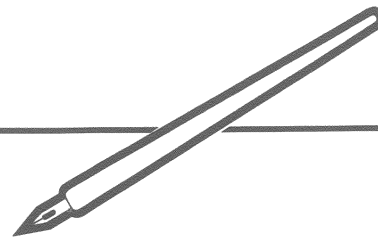




Clarion
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Preaching Christ and experience

In much Christian preaching and teaching great emphasis is placed upon the experience of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. The consequence is often that the certainty of faith is built upon the experience of certain marks of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In the previous issue we paid some attention to the historical line from early Puritanism in England, the so-called Second Reformation, via the "Continuing" (Nadere) Reformation in The Netherlands to our present time. This gave us some historical background information regarding the difference between our sister churches and the sister churches of the Free Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, as well as between the Free Reformed Churches themselves and our churches. It is especially this difference that, as I see it, has been the main reason why the Free Reformed Churches here and the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands did and do not feel for a union or merger with our churches or with our sister churches.

There is also a line from early Puritanism to Pentecostalism in our North American world. It is interesting to follow this line. As said in the previous issue, early Puritanism wanted to purify the Church of England. Its principle was that everything in the church should be arranged and regulated on the basis of directives in Scripture. This meant for them also that the national government should not be governing the church. The queen should not be the head of the church. Queen Elizabeth I, and other leaders in the church did not agree with the aim of the Puritans, many of whom then became Dissenters and Separatists. An example are the Pilgrim Fathers who came to North America via Holland. Others organized themselves as Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, to mention only these. One group was strongly Arminian. Another group was just as strongly Reformed or Calvinistic. This shows that Puritanism was not a united movement.

However, one thing was stressed by all. That was the need for two separate events or experiences, namely, the experience of a personal conversion, and the experience of the work of the Holy Spirit and the presence of its marks.

This leads us to another aspect of what began with the Puritan Movement. We can ask the question, why in Pentecostalism the baptism of conversion with water and the baptism with the Holy Spirit are taught to be two separate events in the life of a believer. Puritanism came into being when the Church of England had become the established, official church. The result was a lack of dedication and commitment. Many were members of the church, but did not show their faith in the fruits of a holy life in accordance with God's commandments.

We see this happen more often in the history of the church: when a spirit of dullness and lukewarmness comes up in the church, voices are raised calling for awakening and revival, for renewed repentance and conversion, leading to new enthusiasm. These voices say that it is not enough to be a member of the church and to believe its doctrine, there must

be experience of the work of the Spirit. In 1725, Rev. J.T. Frelinghuysen, minister of four Dutch Reformed Churches in New Jersey, called for conversion. This started the *Great Awakening* in North America.

At the same time the Wesley brothers, Charles and John, found a spiritual decline in the Church(es) of England. They started preaching repentance and conversion. When their movement was not so well received by the authorities in the church, a separation took place. The churches which they founded were called Methodist Churches. The name "methodist" was a nickname, given to the Wesleys and their friends when they were still students, because they lived a holy life according to a very strict, almost ascetic *method*. Later on the name was connected with their method of preaching and calling for conversion. The aim of their preaching was to work in their listeners the effect of an experience of sinfulness and sins and of a powerful conversion to God. The so converted had, then, to show their conversion in a Holy Spirit-filled life for God, while abstaining from worldly pleasures and entertainment. After 1760 this Methodism received great influence also in North America.

Some eighty years later a similar movement took place again in the United States, following the method and the aim of Methodism. This was the Holiness Movement. As the name indicates, it called for total holiness. From this Holiness Movement in the middle of the Nineteenth Century, a line can be drawn to Pentecostalism in the beginning of this century.

Although there are differences between these movements, nevertheless, there is a similarity in all of them. They all teach that salvation in Christ is experienced in two stages. There is first the experience of sinfulness and conversion or of becoming a Christian. This is also said to be the experience of justification and initial sanctification. The sinner believes and knows that his sins are forgiven him through the atoning blood of Christ. Later on — and this word must receive emphasis — there is a second distinct experience. This is the experience of the Holy Spirit. It is the experience of a baptism with the Spirit. It is the experience of *total* sanctification. After the water-baptism comes, as a separate event, the Spirit-baptism.

It is not my intention to deal here with the question whether this distinction between a first experience of the adult baptism with water and the later experience of baptism with the Holy Spirit is a Scriptural distinction. That is a subject apart. I only want to state that this distinction is not a Scriptural one. I may refer here to two books for further study: *A Theology of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness*. Its author is Frederick Dale Bruner. And *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, written by James D.G. Dunn.

My intention with this historical overview is to show the interesting fact that the distinction between a baptism of conversion or becoming a Christian and later on occurring experience of a baptism with the Holy Spirit is not something new when we meet it in Pentecostalism of our century and in the present Charismatic Movement. In principle this distinction is made already by the Puritans, while it is more strongly em-

phasized and worked out in the revival movements of Methodism, till it received its exaggerating phase in the Charismatic Movement.

Now we understand that people can quite easily be inclined to make this distinction when the church encounters a time of spiritual decline and lack of true Christian commitment and dedication to the Lord, and when worldliness takes over. The church has then members, who confess to be Christians, but are Christians only in name. They go to church, but they are lukewarm. The true dedication and surrender to the Lord is missing. There is an adhering to the Christian doctrine, but it becomes a dead orthodoxy or liberalism. In such a situation a minister can be inclined to address his congregation as consisting of two kinds of people, the regenerate and the still unregenerate, the saved and the still unsaved, the converted and the still unconverted, those who accept the Christian doctrine and those who received the Holy Spirit.

However, although we can make the distinction between people who are converted and people who are not (yet) converted, this does not mean that it is Scriptural to address the congregation *on the basis of experience*. For when this is done, the preacher is not basing himself on God's covenant with His people, in which the whole congregation is addressed and confronted with both the covenant promises and its obligations, but he bases himself in his preaching on the present or not-present religious experience in a person's heart.

This is not how the apostles address the congregations. They speak to the churches as the covenant people of God. All in the congregation are included in that people, believers and their children, all receive God's promises. To all comes the obligation of faith in the promising God. And for all are the sanctions of the covenant: if you believe God's promise in Christ you have salvation in Christ, but if you do not believe the promise and do not accept the obligation of faith that is included, you have no part in Christ, as long as you remain in your unbelief. See Lord's Day 31, Q.A. 84, of the Heidelberg Catechism.

This does not mean that we deny that there is experience of the work of the Holy Spirit. God's work and the confessions of the church speak clearly about it. And we do not deny either that this experience should have a place in the preaching. This is logical. When God's Word speaks about the experience of the work of the Spirit of Christ in the hearts and lives of those who believe, the preaching cannot keep silent about it.

However, the question is, *how* do we preach about the experience of the work of the Spirit. Like the law must be preached, but as flowing forth from Christ, so it is with experience. Also the Christian experience must come from living in the covenant communion of faith with Christ, that is: it must come from Christ in the way of faith in Him. It is not: *first the*

experience, and then faith in Christ as also your own Saviour. It is: first believe in Christ as also your Saviour, because God wants you to believe, and then the experience will follow.

Experience is made into a new, enslaving law, when it is said that one is not a good Christian, unless one has a certain experience; that one cannot sit at the table of the Lord, unless there is that special experience; that one can only believe to be saved, when there is, or has been, that experience; that a baptism with water unto conversion is only a beginning, and that one becomes really saved when there is also the follow-up of the baptism with the Spirit; and that if one does not have the latter, one misses that most important experience that makes a Christian a believer in the full spiritual sense of the word.

The consequence of this reasoning (and I say it again: whereby experience is made into a law) is that people who sincerely believe in Christ Jesus as Saviour and who seriously seek to live a God-fearing life in obedience to His will, do not dare to say that they believe in Christ as *their* Saviour; they do not dare to say that they themselves are saved by the Lord. They still consider themselves lost. Why? Because they did not have that special experience (yet).

It should be possible to see that in this way experience becomes a law, and that in fact, although not intended, this experience-law takes the place of Christ. People are not called to believe in Christ. People are told they have to have a certain experience. Here, practically, Christ does not save. Having an experience does. The certainty of faith is not in Christ, but in one's own experiences.

In this teaching, experience and the preaching of experience becomes a dark and somber prison, in which many sincere Christians are kept groaning and moaning. Often they even like this prison, while they do not see that they disobey the command of the apostle Paul, "Rejoice in the Lord always."

The call of Christ in Matthew 11:28 can be applied here as well: "Come to Me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Paul did not allow the Law of Moses, the Law of circumcision, to receive a place unto salvation beside Christ and together with Christ. We are also not allowed to give that place to a *law* of experience. It would be a dishonouring of Christ, who is an only and a *complete* Saviour.

Besides, when experience is preached as a law, as a must, before a person is really allowed to believe that he is saved, the hearers are in fact told to disobey God. God says very clearly in His Word that He commands everyone to believe in Christ as his Saviour and Lord. Not believing in Christ as also *your* Saviour is therefore disobedience to God's commandment.

In the next issue I hope to say more about this point that, like the law, experience must be seen as fruit of faith in Christ.

J. GEERTSEMA

Public profession of faith₃

9. Some Dutch decisions

Immediately after the Union of the Reformed Churches in 1892, the General Synod of Dordrecht 1893 instructed deputies to advise the next General Synod on how to deal with noncommuni-

cant members who failed to come to public profession of faith.

In 1896 they presented their report to the General Synod at Middelburg. The Synod decided "because of the very serious and tender nature of the matter dealt with in this extensive advice, and

because of the difficulty to come immediately with a somewhat ripe judgment, to print this advice and to hand it out to the members of Synod, to be dealt with later." However, the scrutiny of this report by the members of Synod did not have the desired effect. Synod decided to leave it up to the next Synod to come to a decision on this report.

At General Synod 1899 the matter was dealt with. No conclusive decision was made. Synod declared to agree with

the main intention (Dutch: hoofdstrekking) and considered it desirable that the consistories would work in this spirit as much as possible. This was basically not a decision but only an advice which was not binding.

The content of this advice was almost the same as the approach of the Rev. J. a Lasco, mentioned before, except that a different age was mentioned. We can summarize the advice as follows:

1. Children are incomplete members of the church and for that reason they cannot be an object of discipline and excommunication. They only can be admonished and instructed.



2. Noncommunicant members, who are coming to maturity and fail to make public profession of faith must be repeatedly admonished. If they do not heed this admonition, they will forfeit their membership, and, for that reason, they will not be an object of discipline any longer. Before they reach the age of thirty the consistory has to make an explicit statement in this respect.

3. Because they have lost their membership, their children are not considered to be children of believers, and cannot be baptized.

Especially the last point could have had far-reaching consequences. In that time there were many noncommunicant members who asked for, and received, baptism for their children. However, the decision of 1899 was only an advice and

the custom remained to administer the Sacrament of Baptism also to children of noncommunicant members. In some cases the questions in the Form for Baptism were answered, not by the parents, but by witnesses, often relatives of the parents.

In 1920 the matter was brought again to General Synod. Regional Synod Groningen asked General Synod to adopt a "Form for the excommunication of noncommunicant members." The advisory committee recommended not to grant this request because the adoption of such a Form would sanction the "system of noncommunicant members," as it could be

found very often in the Northern Provinces where many noncommunicant members, even aged people, failed to make public profession of faith. This was considered to be an unacceptable situation.

This report shows, however, that the advice given by General Synod Groningen 1899, "that members who failed to make public profession of faith should forfeit their membership ultimately at the age of twenty years," was not adhered to. The "system of noncommunicant members" was called a phenomenon that "could be found very often in the Northern Provinces."

General Synod Leeuwarden 1920 decided:

a. That noncommunicant members who, in spite of their maturity, fail to make

public profession of faith do not have a legal place in the church;

b. that for that reason no excommunication can take place either. If they behave as ungodly and unbelieving people, the consistory has simply to announce that they have withdrawn themselves from the church;

c. that in some cases it can be desirable to ask advice from classis before such a public announcement is made;

d. that the formulation of such an announcement should be left to the discretion of the consistory.

This decision shows again that the position of adult noncommunicant members was considered to be an exceptional case. At the same time we see that many people, sometimes even aged members, remained "noncommunicant members."

In spite of all the deliberations and decisions of general synods no satisfactory solution was found. The main reason was that no attention was paid to the question *why* they did not make public profession of faith. It makes quite a difference whether someone does not make profession of faith because of shyness, lack of knowledge and insecurity, or that it is a matter of indifference, aversion and even hostility. Later this distinction was made, as we will see.

10. Negligence or aversion

At General Synod Middelburg 1933, the matter was, for the umpteenth time, again on the table. Synod decided that "the time has not yet come to make a binding decision in this matter, but recommends this matter in the serious consideration of the churches." One might wonder why, after all the previous discussions still the time *had not yet come* to make a binding decision. However, the matter would drag on for quite a while.

General Synod Amsterdam 1936 decided to appoint a committee of three members "to advise the next synod concerning the leading principles" and to come, if possible, with some regulations.

The result was the famous report on the table of General Synod Sneek 1939. Initially the matter was postponed, and finally, in 1940 a decision was made. It was not a binding decision, but rather a guideline to be adhered to by the consistories "as much as possible."

The most important point was a distinction between negligence and aversion. The term negligence refers to people who do not come to public profession of faith, but who still, in doctrine as well as in conduct, live as active members of the church. With respect to them the consistory has to continue with instruction and admonition. The consistory shall not proceed to the ultimate remedy of cutting

them off from the church, except when it becomes clear that it is not shyness and lack of knowledge, but rather that negligence prevents them from coming to the Lord's Supper in the way of public profession of faith.

The term aversion refers to adults who, by godless words and deeds, by public rejection of the doctrine of the church, by continuous willful abstention from the worship services and the catechetical instructions — by all these sins or by some of them — transgress the requirements of the covenant.

If repeated admonition remains fruitless, the consistory shall make an announcement to the congregation. If, after a certain period of time repentance does not take place, the consistory shall proceed to the announcement that they have forfeited their membership.

With respect to age, Synod decided that, as a rule, this announcement should not be made before they have reached the age of *twenty-five* years. In cases of very offensive apostasy it can be done at the age of *twenty-one*.

11. Attestations

Still one aspect has to be mentioned. We have said before, that discipline stops as soon as a member withdraws himself from the church. When a confessing member moves to another place without asking for an attestation, or when he fails to join the congregation in his new residence by keeping his attestation in his pocket it means a factual withdrawal.

When children move to another place they do not receive an attestation. On request of their parents an attestation is sent by the consistory of their present congregation to the consistory in their new residence. When mature noncommunicant members move, the rules are different. When they move, they cease to be members of the congregation to which they belonged. However they do not *automatically* become members of the congregation in their new residence. They have to *join* the congregation by a *personal* act. It is incorrect when in such a case a consistory sends an attestation to the new congregation, without a *request* of the person concerned. Synod made in this respect the following statement: "When a noncommunicant member leaves without any notification, the consistory in his new residence has to be informed, with the request to urge him to ask for an attestation. If he refuses to do so, the consistory has the sad duty to conclude that he factually has withdrawn himself from the church. This withdrawal has to be announced in the congregation to which he belonged before he left."

It happens quite often in such cases that a consistory sends an attestation to

the consistory in the new residence but that the person is not willing to see the office-bearers of the church. However, the discipline and the announcement of withdrawal or forfeit of membership is *not* a matter of the *new* congregation. The attestation should not have been sent in the first place. We have to bear in mind that joining a congregation always has to be a personal act of *willingly* submitting to the admonition and discipline of the church. For *children* an attestation has to be sent to the new congregation on request of their *parents*.

12. The Church Order

From what has been said so far, it is clear that the churches in the past have dealt with this matter very often and quite extensively. Many decisions have been made, changed, and retracted.

However, the Church Order did not speak about it. The articles dealing with church discipline applied only to confessing members. Since the recent revision of the Church Order this situation has been changed. Now a clause is added to Article 68, reading as follows: "In case a noncommunicant member hardens himself in sin, the consistory shall in the same manner inform the congregation by means of public announcements." In the new *Book of Praise* Forms for the First Announcement, the Second Announcement, and the ultimate Excommunication of noncommunicant members are included.

When we deal with noncommunicant

members, we have to realize that there is a difference between what is called "negligence" and "aversion." We should not automatically cut off from the church all noncommunicant members, as soon as they have reached a certain age. In my opinion the measures, advocated by Voetius and a Lasco went too far in this respect. We should, however, be aware of another danger as well. When baptized members of the church have reached maturity, they *have* to come to a decision; they *have* to make a choice. They cannot just postpone such a choice, pretending that they are "not yet ready."

In the first place: the point is not whether *they* are ready, but whether they believe that Jesus Christ is ready, that He has given His life to save sinners, and that the Lord has given them His promises. In the second place: Christ has given a command: "Celebrate the Lord's Supper until I come. *Do this* in remembrance of Me." Everyone who, without sufficient reason or for a wrong reason, stays away from the Lord's Supper is disobedient to the commandments of the Lord. The invitation to come to the table of the Lord is not just something we can ignore without any consequences.

Let us all remember that Christ gave His life for us. He is ready. He expects from us an answer, in our walk of life as well as in the confession of His Name, publicly before the congregation, and every day of our life at the place where the Lord has set us.

W. POUWELSE



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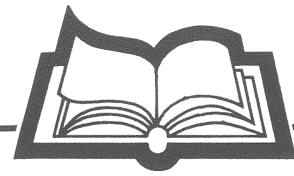
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“Remember Lot’s wife.” Luke 17:32

Don’t Look Back

In His address concerning the end of the ages, the Lord Jesus includes a short and pointed admonition for the church, the shortest He ever gave. He calls the church to remember Lot’s wife, and the form of the word used here indicates that this must be a continuous action; literally He says, “Keep remembering Lot’s wife.” It’s as if the pillar of salt which she became is still standing as a constant reminder for the church and for every believer.

Genesis 19 tells the story. Lot lingered in Sodom with his family, but the visitors seized him in order to take him away, “. . . the LORD being merciful to him,” v. 16. The angels make another concession in allowing the family to flee to a small city nearby, the city of Zoar. But on the way Lot’s wife looks back to Sodom — contrary to the explicit command of the angels, v. 17. And she became a pillar of salt.

Now the Lord Jesus uses this episode as an example and warning for the church at all times, but specifically at the time of His coming, the time of the great judgment. What is the warning inherent in Lot’s wife? Clearly, the Lord Jesus focuses on her heart, her sentiments, reflected in her action. Lot lingered, but she, more than he, was pulled by the worldly life-style of Sodom. She was not ready to give it all up. She remained hesitant about casting the old life overboard. In her heart she continued to linger — even after having been mercifully pulled from the impending destruction. She clearly resented the destruction of the city, and the LORD’s way of dealing with a culture and social life that she had grown accustomed to.

Now this event in the early history of judgment is held up as an example for the *final* history of judgment coming over the world. At that time the judgment will come with greater speed and force, and it will leave none unscathed. It will pierce to the innermost recesses of our hearts, and lay bare what our essential convictions are. And the Lord Jesus warns His church to flee without looking back. He calls us to flee headlong away from the impending doom, and reach out with eager, surging hearts to Him, as He comes to reward the wicked and the oppressors, and to lift up His own to Himself. This requires unconditional commitment, total dedication, unreserved resolve, to follow the only Master.

This certainly does not mean that we must flee all things in this world, and adopt an attitude of pietistic withdrawal

from the stage of human endeavour. Certainly not! But the central matter is this: where do our hearts lie? Even today, here and now, the Lord Jesus demands that we break with the world, totally deny the constant pull of worldly things, and rest with our hearts in heaven, where He is, Colossians 3:1-4. And with hearts lifted upward we can take up our cultural task with new vision and perspective here below. Then — and only then — can we be the salt of the earth, the *pinch* of salt through which the whole is brought to judgment, and God’s will is effected in the world.

Lot’s wife belongs to the early history of redemption.

The church today has received so much more! We, too, have been snatched from the fire, spared from the eternal destruction coming over men and the world because of their sins. Lingered, we, too, have nonetheless been pulled away, sharing the hope of a better life. But with all the greater gifts, human nature remains the same. Still today we can be halfhearted about the gospel, double minded, filled with hesitation, doubt, and even resentment toward God’s will and way. It all amounts to a refusal to *follow through*; a refusal to come to the total, *radical* break with this world and all its passions and desires.

Therefore Christ’s warning still applies today. Some are saved only by being snatched from the fire, Jude 23; some are saved only as through fire, I Corinthians 3:15; but some are *lost* because, once having been snatched away, they still look back, despising even the greatest of mercies bestowed upon them. Such was Lot’s wife. So she became a pillar of salt, an eternal monument of judgment to all those who spurn grace outpoured.

Still today the church must decide: will we be a *pinch* of salt, the healing salt of the earth, or a *pillar* of salt, the salt of judgment that testifies against us. Healing in this world can only begin by a total *break* from this world. “For the form of this world is passing away,” as Paul says, I Corinthians 7:31. Therefore, having been called away from sin and the world of sin, let us go forward with conviction and resolve, overcoming all fear, doubt, hesitation, and resentment. For the kingdom has come! And, as our Master has said, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God,” Luke 9:62.

J. DEJONG



A voice from Australia on the word “Christian” in the Apostles’ Creed

In recent issues of our magazine Professor Dr. J. Faber wrote about the decision of the Synod of Cloverdale 1983 to insert the word “Christian” before “Church” in the Apostles’ Creed. The Rev. G. Van Rongen wrote about the same matter in the magazine of our Australian sister churches, *UNA SANCTA*, of November 24, 1984.

After an introduction of the matter, the author wrote under the heading “1972-edition”:

The older ones in our midst may remember that in the very early stages of our church life we — partly — used “Psalter Hymnal” of the Christian Reformed Church in the USA. It contained also the Creeds, Confessions, and Liturgical Writings.

Well, the word “Christian” was absent in the text of the Apostles’ Creed.

The same can be said about the first edition of *Book of Praise* (1961) and also about the second edition (1965, with its supplement in 1967).

The first complete edition was published in 1972. Then all of a sudden we found in the text of the Apostles’ Creed an ‘extra’ word: “I believe a holy, catholic Christian Church.”

The Nicene Creed, very remarkably, did not have the word “Christian.” There it reads: “I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church.”

My first reaction was expressed in our magazine (Vol. XX No. 13 of April 7, 1973):

“Soon after we had taken the new book into use we almost stumbled during the reading of the ‘Apostles’ Creed.’ From now on we have to confess the ‘holy catholic Christian Church,’ which is an improvement indeed.

But when at Catechism class we checked all the places that contain this Creed, one of the boys found out that this word has not been added in Hymn 45, the metrical version of the Creed. It is noticed that the tune of this Hymn has been simplified a bit. However, the word ‘Christian’ has not been added here.”

As may be evident from the following lines, I would not like to repeat the words: “which

is an improvement indeed.” On the contrary, I am now of the conviction that they are no improvement at all.

From the way in which the text is printed in the 1972-edition it may be clear that the alteration was made consciously and purposely: while the old printing plates were used, the size of the letter in the lines that contain the word “Christian” and its immediate context is slightly larger!

These remarks were followed by others about the “1984-edition” and what Professor Faber wrote in *Clarion* in 1973, namely, that there was no “denomination” in the English speaking world that had the word “Christian” in its Apostles’ Creed. Then he continued:

Origin. What then, is the origin of the word “Christian” in the text of the Apostles’ Creed?

Professor Faber refers to an older colleague, Professor Dr. J.W. Bakhuizen van den Brink of Leyden, an expert in this field.

The latter points at the text of the Creed in the Heidelberg Catechism. As for its Dutch text, this is the origin!

So that we may draw the conclusion that the editors of the 1972-edition of *Book of Praise*, for one reason or another, must have made a translation from the Dutch into English!

However, this is not the end of the story yet. To say: So it is “Dutch,” is not sufficient. We have to add: It is “German” also.

In the German text of Lord’s Day 7 of the Heidelberg Catechism as it is printed in one of Bakhuizen’s books, we find this line: “Ich glaub in den heiligen Geist, eine heilige allgemeine Christliche Kirche” (I believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy universal Christian Church).

This goes back to Ulrich Zwingli, Leo Jud, and Martin Luther.

Luther was of the opinion that misunderstandings could be avoided when the Latin adjective “catholicam” would be translated by “Christian.”

For that he appealed to a tradition that has its origin in the Middle Ages. During the Middle Ages the word “catholic” (“catholicam” in the Latin text) was often replaced by “Christian.”

So that “catholic Christian” in our present edition of *Book of Praise* is a double translation of the Latin word “catholicam”!

From Luther this tradition was adopted by the leaders of the congregation of Dutch refugees in London, 1551. And in that way it finally arrived in The Netherlands.

However, soon afterwards the awareness that “Christian” was a translation of “catholicam” was lost, and the word “catholic” itself was reinserted while “Christian” was maintained. Since then the article reads in Dutch “Ik geloof een heilige, algemene, Christelijke kerk”

So far the contents of Professor Faber’s Articles in *Clarion* — apart from a bit of comment from our side.

Another professor. After I had read all this, more than ten years ago, I was really surprised when I recently read a bit more about the tradition that formed itself in the Middle Ages.

I found it in a contribution to the book that was presented to a German Professor, Robert Stupperich, on the occasion of his 65th birthday, written by the Dutch Professor W.F. Dankbaar.

From the German we translate the following lines, in which he deals with a publication by a certain Ulrich Surgant — more about him in the next issue of our magazine in the series on “Catechism and the Catechism preaching”—:

“The German text offered by Surgant is that of the Apostles’ Creed. Apparently he was not interested in the usual mixed credal forms. We may draw the attention to the fact that he translated ‘sanctam, ecclesiam catholicam’ by ‘die heilige Christenliche Kirche’ (the holy Christian Church). From texts that originate from the Middle Ages it is evident that ‘Christenheit’ (Christianity) was the oldest German rendering of ‘ecclesia,’ in the sense of the gathering of all believers. However, next to it ‘Kirch’ (Church) came into use as well. ‘Catholicam’ which was first translated by ‘allicha,’ i.e. comprehensive, all-inclusive, has since the Fifteenth Century in several German tracts been translated by ‘Christenlich’ (Christian).

In a note he adds the following — again in our translation —,

“On this ground Luther deemed the words ‘Kirche’ (Church) and ‘catholicam’ to be useless. He preferred ‘Gemeine’ (congregation) and ‘ein Christlich, heilig Volk’ (A Christian holy people), but nevertheless maintained ‘Kirche,’ because this word was quite current, and, to prevent misunderstandings, translated by ‘eine heilige Christliche Kirche’ (a holy Christian Church).”

Professor Dankbaar’s observations confirm those made by Professor Faber!

In conclusion. In my opinion it may be clear now what causes the German and Dutch text of the Apostles’ Creed to differ from the traditional English text. The latter is a literal translation of the Latin “received text.” And unlike what I wrote at this point some twelve

years ago on the occasion of the publication of the 1972-edition of *Book of Praise*, I agree with Professor Faber when he wrote one year afterwards: Let us hurry and delete the word “Christian” and return to the text, “*I believe a holy catholic church!*”

Once again, I wonder what we will find in the 1984-edition in this respect.

At our Kelsmcott 1983-Synod the “deputies Church Book” reported: “*No copies of the proposed next text of the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession of Faith and the Canons of Dort have been received*” (Acts Article 24). This may have included the text of the three “ecumenical creeds,” for the Acts are silent on them. So, nothing has been decided yet by our churches.

Even if the word “Christian” would have been maintained in the *Book of Praise* — a publication by the Canadian Reformed

Churches, and not necessarily integrally to be adopted by our churches, remember the decision of our 1983-Synod on a selection of hymns, and also the fact that our Church Order is slightly different —, we here in Australia are not bound to this text and could go our own way!

Is this a little thing only? But it’s the little things that matter in this respect. Our *Book of Praise* prints the three Creeds under the heading “Ecumenical Creeds” and refers not only to the fact that “*they have been approved and accepted by nearly all the churches of Christendom,*” but also to “*the first centuries of the Christian Church.*” Why would we confess our faith differently from the early generations of our fellow-Christians? For is this not “ecumenical” also, to live in a communion of believers of all centuries?

J. GEERTSEMA

Evaluation of divergencies₂

4. The observance of the law

Chapter 21 of the Westminster Confession declares: “As it is the law of nature that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath” It speaks about the Lord’s Day as the Christian Sabbath.

The 1971 Report of our deputies stated that the Larger Catechism spelled out the meaning of the ten commandments in great detail and that the correctness of some words and expressions could be questioned. But although deputies preferred the interpretation of the commandments as given in the Heidelberg Catechism, they did not feel free to declare that the explanation presented in the Larger Catechism deviates from the contents of Scripture and confession.

Later they brought forward the question whether in the explanation of the fourth commandment full justice is done to the progress in the history of salvation. The OPC Committee referred to the word “Sabbath” in our Heidelberg Catechism and answered that they do not regard the redemptive significance attached to the fourth commandment as exhausting its

significance, or the mediatorial accomplishment of Christ as bringing to an end its redemptive significance. “The recurring Sabbath teaches us to look forward to the consummation of redemption and the inauguration of the eternal Sabbath of which the people of God have a foretaste in this life but which is yet in its fullness outstanding. The shift from the seventh day to a first day Sabbath is accounted for in terms of the progress of the history of redemption.”

One could add that, although the Westminster Standards by way of comparison refer to “the law of nature,” which is infelicitous, the institution of the Sabbath is clearly described as one by God’s Word.

Although there is a difference in approach with respect to the fourth commandment between the continental Reformed confessions and the Westminster Standards which were influenced by Puritanism, one should certainly not make this an impediment for acknowledging a Presbyterian church that adheres to these Standards as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. CHURCH—POLITICAL DIVERGENCIES

When we enter upon a discussion of the church-political divergencies that exist between the Canadian Reformed

Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, we may again refer to the 1971 Report and the 1978 letter of our deputies (Acts New Westminster pp. 66-68 and Acts Smithville pp. 199-201).

The 1971 Report spoke about a considerable difference. The Form of Government of the OPC is based on the principle that the local churches are branches of the church universal, while our Church Order proceeds from the completeness and the autonomy of the local churches as churches of Christ. This difference makes itself felt in the description of the nature of major assemblies and their authority.

In 1978 the OPC adopted a new Form of Government and as could be expected, it remained a typically Presbyterian one: “In accordance with the teaching of Scripture, the many members of this church universal are to be organized in local and regional churches” (II.3). This Form of Government speaks of the local church and its session, the regional church and its presbytery, and the whole church and its general assembly. There are, therefore, three governing bodies or assemblies which have the same kinds of rights and powers. “Each governing assembly exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all matters belonging to it The lower assemblies are subject to the review and control of

higher assemblies, in regular graduation" (XII.2).

Church government is described as a valid and authentic jurisdiction to which Christians are commanded to submit themselves. The Westminster Confession is quoted, when it is stated that the decision of church officers, when properly rendered and if in accord with the Word of God," are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in His Word" (III.5). Deliverances of the general assembly, if declarative of the Word of God, are to be received with deference and submission not only because of their fidelity to the Word of God but also because of the nature of the general assembly as the supreme judicatory of the church (XV.8).

In our 1978 letter our deputies wrote to the OPC Committee that we keep having difficulty with the structure of the OPC church government. The regional church with its presbytery dominates the local congregation and session, while in our Church Order local churches are not under the care of, nor subject to the review and control of a broader assembly. It cannot be denied that there are considerable divergencies in church polity between the Reformed and Presbyterian churches.

Nevertheless, the underlying unity also in church government should never be forgotten. In a beautiful manner the new Form of Government begins with a chapter, entitled, *Christ, the King and Head of the Church*. It quotes Isaiah 9:6,7; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23 and Ephesians 4:10-12, concluding that Jesus Christ gave offices necessary for the building of His church, for making disciples of all nations and perfecting His saints.

There is therefore but one King and Head of the church, the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, who rules in His church by His Word and Spirit. His mediatorial office includes all the offices in the church The authority of all such mediatorial office rests upon His appointment, who has ordained government in His church, revealed its nature to us in His Word, and promised His presence in the midst of His church as this government is exercised in His Name.

Christ as the King and Head orders His church by the rule of His Word; the pattern of officers, ordinances, government, and discipline is set forth in Scripture and is to be observed as the instruction of the Lord. "Church government must conform to the scriptural pattern and follow the specific provisions revealed in the New

Testament." The new Form of Government of the OPC is not only remarkable because of this Christological and Scriptural approach to church government but also because of its emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, as is evident in these words:

Jesus Christ, having ascended into heaven, abides in His church by the Holy Spirit whom He has sent. Through His Spirit He has given His Word revealing His ordinances; through the Spirit also He exerts His saving and governing power in the teaching of His Word and the administration of His ordinances. Only by the gifts and calling of the Spirit are men endued and qualified for office in Christ's church (Chapter I.4).

In this confessional first chapter it is stated that the Presbyterian form of government seeks to fulfill the scriptural requirements for the glory of Christ, the edification of the church, and the enlargement of that spiritual liberty in which Christ has set us free. In the last expression we recognize the usage of Galations 5 in a Reformed and anti-hierarchical manner.

These Scriptural principles are recognizable in the chapters that follow in the Form of Government. Chapter III, e.g., about the nature and exercise of church power begins with this anti-hierarchical statement,

The power which Christ committed to His church is not vested in the special officers alone, but in the whole body The power of believers in their general office includes the right to acknowledge and desire the exercise of the gifts and calling of the special offices. The regular exercise of oversight in a particular congregation is discharged by those who have been called to such work by vote of the people.

The general office of all believers is thus clearly acknowledged.

The supreme rule of Christ by His Spirit and Word and the spiritual liberty of all believers are safeguarded in the following clause,

All church power is only ministerial and declarative, for the holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. No church judicatory may presume to bind the conscience by making laws on the basis of its own authority; all its decisions should be founded upon the Word of God (III.3).

This statement reminds us not only of the Westminster Confession, Article XX.2, but also of our Belgic Confession, Article 7 and Article 32. It is repeated in an important chapter (XV.8) of the Form of Government, dealing with the whole

church and its general assembly: "the general assembly is not invested with power, by virtue of its own authority, to make pronouncements which bind the conscience of the members of the church." We have already indicated that we have difficulty with the description of the nature of ecclesiastical authority, especially when Chapter XV.8 states that the deliverances of the general assembly are to be received with difference and submission *also* because of the nature of the general assembly as the supreme judicatory of the church. Nevertheless, we must not overlook the restrictions in Chapter III and Chapter XV. The decisions of church officers are to be received "when properly rendered and if in accord with the Word of God." It reminds us of the important Article 31 of our Church Order, "Whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, *unless* it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order."

A similar restriction is found in Article XV of the Form of Government when it defines the reception of deliverances of the general assembly by the words: "if declarative of the Word of God" and when it grounds this reception with submission in "their fidelity to the Word of God."

On the basis of these or similar expressions our deputies concluded already in 1971 that, although considerable divergencies exist, there is no difference in the essential truth of Christ's Headship over His Church and of the absolute authority which His Word should have in the government of the church.

If we now scan the new Form of Government, we see other anti-hierarchical elements. Chapter XVI is a new chapter dealing with congregational meetings. A stated meeting shall be held at least once annually to consider the affairs of the congregation. Other meetings shall be called when the session deems it to be for the best interests of the congregation or when requested in writing to do so by one-fourth of the communicant members. It is remarkable that the Form of Government gives regulations for the transaction of specific matters of business and for the procedure of voting in these congregational meetings. Minutes have to be ap-

OUR COVER

Parliament Hill
Ottawa, Ontario

Photo courtesy of
Manitoba Government

proved by the congregation before the close of the meeting. The Form of Government even states:

A congregation may withdraw from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church only by an affirmative vote of the congregation at two successive meetings of the congregation

Although one could ask whether these regulations for congregational meetings do full justice to the office of overseers and whether they do not lead into the direction of congregationalism, one may certainly not allege that hierarchism in the OPC has taken away the rights of Christ's congregation and its members.

The session, which is called "the governing body of the local church," consists of its pastor, its other ministers, and its ruling elders. Chapter XIII.4 mentions that the session shall choose its own moderator annually from among its members. This new regulation (the old Form had the pastor always as the moderator of the session) certainly diminishes "the special place of the ministers among the office bearers of the church," against which our Report 1971 protested.

The Form has, as far as we can see, a new clause about the final authority over the use of church property. It describes the task of the session as follows:

The session is charged with maintaining the government of the congregation. It shall oversee all matters concerning the conduct of public worship; it shall concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual growth and evangelistic witness of the congregation. It shall receive, dismiss and exercise discipline over the members of the church, supervise the activities of the diaconate, the board of trustees and all other organizations of the congregation, and have final authority over the use of the church property (XIII.7).

Sure, the following sentence mentions that the session also shall appoint ruling elder commissioners to higher assemblies and the expression shows again that Presbyterianism describes the presbytery and general assembly as higher courts or judicatories. But we must not forget that in the case of appeals our Reformed broader assemblies *also* act as "courts." Moreover, the description of the authority and task of the session resembles that of the consistories in Reformed church government and clearly acknowledges the final authority of the session over the use of the church property.

In the past our deputies rightly brought forward their objections against the special place of the presbytery among the church assemblies, e.g. in the con-

cept that "the presbytery has the power to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under its care" (XIV.5). Nevertheless, we should not forget the function of church visitors authorized by classis according to Article 46 of our Church Order, and we should not forget that the Form of Government of the OPC specifically states, "always respecting the liberties guaranteed to the individual congregation under the constitution." Those liberties of the congregational assemblies have been spelled out in the chapters we quoted about the session and the congregational meeting.

As far as the general assembly is concerned, Chapter XV regulates that it "shall consist of not more than one hundred and fifty-five voting commissioners." This number may seem small to Presbyterians in the USA, but it is large for us who are used to a delegation of sixteen brothers via classis and regional synods. In the event that the general assembly fails to establish such proportions, "the next general assembly shall consist of every minister and of one ruling elder from every local church" (XV.2). As far as representation is concerned, one must conclude that the local congregations in Presbyterianism are certainly not far removed from their general assembly.

In this context another regulation must have our attention:

Deliverances, resolutions, overtures, and other actions which have the effect of amending or adding to the subordinate standards shall not be binding unless they have been approved by the general assembly and presbyteries in the manner provided in this Form of Government for the amendment of the constitution (XV.8).

It shows that even the general assembly itself — however broadly composed of ministers and ruling elders commissioned by the presbyteries — cannot immediately amend or add to the Confessions, the Form of Government, the Book of Discipline and the Directory for the Public Worship. It requires consideration and decision by the presbyteries. The reports about voting by presbyteries e.g., concerning proposals of merger, have made clear to us that we cannot condemn the Presbyterian church polity as mere hierarchism. The many safeguards which have been built into the system caution against such a generalizing statement.

The 1971 Report of our deputies concluded that although the differences in church polity should remain a point of serious discussions, they need not prevent the Canadian Reformed Churches from recognizing the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ and from entering into correspondence with this church.

We hope that our evaluation has underlined this conclusion that truly Presbyterian churches acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head of the church and accept His Word as the only rule for faith and order. A true church governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it and regarding Jesus Christ as the only Head. Presbyterian church government as such does not prevent recognition of a church as a true church, according to Article 29 of our Belgic Confession.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion we would like to add a historical note. Last year we commemorated the sesquicentennial of the Secession in The Netherlands of 1834 (the "Afscheiding"). During this commemoration it was mentioned that the Synod of Leiden 1857 sought ecclesiastical contact or fellowship with the Free Church of Scotland and that deputies of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland visited Kampen. The Rev. A. Brummelkamp and the Rev. S. Van Velzen were delegated to Scotland. At the Synod of Hoogeveen in 1860 the churches of the Secession received official delegates of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Brummelkamp Jr. writes that the Seceded Church in The Netherlands then and later owed much to its correspondence with the Scottish brethren and to their rich experience. In 1877 Brummelkamp and Van Velzen participated in the Pan Presbyterian Council which intended to establish communion or fellowship between Presbyterian Churches.

It shows that the fathers of the Secession, who firmly adhered to Articles 27-32 of the Belgic Confession, recognized faithful Presbyterian Churches as true Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Canadian Reformed Churches are in the line of the tradition of Reformed Churches on the continent of Europe, when they in their contacts not only with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church but also within the International Conference of Reformed Churches recognize in Presbyterianism a fruit of the Reformation that God graciously gave to His Church in the Sixteenth Century.

Permanent contact in the unity of true faith and continual discussion of divergencies may express the catholicity of the church of God and enrich the body of Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit, until we all attain to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The Committee for
Contact with the OPC

The Fifth Conference of Reformed Mission Workers in Latin America

Conference in Brazil

From April 10-17 the Fifth Conference of Reformed Mission Workers in Latin America was held, in Northeast Brazil. Five workers of Curaçao were present, two missionaries of Curitiba, all workers of Canada, namely, the Rev. R.F. Boersema and the Rev. P.K. Meijer (both sent by the Church of Surrey), Mr. G. Glas and Mr. J. Souman (both sent by Mission Aid), and also the Rev. D.G.J. Agema and his wife, and myself (of Hamilton).

The first part of the conference was held in São José da Coroa Grande (in a large house, close to the South Atlantic Ocean), and the second part in Maragogi (at the Souman's place).

No doubt it was a successful conference. In the course of the conference much information was given to the participants concerning the several mission fields. It appeared that many of the problems in the fields were parallel and it was very profitable to discuss them. All of us were very grateful that we were permitted to see how God's work is going on, and how the small congregations are growing, also in Latin America.

Topics

No fewer than six special topics were discussed at the conference, which also concerned problems which the mission workers time and again encounter. These topics were: *Church Growth*, *Employment of Evangelists*, *Recognition of Roman Catholic Baptism*, *Work among the Youth*, *Child Communion*, and *Pedagogy of Paulo Freire*.

The papers on these topics had been sent to the participants of the conference ahead of time, so that they could study

the matter beforehand. Sometimes there was even a second paper, which gave a response to the first, or considered the topic from another angle. Of course a conference like this cannot make decisions, because it is not an ecclesiastical meeting. Nevertheless we could sometimes reach a common opinion and come to certain conclusions.

Church Growth

There was in the first place a book report of *Understanding Church Growth*, written by Donald A. McGavran. He wrote that in the past tremendous resources were spent in mission work, often for very little growth of the church. McGavran stressed Church Growth as one of the most important things in mission work. Many American missions are working with his method, and the ideas of McGavran gain also ground in the Third World.

But as far as his theological background is concerned, McGavran has Arminian ideas, and that background is not to be separated from his method. We discussed especially McGavran's wrong distinction between *discipling* and *perfecting* (Matthew 28:19). His emphasis on "discipling" caused that "perfecting" had been delayed and even sometimes forgotten.

We discussed also the so-called *Homogeneous Unit Principle*. McGavran said: mission work must concentrate on one homogeneous unit, anyway in the beginning. But does not the gospel unite nations and cultures? Our conclusion in this respect could limit itself to stating that although ethnic and cultural diversity has its roots in God's creative work, the development of this diversity in history

has been profoundly affected by sin and God's judgment. This diversity can serve the devil or it can serve the LORD.

We also discussed the question: How important is it that people do not like to cross cultural barriers? Our conclusion was: Mainly to promote effective communication, different homogeneous units should be approached and encouraged to express themselves in terms of their own characteristics, yet in such a way that the catholicity of the church is fully honoured.

McGavran often uses the term *winnable people*. In mission work, he said, we must try to reach winnable people with the gospel. Our conclusion was that we cannot use this term. Overagainst the principle of "winnable people" we have to stress that all of us are by nature enemies of God.

In connection with this matter we discussed also the choice of a new mission field. We have to be careful in that choice, and we have to investigate the whole situation and the circumstances before we start new mission work.

Employment of Evangelists

In Curaçao there is a possibility to start a course for training Evangelists. In Irian Jaya such courses had been held already. So the employment of Evangelists was another topic of the conference. Especially the term *Evangelist* was discussed. There are three texts in the New Testament concerning this office, namely, Acts 21:8, Ephesians 4:11 and II Timothy 4:5.

We also studied the report, written in The Netherlands by Deputies of Synod Amersfoort 1948, concerning the term

Evangelists. Our conclusion was that in the New Testament the word points in the direction of what we call *missionaries*. If "Evangelists" are trained, we have to be careful that these men may not be mere *helpers* of the missionaries. We also have to be aware that there may not be *two different kinds* of ministers, namely, on a different level. After having finished his course, the Evangelist can perhaps receive the office of an *elder* in the church, with a special assignment to teach, to give Bible lessons. Then he is an office-bearer in the church. And if he has talents for it, he can continue with a complete theological training, in order to become a minister of the church.

Recognition of Roman Catholic Baptism

If, for instance, a Roman Catholic person in Latin America wants to join the church, it more than once happens that he or she says: "I am now converted, I am not a Catholic anymore, but I am now a Christian!" The question is: must he or she be baptized again, especially if that person asks for it?

In such a case, the general rule in the Reformed Churches is that baptism is to be "recognized" under three conditions: 1. The formula must have been the right formula, namely, "into the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit;" 2. he who had baptized must have been somebody who had been ordained officially in that church; 3. that baptism must have been administered in a church that holds to the dogma of Trinity.

In the discussion it was said that this recognition of baptism is not the same as recognition of the church concerned, so a kind of "pluriformity" of churches.

It was also said in the discussion that not only baptism in the Roman Catholic Church is involved, but also baptism by Pentecostals, who have a weakened doctrine of Trinity. So there was at the conference a critical approach especially concerning the last stipulation of the three conditions.

One also asked: is there still a *vestige* of the church, for example in the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America and especially in Brazil? Is the situation of today comparable with the situation in Calvin's time, when he spoke about recognition of Roman Catholic baptism? It appeared that the Presbyterian Church has no objections to baptize again, especially when converts ask for it.

We discussed also the matter whether we should speak about vestige of the church (*Vestigium Ecclesiae* — that was also the title of Dr. J. Faber's dissertation) or about vestige of God's *covenant*. A letter of Dr. J. Faber concerning this topic

will be placed in the bylaws of the conference.

Work among the Youth

In Curaçao there is a special mission worker for the youth. He informed the conference about his work, especially about the Bible lessons, given to several groups of young people.

We came to the conclusion that the work among the youth in the mission field is fully mission work. Maybe it is also helpful to solve the problem that so often *men* are missing in the new congregation, a very old problem!

One of the conclusions was also that this work must be clearly related to the public worship services on Sunday with the whole congregation. When, on Sunday, we experienced three services in Northeast Brazil, it was encouraging to see how the work among the youth worked for instance in São José da Coroa Grande. After the morning service, the young people were divided into three groups of Sunday school classes, and they went to separate rooms. The older people remained in the pew and studied a passage of the Bible. Afterwards all groups came together and representatives of the groups reported. At the end the meeting was closed by singing and thanksgiving.

One of the conclusions of the discussion about the work among the young people was that also the manner of bringing the gospel to the youth may not remain free. In the presentation, too, the child must be appealed to for faith and conversion.

Child Communion

Another topic was the question: Can children be admitted to the Lord's Supper? There is not only the practice that at the age of seven years a Roman Catholic child goes to the "first communion," but also in "Protestant" churches

there is a tendency to allow children to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

There were several points of agreement in the discussion, for instance the importance of God's covenant in connection with the Lord's Supper. There was also the general opinion that the Passover did not proceed simply to the Lord's Supper, and that in this respect there is a clear difference in responsibility. We stressed in the discussion the terms *to examine yourself* (I Corinthians 11:28) and *discerning the body* (I Corinthians 11:29) as heavy words, not applicable to very young children, and also the fact that Calvin said that the profession of faith was a delayed response to baptism, but that it could not be given without having been taught in the doctrine, the confession (Heidelberg Catechism) of the church.

Unfortunately in the course of time the age for profession of faith has been delayed, especially under the influence of pietism and mysticism.

In any case it must be stressed that the children who belong to God's covenant and His congregation, have to give a response to their baptism.

Pedagogy of Paulo Freire

There was also a topic concerning *Paulo Freire*, a pedagogue, born in Brazil. He wrote a book, called *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in which book he promoted a method for teaching illiterate people. He has a great influence in the Third World, and especially in Brazil, where he is now living again, after having fled from the country in the sixties. He tried to make the people conscious of their situation.

We came to the conclusion that Freire's method is not useful for the mission work and that we must take our starting point in the Scriptures in order to unfold latent talents which could not develop themselves on account of oppression.

Conclusion

At the end of the conference we had an evaluation. We concluded that it was a useful and helpful conference.

Of course, it was not possible to solve many problems of the mission workers, but we had an open and very good discussion.

Some topics for the next conference were already mentioned, and more than one participant of the conference offered himself to deliver a paper.

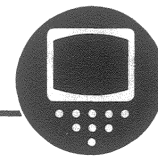
It was decided to hold the next conference of the Reformed Mission Workers of Latin America at Curitiba, Brazil, the Lord willing in April 1987.

K. DEDDENS



CHURCH NEWS

NEW ADDRESS:
 Effective June 1, 1985
 Theological College of the
 Canadian Reformed Churches
 110 West 27th Street
 Hamilton, ON L9C 5A1



“ARPA” Association of Reformed Political Action of Carman and Winnipeg, Manitoba, General Membership (Founding) Meeting - April 24, 1985 at Carman, Manitoba

The meeting opened with the singing of Psalm 25:2,3. The Scriptures were opened and Romans 15:1-3 was read. Br. P. Veenendaal, chairman of the Founding Committee opened the meeting with prayer, followed by his opening address.

The agenda was as follows:

- Opening
- Discussion on and adoption of the constitution
- Intermission and registration
- Nomination and election of board members
- Closing

The constitution and bylaws were presented to the “membership.” After discussion and approval of the constitution, intermission was held during which all had the opportunity to register. Membership fees (\$1.00) were taken and a membership list was made up. All of the thirty-two members present registered in addition to two members who were not able to come, but indicated their desire to become members. Thus the total membership as of the founding meeting was thirty-four.

After the meeting was called back to order the nominations were opened for chairman and four members were nominated. After the election, br. P. Veenendaal (Carman) was elected. The nominations were then opened once more for board directors. Seven were nominated and the following brothers were elected: T. Bergsma (Carman), H. Ludwig (Carman), W. Van Beek (Winnipeg), and P. Weessies (Winnipeg).

A schedule for retirement was proposed by the chairman that in the first year the vice-chairman would retire, the second year secretary and research director, and in the third year chairman and treasurer. This proposal was accepted and discussion then turned to the dissolution of the former separate ARPA associations of both Carman and Winnipeg. After both former associations had been officially dissolved, the meeting was closed with the singing of Psalm 25:6,10 after which br. W. Van Beek closed in prayer.

At a board meeting held on May 8, 1985, duties of directors were assigned as follows: T. Bergsma - research, H. Ludwig - vice chairman, W. Van Beek - secretary, P. Weessies - treasurer.

For the Board,
W. VAN BEEK

“Anchor” Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, May 3, 1985

The meeting is opened in a Christian manner. Everybody is welcomed.

The minutes are accepted.

A general report on the boards activities is read by the chairman. This report is to be read at the general membership meeting.

Matters arising from the minutes of last years general membership meeting are discussed.

Peter Veenstra reports on progress with the department of employment and immigration.

We are still waiting for severance of the lot.

A report is given on the Summer Camp reunion. The afternoon was enjoyed by all.

A pamphlet to be used in the coming building fund drive, is passed around. A lengthy discussion follows. The pamphlet is approved with amendments.

Contact will be made with ARC industries to seek employment for the residents of our home.

The press release is read and approved.

After a general question period we sang Psalm 116:1 and brother Bartels closed the meeting with prayer.

E.J. DEJONG

**Consulaat-Generaal
Der Nederlanden
CONSULATE GENERAL
OF THE NETHERLANDS**
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OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

BAKERMANS-Meurkens, M., geboren in 1907, naar Canada vertrokken circa 1955, laatsbekende adres: RR 1, Box 6, Winfield, Alberta.

BOELHOUWERS, Wilhelmina Geertruida (mogelijk gehuwd met A. Goudsmit,) geboren 20 juni 1935 te Amsterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 16 maart 1955 met bestemming Montreal.

DIREL-Verkaart, Irene Alberdina Maria, geboren op 17 mei 1956, naar Canada vertrokken op 4 juli 1984.

KONIJNENBERG, A.W., geboren op 16 juni 1954, naar Canada vertrokken op 1 juli 1984, laatsbekende adres: 458 Adelaide Street, Kincardine, Ontario N0G 2G0.

KUIPER, Reina Alida Etienna, geboren op 21 april 1925 te Norg, naar Canada vertrokken op 3 december 1977, laatsbekende adres: 26 John St., St. Catharines, Ontario.

PORTER, K.J., gehuwd geweest met Marie de Jong, laatsbekende adres in Canada: RR 2, Windsor Drive, Stouffville, Ontario L0H 1L0.

SCHOONFELD, Ilona Jacqueline, geboren op 8 augustus 1957 te Amsterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 13 juli 1984.

VAN STRATEN, Allegonda A.M., geboren op 20 oktober 1954 te Hoge-en Lage

Zwaluwe, laatsbekende adres in Nederland: Zwaluwstraat 7, Breda, naar Canada vertrokken op 15 feb. 1985.

VERHOEF, Klaas, geboren op 18 januari 1920 te Landsmeer, laatsbekende adres in Nederland: Zilverschoonstraat 18/1, Amsterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 22 mei 1953 met bestemming Winnipeg.

VISSER-de Groot, Elisabeth Louise, geboren op 12 mei 1944 te Hilversum, naar Canada vertrokken op 7 december 1967.

VRIESEMA, Wilhelmine, geb. op 4 aug. 1957 te Den Haag, naar Canada vertrokken op 8 september 1982.

De Consul-Generaal
voor deze:-
Mevr. G. SCHNITZLER
Fgd. KANSELIER

HYMN 36

He has come, the Holy Spirit!
Jesus left us not alone
When He went up to inherit
Might and glory on the throne,
For He sent the One He promised:
Holy Spirit, Power of God.
Let us spread this truth abroad
And unceasingly declare it.
Let us now our voices raise:
To the Spirit we give praise.

Praise the Spirit who, proceeding
From the Father and the Son,
In the truth the Church is leading.
Let us praise Him, everyone!
Him who is both Gift and Giver,
Him the Sender sent to earth,
Holy God and yet poured forth.
Praise, O people, Him forever:
He true life to you imparts,
For He dwells within your hearts.

Counsellor, O Holy Spirit,
Thou who didst from heaven descend,
Wilt Thou with our Saviour's merit
Fill the earth's remotest end.
Cause Thou love and zeal to flourish
There where all may fade and fail;
Let Thy healing wind prevail.
Wilt Thou work our life to nourish;
Through Thy power the dead be raised.
Holy Spirit, Thou be praised!

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



Dear Busy Beavers,

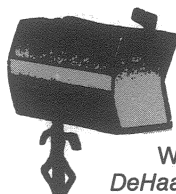
Could you imagine your family without your Dad?
Of course not!
We are all thankful for our own Dad!
Sure, they are all different.
Some Dads love to play soccer.
Some Dads tell bedtime stories.
Some Dads help build a tree house.
And I know one Dad who picks up films from
the library to show kids at the birthday party!
But your own Dad is special, right?
Of course! You belong together!
We don't always think of that.
But still it's true!
And now with Father's Day coming
you can show your Dad just how much
he means to you.
Maybe you are good at making cards?
You can make him a colourful card with a nice message.
Does your Dad like to cook?
Maybe he would like YOU to fix him something!
Think about it.
You can figure out something nice to do for
your Dad.
Have fun!

I AM A SHOE

I am a shoe,
Bright as sky blue,
And I have an owner
And she is named Sue.



By Busy Beaver *Jacoba Harlaar*



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Leona DeHaas*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already.
Thank you for the quiz and picture. Keep up the good work! Where is your family going camping, *Leona*?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Shelley VanderHorst*. We hope you will really enjoy being a Busy Beaver and joining in all our Busy Beaver activities! What is the name of the baby in your family, *Shelley*?

How did the babysitting go, *Nicole DeHaas*? And are you keeping up with all your letter writing? Thanks for your nice chatty letter and for sharing your quiz, *Nicole*. Bye for now.

Hello, *Teena Buzeman*. How are you doing? It was nice to hear from you again. Thanks for the poem, *Teena*. Write again soon.

That was quite the fort you had, *Peter John Sikkema*! How are the rabbits doing? Will you write and tell us about the novel you're reading? Thanks for the quiz, Peter John.

Thanks for the puzzle, *Jennifer Siebenga*. It was nice to hear from you again. How are you enjoying the spring weather? Bye for now.

How did you enjoy your friend's birthday party, *Rita Wubs*? And now you're having a good time with your grandparents, right? Your puzzle is just fine, Rita. Thanks for writing.

How did your talent evening go, *Carolien Wubs*? That's sure a nice way for your pen pal to learn English! And you're a lucky girl to have such pretty wallpaper in your room! Thanks for the illustrated puzzle, Carolien.

Hello, *Katrina DeHaas*. It sure was nice to hear from you again. And thanks very much for your poem and picture. I'll bet your little brother loves your playing games with him, right Katrina?

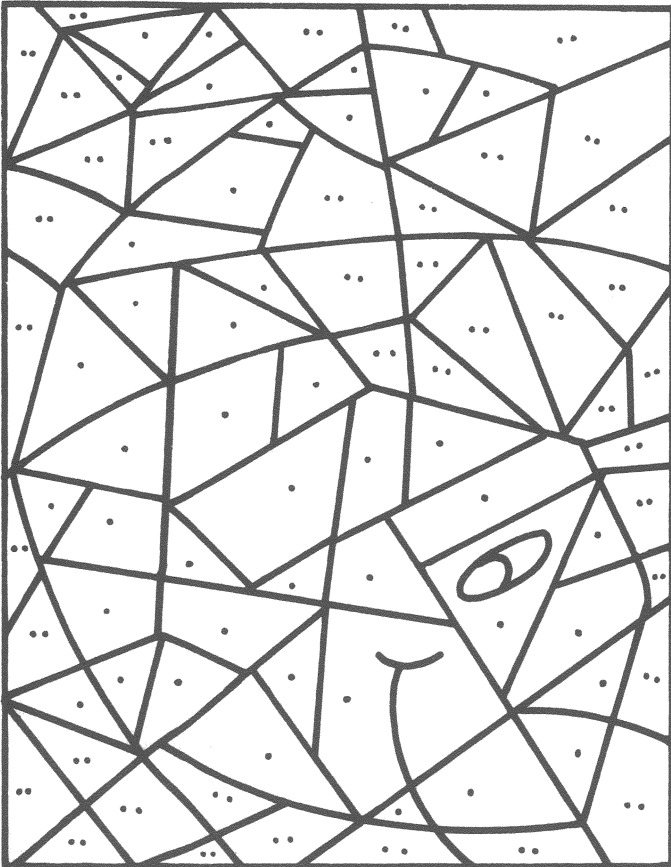
Thanks for your story and poem about Spring, *Kerri-Anne Wierenga*. Are you looking forward to the holidays? Do you have plans for this summer, Kerri-Anne?

Who caught your big fish, *Linda Van Sydenborgh*? Congratulations on your success at Fine Arts Day! Keep up the good work. Who knows how well you'll do NEXT year!

I'm glad you had such a good time on your birthday, *Margaret Admiraal*. Thanks for your entries for the Contest. Watch for the results in a few weeks! Bye for now, Margaret.

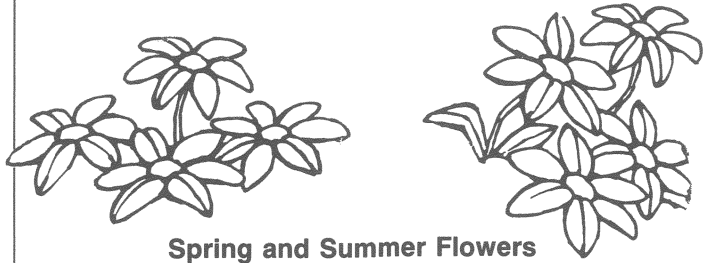
Quiz Time!

Shade in just the spaces with one dot and see who is hiding here.



WORD SEARCH

By Busy Beaver *Pauline DeRuiter*



Spring and Summer Flowers

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

Tulip
Morning glory
Sunflower
Petunia
Thistle
Lily
Clovers

Daisy
Milkweed
Poinsettia
Poppy
Black-eyed Susan
Pussy-paws

Rose
Harebell
Ladyslipper
Violet
Mallows
Pansy

ANIMAL WHO AM I?

By Busy Beaver *Michelle Oostdyk*.

1. I eat bananas. Who am I? _____
2. I carry a long trunk. Who am I? _____
3. I am a small, cuddly house pet. Who am I? _____
4. I can guard your house. Who am I? _____
5. I am pink and fat. Who am I? _____
6. I have many sharp teeth. I am long and green and live in water. Who am I? _____
7. I have white wool. Who am I? _____
8. I look like a robber. Who am I? _____

(Answers next time!)

Did you enjoy the puzzles?

That's great!

Be sure to let me know how you surprised your Dad on Father's Day!

I'm so curious!

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

Keep busy!

With love from your
Aunt Betty

You know my address!
Aunt Betty, Box 54
Fergus, ON N1M 2W7

Thankful to our heavenly Father, who has again entrusted to us a child, we joyfully announce the birth of:

SCOTT ANDREW

Born: May 10, 1985.
Brother for: *Richard, Matthew, and Aileen*
Peter and Margaret Feenstra
(nee Aikema)
RR 2, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

Our heavenly Father has entrusted another one of His covenant children into our care.

Thankfully we announce the birth of our son:

MICHAEL JAMES

A brother for *Jeremy and Alan*
Born: May 2, 1985
John and Ingrid VanderGaag
66 John Street
Elora, ON N0B 1S0

Sing praises to Him, tell of all His wonderful works! Psalm 105:2

The Lord has richly blessed us with another child:

KEVIN ROY

Born: April 27, 1985
A brother for *Richard*
Harry and Joanne Voorhorst
(nee Veurink)
1111-19A Avenue
Coaldale, AB T0K 0L0

This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

Psalm 118:23

Joyfully we announce the birth of our third child:

MARK TIMOTHY

Born: May 9, 1985
Lovingly welcomed by parents,
Barry and Joanne Hordyk
and sisters, *Amy and Sarah*

Have you sent
in some
photographs for
OUR COVER?

With thankfulness to the LORD, we announce our engagement:

PATRICIA VANDEBURGT
and
RICK JOHANNESSEN

May 4, 1985
17324-92 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5T 3C2

Mr. and Mrs. P. vander Meulen are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of their daughter:

BETTY ANN
to
ANDREW GEORGE

son of Mr. and Mrs. C. Leyenhorst.
The ceremony will take place, the Lord willing, on Friday, the 12th of July, 1985, in the Canadian Reformed Church at Fergus, ON.
Rev. J. Mulder officiating.
Future address:
411-10626-151A Avenue, Surrey, BC V3R 8K7

Together with our parents, we:

JOHANNA ELISABETH VAN DER PLAS
and
RICHARD JOHN BUIST

are pleased to announce our forthcoming marriage to be solemnized on the sixth of July at 2:00 p.m. in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, in the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church building, Burlington.
Prof. C. VanDam officiating.
Future address:
303-4067 Longmoor Drive
Burlington, ON L7L 1X4

With thankfulness to the Lord, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lodder, are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of their daughter:

JOANNE LINDA
to
JOHN HERMAN

son of Mr. and Mrs. Henk Hutten.
The ceremony will take place, D.V. on Saturday, June 22, at 2:00 p.m. in the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church at Fergus, ON.
Rev. J. Moesker officiating.
Future address:
369 Argyle Street, Fergus, ON N1M 2Y4

1955 — June 25 — 1985

With thankfulness to the LORD, we wish to announce the 30th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents:

JAKE and HENNY RIEMERSMA (nee Moraal)

Their thankful children and grandchildren:

Elora, ON: John and Ingrid VanderGaag
Jeremy, Alan and Michael
Guelph, ON: Ken Riemersma and Janice
Burlington, ON: Albert and Petra Riemersma
Fergus, ON: Anna Riemersma and Dave
Jackie Riemersma
Christine Riemersma
380 St. Andrew Street E., Fergus, ON N1M 1R1

1935 — June 6 — 1985

With thankfulness to the Lord we announce the 50th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents:

FRED and THERESA BOUWKAMP

Coaldale, AB: Jack and Judy Bouwkamp
Peter, Debbie, Paul and David

Thornhill, ON: Frank and Jenny Kampen
Gerald and Theresa Boot
Dianne

Andrew and Ivonne Kampen
Fred Kampen
Irene Kampen
Anthony Kampen

16 Centre Avenue, Willowdale, ON M2M 2L3

1960 — June 10 — 1985

Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob.

Psalm 146:5a

With thankfulness to the Lord, we announce the 25th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents:

KLAAS and FENNY KOBES (nee Poll)

Their thankful children:

Margaret
Jake and Anita Tetteroo
John
Clarence

2340 Holly Street, Clearbrook, BC V2T 2P5

1960 — June 11 — 1985

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.

Ephesians 5:2a

JOHANN BARTHOLT LUDWIG

and

LENA WILHELMINA LUDWIG (nee VanAmerongen)

With great joy and thankfulness we wish to announce the 25th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents.

Their thankful children and grandchild:

Wolter and Veronica Vis
Leanne
John and Esther
Tammy
Mark and Arlene
Edwin
Michael

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AUTO **LIFE**

With thankfulness to the Lord, we would like to announce the 35th Wedding Anniversary on June 6, 1985, of our dear parents and grandparents:

JOHN DE BOER

and

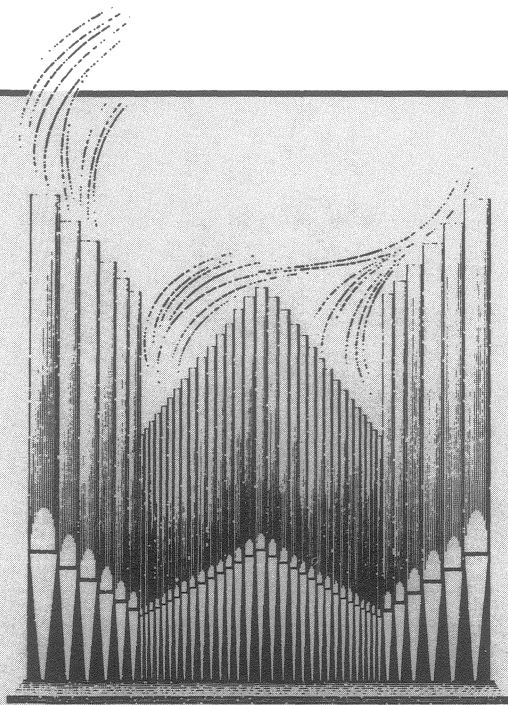
WEIS DE BOER (nee Varwijk)

Waterdown, ON: John and Ann Witten
Daniel

London, ON: Ken and Grace McIntyre
Jason and Daryl

Burlington, ON: Shirley De Boer
Burlington, ON: Mark and Mary De Boer
Michael

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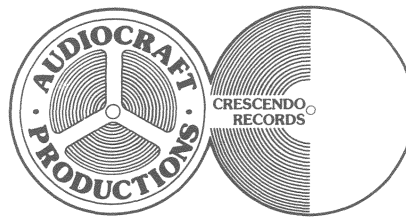
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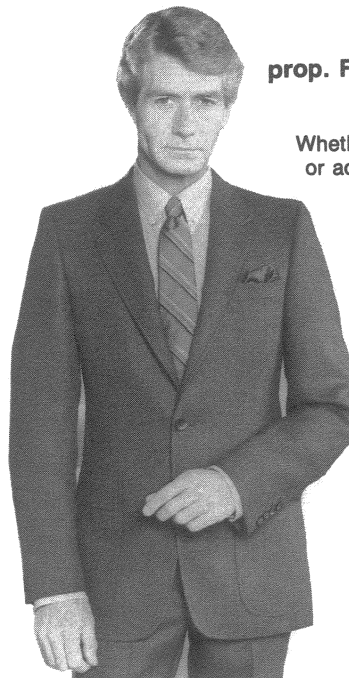
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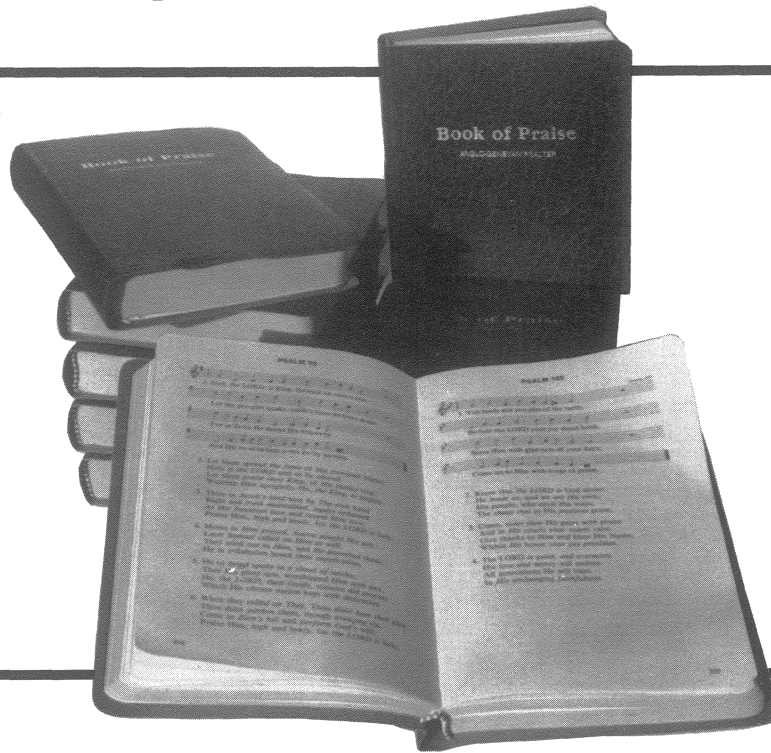
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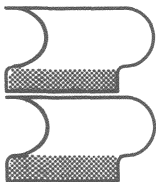
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