it is best, at first, to avoid the calculators that now also have these functions (i.e. sine, tan-

*Continued on page 118.*

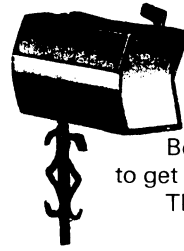
## PICK OF PUNCH



"Look — if you have five pocket calculators and I take two away, how many have you got left?"

Photo courtesy *Punch*, the English satirical magazine.

# our little magazine



## From the Mailbox

Before we start our letters here is a little poem to get us into the mood for mail!

Thanks go to Busy Beaver *Hetty Witteveen*.

### Mail

Writing a letter                      Because I can mail it  
Is really quite fun                      As soon as it's done!

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Joanne Oostdijk*. We are happy to have you join us. And we hope you will really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Write again soon, Joanne.

And a big welcome to you too, *Eileen Salomons*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already, sending us such a nice poem in your very first letter. Keep up the good work, Eileen!

Thank you for your nice chatty letter *Mary Vande Burgt*. It was nice to hear from you again. I see you have been keeping very busy! I'm glad you enjoyed your job so much, and your Christmas holidays. Thank you, too, for your contribution to the Birthday Fund, Mary!

Thank you for your letter *Karen Oostenbrug*. I hope many others will follow your good example! Bye for now.

How deep did your snow get to be, *Charles Doekes*? Are you still having fun on your mini-skis? I hope your electricity wasn't out for too long during the storm, Charles!

Hello *Joanne Doekes*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for your story, Joanne. Write again soon!

Thank you for your puzzle, *Caroline Marissen*. I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing it. Thank you for sharing.

I really like your poem, *Florence Visser*. And I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing your quizzes. One of them I will save for Christmas time, all right Florence?

You did very well on the quizzes you sent in, *Theresa Terpstra*. And thank you for your poem. But right now we're all looking forward to spring, aren't we? So I'll save your poem for next winter, all right, Theresa? Write again soon!

Oh, I'm sure we'll all enjoy your word search puzzle, *Patricia Barendregt*. Thank you for sharing. I'm glad you're having lots of winter fun. And did your Dad finish the book shelf on time?

I hope you soon get your pen-pal, *Hetty Witteveen*. Thank you for your poem, and the quiz, too. Bye for now, Hetty. Let me know when you get your pen-pal!

Now Busy Beavers, have you thought of being a pen-pal to someone? Below is the address of Hetty Witteveen. She is eager to have a pen-pal and she also enjoys trading stamps! Maybe someone else has the same interests? You can write Hetty at this address: 1240 Sumas Way, R.R. 2, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 4N2.

### QUIZ TIME

\*\*\*\*\*

Now Busy Beaver *Hetty Witteveen* has this quiz for you.  
*Who's Who in the Bible*

Write in the name of the person who fits in each Bible quotation.

1. As \_\_\_\_\_ lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ saith unto Him, Thou shalt never wash my feet.
3. Then entered Satan into \_\_\_\_\_ surnamed Iscariot.

Hello Busy Beavers,

I know you are curious who is the winner in our Finish-the-story Contest!

Well, the best story was written by Busy Beaver *Nancy Van Raalte*. Congratulations, Nancy, you may look forward to receiving your prize!

And I know we all love a story, so another time I will let you all read Nancy's. That way we all have something to look forward to!

\*\*\*\*\*

Right now, Busy Beaver *Eileen Salomons* has a poem for us to enjoy. Here it is:

### Joseph

Joseph lived in a house with two mothers,  
And also in the house lived eleven brothers.  
He had dreams he wanted to share,  
But no one seemed to care.  
One day his brothers put him in a pit,  
It was such an awful place to sit.  
Later his brothers took him out and sold him,  
It was already dark and dim.  
His master's wife grabbed the slave,  
As if Joseph did not behave.  
So to jail he was quickly sent,  
And that was where he went.  
But Joseph did not fear.  
He knew that God is always near.

\*\*\*\*\*

Time for birthday wishes! How the time flies! (Or did you think it takes long for your birthday to come?)

Anyway, here's wishing all the Busy Beavers celebrating March birthdays a very, very happy day with their family, and many happy returns of the day! May the Lord bless and keep you in the year ahead.

Joanne De Groot	March 2	Michael Bosch	March 17
Lorraine Heres	2	Margaret Tenhage	17
Stephanie Louwerse	2	Lorraine Linde	20
Janet Veenendaal	2	Pat Kamstra	20
Brian Hendricks	3	Henriette Bosscher	21
Lyndon Kok	4	Marjorie Smouter	22
Joyce Jagersma	5	Debbie Aikema	23
Simone Datema	8	Heather Bergsma	24
Nancy Koster	8	Cor Bultena	27
Joanne Oostdyk	9	Charles Slaa	27
Jo-Anne Vander Ploeg	9	John Vander Woerd	27
Angela Wiersema	9	Carolyn Irene	
Hilda Jongsma	11	Hoeksema	29
Marsha Oosterhoff	12	Henrietta Beukema	31
Jacqueline Riemersma	13	Mary Van Woudenberg	31
Joanne Doekes	15	Jane Wiegers	31

\*\*\*\*\*

4. Satan went forth and smote \_\_\_\_\_ with sore boils.
5. By faith \_\_\_\_\_ was translated that he should not see death.
6. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was \_\_\_\_\_, Simon Peter's brother.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?
8. Behold, \_\_\_\_\_ hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

How did you do on last time's quizzes. Let's have a look.

Here are the answers to *Karen Ellens'* puzzle: Peter, Paul, Rahab, Noah, Adam, Moses, Obadiah, Ahaziah.

*Who Am I?* 1. Joshua, 2. Rahab, 3. Jonah, 4. Hagar, 5. Abraham, 6. Esther.

*How Many?* 1.-3, 2.-1, 3.-3, 4.-7, 5.-4, 6.-5, 7.-33, 8.-2, 9.-100, 10.-4, 11.-12, 12.-52, 13.-300.

How did you do Busy Beavers? Did you have them all right? If you did, write and tell me — you deserve a reward!

Let's do a MATCHING PUZZLE today! Try to match the names of the wives in the second column and the names of the husbands in the first column.

Ahab	Jochebed
Felix	Esther
Boaz	Asenath
Isaac	Rachel
Joseph	Zipporah
Agrippa	Naomi
Ananias	Hannah
Jacob	Bernice
Elimelech	Jezebel
Zacharias	Adah
Amram	Rahab
Ahasuerus	Drusilla
Esau	Rebekah
Elkanah	Judith
Abraham	Ruth
Moses	Sapphira
Lamech	Elisabeth
Salmon	Sarah

Bye for now. Till next time!

Yours, Aunt Betty

## CALCULATOR COMPLICATIONS — Continued from page 116.

gent, secant, etc.). Unless the student has a good understanding of what these trigonometric functions represent, he may push the right buttons, but he will not be able to solve trigonometry problems.

This lack of understanding and mental self-discipline because of the dependence on the calculator is the first sign of the withering of the student's mind. Next, the path of least resistance. ("The calculator makes it so easy!") becomes a well-worn trench leading to mental slothfulness. Students too lazy to think for themselves accept ideas indiscriminately (e.g. "He ran 3½ miles in 11 minutes!"). Concentrating becomes an arduous task for all but the most interested students. Thus, in the same way that television can stifle the imaginations of young children, calculators can smother their thinking processes.

That is not to say that calculators are instruments of the Evil One, or machines which we must never use; the advantages of the calculator have already been conceded. The important point to see is that calculators must be used at the right time for the right purpose (like most other machines).

The right time for calculator use is after the student has gained a disciplined, discriminating knowledge of

Mathematics. To prepare a student for this right time, three types of mental fitness have to be instilled. First, the teacher must build in the student an open, full warehouse of commonly used arithmetic facts. Second, the student must combine this warehouse with an efficient system of handling these facts. Third, the teacher must help the student develop his estimating skill. This skill is a safeguard to spot bogus answers. The only method of instilling and maintaining these three types of mental fitness in the student is by means of rote learning, speed drills, and problem solving "in one's head." If the calculator is introduced before these fitness levels are reached, they may never be reached. Nevertheless, after the student has proven himself mentally "fit" as described, he may use the calculator for problems that used to be too time-consuming to be done without one.

The "right purpose" then is not to simplify the simple with a calculator; rather it is to enable man to tackle still more complex problems. In solving problems such as these, the calculator is used as a tool, much like the framer uses his circular saw.

For the foregoing reasons, the calculator should be restricted to senior high school science and business courses (that is, grades 11 and 12). The calculator should not even be

used in Math 11, but only in Math 12 after trigonometry and logarithm functions have been mastered.

Yes, parents, you have probably already started your Christmas shopping, but before you spend your money on an electronic pocket calculator ("Only \$14.95 plus tax!"), think of the effect it will have on the one that gets it. Remember that this sophisticated machine may be extremely helpful, but only if it is used at the right time and for the right purpose. Your well-intentioned gift could smother your child's intellectual talents, which God wants to have cultivated to His honour. And you wouldn't want to do that, would you?

S. KOAT

*Mr. S. Koat is a teacher in the senior division of the William of Orange Christian School in Surrey, B.C.*

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*There are still some who  
do not read it.*

Engaged:

VIVIAN HOLWERDA

and

TERRY HOEKSEMA

February 4, 1977.

11011-152 St., Edmonton, Alta.

Engaged:

GERRY VANDERGRIENDT

and

HERMAN POORT

March 5, 1977.

6332 Thorold Stone Road,  
Niagara Fall, Ontario L2J 1A8.

With great joy and thankfulness  
to the Lord we announce the  
birth of our daughter:

MARY-LYNN

Connie and Ann DeBoer.

A sister for: *Geraldine, Lorraine,  
James, Corrie, Cornell,  
John and Andrew.*

50th Grandchild for Opa Vanden  
Haak.

66th Grandchild for Pake De  
Boer.

January 24, 1977.

R.R. 2, Smithville, Ontario.

With thankfulness to God, the  
Creator and Preserver of life, we  
are pleased to announce the  
birth of another covenant child:

LINDA DARLENE

Sister to: *Sheila, Richard,  
Robert and Jeffrey.*

Albert and Nelly  
VanSydenborgh

February 3, 1977.

R.R. 3, Orangeville, Ontario.

With great thankfulness to the  
LORD our Creator, we joyfully  
announce the birth of:

JUDY MARLENE

on February 11, 1977.

John and Dorothy Bysterveld  
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Langley, B.C.

*OUR COVER*  
*Maple sugar party in Quebec.*  
*(Photo courtesy Quebec Gov-*  
*ernment.)*

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Thankful to the LORD, we hope to celebrate, D.V., on March 20, 1977 the 25th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents:

WIETZE DE JONG  
and  
CATHARINA DE JONG (nee Offringa)

*Isaiah 41:10A.*

Their thankful children and grandchild:

Bob and Joanne Evesden  
*Laura*

Hilda  
Cathy  
Henry  
Robert

644 Dynes Road, Burlington, Ontario L7N 2V6.

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We offer: expense paid travel to and from the mission field, room and board supplied, a monthly gratification.

A grand opportunity for someone to see something of South America.

Inquiries and applications to be sent to:

*Mission Aid Brazil*  
c/o W.H. Bredenhof,  
3986-184th Street, Surrey, B.C. V3S 4N8  
or Phone: (604) 574-5582

The Canadian Reformed School Society of Surrey, B.C., is in need of a:

TEACHER

Duties to commence September 1977.

For information contact:

*Mr. S. VanderPloeg, Principal*  
809-14th Street, New Westminster, B.C.

Send applications and correspondence to the secretary of the Board:

*Mr. W. Dam,*  
19671-46A Avenue, Langley, B.C.

Immanuel Christian School, Winnipeg, Manitoba, requires:

1 TEACHER  
for Grades 1, 2, 3

Duties to commence September 1977.

The Board of the School Society invites applications for this position. Please direct all applications and/or inquiries to:

*Education Committee, c/o Mrs. W. Gortemaker*  
506 Winona Street,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2C 2N8  
Phone: (204) 222-7095

Because of vacancies in our Staff, the Board of the "Ebenezer" Canadian Reformed School of Smithers, B.C., invites applications for:

A. For High School: A teacher for general academic subjects, preferably English and French. Subject package can be discussed with the Board and Staff.

B. For Elementary Grades: 2 teachers. In both cases it is possible to apply for the position of teaching principal.

For information write to the principal: *Mr. J.J. Hoekstra* or the Board of the "Ebenezer" Canadian Reformed School at:

Box 2439, Smithers, B.C.  
V0J 2N0

Please submit all applications to the Board.

Due to expansion and the possible addition of a Grade XIII, Guido de Bres High School in Hamilton, Ontario, will need:

*Three or Four Additional*  
TEACHERS

in the following subjects or combinations:

*Bible, Church History and Confessions — English — German — Senior Science — Mathematics — Drafting and other vocational subjects — Some commercial — Junior-level academic subjects.*

Applications to be sent, if possible before March 15th, to:

*Prof. Dr. J. Faber,*  
Chairman of the Education Committee,  
374 Queen Street South,  
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 3T9

For information please contact the principal:

*Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff,*  
c/o Box 6247, Station "F", Hamilton, Ontario  
Phone: (416) 525-9800 (school); or  
(416) 388-4747 (residence).