

The Outlook

**CRC SYNOD '78 – A DIVIDED HOUSE
IMMUNITY
A LAND WITHOUT LAUGHTER**



AUGUST - 1978

DEVOTED TO THE EXPOSITION AND DEFENSE OF THE REFORMED FAITH

CRC SYNOD '78 -

a house divided

REV. HENRY VANDEN HEUVEL

Rev. H. Vanden Heuvel, pastor of the Bethel Church of Sioux Center, Iowa, member of our Board and delegate to the CRC Synod, was asked to report on Synod actions for *THE OUTLOOK*.

The Christian Reformed Synod met on the campus of Calvin College and Seminary along with four other member churches of NAPARC—North American Presbyterian and Reformed Churches. It was an historic event in that for the first time in history, five churches met in Ecclesiastical Assembly at the same time and place. There was a wonderfully thrilling experience when all five churches met together for worship in Calvin's Field House to hear Dr. Joel Nederhood and to hear brief greetings from the presidents of each of the five assemblies. The other NAPARC churches meeting at Calvin College were the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, and the Presbyterian Church in America. It was an interesting experience not only to worship together, of course, but also to eat together at the noon and supper breaks, and to have fellowship with others of Reformed conviction from different parts of the country and different cultural backgrounds.

In many ways the Christian Reformed Synod acted decisively. Sometimes synods have been described as acting only to put off issues to another year. But this Synod acted, although in my opinion, it did not always act wisely or in keeping with the spirit of Scripture and Church Order. The fact that struck me as the crucial issues dealing with opening the offices to women were decided is that our church is a divided church. Every crucial issue dealing with the life of the church was decided on an extremely narrow vote. Such issues as opening the office of deacon to women, permitting the candidacy of Mrs. Marchiene Rienstra, creating a new office of Evangelist in the Church were

all decided with a large minority vote being cast. While a minority opinion is usually a sign of healthy difference of opinion, in the case of the CRC Synod, I am afraid that it points rather to a house divided. Furthermore, what was also most apparent is that the differences always were seen at the same point. That is, the Canadian classes with very few exceptions, always were on the same side of every issue. And a sizeable number of U.S. classes were also found on that same side. One wonders how long a church divided can continue to stand. We know that a house divided cannot stand, as the Lord Jesus stated. How long our church can continue to exist with such deep division on such crucial issues is becoming an increasingly gnawing question being asked by many people.

The best way to look at these issues as they were decided by Synod is to take up some of the activities of each day of Synod, commenting on them as they are reported. Obviously the opinions and comments are my own as one who witnessed the proceedings. Others who were there as delegates or observers might have come to different conclusions.

TUESDAY, JUNE 13

The first full day of Synod began with the election of officers. Synod proceeded to elect Rev. Clarence Boomsma as president, Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven as vice-president, Rev. Howard Spaan as first clerk, and Rev. Alvin Venema as second clerk.

On this first day of Synod thirty-seven candidates for the ministry were approved. The way in which Synod has handled this matter has often been criticized since Synod no longer interviews each candidate. But this year Synod approved a system which will go into effect next year in order to make the declaration of candidates a more personal procedure. Each delegate at Synod will receive a consistorial recommendation, a one-page statement of faith, a one-paragraph statement of reasons for seeking candidacy, a picture and personal data, the report of the visit by a board member, and the board's recommendation. Hopefully this additional information will help Synod expedite what is perhaps the most important decision that is made by any synod.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14

Synod last year had appointed a Study Committee to study "the way that we Christians of Reformed faith, as individuals, and as a denomination can most effectively speak to the issues of social justice in our world." This Study Committee recommended that Synod "appoint a Committee on Social Justice to provide a Christian educational vehicle, grounded in the Bible and the Reformed faith, to stimulate mutual awareness of, knowledge about, and active response to, issues of social justice." Synod rejected this recommendation, and instead adopted the following decision: "That synod urge each congregation to establish a social justice committee to gather information and to recommend action on social justice

matters of local concern, and to initiate procedures for consideration of broader social justice issues at broader ecclesiastical assemblies. That synod through the Synodical Interim Committee call up its Christian Educational Institutions and Agencies, its Board of Publications, CRWRC, and SCORR to enlist the skills of knowledgeable people to speak and to write publicly so that the church will be alerted to issues of social injustice that challenge a Christian response."

Synod approved an ambitious ten year cycle of course material for the Bible Way Curriculum in the church educational program.

THURSDAY, JUNE 15

Classis Hudson had overtured synod to reorganize the Back to God Hour Committee "in such a manner that it will be constituted as a denominational board comprised of one representative from each classis plus a number of members-at-large chosen by the newly constituted board from our constituency and approved by synod." This was quite an emotional subject because the Back to God Hour Committee has been organized according to its present status for the last 40 years. Those who are part of the Radio and TV work of the Back to God Hour were not happy with the suggestion made by the overture. And they found an ally in elder William Boer from Classis Holland. Elder Boer made a ringing plea for keeping the Back to God Hour Committee as it is, and for bringing all the other agencies and boards of the Christian Reformed Church in line with the organization of the Back to God Hour. Apparently Synod was convinced of the wisdom of the present organization of the Committee, because when the vote was taken Synod rejected the Overture from Classis Hudson.

Synod's activities were also the interest of the TV people on Thursday. And the reason was the endorsement of the Koinonia Declaration. This declaration was written by a group of persons from the Reformed Churches in South Africa, calling for justice in the area of race relations. Synod was asked to "declare that it considers the Koinonia Declaration to be an excellent enunciation of biblical principles and a significant reformation statement on South African race relations by Reformed Christians of South Africa." This decision was taken without much debate, although the TV cameras were buzzing about.

FRIDAY, JUNE 16

Synod approved the proposed revisions of Articles 11, 12, 13, 14 of the Church Order as recommended by the Study Committee on Church Order Article 13a. The concern of Synod in approving these changes was to recognize the importance of the work of the Ministry of the Word, and thus to attempt to regulate what kind of tasks could be done by the minister in keeping with his calling. Recognizing that Synod could not simply list all the kinds of professions which could or could not be in accordance with that calling, Synod did instruct classes and consistories to be very

THE
OUTLOOK



"And the three companies blew the trumpets . . . and held THE TORCHES in their left hands, and THE TRUMPETS in their right hands . . . and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon" (Judges 7:20).

JOURNAL OF REFORMED FELLOWSHIP, INC.

Send all copy to Managing Editor, Rev. Peter De Jong, Box 34, Dutton, Mich. 49511. Phone (616) 698-6267.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Arthur Besteman, John Piersma, Harlan Vanden Einde, Henry Vanden Heuvel, Syburn Voortman, Clarence Werkema.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Renze De Groot, President; Clarence Werkema, Vice-President; Arthur Besteman, Secretary; Ronald Van Putten, Treasurer; Peter Wobbema Jr., Assistant-Secretary-Treasurer; John Blankespoor, Peter De Jong, John Piersma, Gary Popma, Cornelius Rickers, Berton Sevensma, Harlan Vanden Einde, Henry Vanden Heuvel, Syburn Voortman.

Assistant to the Editor: John Vander Ploeg.

Production Manager: Peter Wobbema.

Business Manager: Mrs. Mary Kaiser.

This periodical is owned and published by Reformed Fellowship, Inc., a religious and strictly non-profit organization composed of a group of Christian believers who hold to the Reformed Faith. Its purpose is to give sharpened expression to this Faith, to stimulate the doctrinal sensitivities of those who profess this Faith, to promote the spiritual welfare and purity of the Christian Reformed Church particularly and also of other Reformed churches, and as far as possible to further the interests of all Christian action and institutions of Reformed character.

The publishers of this journal express their adherence to the Calvinistic creeds as formulated in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort, and the Westminster Confession and Catechisms.

All contributions represent the personal views of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the members of Reformed Fellowship, Inc.

Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$6.00 per year, \$10.50 2 years. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

EDITORIAL AND CIRCULATION OFFICES

THE OUTLOOK
4855 Starr Street, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506, Telephone 949-5421

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9-11 a.m.

After Office Hours please call: 452-9519

Mailing Address: 4855 Starr Street, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

August 1978 — Volum XXVIII, No. 8

Contents:

CRC SYNOD '78 — A HOUSE DIVIDED.....	2
Henry Vanden Heuvel	
OUR QUESTION BOX	8
Harlan G. Vanden Einde	
REFORMED WOMEN SPEAK — IMMUNITY.....	10
Shirley W. Madany	
ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE	11
John J. Byker	
MEDITATION — THE GOSPEL GIVEN TO NAAMAN.....	12
John Blankespoor	
A LAND WITHOUT LAUGHTER	13
Edwin H. Palmer	
LESSONS FROM 1 PETER.....	17
Henry Vander Kam	
A LOOK AT BOOKS.....	21

careful in their decisions to approve the calling of ministers for extraordinary positions.

Synod handled several items dealing with the church's confession and liturgy. It approved the recommendation of the Overture from Classis Pacific Northwest to request the Bible Translation Committee to study the New American Standard Bible, with a view to its approval for use in the worship service. It rejected the overture from Classis Sioux Center to instruct the Liturgical Committee to prepare a new form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper in nursing homes, old people's homes, and in private homes. Synod adopted a new translation for the Baptism of Adults, being careful to make several changes from the proposed form as presented by the Liturgical Committee. Synod also approved a new form for the Lord's Supper to be used provisionally for three years. This decision brings the total number of forms for the Lord's Supper to four, one for every liturgical taste. When objections were raised questioning the need for still another form, the usual answer was, "You don't have to use it if you don't want to."

MONDAY, JUNE 19

Although Synod met during the morning of Saturday, June 17, I am skipping the discussion because what transpired then is covered by the decisions made on other days.

One of the most interesting decisions that faced Synod was the election of a man to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Dr. Hoekema from the seminary. The Board of Trustees had presented Synod with two nominees for this position, Dr. Gordon Spykman and Rev. Neal Plantinga. On Monday Synod interviewed both men, and made its selection. The position to be filled was in the area of Systematic Theology, and both men spoke of their interest and their relative strengths which they could bring to this department. After some discussion, Synod elected Rev. Neal Plantinga to the chair of Systematic Theology in the Seminary.

Synod heard from the fraternal delegate from the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Rev. Mok. He called upon the Christian Reformed Church to be much more concerned about the arms race and the attitude of the U.S. on social matters. Following his address, the Rev. Raymond Zorn brought greetings from the Reformed Church of New Zealand and Australia. He encouraged the CRC to remain close to their brothers down under and to hold to the Reformed faith which we both have in common.

The Canadian Council of the CRC came up before Synod in an interesting discussion. Recently the Canadian Council decided to appoint a full time Executive Director. Classis Eastern Canada disapproved of this decision, and decided to withdraw from the Canadian Council. The issue before Synod was, first, to define the nature and authority of the Canadian Council of the CRC, and, second, to decide whether the action of Classis Eastern Canada was to be allowed. Synod responded to these requests first

by stating that Synod of 1966 had already spelled out the nature and authority of bodies such as the Canadian Council of the CRC, and then by observing that the appeal regarding the withdrawal of Classis Eastern Canada could not be rightly handled by Synod since it had not yet been taken up by that Classis itself.

Synod approved the work of synodical deputies with respect to five ministers: four released from their congregations, and one deposed from the ministry. Synod also heard reports on two resignations from the ministry. It was observed that there seems to be an increasing number of releases and/or resignations from the ministry. One wonders whether this is a larger problem in recent years or if it has always been a problem in the CRC.

TUESDAY, JUNE 20

One of the decisions that Synod took capped more than 30 years of struggle and discussion. This had to do with the matter of lay workers in evangelism. The problem all these years concerned the status of these lay workers who bring the Word of God in the Back to God Chapels maintained by the churches of the CRC. In some ways, the CRC has brought this problem on itself by establishing such chapels in the first place. We have never really decided just what their place is within the structure of the CRC. At any rate, the problem arises regarding those who labor in these chapels. These faithful men bring individuals to the knowledge of salvation in Jesus Christ, and when baptism is administered they must step aside for the ordained minister of the sponsoring church. When the Lord's Supper is administered in the "chapel," again the lay workers must step aside for the ordained minister in the supporting church. For more than 30 years synods have been asked to settle this problem.

Synod in 1977 again appointed a committee to study the problem relative to lay workers in evangelism. This committee came to Synod 1978 with a divided report. A majority recommended that Synod allow the churches to ordain men who are especially gifted in the work of evangelism as elders in the supporting church, and then to give these elder-evangelists a licensure to exhort in that classis. The emphasis in the majority report is on the strong tie between the evangelist and the consistory of the supporting church. The minority report recommended that Synod approve the ordination of the layworkers in evangelism to a fourth office in the church, that of evangelist. The minority report also recommended that the function of the evangelist would be to preach the Word and administer the sacraments.

The Advisory Committee of Synod dealing with this report brought a report which took parts out of both the majority and the minority reports. The advice was that "synod establish the office of evangelist with authority to administer the Word and Sacraments in the work of evangelism of this calling church; that synod declare that the evangelist be acknowledged as an elder of his calling church with corresponding

privileges and responsibilities; and that synod declare that one who is ordained to the office of evangelist shall function under certain regulations." One of these regulations states that the ordination of the evangelist shall correspond to his appointment by the local church. Thus the new office of evangelist is not an ordination for life as is the case with the minister of the Word. The advice of the Advisory Committee was adopted by Synod, and the Church Order will be changed accordingly to correspond with the decision regarding a fourth office.

The afternoon of June 20 was spent on the extremely long report of the Task Force on World Hunger. It was apparent from remarks of a number of speakers at Synod that the manner in which the Task Force on World Hunger was dealing with this very complex problem was filled with frustration. There is no doubt that the issue is complex. Questions arose as to whether this was the business of the institutional church, whether the church has the task of first seeking to change the life style of those who worship cows and rats, and then bringing them the necessary food, and whether the kinds of proposals suggested of the Task Force on World Hunger will help at all to alleviate that hunger. After hours of discussion, Synod finally adopted the proposals as presented by the Task Force, and to continue the Committee for one year to monitor the implementation of its program.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21

In many ways the decisions taken on Wednesday mark the heart of Synod 1978. Just as synods in the past are remembered for the decisions taken then, as for example 1928 suggests "Worldly Amusements," so Synod 1978 will be remembered as the synod that permitted the ordination of women to be deacons in the Christian Reformed Church. In my opinion, this decision was a "water-shed"; that is, a decision which will have ominous results for the CRC. Before making further comments on the results of this decision, I wish to report on how the decision was made.

Report 31 in the Agenda is called "Hermeneutical Principles Concerning Women in Ecclesiastical Office." This Committee was appointed in 1975 as the third committee appointed by various synods to deal with the matter of women in ecclesiastical office. The previous two reports were not adopted by their respective synods. Therefore synod in 1975 appointed the present Committee to study "the hermeneutical principles concerning women in ecclesiastical office." The committee came with a divided report. Four of the members of the committee recommended that consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon as delineated in the Church Order, Art. 25. The majority committee further recommended that the church continue to reflect upon the question of admitting women to the office of elder and minister. Their grounds for this second recommendation touch upon a very important matter. The first states, "the evidence from the Bible is not as

clear-cut on this issue as one might wish and requires the ongoing reflection of the church." And the second says, "the desire of the church to use all of the gifts of the Spirit given to all of its members should be an ongoing concern of the church."

The minority report on the hermeneutical principles recommended that "consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders." And their second recommendation is that the "offices of elder and minister not be opened to women" on the ground that there is no evidence in the Bible for opening the offices of elder and minister to women.

The Advisory Committee of Synod tried to present a recommendation that would be most in harmony with the report of the Study Committee. The reporter, Rev. Wilbert Van Dyke, observed that when the Advisory Committee first began working on the report, they were divided equally between those in favor of admitting women to the office of deacon, and those opposed. But the more they talked and discussed, the more unified they became, until at last they were able to come with a unified report. In seeking to prepare the delegates of Synod for their recommendation, the Advisory Committee made several "Observations." One of these was a paragraph dealing with the matter of "unity in diversity." The Committee states that some churches do not permit women to vote at congregational meetings; others do allow this. Yet both kinds of churches live together in unity within diversity. So, argues the Advisory Committee, we as a denomination can live together with this decision on women in ecclesiastical office. Each consistory has to decide the matter for its own congregation. (However the matter of women in ecclesiastical office is a different thing from allowing women to vote in a congregational meeting. The kind of unity expressed by the advisory committee is a unity that forces a position upon the church which a segment is convinced is contrary to Scripture. Such unity is a false unity.)

The recommendation of the Advisory Committee was "that consistories be permitted to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon as delineated in the Church Order, Article 25." This recommendation obviously was debated at great length. It was also debated before a packed gallery. Every seat in the Fine Arts Auditorium was taken. It was learned later that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had adjourned a session of its Synod to permit its delegates to hear our discussion on this issue.

The debate centered primarily on two issues. First there were several voices claiming that the recommendation did not go far enough. Rev. Jacob Kuntz of Classis Chatham spoke with enthusiasm for the recommendation, but urged the Synod to go beyond the report and open the offices of elder and minister to women. He argued very logically from the report on the nature of office as adopted by Synod in 1973, that the offices are one. There is no difference in authority or importance between the three offices of the Church Order. To be consistent, he said, if we open the office

of deacon to women, we must also open the other offices to women. And of course, he was right. The decision of Synod 1973 opened the door to the decision facing the church in Synod 1978. The nature of office was declared in 1973 to be primarily function, and since many women are already functioning as "deaconesses," there is no reason why they should not also be given the office of deacon. Most of the Canadian delegates also spoke strongly in favor of the recommendation.

On the other side of the issues, many speakers brought out the important matter of the authority of the deacons. The Committee referred to Article 25 of the Church Order, but Article 35 of the Church Order says that the consistory has charge of the government of the congregation, and the consistory is comprised of elders and deacons, together with the minister of the Word. But the issue of authority did not meet with much favor in the minds of the Advisory Committee or Study Committee. The point that was stressed again and again was that women and men are equal before God, and ought to be treated equally in the church. One delegate speaking against the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, told of a conversation he had had with a member of the PCA (Presbyterian Church in America), a church which recently had broken away from the liberal Presbyterian Church in the U.S. This man from the PCA said in response to the discussion on the matter of women in office, "Brother, that's why we left the mother church!"

Toward the end of the discussion, Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven, vice-president of Synod, spoke movingly for recommendation. He suggested that hermeneutical principles of interpreting the Scriptures call for an understanding of the continuing working of the Holy Spirit in the church. He referred to I Corinthians 11:2-14 which speaks of women in the church. There the apostle Paul says that women must have their heads covered when they are worshipping God. But, Kuyvenhoven said, the hermeneutical principles by which we interpret Scripture lead us to see that that rule was for a local situation and is no longer relevant among us today. The same understanding must be used to deal with the question of women in ecclesiastical office. We continue to be led by the Spirit. And the Holy Spirit leads us to see that the message of Scripture must be understood in a different way from the way in which we have always previously understood it. This argument regarding the working of the Holy Spirit came up again and again in various contexts during Synod. The fact that the Spirit gives gifts to women proves that they must therefore be ordained as deacons, elders, and ministers. Never mind that the Bible speaks clearly on this subject: the Holy Spirit leads us to new truths through the gifts that He gives, and through our ever new understanding of Scripture. Oh, the subjectivism of such logic! It will be the downfall of our church.

At last Synod was ready to vote. The roll was called and the chair announced that the recommendation carried by one vote! Pandemonium broke out in

the galleries. Someone remarked that it sounded like all the women there had just received a free trip to Hawaii on a game show. But alas! The vote was miscounted. An elder from Classis South asked for the floor and said that he had also been counting, and his count showed that the recommendation had lost by one vote. So the chairman asked for a recount. And sure enough! The elder was right. The recommendation had indeed lost by one vote.

But that did not end the matter. At once a motion was made to go to the minority report of the Study Committee. The minority report had recommended that consistories be permitted to ordain qualified women as deacons provided that their work be distinguished from that of elders. Now a motion was immediately made to approve that recommendation. But was that procedure legal according to the rules of Synod? The rules of Synod state that a motion is not acceptable if it is verbally or substantially the same as a motion already rejected by Synod. Many delegates believed that there was no substantial difference between the motion that was defeated, and the recommendation of the minority report. It was therefore brought to the chairman's attention that this new motion was out of order. But he ruled that it was in order, that it was substantially different from the motion already defeated. And his ruling was sustained in the face of the challenge.

The recommendation of the minority Study Committee was adopted by a vote of 87 to 64. Apparently the provision which was added to the minority recommendation persuaded the minds of some who had previously voted against the first motion.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, JUNE 21

This was not the end of the matter of women in ecclesiastical office. That evening Synod took up the appeal of the Church of the Servant regarding Mrs. Marchiene Rienstra, and her desire to be declared a candidate for the ministry. The Advisory Committee of Synod recommended that Synod "declare that the Board of Trustees acted properly when it decided that it could not permit Marchiene Rienstra to become a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church." The ground for this recommendation was Church Order Article 3.

The discussion regarding this recommendation brought out some very revealing insights into the thinking of the CRC in general, and the seminary professors in particular. Every delegate, for example, was given a document signed by Dr. Melvin Hugen, professor of Pastoral Theology at Calvin Seminary, in which he pleaded for Synod to "accede to the appeal of the Church of the Servant and present Marchiene Rienstra to the churches as a candidate for the ordained ministry." It would be enlightening, I think, to look briefly at this document prepared by Dr. Hugen in order to see how he reasons regarding this matter. His argument is based on the way God brought the early church to admit Gentiles into the Church of Jesus Christ. He claims that God is doing

the same thing today, and is calling the CRC to admit women into the gospel ministry. He says, "God has not left Himself without witness; He shows us how He changes the mind of His church concerning His Word. In the Acts of the Apostles there is a revelation that has immediate bearing on the question now facing us. Peter and the rest of the church believed that the covenant promise was for Israel and only for Israel. They had read the Scripture in no other way." Of course, this is patently false. It simply is not true that "they had read Scripture in no other way." The O.T. shows how the promises of God repeatedly are for Gentiles as well as Jews. The practice of the Church in "proselyte baptism" is an example of their understanding of that fact. Dr. Hugen is setting up a false premise for his argument.

He further shows how God led Peter and the N.T. Church to receive Gentiles into its number. "This is what God did: He confronted the church with a specific case that was contrary to its understanding of the Scriptures. He poured out His Spirit upon the uncircumcised Gentile, Cornelius, and upon his household (Acts 10); Peter knew well that the gift of the Spirit meant that they also were included in the covenant." He goes on to say, "Without question such gifts [the gifts of ministry] are gifts of the Spirit, and without question they are given for ministry (I Cor. 12, Rom. 1:3-8, and Eph. 4:11-16)." Dr. Hugen assumes too much here. "Without question," he says. How does he know this is "without question"?

Thus the logic of Dr. Hugen is that the Holy Spirit is leading the Church beyond Scripture. Whereas the Bible clearly speaks of the authority of the man over the women, an authority rooted in creation and in the fall (I Tim. 2), Dr. Hugen says that the Holy Spirit is leading us to this new understanding of Scripture? We know this by the fact that He has given the gifts of ministry to such a woman as Mrs. Marchiene Rienstra.

Dr. Hugen was not alone in coming out so boldly in favor of the appeal of the Church of the Servant. The president of the seminary, Dr. John Kromminga, also spoke of his fervent desire that the church would very soon open the office of the ministry of the Word to women. It is amazing that two men from our seminary should come out so openly and forthrightly for a position which is so clearly opposed by Scripture on the ground of that woman is not to have authority over a man, and that she is to be in submission to him.

When the vote was called on the appeal of the Church of the Servant, Synod ruled not to accede to that appeal. For the time being Mrs. Rienstra is not a candidate.

The dance issue was up before Synod that night once again. The Board of Trustees had been bombarded with negative reaction to their decision to allow social dancing at Calvin College. Several Overtures and communications were addressed to Synod, urging Synod to instruct Calvin College not to implement this decision on dancing. The Advisory Committee of Synod recommended "that Synod appoint a

study committee whose mandate shall be to study the matter of the dance in the light of Scripture, including the question whether and in what way the dance is a cultural area which is to be brought under the Lordship of Christ, making use, where appropriate, of the Film Arts Report of 1966 and of Overture No. 1 of Classis Hamilton to Synod of 1971; and the Report on Worldly Amusements of 1928 and 1951; and to submit guidelines and recommendations to the Synod of 1980." The Advisory Committee also asked Synod to "instruct the Board of Trustees to withhold implementation of its position on the matter of the dance until Synod shall have taken action on the study report." This recommendation was adopted by Synod.

THURSDAY, JUNE 22

The last day of Synod saw a very lengthy debate on the appeal of Rev. Rodney Westveer against Classis Zeeland. Classis Zeeland had deposed him on ground of his unbiblical divorce. The Synodical Deputies did not concur with Classis Zeeland in its decision because of insufficient evidence. So the matter was brought to Synod. Rev. Westveer appealed to the Judicial Code Committee, and thus became the first case brought before Synod by way of the Judicial Code. It was however, a very unsatisfactory experience because the Judicial Code Committee was divided in its recommendations. The result was the appointment of a Pastoral Concern Committee to deal with Rev. Westveer and the Classis regarding the matter of his divorce.

The last major issue before Synod was the change to be made in the Church Order now that consistories will be permitted to ordain women to the office of deacon. The Church Order Article 3 states, "Confessing male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements for office-bearers are eligible for office." Obviously this must be changed now that women may be ordained to the office of deacon.

One of the most amazing things about the government of the CRC is that the Church Order can be changed right there on the floor of Synod. I spoke with one of the officers of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church which was holding its Synod at Calvin College too. He said in regard to the decision to permit women to be ordained as deacons, "But surely the churches must ratify this decision! You cannot just change the Church Order like that, can you?" But the amazing fact is that Synod can indeed change the Church Order "just like that." So the Advisory Committee came with its proposed change: "Article 3: a. Confessing male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the offices of ministry and elder. b. All confessing members of the church who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the office of deacon. c. Only those who have been officially called and ordained or installed shall hold and exercise office in the church."

But the Church Order says something else about such substantial changes. Several of the delegates immediately reminded the chairman of Synod that

Article 47 says, "No substantial alterations shall be effected by Synod in these matters unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes."

These delegates moved to refer the entire matter of women as deacons to the churches for such consideration until Synod next year has an opportunity to review the response of the church. But the chairman of Synod ruled that the churches do not have the right to change the decision which was adopted yesterday. They may speak and respond only to the wording of the change as it would appear in the Church Order, but not on the substance of the change.

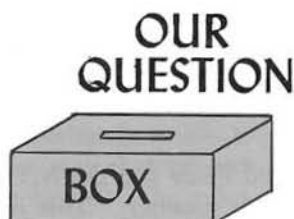
An elder delegate obviously pleased with yesterday's decision then accused those who were appealing to Article 47 of dishonesty and dishonorable behavior. He said that those who were seeking to bring the matter to the churches' attention were merely attempting to change the decision that Synod had made. It was indeed an unfortunate accusation. At any rate, the decision was made by Synod to send the matter of the Church Order change to the churches, but only as it concerned the wording of the change.

OBSERVATIONS

So ended the Synod 1978. I began by observing that Synod 1978 could be called a "house divided." I believe that is an accurate description. The matters of such importance as women in ecclesiastical office and the candidacy of Mrs. Rienstra were not just minor differences of opinion. The authority of Scripture is at stake in these issues. The division of Synod over these issues was a deep division. I am personally convinced that the question of women elders and women ministers is just a short time away for the CRC. With our position regarding the Church Order and the ease with which changes can be made in it, we will have women elders and ministers before such a denomination as the Reformed Church in America.

Another thing that I observed was the way in which the Bible was sometimes used in the devotions before the session of Synod. At crucial times during the debates, when Synod recessed for noon lunch, and then began with devotions before the afternoon session, those who led in Scripture reading sometimes chose passages which seemed to promote their particular position. In my opinion, this was a poor use of Scripture, and should be discouraged at any time, but especially during the heat of discussion at a Synodical session.

One final observation: It has been observed in the past that Canada strongly influences the CRC. This was certainly evident at Synod 1978. As has been stated above, the majority of Canadian delegates were strongly in favor of the ordination of women to the office of deacons, as well as of the candidacy of Mrs. Rienstra. One cannot help but wonder where this heavy influence of Canadian churches is leading us. I cannot help feeling that the direction to which they are leading is not a good one. Time alone will decide. ●



REV. HARLAN G. VANDEN EINDE

Rev. Harlan G. Vanden Einde is pastor of the Oakdale Park Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan. All questions for this department are to be sent directly to his address:

Rev. Harlan G. Vanden Einde
1000 Hancock, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

This department is *for everyone*. No signatures are required and no names will be published. Your questions will be gladly received and answered as promptly as possible.

From a Canadian reader comes a question which concerns the "infallibility of the Bible. When we talk about this and think about the many translations and the reader states further that he dislikes the grammar paraphrased books on the Bible one comes to ask this question: 'which Bible do we have in mind?'" Though the reader states further that he dislikes the grammar of the King James Version, he does admire this translation most of all.

Much has been written on this subject recently, undoubtedly because of its great import and significance. Where we stand with regard to the Scriptures will surely determine where we stand in regard to every issue that faces us. So I can deeply appreciate your question and your concern about the Bible.

I believe with all my heart that the Bible, as originally inspired by the Holy Spirit, is totally trustworthy and dependable in all matters. It is infallible and inerrant, as our Lord testifies in John 10:35, "the scripture cannot be broken."

When I say that, of course, I am talking about the original writings, commonly called the "autographa." God inspired these men to speak and write so that everything they said and wrote was without error or contradiction. But we do not have these original manuscripts in hand any more today. We have countless copies of these manuscripts, but not the originals themselves. And here the problem lies. Did God inspire the copyists in the same way as the original writers? Dr. E. J. Young, in his book *Thy Word Is Truth*, writes in respect to this (p. 55): "If the Scripture is 'God-breathed,' it naturally follows that only the original is 'God-breathed.' If holy men of God spoke from God as they were borne by the Holy Spirit, then only what they spoke under the Spirit's bearing is inspired. It would certainly be unwarranted to maintain that copies of what they spoke were also inspired, since these copies were not made, as men were borne of the Spirit."

It is not impossible, therefore, that some of these copies have errors. If you were to copy a dozen pages out of your English Bible, you would likely discover, after reading and carefully checking your work a second time, that you had made some errors in copying. That would not mean there are mistakes in the Bible, but merely that there are some mistakes in what you had written out.

Can we say then that these copies are the inspired Word of God? To the extent that they are faithful to the original, the translations are the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God. And if that sounds like a loophole which permits anyone to say that the Bible is full of errors, let me hasten to add that I believe we have translations today which are very accurate and remarkably true to the original manuscripts. But there are some obvious differences in the translations which do not permit us to say that they are all right at the same time. If you will look up John 5:4, Matthew 23:14, Mark 11:26, Luke 17:36 and Luke 23:17 in the American Standard Version, the Revised Standard Version, and the New International Version, you will likely be frustrated, for you won't find them. They are, however, in the King James Version. Without getting into the debate as to which version(s) is correct, the point is, they both (the KJ and the other versions) cannot be correct at the same time.

Translators of the Bible do have a very important and weighty responsibility. I appreciate very much the words of Dr. E. Palmer in an article which he wrote in the November 11, 1977 issue of *The Banner*. He wrote: "All of us who work on the New International Version believe the Bible is the infallible, inspired Word of God in the autographa. We begin each day asking the Holy Spirit to assist us in the translation. But this kind of assistance is not the equivalent of the original inspiration. We do not pray for a new revelation. The Holy Spirit does not come on us in such a way that we are just as good as Moses, Zephaniah and James. God inspired His Word once

and for all. It is finished. But now we ask that God will illumine our minds and grant us the right choice of words, so we will be as idiomatic as possible, and yet so that we will not depart from the meaning of the original. Then we begin to argue vociferously as to the best translation. In the course of the argumentation, the opinion of some of the translators will change, and finally a decision will be made. There is by no means one hundred percent agreement as to the translation; many times five may vote for a proposal and four against. And maybe the next day even that vote will be reversed.

"No, we are not infallible. And we may make mistakes, even though we ask the Holy Spirit to lead us and even though we have a large number of translators, all of whom are true Christians and scholars."

Dr. Young, to whose book I referred earlier, gives a very meaningful and helpful illustration of this matter on page 57: "Suppose that a school teacher writes a letter to the President of the United States. To her great joy she receives a personal reply. It is a treasure which she must share with her pupils and so she dictates the letter to them. They are in the early days of their schooling, and spelling is not yet one of their strong points. In his copy of the letter Johnny has misspelled a few words. Mary has forgotten to cross her t's and to dot her i's. Billy has written one or two words twice, and Peter has omitted a word now and then. Nevertheless, despite all these flaws about thirty copies of the President's letter have been made. Unfortunately, the teacher misplaces the original and cannot find it. To her great sorrow it is gone. She does not have the copy which came directly from the President's pen; she must be content with those that the children have made.

"Will anyone deny that she has the words of the President? Does she not have his message, in just those words in which he wrote it to her? True enough, there are some minor mistakes in the letters, but the teacher may engage in the science of textual criticism and correct them. She may correct the misspelled words, and she may write in those words which have been omitted and cross out those which are superfluous. Without any serious difficulty she may indeed restore the original."

So it is with the Bible. We are sorry that we do not have the originals. But from the many copies that we have, we are able to restore the original to a very, very close approximation of what it was, and confidently say we have God's Word to us.

In conclusion, let me say that God, in His good providence, has preserved His Word to us in a most remarkable way. The parts of which we are unsure are few, and their subject matter is quite insignificant. If you read His Word with a prayer for the Spirit's guidance, you will be blessed and enriched. Continue to pray too for those who are involved in the work of translation.

Immunity

SHIRLEY W. MADANY

Laurie Vanden Heuvel (Mrs. Thomas Vanden Heuvel) has consented to replace Miss Johanna Timmer as editor of "Reformed Women Speak." We welcome her as new editor of this department. Copy for this department should be sent to:

MRS. LAURIE VANDEN HEUVEL
6159 Riverside Dr.
Chino, CA 91710

When it comes to health and communicable diseases we are all agreed that it is important to have immunity. Thanks to public health care, measles and chicken pox just aren't what they used to be. But this past winter the Russian flu hit our high schools exactly as predicted, because the population under 25 years of age did not have immunity to that type of flu.

How much thought do we give to the building up of our own and our children's spiritual immunity to such sicknesses as wrong doctrine, apathy or false religions?

There is a classic example of the need for such immunity in the history of a once-thriving Christian population which completely disappeared. This was the community which produced the church father, Augustine in North Africa. The epidemic which totally destroyed every vestige of Christianity, was not biological; rather it was spiritual. It was Islam. And Church historians diagnose that probably the Christians there were already in a weakened state from heresies, when Islam swept across their country.

Perhaps we should look at our present-day situation then with more feeling of concern. We know that already our days are being referred to as "post-Christian." Observing that the Christianity that once flourished in Tunisia is now relegated to ruins and museums, we don't want that to happen to us.

These are challenging times for Christian families. How can we survive the epidemics that may come, if we are weakened by our pagan environment?

Television brings unwelcome people, situations and events into Christian homes. Thoughtful writers are making us aware of the manipulative power of this magic box.

Mrs. Madany is the wife of our Back-to-God Hour minister who brings the Word of God in Arabic to the Moslem world.

Movies have progressed (or regressed) to being art forms guided by philosophies which break down the Christian life.

Permissive words and pervasive sound batters the ear when you want to shop with your teen-agers.

The other day I heard the owner of a "school for begging," in New York city, being interviewed on the radio and he blatantly stated that "after all we are living in the age of the permissible lie." His job was to train well-educated people to artfully "steal," by creating fake situations which would prompt a hand-out.

A few years ago who could have imagined discussing abortion around the family dinner table? We wonder if there is enough denunciation of the sins of fornication, adultery and selfishness, which often precede the conception of the "unwanted child!" Strangely, a Christian newspaper carried a news item about the rights of the father in this matter of abortion; but it turned out that the "father" in question was merely an irate "boyfriend"!

Can we really build up an immunity to such an array of germs?

Meanwhile, there is an epidemic approaching the Christian west which is the same as that which spread across North Africa 1300 years ago. Islam is on the march again. World conquest is a natural part of the Islamic thrust. Already it is the third religion in many European countries. In France it is the second. Mosques and cultural centers are appearing everywhere. Not everyone realizes that with Islam the church is the state and the state is the church.

You say, "Who would ever be attracted to that religion? We're safe here. Let's not worry about something far fetched." But are you? Remember what happened to the North African churches? They probably thought they were safe too.

Perhaps in the immediate future we should find out more about the Islamic religion and its 600 million adherents. Perhaps our schools could spend a little more time on that section of their studies, including the geography and history of Muslim lands. Think of the empty churches of Britain and the sudden influx of Muslim immigrants. Who could have imagined mosques in Britain?

Most important for our immunity will be our determination to seek the Lord for strength to live consistent Christian lives. How we need to "put on the whole armor of God!" When a church loses its zeal for the truth, the signs of weakening show first in the lives of its people. What must a Muslim immigrant think of our nation's Christianity? Our lives have to exhibit an obedience to the Word of God. We will have to take a stand against all the ways in which the pagan world batters at our family door. Our actions should demonstrate a deep reverence for God and a desire for sanctification.

It is possible, with the help of God, to live healthy Christian lives in the midst of a sick society. ●

another perspective

JOHN J. BYKER

How often the name Watergate has been used since 1973, would be impossible to estimate. It would be difficult to find people who are unaware of something that the name represents. It has been widely treated as the epitome of evil. The catalog of writings on the subject would be enormous.

Now, however, there has appeared a book which is unlike any other written on the subject, a book that is eminently worth reading. It may open the reader's eyes to a new appreciation of the declaration of Scripture that evil resides in the heart of man.

As the drama of Watergate unfolded, there were those, myself included, for whom the real and whole story waited to be told. We were confident that whatever this crime might be, Richard Nixon was being cut down by men of the press. The former president was classed among the lowest criminals. He has been compared with a drop of rotten blood which is extracted from the patient to assist in diagnosing his health, the patient in this case being society.

History, however, has a way of revealing its own perspective. A new viewpoint is taken in the newly published book, *It Didn't Begin With Watergate*, by Victor Lasky. Mr. Lasky, while not exonerating Nixon, puts Watergate in a new perspective. He demonstrates that the "crimes" which brought about the resignation of the President were practiced in equal measure, and in most cases more voraciously, by his predecessors. In fact, Lasky's documentation reveals that Nixon was least culpable of those who have held office, going back to and including Franklin D. Roosevelt (with Harry Truman being a possible exception). The reader will be forced to evaluate his own standard of judgment when reading *It Didn't Begin With Watergate*. To read this documented novel and condemn the ex-president makes as much sense as "asking the Chicago gangsters to investigate the Chicago Police."

Many illustrious names of the past and present are paraded before the reader in the 448 pages of this book. FDR's and all subsequent presidents' records are opened up. Besides them you will meet Bobby F. Kennedy, Martin L. King, J. Edgar Hoover, Katzenbach, John Dean, Doar, Califano, Ervin, Weicker, Cox, Sirica, Rebozo, Colson, Humphrey, Baker, Hays, Mills, Mitchell, Reynolds and a host of others who are revealed as less than paragons of virtue. Although the men surrounding Nixon are also portrayed as men of

low caliber, they do not come off worse than those who worked with their chief executives. All of which leads William Safire, author of *Full Disclosure* to comment:

The first carefully researched blast of criticism at the fusion of the hysteria that gripped this nation in 1973 and 1974 . . . Mr. Lasky may have intended to write a rock-'em, sock-'em everybody-did-it defense of Mr. Nixon, but the import of this book is more profound. . . . Lasky's blockbuster . . . is not like any book on the Watergate shelf.

and the *New York Daily News* to say:

"No defense of the idiocies or misdeed of Watergate, or even Nixon himself. . . . Lasky's book is about the primary export of this capital city - Hypocrisy . . . eminently readable."

I personally doubt that this novel will get the attention it deserves. Nor do I expect a re-examination and re-evaluation of the sordid history of 1973-74. I do assume, however, that the fair-minded church editors and others will make some sort of evaluation of the Watergate events and their total perspective for the benefit of the reader and for the record of history. Surely, we may expect that the episode of the nation's history of 1973-74 will now be seen in a larger perspective.

To have said all the above about this recent publication will be of little use if we only intend to say "See, I told you so," or "Look at the abiding corruption in the very highest echelon of our government, including the misdeed of Nixon." If the author is right, Nixon was no worse and perhaps of higher moral character than some of his predecessors and investigators.

There are, however, three things to be seriously considered and which make this book worthwhile. The Watergate story and its climax has weakened the office of the presidency, as we clearly see today. No president can now forget that he governs in the shadow of the fourth estate, and what the men of the powerful press are able to do and demand. The second lesson which makes this book valuable is its exposure of the degree to which we are brainwashed, influenced and ruled by many unprincipled men from whom we receive our information and who hold office. And finally, the same unprincipled men continue to direct the affairs of government on the pathway of surrender which we witness at present. To summarize, in its broadest terms, the book exposes the rotten fruit of the relativism we have been taught.

I would encourage and urge all those who would like to get a fair look at the facts and story behind the scenes to read this book. History can not be changed, but perhaps if we made ourselves aware of something of the total perspective we would be better able to assess and evaluate, and, perhaps, influence the course of events. For the small sum of \$2.25 you can have this information. ●

THE GOSPEL GIVEN TO NAAMAN



REV. JOHN BLANKESPOOR

Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.
II Kings 5:14

People must know that there is a prophet of God in Israel. That's what we read here. Israel must know this, Naaman must know this, the world must know this. This prophet as a type of Jesus Christ, has the Word of the living God and therefore life itself. And what good news it is!

Naaman is the great general of the Syrian army. Very likely a five-star general, a great man in the eyes of that part of the world. But he was a leper. Leprosy is and was a dreaded disease. Surely in that day there was no cure. Often the bodies would literally rot away. A clear picture or symbol it is of sin. For lepers and sinners there is no hope, as far as man is concerned. It's exactly this that the Heidelberg catechism emphasizes in its first part. This dreaded disease is no respecter of persons, no more than sin is. Naaman likely considered himself to be a V.I.P. who happened to have leprosy. But God says to Naaman that he is no different from the rest of mankind, a helplessly lost sinner who happens to be a general. With this he is greatly humiliated. It surely must have been a real worry and burden for him. But who wants to admit that he's a lost sinner?

But God will humiliate him still more. He must go, if he will follow the advice of the slave girl, to the king of Israel. And ask for advice of this great enemy. Remember, likely it was Naaman who fought against Ahab, when he was mortally wounded and when Israel was defeated. They had been enemies for years. And now, as the conqueror, must he consult the conquered?! But he goes. Later Naaman is told to go to the house of Elisha, the prophet, who has the Word of the Lord.

Rev. John Blankespoor is pastor of the Pine Creek Christian Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan.

Visualize this event. There comes Naaman with a "train" of horsemen, chariots and wagons. I just imagine that all the children of Jericho came out to see this, gawking and wondering what this was all about. Surely this didn't happen every day. And the train stops in front of the humble home of the prophet Elisha. Naaman expects the prophet to come out, greet him and respect him. After all, isn't he the great general from the victorious Syrians. Surely this prophet would give him the red carpet treatment. Instead, he doesn't even see the prophet, only his servant. And "all" the servant gives him is some simple instructions, to wash himself in the Jordan River seven times. What humiliation! But this is what God always does with sinners, also with Christians when they live in sin. Sooner or later we will experience that.

* * * * *

Elisha has a "second point" in his sermon to the great Syrian. This: he must live in simple faith and trust in the Word of God. He must go and wash himself in the Jordan River. Nothing must distract Naaman from listening to this word. He expected Elisha to come out and give him much attention and the magical treatment, by waving his hand over the affected part of his body, or something like that and so heal him hopefully. But nothing of the kind. He doesn't even see the prophet. No, God doesn't want anything to embellish the simple word of the Gospel, not even the person of the prophet. All Naaman must learn and remember, so that it echoes in his ears, is the word of the prophet: wash yourself in the Jordan River seven times.

But what foolishness, what nonsense! Isn't the Jordan River dirty and muddy?! It's almost pure mud down there by Jericho. Everybody who has seen it knows that. In anger Naaman leaves and will go home. How his future, yes his eternal future, from our viewpoint, "hangs on a thread." It is one of his servants who prevails upon him to listen to the word of the prophet.

Isn't this symbolical of the way of the cross? Isn't this always foolishness to the natural man, according to Paul centuries later, that sins are washed away through blood? The natural mind does not discern the things of the Spirit. But God doesn't ask us to understand and discern. He wants us to have simple faith in His Word, also the Word of the cross.

Trust and obey, for there is no other way. This the Lord wants us to do with all of His words to us.

And blessed are those who do listen and obey. Naaman went to the Jordan. Likely all those with him were his audience, wondering what was going to happen. Or did they perhaps silently ridicule their master? I can also imagine that after he had "ducked" under three or four times he looked at the leprous part of his body, only to see no change. But he obeyed, that's the important thing. Seven times he dipped himself. Why seven times? Why not six or eight times? Why did Elijah, the predecessor of

Elisha, send his servant to look at the sky seven times? There's one answer to these questions that comes out loudly and clearly. Seven is the number of the covenant, of God's faithfulness in Christ. His Word is dependable and sure, always. He keeps His promise. And Naaman learned with his obedience of faith that God did keep His promise, that when he would wash himself seven times he would be clean and healed. And he was.

The Bible is full of that number seven. From cover to cover it speaks of God's faithfulness. He is the Jehovah of the church, the body of believers. Believers must always believe that Word, and trust in those promises. God keeps His Word, always. His ways of salvation itself and the way He leads us in life often are in the dark. They often just don't make any sense to us. In fact we are almost convinced they are wrong. But He wants us to believe His promises. Believe, believe, believe Me, He constantly says to us. And no one who does is ever disappointed, but instead receives incredible blessings. . . . Look at the simple faith of this "heathen" Naaman.

* * * * *

Elisha has "three points" in his "sermon" to Naaman. The third one is that this miraculous healing is free of charge. It is for nothing. Who has ever heard of something like this? The thought is completely foreign to all of Naaman's concept of religion. To this day it is foreign to all religions except the one true religion of the Bible.

Naaman is ready and eager to pay Elisha liberally. Likely the amount offered was in excess of two hundred thousand dollars. And poor Elisha (most prophets were poor) surely could use it. But O no! Listen to what he says, "Is this a time to receive money and to receive garments and olive-yards and vine-yards, and sheep and oxen and men-sevants and maid-servants?" Of course not. Not when one preaches the Gospel of free grace to lost sinners. Naaman literally begs the prophet to accept at least something, a little bit. But nothing doing. And when he has returned to his home country and people ask him, what did it cost you, they must know that it was for nothing. Who ever heard of such gifts for nothing! So they must learn that there is a God of salvation by free grace in Israel. This we must all learn. Can you imagine yourself going to the grocery store and having bought a large order, the clerk would give you all of it for nothing? Can you imagine someone buying a new car of some \$6,000.00 and in turn the dealer would make it a present? Such things just don't happen. Not with us, but they do with God. Ever more must it register with us that eternal salvation is for nothing, by grace, elective grace alone. And it remains that way. We keep it only because His grace abides forever, because of His everlasting mercies and abiding love. That's the kind of God we have.

* * * * *

But the Lord also tells us, very clearly here, that we must not spoil or distort this precious truth. This

is what Gehazi did. And what punishment he received! He just couldn't resist the temptation. By lying to Naaman and Elisha he would get some of those gifts of Naaman for himself. The punishment seems to be so severe, he and his descendants would be leprous in all ages to come. Why so severe? God doesn't want man to tamper with this truth, or distort it in any way. This is done doctrinally when we deny the total depravity of the sinner, or with the Pharisees believe in work-righteousness. Practically we deny it when we fail to give God the credit. People who truly know this glorious truth of salvation by grace alone should always be humble and dedicated to the Lord. How they should love the Lord! And never be proud or boastful!

The first shall be last and the last first. Naaman the Syrian (a heathen) will be in heaven, some or many of the church will not be there. Why? Because they really don't know what this blessed truth means, a poor sinner saved by such a rich Savior. Heaven will never quit singing about it. ●

A LAND

*without
laughter*

EDWIN H. PALMER

We were on a trolley in Prague, going to the house of Vladimír,* a Czechoslovakian whom we had casually met at the site where the Nazis had murdered some Czech resistance fighters. As we passed the drab buildings, he said to us in German: "A land without laughter." This summed up what we felt from the moment we went behind the Iron Curtain to the moment we re-entered Free Germany. No joy. No laughter. No lights. No frills. "Ein land ohne lachen."

To see a different Europe from that of the free world, my wife, one of our sons and I decided to spend eight days in a Communist country. We rented a car and traveled in a counter-clockwise fashion from

Dr. Edwin H. Palmer is the Executive Secretary of the New International Bible sponsored by the New York Bible Society International.

*Vladimír is not his real name.

august, 1978 / thirteen

West Germany, to southern Bohemia and Moravia, north and west again to Prague.

The first town we came to — Domazlice — was typical of much of Czechoslovakia. It has the makings for a fascinating tourist visit: colorful, old, Baroque houses, all joined together, surrounding a lengthy, open, town square. The buildings were of pastels, several having striking designs that we were to find again and again in the country. In the center was a 13th-century stone tower, from which a good perspective of the town could be had.

It had the makings — I say — of an attractive area, but it was not that attractive now. Paint was peeling, stucco falling, cobblestones were loose, on the side street grays dominated. The store windows were drab and unenticing.

My notes state: “Deserted. No cars. No people in the streets.” This typified much of Czechoslovakia: Deadness. Instead of lovers strolling in the streets, hand in hand, crowds milling around as they window-shopped, street vendors hawking their wares, cars honking their horns, the smell of bratwurst in the air — instead of all these signs of life, there was a quietness that reminded the visitors of a western ghost town. The buildings were there, and the ever-present soldier was visible, but where were all the fun-loving people on a Saturday afternoon?

My impression was that Communism had no time for the unnecessary and varied frills of the western world that make life so much fun, but that it tried to meet the essential needs of the people, and it has not even succeeded in doing that.

Now it is true that there are touches of elegance — but they are only touches. Prague can boast of a fine — if modest — art museum, with the paintings tastefully displayed. But right there was the sign of a land without laughter. For in this museum in Czechoslovakia’s largest city, I met only seven visitors in an hour’s visit on a Friday afternoon! There were no throngs rushing to enjoy the splendid Rubens or Rembrandts or Breughels. It was as if Communism felt it had to put on a show of loving art but didn’t dare to let loose to enjoy it.

And it is true that the gloriously situated and magnificently built castle of Karlstejn has been restored and that trumpeters sound their medieval horns to begin the tours, lending a delightful and unnecessary touch to the atmosphere of this medieval bastion. And it is true that some of the towns are beginning to be restored to their original beauty.

But these are only a few examples of elegance in a generally drab, dull land. Here are some concrete examples of the unimaginative, no-time-for-frills Communist mentality:

1. There were no finely-manicured lawns. In the Netherlands, Belgium and Scotland, for example, even in very modest homes there is an obvious pride in the

appearance of the gardens. Lawns are cut and edged, hedges trimmed, and flowers bloom profusely. To the American, who is not unaccustomed to fine things, home after home is simply elegantly surrounded by beautiful gardens. But in our eight days in Czechoslovakia, we saw only three areas (public or private) that had even a mowed lawn! It was as if the government thought that the lawn mower was an invention of the bourgeoisie and therefore evil. Public squares, through which many people pass, have monuments and fountains created in the pre-Communist era, but even here in these most obvious places of all, the Communists have no time for such niceties. New apartment buildings were surrounded by scraggly grass instead of closely clipped lawns and trimmed bushes. The Communists are proud of ten state-owned combines working productively in one wheat field at a time, but apparently the lawn mower is an unnecessary luxury that the hard worker should disdain.

Lidice is a good example of the lack of imagination and lack of a desire for beauty. Lidice is the town that Hitler vowed to so destroy that the world would remember it no more. This was in reprisal for the assassination of his ruthless aide, Heydrich. He succeeded in leveling it to the ground, but its memory will live forever — in the free world as well as in Czechoslovakia. The Communist built a new town next to it, but made the old site a memorial park. It might be thought that the memorial is an unnecessary luxury, but it fits in well with the ever-continuing Communistic exploitation of anti-Nazi feeling. But right here, where they could have made a beautiful park as the Americans have with their huge war cemeteries, they have allowed the lawns to become weeds and hay. And even after some fifty countries had given rosebushes for a garden, they have failed to keep the garden up. This lack of mowed lawns is a minor matter, but it accurately reflects the joylessness of Communistic Czechoslovakia.

2. Another evidence of the drabness of the land is seen in its buildings. Although some are repainted and are attractive, the general impression one receives is that of unkemptness. Cement or stucco facing is tumbling down and not being fixed. Grays predominate. There is little variation from the uniform cement exteriors — no wood or brick. “Unkempt” was the word that came to mind again and again.

In downtown Prague the visitor is overwhelmed with the scaffolding. It is everywhere — on the main streets, the beautiful streets, and the side ones. Sidewalks become tunnels through a maze of scaffolding footings. The impression is that much beautifying is going on, but on closer inspection, one soon finds that the rusty scaffolding has been there for months and that there are very few workmen using it. It is so old that if the Communists are not careful, they will need new scaffolding to repair the old scaffolding! Outside of Prague we saw no attractive homes, like those in the Austrian or Swiss Alps or the German or Dutch villages and towns.

3. Store windows were another example of the dullness of the land. In downtown Prague on its main street there were a few store windows tastefully dressed. But the norm of the land is dullness. First of all, the decor is not that appealing. Since the stores are all state owned and operated, there is no competition to outdo the windows next door and take the trade away from that merchant. A few feeble attempts are made to display the wares attractively, but they lack the extravaganza of a Jordan Marsh window vigorously competing with Filene's or Stern's in order to woo the customer's kroner. After all, the state is going to get the few kroner that the Czechs have anyway, whether they go to state-store A or state-store B.

Second, the content of the stores was pathetic — even of the grocery stores — No great multiplicity of soaps, canned vegetables, soups, macaroni, pickles — you name it. Dresses, suitcoats, ties and shoes — yes. But no overwhelming variety to entice every caprice of the customer. As for many products, such as cars, you take what you can get — if you can get it — and that is the coughing Skoda. And if you should happen to like to sweeten your bread with jam, you had better make it yourself, for we never did find any in all the stores in which we shopped.

We tried to find something distinctively Czechoslovakian to take home as a remembrance, but our options were limited. In nearby Austria, we can find all kinds of woodcarving, for example, the pride of the individual woodworker. But in Czechoslovakia the nearest we could come to that was the glassware and china. And that was made with a monotonous uniformity in a state-owned factory, so that we found the same items in the stores all over the country. Again, no individualistic pride in the work of one's hands.

The only souvenir we did secure — outside of a watercolor of Prague's charming Charles Bridge — was a two-and-a-half-foot long street broom made of small branches with many twigs and without a handle. The caretaker of an ancient church gave it to us when we admired it, and I treasure it highly.

4. A fourth evidence of a land of grays and blacks was the poor illumination on the streets. As twilight approaches the streets grow darker and darker but the lights do not come on — until it is very dark, and even then the lighting is most modest. If the fountains are playing — which is apparently a bourgeoisie frivolity, for we saw few of them running — they are not lit. The store windows were darkened, so that any modest display of state goods could not be seen. And so, walking down the streets of Susice was a depressing experience. The one light that did dominate in this town was the big Red Star that peered down on the strollers everywhere in the square reminding them of the presence of Big Brother. I was glad to get out of sight of the big red eye and get back to my hotel room that was fixed up attractively

for western tourists. At least there we could have the joy of reading up in our guide books and plan for the next day.

In Prague, instead of lights playing in the old town square or on monuments or fountains or bridges or cathedrals, darkness reigned, and the park benches were empty.

5. Prague is one of the great and beautiful cities of the world. It has history, medieval towers and buildings, one of Europe's greatest Gothic cathedrals, monuments, old town squares, a river with bridges, including the charming Charles Bridge, museums and a pleasant shopping area if the scaffolding is ever removed.

But its beauty is clouded over. There is not much litter in the streets (maybe because they have so little with which to litter), but it is one of the dirtiest cities we've encountered. Trucks pour out clouds of fumes, and after one truck passed by, my wife's vanilla ice cream cone was covered with flecks from the dirty streets. The cobblestone streets are most uneven, and for the first time in my life I saw trolley tracks that were bent because of the rough road. Buildings need to be patched and painted, the fountains turned on and the lights lit to help restore some of the quality of life that rightly belongs to this charming city.

6. A final evidence of the land's drabness is the lack of material luxuries. Now material things do not make a nation great or happy or strong. Witness the civilization of ancient Greece, which was poor in comparison with twentieth century standards and yet had one of the greatest spirits of all civilizations. And consider some modern countries, such as Spain and Italy, that have a standard of living several cuts below the American standards, and yet have a love of life. But the unnecessary Communistic poverty makes a drab life even drabber.

Our friend Vladimir, for example, lives in a single room in Prague! Here is a 57-year-old man whose wife is working, and yet they are able to afford only one room, eighteen by eighteen. In one corner was a bed with a sagging mattress where the mother, father, and 12-year old boy slept! In the opposite corner stood a small stove. A table was in the center with four straight-back chairs. Apart from two easy chairs, another small table and an eight-foot clothes-linen closet, there was nothing else in this crowded state-owned room. A narrow bathroom contained a hot water heater, a toilet, bathtub and very small sink. This is the joy of a Communistic regime, the reward to two of its laborers, who were in the upper years of their productive lives. If, however, they had been faithful party members, they probably could have obtained better quarters.

Another sign of the material failure of materialistic Communism is the long lines of customers waiting to

buy consumer products. When we were there, watermelons were coming in, and in several towns we saw twenty- or thirty-minute lines to get one small, round watermelon. It would not be right to overemphasize the lines, but they were frequent, and as Vladimir said, it reminded him of the war. At one gasoline line we were car number twenty and there was only one man operating the pumps. Typical inefficiency.

Cars are scarce in Czechoslovakia — so much so that we were always able to park our car directly in front of our hotels, whether in the towns or in Prague. Coming to Prague on a Thursday afternoon at 5:30 p.m. on a major route, about a half hour from the city, we encountered only forty passenger cars in a half hour over a space of thirty-one kilometers — a little more than one per kilometer! In Brno, the second largest city in Czechoslovakia, in the middle of the afternoon, we could stand at one of its busy shopping centers and not see a car moving. In the smaller towns, at the very heart of town, at morning, noon or night, cars were a rarity.

Strikingly, there were few bicycles. Rather, people were seen walking on lonely highways far from any houses.

One final touch of materialistic failure — or was it fear of exposure to the west? — telephoning to another country. At the Belgium Bible Institute I made three direct dial calls to America at an incredibly low cost. But our breakfast company at a Prague hotel — an Italian engineer — told of his attempt to make a call to a place outside Czechoslovakia and how he had to make an appointment for the following day after he had told the authorities whom he wanted to call.

Some have thought that the poverty of Czechoslovakia is due to the war. But not so! Germany was ravaged, and Czechoslovakia hardly knew what devastation was. Yet Free Germany has risen to an astonishingly high level of prosperity.

But more than these material deprivations takes away the joy in this land. The basic and fundamental cause is the repression of Communism — the denial of basic liberties.

There is always the fear of the authorities. We asked a caretaker in an historic church in the countryside about Catholic schools. He said that parents had the right to ask permission to have their children catechized one hour a week. "But how about regular Catholic day schools?" At this he choked up and said they were not permitted. And we did not press our questions any further.

I couldn't help thinking that although American parents have the freedom to send their children to non-state schools, we are about the only country in the free world that sets up state schools, makes all people pay for them, and then requires those who do not want a secularistic education to pay hundreds of dollars extra for a God-centered education. In spite

of our vaunted freedom, we have moved away from our historic moorings, where parents who wanted a Christ-centered education were not required to pay twice for it, and we have given financial preference to the religiously secularistic state schools.

The lack of freedom extends to censorship as well. In one book store, after repeated questioning, the sales clerk pulled out from under the counter a modern translation of the New Testament. But I searched in vain for newspapers from the free world. I looked in the kiosks on the main street where most international visitors stay. I looked in the hotels. Finally I found on a back street a foreign press book shop. There I could find *Pravda* and the French Communist *Humanité* and the official organ of the German Communist party. But *Time* magazine? The *Herald Tribune*? The *New York Times*? Maybe they are to be found, but I could not locate them anywhere in Prague after several searching inquiries. When I asked Vladimir about this, he assured me they were not available.

I also asked him about the radio, for in all our hotels, we had only one station we could turn to. That was the Communistic one, where you have to take the propaganda along with the good. He assured us that he listened to Radio Free Europe every day — and his eyes flashed with pleasure.

We learned that one of our Prague hotels was on the same street where the beloved first president of Czechoslovakia, Thomas Masaryk, once lived. As we stood in front of the building, we asked a passerby where the house was where Jan Masaryk, minister of foreign affairs and son of Thomas, was pushed by the Communists out of the window to his death. He hesitated to talk about that, told us of his brother who lives in Stowe, Vermont, and at the end of our conversation asked us to forget our conversation. He did not want to get into trouble.

Vladimir, on the other hand, was very bold in speaking — on the street and in his street-level room with the windows open. We asked him about that, and he responded that since he had been in concentration camps for resisting the Nazis (he showed us pictures of himself in Buchenwald and Dachau and documents from several authorities about his confinement), had served fifteen years for resisting the Communists, and had to be questioned by the police every year, he did not care. He wasn't afraid any longer. Twice he had been condemned to death by the Communists, but twice he was pardoned by former President Novotny, with whom he had served a prison sentence under the Nazis.

The most irritating evidence of Communistic domination was the signs and posters that everywhere screamed "I am the greatest." It was impossible to escape them at any time. In one small town square there were at least twelve signs shouting Communism. In the store windows, on the road, on buildings, on factories — everywhere — were the red propaganda

signs and emblems. Rarely did the Czechoslovakia flag fly alone: the red flag was always alongside it.

And even the Russian flag. 1977 is the sixtieth anniversary of Russian Communism, and so the Czechoslovakians were constantly reminded of that. In the old town square of Prague, for example, a bandstand was set up on a semi-permanent basis, with big banners proclaiming the anniversary. On the two successive afternoons that we were there, the Communists provided free, first-class musical entertainment – but coupled it, naturally, with propaganda.

One of the fine castles of the land – Hluboka – has been restored to its former beauty. But the ever-present Communists had the gall to end the tour of the magnificent rooms with three rooms of blatant distortions of the truth concerning the common people by former lords and the glorious freedom that Communism brings. Hopefully, most Czechoslovakians are immune to this sort of untruth, but Hitler won many people to his side by the incessant repetition of the Big Lie. Czechoslovakian Communism is trying to do the same.

We had a particularly good talk with an archaeologist at the site of a grand fortress that was successfully stormed in the 15th century by Hussite leader John Zizka. (Here, too, the historical brochure ended up with a paragraph on “Rah! Rah! Communism is great!”) He was taking measurements of the ruins, so we asked him about the history of the castle. Then he asked us about our reaction to Czechoslovakia, and soon he launched into a strong defense of Communism. I kept wondering what had influenced him. He had known the country in the days of freedom, was well educated, and looked refined. When asked why Czechoslovakia had to have an Iron Curtain, if it has the greatest political regime, he answered in all seriousness, “To keep the Nazi-minded Germans out!” How can you argue with such naiveté? The only response is by telling the truth over and over again, even more times than they repeat the lie.

On the ninth day we returned to the free world. What a relief! That night we entered a West German village and spontaneously we all exclaimed for joy. Spotlights illuminated a beautiful, stone church tower. Fountains were playing, illuminated by lights. People were strolling around the streets, going to cafés and looking at the exquisite store window displays.

The next day we hit the delightful city of Bamberg. The houses were freshly painted with decorative designs. The streets were winding and narrow. Bridges spanned the Regnitz and in the middle of the stream was the old Town Hall with all kinds of painting on the outside. On top of the hill was a magnificent church with an apse at both ends! And in the city hundreds had turned out for the annual fair of four days. Bands were playing, people were drinking beer from liter mugs. We consumed two bratwursts and ice cream. Oh what a joy! No fear, no propaganda, but freedom – freedom to do what we wanted. The sun was even brighter. Thank you, God, for the free world! ●



REV. HENRY VANDER KAM

LESSONS FROM I PETER

Lessons 1 and 2 on I Peter by Rev. Henry Vander Kam, pastor of the Christian Reformed Church, Lake Worth, Florida, are in this issue.

This series also – intended for church societies (1978-'79 season) – study groups, and all others interested – promises to be highly profitable. Rev. Vander Kam has the knack of presenting his material briefly and clearly, as those who have used his outlines in the past will well remember. Two lessons appear each month.

Group subscriptions for society members are available at \$5.00 (regular rate \$6.00). Copies will be mailed to the individual subscribers upon receipt of their names and addresses. However, the order and payment for group subscriptions must be handled by one person.

Send your orders to:

THE OUTLOOK
4855 Starr St., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506

LESSON 1

I Peter 1:1-2

Introduction

The first verse of the first chapter of this epistle tells us who was the author of this small letter. It has been acknowledged from the earliest days of the history of the church that it was indeed the product of this Apostle's hand.

The author – When we think of the person of this author there are many thoughts which at once fill the mind. He certainly was the leader of the twelve disciples whom Jesus had chosen to be with Him and to be in training for their future work. He is also the most interesting personality among all the disciples.

This man Peter was so genuine! He was ready to leave everything and follow the Teacher of Nazareth. If he did not understand some of the teachings of Jesus, he asked further questions. His faith in Jesus and his utter devotion to Him cannot be questioned.

When Jesus asks the disciples whether they also would wish to leave Him as the great majority of the people had done, Peter replies: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Peter did not only belong to the company of twelve, he was one of the three who went with Jesus when even the other nine were left behind. So he was with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. So he was with James and John to see the awful agony of his Lord in Gethsemane. He was a trusted leader among the disciples.

True, there is another item in the history of Peter which the Scriptures do not overlook. He, the privileged one, the one who often boasted of his loyalty come what may, denied his Lord at a very crucial moment. He does not remain standing when danger threatens. His strength of character is not enough. He has to learn the hard lesson that all boasting is excluded and that one can glory only in — a cross!

Peter weeps bitter tears. But, these tears are evidence of the Spirit's work within. Judas was led to remorse — Peter to repentance! Nevertheless, it causes the angels to tell the women on Easter morning: Go tell His disciples *and Peter!* His office has been forfeited. In the last chapter of John's gospel the humbling meeting takes place with the resurrected Lord and He asks Peter three times whether he really loves Him. Upon the affirmative answer given, he is restored to office.

This is the man who is now called to write this epistle.

The readers — Peter writes to people who have been scattered throughout Asia Minor. He names various places and all these places together cover almost all of Asia Minor. He had not gone here to preach as far as we know. This had been the mission field of Paul. Why then does Peter write to them rather than the man who had been instrumental in founding the churches there? Various answers have been given to this question. Everything seems to point to a time between the first and second imprisonment of Paul as the time when this letter was written. In other words, Paul was not available at this time. Peter therefore writes instead of Paul because the people in this region needed pastoral care and advice.

The people to whom Peter writes seem to be mostly gentile Christians. They had not witnessed the sufferings of Christ as he had done. They may not have known the Lord in the flesh. Because Peter is writing to those who are strangers to him, there are not greetings from others or greetings to some individuals.

The people in the dispersion in Asia Minor had suffered a great deal for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This they had not expected and were troubled in their spiritual life as they sought an answer to this problem. This is understandable. Is not Christ preached as Lord over all? Why does He then seek to thwart His own purpose? Not finding an answer to this problem the readers were in danger of returning to the world.

Peter addresses this problem throughout this epistle. He directs the readers' faith and their thoughts to God and to the hope which will be realized later. No, this is not a "pie in the sky" philosophy, as some have charged. The believer is to come to the proper evaluation of the present life and then look unto the life which is life indeed. Peter not only holds that hope before them, he also encourages them in their present state. They may not be able to understand the ways of God, but they are called to be faithful and obedient. He tends and feeds the sheep and the lambs of Christ in this epistle, as he had been told to do.

Peter, an apostle — Although it is profitable for us to know as much as possible about this author, and there certainly is a great deal of information given about him in the gospels, he is not writing to the churches in Asia Minor as a disciple of Christ, or as a former boaster or penitent sinner, but he is writing as "an apostle of Jesus Christ." He comes with authority.

Certainly, Peter's former experiences may be very helpful in understanding the difficulties in the lives of his readers, but, he now comes with the Word of God! He is not encouraging them or holding a hope before them as the most logical way to face their problems. He comes with the authoritative Word! Regardless of how difficult it may seem — this is the only way. So these people in the dispersion, these strangers, are to receive this epistle.

The elect in the Dispersion — The people to whom Peter is writing are elect — but in dispersion. It seems strange to have these concepts so close together. They are the chosen people of God and this fact they must keep clearly before themselves. They will have the temptation of placing all the emphasis on the fact that they are sojourners, strangers, exiles. However, though they are such, they must not lose sight of the fact that God has chosen them to be His people. So they must look upon their present state.

They are sojourners, but so is every child of God! Each one must realize that this is not his home but that a far more glorious place awaits him. True, they are spread throughout the regions of Asia Minor which makes the fellowship of the saints more difficult and the forces of opposition more bold, but that is not the heart of the matter. Their true relationship to their God must be kept in mind.

Having mentioned the various places to which they have been dispersed, Peter now comes with a statement which has often been misinterpreted. Does the election of believers only rest on the foreknowledge of God? Did God know from eternity who would believe, and, then chose those? Is that what election means? Some have thought so. However, all that has gone before is referred to by the foreknowledge of God. They are elect according to this foreknowledge; they are sojourners according to this foreknowledge. Nor is this merely knowing beforehand. It is the outworking of the plan of God. The things mentioned have not just happened to them as though

blind chance were at work, but it is all according to His will. They must, therefore, be very careful how they react to the will of God. Besides, they are assured that they have been placed in an eternal relationship to Him through His electing love.

God their Father — God is a Father to them. This has been so difficult for these people to grasp because life has become so difficult. They have received the sanctification of the Spirit whereby the power of sin has been broken and faith has been instilled within their hearts. Therefore the Apostle is able to write to them and have the confidence that his words will bear fruit.

If this epistle were written to unbelievers it would be entirely different. Seeing they have received the gifts which the Spirit imparts, the words Peter writes them will strike a responsive chord. The temptation may be present to depart from the Christian way of life and to embrace the ways of the world again, but the Spirit will not let them go! They need instruction and encouragement. They will then again see the glory of the hope he portrays to them.

They had been brought to the obedience to Jesus Christ when they believed. They had been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. This had wrought such a change that they had been brought from death into life. The blood whereby they had been sprinkled cannot be washed away! It will always have its effect! They had been brought to His obedience and that was their only comfort! It is amazing how the apostle lays the groundwork for the body of this epistle in this introduction! It is the genius of the Spirit of God!

The salutation — Now the salutation to this troubled people. Grace to you. Not only is this the common Greek greeting, it receives richer meaning when it is laid on the people of God on apostolic authority. It is the grace of God which had chosen them and through which they have forgiveness. They have to live on grace! That grace is not removed because they are beginning to doubt the ways of God. He still bestows His grace. They may become faithless, He is always faithful.

Beside the grace which is given them the apostle bestows the peace of God. Again, this peace was not only the common greeting among the Jews, it receives far richer content for them now. It is the peace of God! He doesn't give peace the way the world does. This is both an inner and outward peace. Is He able to give peace to their troubled hearts? Of course. It is not a wish or a prayer, it is a declaration!

In both his epistles Peter seems to go beyond the usual Pauline salutation when he says: Grace to you and peace be *multiplied*. Surely, it is enough to give the grace and peace to the people of God upon apostolic authority, but it does not seem so to this apostle. That grace and peace be *increased*. These people have received God's grace and peace. Let that grace and peace now increase — let them have it in ever greater abundance!

Questions for discussion:

1. Do you think Peter was well equipped and qualified to write a letter to people who were wrestling with problems such as these in Asia Minor?
2. Jesus had met Peter on Easter day. Later, as recorded in John 21, Jesus asks him about his love for Him. Was this to restore him as believer or to restore him to office? Is there a difference? Discuss.
3. What is the difference between a disciple and an apostle?
4. Why does God (Who is in control of all things) allow His people to suffer? Is this still a problem? Does the Catechism really give an answer to the question asked about the reason for our death? (Q. 42)
5. What is the basis for election?
6. Do you receive a blessing from the salutation on Sunday or does it only mean that the service is officially begun?

LESSON 2

I Peter 1:3-9

The living hope

After a brief introduction, Peter, the apostle of hope, immediately begins to speak of the main theme of this book. The people to whom he is writing were in danger of losing sight of the most important things given to them and to dwell on those things which seemed more important to them in the present time.

Reason for praise — "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Whatever may be the condition of life for them at the present time, they may not neglect to praise the name of their God. Regardless of what He sends, He is to be praised. He had showed such grace to the redeemed that their mouth must always be full of His praise. He is worthy of it. He is the Father of Jesus Christ and therefore the Father of all those who have been redeemed.

The mention of this Fatherhood will immediately bring to their minds the relationship in which they stand to Him. Whatever may have been experienced by them at the hands of men, they must realize that they have received it out of the hand of the Father and not out of the hand of a stranger.

Rooted in Christ's resurrection — This is the Father Who has shown His great mercy to His people. It is a great mercy because it is inexhaustible. By it He begot us to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It was necessary for His people to be born again because by nature they were dead in their sins. Life must be given to them before they are able to turn to Him or to believe. God alone is able to give life. It was His great mercy which gave life to His people.

But, God has not only given life to those who were dead, He has caused them to be born again unto a living hope! It is a hope which is alive! It is

not like the common hopes of man. It is a hope which has life and gives life! It is that living hope which always seeks the Source of life. It is a hope which overshadows everything else in life. They have not been made alive merely to exist, but to be filled with an undying hope!

This hope is rooted and grounded in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The resurrection of our Savior has changed everything. By it He has shown that death is conquered and that the life now given to believers will not be subject to death. His resurrection gives us a true basis for a living hope. Now that Jesus has been raised from the dead, His followers need no longer fear. The greatest enemy has been vanquished and therefore no other enemy can arise to conquer the believer.

An inheritance — Not only have they been begotten to a hope, but also to an inheritance. This hope has content. An inheritance has been laid away for them. This is an incorruptible inheritance. It is not of a passing nature. It is undefiled — nothing can mar its beauty. It doesn't fade away — it doesn't lose its value. Israel had received the land of promise as an inheritance, but that certainly did not have the characteristics of this inheritance. The people to whom the apostle is writing, as well as all New Testament believers, are far richer than Israel in the past.

This inheritance, he says, is reserved in heaven for you. It is, therefore, not a present possession. It will be given to the believer after his present life. It will not be a surprise — no, we are certain of it already — but it will come into our hands only after this present life. Salvation is certain and we already have it, but we do not yet possess the fulness of it. There is still more! One day we shall come into possession of the fulness of salvation and of life and shall be able to "handle" an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance. This cannot be done in the present with both heart and hand still stained by sin.

Guarded by power of God — He has reserved that inheritance for us in heaven. He will guard it unto the day of Jesus Christ. We need, therefore, not worry whether He will be able to keep it in safety for us. Nor may we doubt His word of promise that it will be waiting for us. But, He does more. We are guarded too by the power of God! If the inheritance is safe but those who are to inherit it are not kept in safety, we still would have no assurance. He guards both the inheritance and those who are to receive it. Jesus comforted His disciples by telling them that He was ascending in order to prepare a place for them. He will also prepare them for the place!

The power of God will guard them and He exercises this power through their faith. This faith lays hold on the power of God. Through it He gives power to overcome the world. That faith is evidence of their present salvation and will lead them to the salvation to be revealed at the last time. Salvation is of one piece — the salvation which they now experience is no different in essence from the salvation which still awaits. The latter will be richer than the

former and the fulfillment of it. So this apostle makes clear to them how rich they are. He reminds them of their safety in this world regardless of conditions. God has done great things for them.

Great rejoicing amid trials — They have not lost sight of the grace of God which had been revealed to them. Had they lost sight of that, they would have sinned grievously. No, he realizes that they greatly rejoice in the salvation which they have received. But, it is not an unmixed rejoicing. They rejoice in salvation but they are troubled by the things which are happening to them. God has shown His great love in their redemption, but where is that love to them in their everyday life? Peter is, of course, aware of this problem and it is the reason for this epistle. They have been put to grief through many trials. He does not tell us the nature of these trials but they have been severe enough to put them to grief. These trials have not turned them away from their God, they still rejoice in Him, but the danger exists that the rejoicing in God will diminish and the grief become greater. They must, however, bear in mind that this time of grief is but short in duration compared to the salvation which has been revealed to them. Their salvation stretches through this life and includes all of eternity. Even from this point of view, they cannot be compared.

The readers of this epistle must not think, however, that their faith and the trials of the present time are unrelated or opposites. The trials are being used of God for the refining of their faith. Their faith is being put to the test and they are to see the present trials in that light. Gold is refined and tested by fire. Their faith is much more precious than gold and will be able to endure the testing. In fact, though the fire removes the impurities from gold it is still perishable, but their faith will continue until the revelation of Jesus Christ. The testing by trials will cause it to flourish so that it will praise and glorify and honor Christ! They have suffered pain as a result of the trials but they need not fear that these trials will defeat their faith. His gift of faith will triumph.

Faith binds the believer to Jesus Christ. They love Him! They love Him despite the fact that they had never seen Him while He was here on earth. In this respect there is a great difference between the experience of the writer and of the readers. Peter had seen Him; he had heard Him; he had seen His mighty works; and he loved Him. But, thanks be to God, it is not necessary to have seen the Christ while He was here. That privilege was given to few.

Nevertheless, although they have not seen Him, they love Him and believe on Him. The gospel preached has been sufficient, by the working of the Holy Spirit, to instill faith in the heart. That is the method which God has chosen to draw a people to Himself. Believing in Jesus Christ has caused them to rejoice in Him. It is a joy which cannot be compared to any other. It cannot be put in words! It is a joy which fills the whole life and gives it direction. It is "full of glory." It is a joy which is radiant. Not even

the trials which had come on them and had caused a measure of grief can take away the joy of salvation which they had received. That joy must come to ever fuller expression. They may not dwell too much on the difficulties of the present time and thereby overlook the great joy He has imparted to them. Let them keep the eye of faith directed to Jesus, Whom they have not seen, but Who rose and lives forever, and they will not fall into snares which are laid for them by the world.

The purpose and goal — By “receiving the end of your faith” he refers to the purpose and goal of their faith. This they must always keep in mind. The goal is not to be found here, first of all. It is not to be found primarily in a life free from all problems and difficulties. The purpose of faith goes far beyond the present. Surely, that faith has filled them with an unspeakable joy in the present time, but that is not its primary purpose. “The salvation of your souls” is the goal and purpose of faith.

By “souls” he does not mean to imply that salvation is not for the body, but, rather, emphasizes the most important element in the whole person. The “body” is often the object of the trials which bring grief. These trials will be used to purify the faith so that the salvation of the soul is not placed in danger.

The salvation of their souls will be accomplished. Nothing will be allowed to thwart the purpose of God. The work He has begun will be completed. They have the assurance that the work has been begun within them. This is the reason for their joy and faith. The trials may come and cause pain for a time, but the work of God will not be overthrown. The goal of faith will be attained.

So the apostle comforts these in the midst of trials. Trials may be grievous — but will not touch their salvation.

Questions for discussion:

1. What is the difference between regeneration and conversion? When does regeneration take place? Explain.
2. What is a “living hope”? Can any other hope be called “living”?
3. Is the death of Christ or His resurrection central in our salvation? Or may we not make this distinction?
4. Do trials always refine faith? Is persecution always “the seed of the church”? Explain.
5. Does our joy of faith come to sufficient expression? Why, or why not?
6. Was it an advantage to have seen the Lord in the flesh?



“If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, I do not know what is going to become of us as a nation. If truth be not diffused, error will be. . . . If the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of corrupt and licentious literature will.”

DANIEL WEBSTER

BOOKS RECEIVED

(Books received from the publishers for mention and/or review) John Vander Ploeg.

CHRIST and THE MEDIA by Malcolm Muggeridge; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.; 127 pages; \$5.95.

THE CHILD’S BIBLE STORY, Catherine F. Vos. Revised by Marianne Catherine Vos Radius; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; 436 pages; \$9.95.

DINOSAURS — THOSE TERRIBLE LIZARDS by Duane T. Gish; Creation-Life Publishers, Inc., San Diego, California; 62 pages; \$4.95.

WHO WILL LEAD US (A study in the Development of Biblical Offices with Emphasis on the Deaconate) by Leonard J. Coppes; 154 pages; Pilgrim Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, N. J.; \$3.95.

THERE’S NO BUSINESS LIKE GOD’S BUSINESS by Chuck Murphy; 128 pages; Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, \$2.95.

THE REFORMATION OF JOURNALISM (A Christian Approach to Mass Media) by John R. Kennedy; 144 pages; Craig Press, Box 13, Nutley, N. J. 07110; \$2.95.

PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT by H. C. G. Moule; 252 pp.; Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501; \$5.95.

COMMENTARY ON ROMANS by F. L. Godet; (Kregel Reprint Library Series); 531 pages; \$12.95.

COMMENTARY ON FIRST CORINTHIANS by F. L. Godet; (Kregel Reprint Library Series); 920 pages; \$14.95.

HOPE FOR A DESPAIRING WORLD (The Christian Answer for the Problems of Evil) by Philip E. Hughes; 125 pages; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich.

THE TRUTH OF GOD INCARNATE; Edited by Michael Green; 144 pages; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.; \$2.45.

DEATH BEFORE BIRTH by Harold O. J. Brown; 168 pages; “A book which looks at all sides of the abortion problem . . .”; Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, \$5.95.

GOD’S HIGHER WAYS (the Birth of a Church) by Clarence W. Duff; the author “was sent by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to open a field in Ethiopia. . . . He tells that story in this book”; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Nutley, N. J. 07110; \$7.50.

HOW TO DEVELOP DEEP UNITY IN THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP by Wayne Mack; (A How to Manual for Christian Growth and Development); 151 pages; from the *Preface* by Dr. Jay Adams: “Pastors, you will find that both the biblical studies and the personal exercises included will be useful to you in counseling with married couples in your church as well as in pre-marital counseling. . . . You and your counselee (even on his own) both can use it”; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. \$3.95.

THE UNLISTED LEGION (Part of its witness in Karakoram and the Khyber) by Jock Purves; 195 pages; The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621 Carlisle, Pa. 17013; \$2.25.

DISTINCTIVE LESSONS FROM LUKE by William C. Brownson, Jr.

(RCA radio minister of Temple Time, a weekly national and international broadcast); "This book is designated to capture the unique perspective of the third evangelist—Luke"; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 128 pages; \$1.25.

JOB — OUR CONTEMPORARY by H. Harold Kent; 92 pages; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 49502; \$1.50; "This bold fresh examination of the classic patient doubter effectively refutes the charge that the Old Testament is no longer relevant" — from the *Foreword* by John B. Stirling, Chancellor, Queen's University, Ontario, Canada.

DAYLIGHT, by Andrew Kuyvenhoven, Paideia Press, P.O. Box 1450, St. Catharines, Ontario, 382 pages, paperback, price \$5.95. Reviewed by Rev. Cecil W. Tuininga, pastor of the Grand Prairie-La Glace CRC, Alberta, Canada.

Having read several reviews of *Daylight* in the past few months, I concur with the words of praise written. This is a marvelous book. The author has the unusual gift of penetrating the mysteries of God's Word and bringing his findings to his readers in concise and living words. This book is literally filled with gems for daily reading. It will undoubtedly be used by those who buy it for many years to come. It is not a book for just one reading. And one may well want to reread many of the meditations right away for greater spiritual benefit.

I have no criticism of this book. I wonder though how readers will use it. We have learned to value very highly our parents' practice of reading the Bible from cover to cover, with no part omitted. We found that tedious at times as small children. We asked: Why read what to us made little sense. The answer was very simple: This is God's Word, and He wants us to hear all of it. In later years we were very thankful that through this systematic reading of God's Word we became acquainted with all of it. As we see how some use meditations, such as in *Daylight*, instead of reading Scripture systematically, we are fearful for the results. Will our future generations still know God's Word in all its beauty if parents do not read it all with them?

However, if these daily Bible readings are added to a systematic reading of Scripture they can be a great help towards a better understanding of Scripture. No doubt the author had no other intentions. But whether parents are using it as a help to Bible reading or instead of Bible reading, I can recommend this book most heartily. Very few, if any, books of daily readings can match it. Besides, in our rushed world, where so many seem to have lost the important art of reading and studying, these meditations can serve as a goad to spur our rushed generation to a more intensive reading and study of God's Word. May our God bless it to that end.

Convinced that all who buy this book

will be much pleased with it, I would like to add one comment about this book. It is not only attractive in its cover design but also in the order of its contents. For each month there is a theme, beginning with the appropriate theme for January, "Thy Kingdom Come" (so fitting as we begin a new year) and ending with December, the theme, "Jesus Is Coming" so fitting a reminder as we see another year coming to a close). And with these fitting words the book ends, "We know only one thing about the future: Jesus is coming!"

IN THE BEGINNING by E. J. Young. Published by The Banner Of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Charlestown, PA 17013, 1976. 117 pages. Price not given. Reviewed by Joseph Brinks, Pastor, Noordeloos CRC, Holland, MI.

The late respected Professor E. J. Young of Westminster Seminary published two books on chapters in Genesis during his lifetime, *Studies In Genesis One* in 1964, and *Genesis 3* in 1966. He died two years after publication of the second of these two books, in 1968. Shortly before he died he gave a set of lectures at the Toronto Baptist Seminary. These lectures were printed *verbatim* in *The Gospel Witness* in 1967 and 1968. Now the lectures given in Toronto are collected and slightly edited (though the book does not say who did the editing) and presented in book form for the first time some eight years after Young's death.

Young views these lectures as a popular apologetic in refutation of critical theories of the early chapters of Genesis. These lectures are popular speeches and the editing retains this style. The lectures are a defence of the traditional understanding of the first 3 chapters of Genesis. Laudable about this book is the fact that Young, though critical of several recently influential theological positions on the early chapters of Genesis, nonetheless gives not only criticisms of errant positions, but also positive reasons for his own stance. He carefully states reasons, usually based upon grammar or context, for his views. The reader senses something of the respectability and profundity of the traditional understanding of Genesis 1-3 and also senses something of the wrong presuppositions and shallow, patchwork thought that liberal interpreters use to bend Genesis 1-3 to fit currently popular liberal theories.

Young rejects those views of Genesis 1-3 which suggest the account is fable, legend, myth, parable, or poetry. He explains the main use of these terms as he goes along and then refutes the position suggested by these terms.

Young takes a strong stand for the KJV rendering of Genesis 1:1, giving compelling reasons for his position. He sees Genesis 2 as a parallel account to Genesis 1 with a different purpose and without strict chronological development. Also he suggests that neither

atheistic evolution nor theistic evolution can be made to accord with the Genesis account of creation, a position this reviewer is inclined to share. The discussion on the fall emphasizes factuality and application.

This is a good summary book. As such it is neither original nor detailed. But it summarizes important truths and positions in clear, concise ways. We recommend this book for ministers as a good review and overview of relevant arguments concerning the early chapters of Genesis. We also recommend this book for church libraries as a good short account of the main issues in interpretation of Genesis 1-3 written in true Biblical perspective. We also recommend this book for laymen with limited time for reading who want a concise treatment of this crucial subject.

Let me close this review with a personal note. I hope Young's perspective continues to gain popularity with the American populace. If I discern correctly recent years are showing a decline in the popularity of evolutionism and a rise in openness to a belief in creationism. May God will, in the next generation, lead the world out of the abyss opened by Darwinian evolutionism, and lead, not only His children, but also the world in general to see the sense of creationism and the resulting honor due to God for creating the universe.

BUSH AGLOW by Richard Ellsworth Day. Paperback edition, 1977, Baker Book House, 340 pp. Reviewed by Hattie A. Guichelaar, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

This is the story of Dwight Lyman Moody, the great revivalist preacher of the latter half of the nineteenth century. He was born in snowy New England on Sunday, February 5, 1837 and he died December 22, 1899. His life proved "what God will do with and for and through and in and by a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him."

In doing research on his life and sermons, the author says he found reason for disappointment in his printed sermons, because Moody's preaching was chiefly his personality — Bush Aglow. His chief objective was to walk in the Spirit and thereupon his sermons automatically held to the Word of God. One of Moody's oft-repeated sentences as he preached to thousands all over America and in England was "What we need today is men who believe in the whole of the Bible, the things they understand, and the things they do not understand." How timely!

When Sankey joined Moody with his soul-stirring hymns, crowds listened to these two, who were certainly not of the mighty, or cultured, or learned, or highly talented. When Moody was asked how they did it, he replied, "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty — that no flesh should glory in His presence."

A very readable biography of a great man which should be added to every church library.

THE SHADOW OF THE BROAD BRIM. — The Life Story of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans, by Richard Ellsworth Day. This book is available at Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, at the price of \$3.95 and is reviewed by John De Pater, Escalon, California.

This book is about a man, already quite well known, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, but it is not just another biography. The author has succeeded in giving us a better background study of Charles Haddon Spurgeon than many others. He brings to light facts regarding his ancestry and early youth that have a bearing upon the formation of the character of this prince of preachers and enable us to better understand him. The book is in no way a complete life story of Spurgeon, nor does it pretend to be. When the author draws attention to the important influence of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, in the shaping of Spurgeon's life, he gives us a clue to understanding him as a man. The author lets us look at Spurgeon from a narrower perspective than his other biographers but makes us well aware of what kind of man this Reformed-Baptist preacher of a century ago was and how the Lord used him. Spurgeon exerted a tremendous influence upon his contemporaries both in England and America and left a lasting imprint on society. One should allow for the fact that this book is written in the style of half a century ago, since it is a paperback reprint of a book that was published in 1934. But how else could you obtain a book with such a wealth of information at such a low price? Buy it and you might get a blessing out of reading it.

EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY: LECTURES ON DOCTRINE by A. A. Hodge. Published by The Banner Of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, PA 17013. 1976, 402 pp., price \$3.95. Reviewed by Joseph Brinks, Pastor, Noordeloos CRC, Holland, MI.

This is an excellent book. This book deserves to be read by the Reformed Minister and to be in his possession for occasional reference with other great books on systematic theology.

The author, the younger of the famous two Hodges, taught at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1877 until his death in 1886 at the age of 63. The chapters that comprise this book are popular lectures given by Hodge in Philadelphia in 1966, the last year of his earthly life. They were originally published in 1890, and are now republished in the *Banner Of Truth* reprint.

It should be noted that the Reformed Christian will find himself very much in agreement with almost everything written in this rather lengthy volume. In fact there is little said to the 19th century audience that is not clear and

relevant to the 20th century mind. Hodge excels in presenting a very carefully defined and clearly distinguished panorama of Reformed thought. This author has an intelligent mind and an ability to present his thoughts clearly and coherently. Many pastors today could improve their preaching and teaching significantly if they had Hodge's lucidity.

The book begins with a short biography of the author by Francis Patton which was given at the Chambers Presbyterian Church shortly after Hodge's death. And it concludes with an excellent subject index which provides easy reference when one is studying a particular area of theology.

The lectures are popular theology. They are lectures presented to the intelligent layman in language and style he easily grasps. I suspect Hodge's greatest strength lies in his ability to present theology clearly and interestingly. I find it hard to imagine any preacher or theological teacher announcing a series of the theological lectures these days in some church auditorium and finding interest high. Perhaps that is something Hodge could do a century ago that we can not do in the television age. But at least we can learn from this master of clarity the art of sound and palatable teaching.

The lectures are popular theology. As such they are first of all systematic theology. They touch the high points of the 6 loci of theology. Hodge chooses and explains theological matters that he found especially interesting or especially under attack by modernism. The subjects he discusses include God, providence, miracles, the inspiration of the Scriptures, prayer, the Trinity, predestination, the original state of man, the covenants, the person of Christ, the offices of Christ, the Kingdom of God, sanctification, the sacraments, the intermediate state, and the final rewards and punishments. Several of these chapters are masterpieces of theological explanation.

Most refreshing in the book is its dedication to the high view of the inspiration of Scripture. The chapter on the canon and inspiration of Scripture needs to be read in the CRC today. I find that one of my most difficult challenges is to impress upon the younger generation of people to whom I am called to minister the real value of the Word of God. Most of us confess a high view of the inspiration and authority of Scripture. But a casual attitude toward church services and sermons and Bible study and a lack of desire to participate in church society life betray a low interest in the Word of God. In other words the confession of the high view of inspiration and authority of Scripture with the mouth somehow does not touch the heart. We easily say one thing but too often really believe something else. We as ministers must work hard with our people to promote love for the Word of

God. Hodge's evident love for the Word excites the reader and challenges him to communicate this same love to his flock.

There is much more that should be said about this book. This is one of the most worthwhile books I have read for some time. It is a real bargain for \$3.95. It merits a place with Berkhof and other important systematic theologians on the bookshelf of every CRC minister. And the book is just as valuable and helpful to the interested layman, whether he uses it to prepare for church study groups or for his personal reading.

A THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, George Eldon Ladd, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974, pp. 661, \$12.50. Reviewed by Rev. Elco H. Oostendorp.

"This book is intended to introduce seminary students to the discipline of New Testament theology," says the author in his Preface (p. 5). No doubt this textbook for seminaries is being widely used by this time. However, it will also be valuable for ministers and others who are interested in an up-to-date survey of thinking by leading scholars in this discipline. Among these scholars Dr. Ladd holds a prominent place, and his views as expressed here are the fruit of a lifetime spent in New Testament studies. He is evangelical in his position, and although he fairly presents many different views, maintains what might be described as a conservative interpretation of the teachings of the New Testament.

I have some difficulty with the title: *A Theology of the New Testament*. Might it not have been better to call this book "*A New Testament Theology Textbook*," or simply "*New Testament Theology*?" One might imply for the "A" that this is one theology of the New Testament among many, Dr. Ladd's personal theology and interpretation.

The book is very valuable in that almost each chapter is prefaced with a book list. There are also copious footnotes in which reference is made to the literature, mostly recent books and articles. Thus the reader who wants to follow up on given subjects has much bibliographical material at his disposal. There are also extensive indices.

Dr. Ladd is a believer in a literal millennium, but does not accept many of the teachings of dispensationalism. He is a Baptist and argues gently for "believers baptism." There are no doubt several points on which most of the readers of *THE OUTLOOK* would disagree with the author, but on the main issues in the struggle between those who accept the New Testament as God's Word and those who approach it as only a human document he takes a firm stand. We are thankful for this solid work and trust that it will be used with blessing in many of our theological seminaries.

ANNUAL MEETING

OF

REFORMED FELLOWSHIP, INC.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1978

AT

Dutton Christian Reformed Church

DUTTON, Michigan (Hanna Lake Ave. and 68th St., S.E.)

2:00 P.M. BUSINESS MEETING and ADDRESS

by DR. P. Y. DE JONG of Sheldon, Iowa, on:
"OUR NEEDED REFORMED MANIFESTO"
(for all members and wives)

6:30 P.M. BANQUET (Punch Bowl at 6:00)

Order your reservation for Banquet no later than
September 28, 1978 by writing to:

**REFORMED FELLOWSHIP
4855 Starr St., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506**

Tickets: \$6.00 each

8:00 P.M. INSPIRATIONAL MEETING (Dutton Christian Ref. Church)

Speaker: REV. IAIN MURRAY of Edinburgh, Scotland
Editor of the "Banner of Truth" magazine and publisher
of Calvinist - Puritain books

Topic: "NECESSARY INGREDIENTS OF BIBLICAL REVIVAL"

**EVERYONE
INVITED**