



CONTENDER

“contending earnestly for the faith...” Jude:3

MISSION POSSIBLE

When attention is once again turned to mission I feel somewhat uncomfortable. This is due to a guilty realization that I know far less than I should about the fundamentals of this topic in theory and the churches execution of it in practice. Obviously, as with all 'theory-practice' contrasts, this statement presents a false dilemma, in as much as theory concerns itself with practical issues which in turn can not be dealt with in the absence of the theoretical framework.

Nevertheless it is stated this way in an attempt to initiate a brief investigation into a one sided perception of mission that might well have limited the development of the understanding we, as youth, could have had of this important subject. For I propose that, although we are challenged to keep up with largely anecdotal reports from various mission activities and locations, this is only the 'face' of the matter.

Far be it from anyone to belittle or derogate this physical, personal aspect of the work. However, it is equally, if not more important not to deny or ignore the 'heart' of mission. By this I mean the systematic and, for want of a better word, theoretical understanding of mission as a theological discipline. Reluctance to admit the need for such knowledge betrays a naiveté that would expect vigorous bodies all around without any commitment made to the health of the heart beating within.

So, whereas we may be to far from the face of mission to offer anything but our prayers and pennies, we are well situated to invest our time and energy in studying the heart of this, God's work. Indeed, when there is enthusiastic support in this area, those at the practical

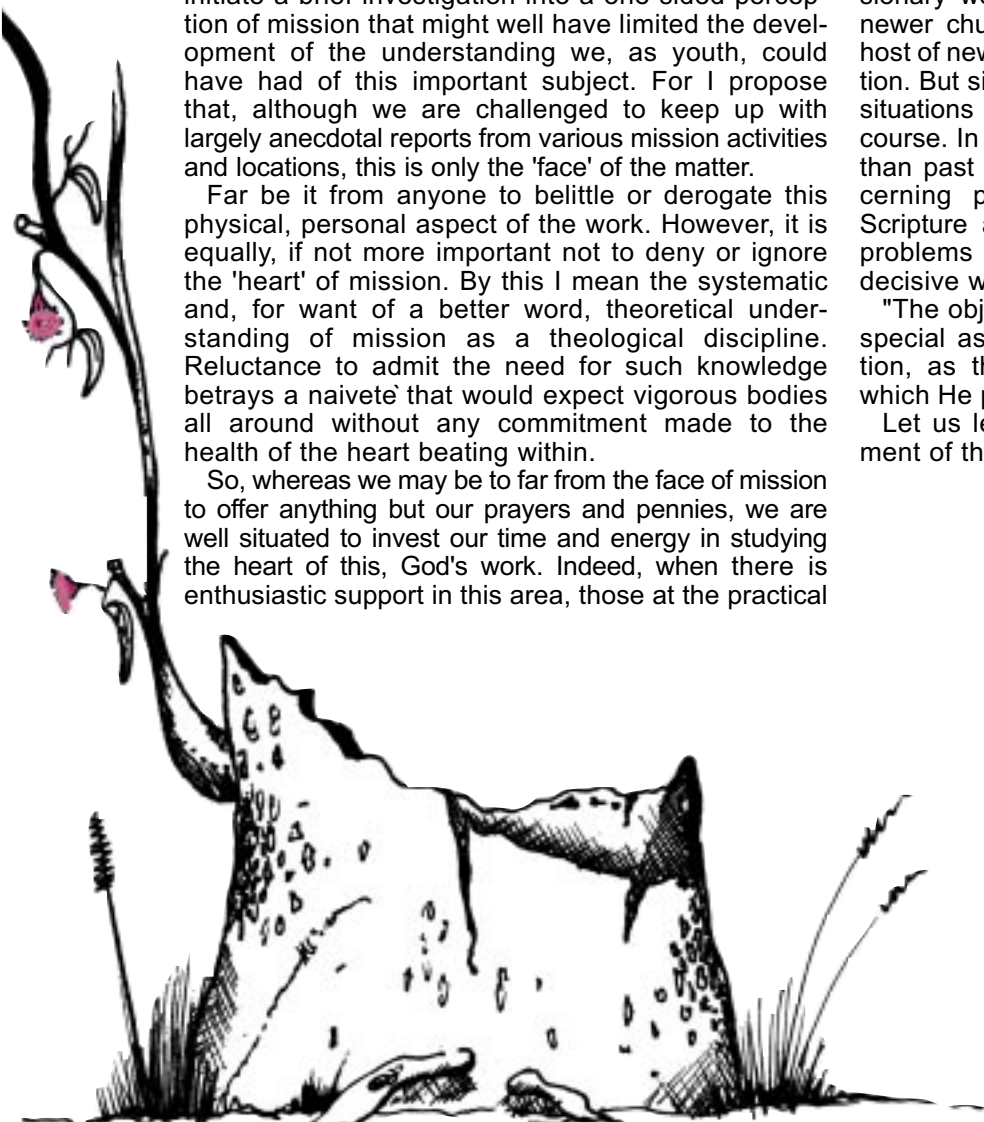
end of the task can devote themselves all the more to their daily activity. Obviously the productive development of these aspects depends on comprehensive communication between the 'frontline' and the 'strategic h.q.', as neither can operate independently of the other in the effort to proclaim the gospel to all nations.

Professor J H Bavinck spoke of the need for this study in his book, 'An Introduction to the Science of Missions':

"Emphasis is also gradually shifting from the missionary work of the mother churches to that of the newer churches established on the mission field. A host of new questions must be handled with great caution. But simply because we must feel our way in new situations does not imply that we are lost or off our course. In fact we are today probably more conscious than past generations that theoretical problems concerning principles, which can be answered by Scripture alone, lurk behind the countless practical problems that beset the church...The ultimate and decisive word must be spoken by the Scriptures."

"The object of missionary science", he states, "is a special aspect of the church, its missionary obligation, as the instrument in the hands of Christ by which He proclaims His power over the entire world."

Let us learn the science, thus enabling the fulfillment of the obligation.



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INDIA

Picture this: a quaint village of some 100 people living in mud huts with palm leaf roofs, naked children playing in the dirt, adults tending to rice paddies or quietly embroidering exotic fabrics in the sultry heat. It is a small, nondescript village in South India, just like thousands of others. The people quietly go about the daily grind of eking out a living, steeped in the traditions of thousands of years of Hindu culture. The twentieth century seems to have hardly touched these simple people, save perhaps for the wooden wheels on their oxcarts being replaced by rubber tyres. Nothing much changes here.

But wait a moment. A new building has been erected on the far end of the village. And in a small number of huts the pictures of Hindu gods have disappeared. Now songs are being sung and a new vocabulary is being learned. The village priest has refused to carry out his duties and is listening to the Word of the only true food. And up to three times a week a man comes from the city to visit the village.

What do these changes mean?

The man's name is Brother Jacob - he is a mission worker sent out by the Free Reformed Church of Mount Nasura in Western Australia to spread the Gospel of Christ to his fellow countrymen. He has been working for two years and God has blessed his labours tremendously. As well as in the village where a group of about 40 faithfully attend gatherings, there is also a group in the city of Chennai - formerly Madras - and a number of families in other villages regularly meeting to hear the Gospel preached.

This work is of course not without its trials. Our Brother Jacob has been threatened with physical harm. In one of the villages a member of the group has had his house burned down. There have been a number of discouragements, disappointments and sorrows. But with thankfulness to our Heavenly Father and trust in His sovereignty we can look beyond these setbacks and realise His overflowing goodness in that His Name can be spread throughout

the world.

There are so many examples of His blessings and working. There is the young man from a village who, overhearing Brother Jacob discussing Jesus, asked him to visit his village, leading to a group of some 40 people gathering regularly to hear the Gospel. There are the children memorising up to 100 Bible verses. There is the refusal to join in big Hindu festivals despite considerable pressure to do so. There are people who would rather lose their job than miss Sunday gatherings. There are the people being denied government grants and privileges for the sake of being Christian. And the list goes on.

It has been a great blessing to be able to work with an indigenous person who knows the language and customs of his country. And we in Mount Nasura count it a great privilege to be able to support and be involved in the spreading of the Gospel in this small part of India.

■ **Robyn Koens**

PAPUA NEW GUINEA - LAE

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a name that arouses the imaginations of many. To some it is an amazing tropical paradise, filled with an exotic and diverse range of plants and animals. To others it is a country struggling to come to grips with the 21st century; a country attempting to balance its native and colonial past with the modern, technological world around them. It is recognized by many to be one of the world's last frontiers. As late as the 1930's, tribal groups were found who had had no previous contact with the modern world. This is one of the reasons why many denominations from all over the world, have made PNG the focus of their missionary efforts. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that Papua New Guinea is one of the most "missionised" countries in the world. A number of congregations from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia are also involved in spreading the Good News in this country. They have a wonderful and challenging opportunity to spread the true and full gospel of Jesus Christ, in obedience to the command Christ gave to his Church (Matthew 28:19-20)

The Free Reformed Church of Armadale is the Sending Church for mission work carried out in Lae,

a port city on the northeast coast of PNG. It works in cooperation with the Free Reformed Churches of Byford, West Albany and the work is supported by the Free Reformed Churches of Kelmscott, Launceston, Legana, and West Kelmscott. While Armadale is not the original sending church it has continued the work begun by Albany. Contact was established with Lae in 1992 when Rev Bosch, then minister of Kelmscott, met a church member, who lived in Lae, while he was visiting the church of Port Moresby.

Since then the congregation in Lae has grown. At present there are 17 communicant members, 20 children and 1 non-communicant member. Many of the men in the congregation are from West Papua and are thus very aware of what is happening in Indonesia at this present moment. The women on the other hand are from Lae or the surrounding districts. Regular church services are held, as well as catechism instruction and Sunday School for the children. An evangelist by the name of Bob Bouway leads the services held every Sunday. The congregation in Lae is supported both financially and by regular visits from ministers from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. During these visits the congregation also

has opportunity to celebrate the Lord's Supper and if necessary, Holy Baptism.

At present the work in Lae is progressing well. While numbers in the congregation have not increased dramatically the evangelist and the members are committed to the Reformed doctrine. They value its depth and riches especially when it is compared to the shallow teachings of other churches around them. At the moment the Mission Board is looking for a mission worker and missionary to assist the work in Lae. It is hoped that these persons will strengthen the work in Lae and that, God willing, perhaps the wonderful Light of God's Word can shine even brighter in this beautiful country.

Many years have passed since Jesus walked on this earth. Yet His words recorded in Matthew 9:37 are still relevant. "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Please do that my friends. Also pray that God will bless the congregation in Lae, that if He wills, it may grow and prosper and cause His Word to shine brightly in Papua New Guinea.

■ **Wayne van der Heide**

Communion of Saints in Mission Work

I recently had the privilege to travel to West Timor, Indonesia. This beautiful part of the world is very rich with Christ centred mission work. Right from its early beginnings, the people of West Timor have been exposed to the preaching of Christ. Even today, mission work in Indonesia is very much alive.

I went to West Timor mainly for my personal enjoyment and experience, but at the same time I also hoped that the local people there could benefit from this Communion of Saints. Together as God's children we can appreciate the things we share in common.

Today's experience teaches us that to supply the mission fields with only financial gifts is a very ineffective way of achieving our mission objectives. Flooding a primitive society with loads of cash does nothing for solving the needs within the community. As fellow Christians some of the most effective help we can provide is through prayer and the communion of saints.

The culture of West Timor is different to our western culture. In the western world our culture is based on reason. Man's feelings and emotions are often left out. However in Indonesia interaction between people is more considerate to one another's feelings.

The people I met were keen to serve God and the youth have a strong desire to actively carry out their duties to God and their neighbour. Western youth could make a difference by providing them with information and ideas on how we

serve God from our home. They desire also to learn the English language and therefore would appreciate any communication with the western world.

New technology related products and services like the Internet, advanced communications, cheaper air travel, electronic funds transfer etc, could mean new ways of dealing with people in remote or distant areas. By using these technologies, many opportunities become available in sharing the wonderful gifts God has given us.

These developments give us a good opportunity to encourage and support one another by various forms of literature. I noticed that they would like more christian literature such as the *Una Sancta/Contender*, *Clarion*, *Perspective* or other magazines and books. From our position we may be able to assist in this need of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The communion of saints needed for mission work challenges the way in which we can use our God given gifts. God has blessed us with many skills and abilities that we can use for the communion of saints. Romans 12 lists these spiritual gifts as prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership and mercy. Can we use the technological advances of today, together with our spiritual gifts for the benefit of Christ's church in the mission fields?

If we can find practical ways in which to use our spiritual gifts through the use of today's technology then we would be able to apply the communion of saints to

increasingly new levels. This can create opportunities for spreading the gospel and building Christ's Church.

It is always going to be a real challenge to find practical ways to use our gifts for mission support. Often we do not know how or what we can do. This can be very frustrating, because even if we want to use our talents, sometimes we can't find an opportunity to help others. This is also a challenge for mission workers and others involved in mission work to show the youth ways in which we can make a difference to the spread and development of Christ's church.

The youth are usually the energetic and easily motivated members of a congregation. This puts us in an excellent position to do something for mission work. If we can use the guidance and wisdom of the older members as well as the energy and motivation of the youth, we in Christ can accomplish great things.

We should also remember that every bit of effort helps, for "Who despises the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10). Even if our efforts may seem small and pathetic, God measures our hearts.

As youth we have a possibility of using our gifts together with today's technological advances, to support mission work so that Christ's name may be promoted in all corners of the world.

■ **Kevin Michael Swarts**

Mission Brazil

After a missionary has chosen a place to work, his next question would be how to get a church started.

For 30 years, missionaries and mission aid workers have laboured in Word and deed in Brazil. The Lord has blessed this work so that now there are 5 instituted churches and several missionary congregations. These churches formed a federation of Reformed Churches in May of last year. In the small amount of space allowed, let me tell you a little about the work of mission in Brazil.

Often when someone speaks of mission work, people would automatically think of half naked Blacks /Indians /Negroes coming together from some isolated neck of the woods and the missionary living in a rather inadequate shelter of sticks, courageously braving the dangers of the elements of nature, tribal warfare etc.. However, when speaking of mission work in Brazil, one of the first things to note is that mission work is done in cities and towns. When our Dutch sister churches first sent their missionaries in the late 1960s and early '70s, they deliberately chose this option claiming it was more in line with the example of the apostle Paul. The cities were heathen cities and hence it was felt that God will also gather His Church in the city if that is where the missionaries work. The Canadian Churches, though, did not yet have the same vision as their Dutch sister churches as their aim of mission was to spread the gospel where it had never been preached before. To their way of

thinking, a place away from civilisation would be the most likely choice. However, after investigating some of the wilder parts of Brazil, several changed their idea. Some thought the dangers and difficulties threatening the missionary (including T.B., tribal attacks and the variety of languages) would be so great that it would not be responsible to proceed, even with a missionary team, while others thought that it might well be possible to go to the Indians with strings of beads and mirrors. If Simon Fraser explored the Fraser Canyon on foot, our missionaries could do the same. And so they decided to send a missionary to preach the Gospel to the heathens of Brazil leaving the missionary to make a choice. This resulted in the Canadian missionaries working in coastal fishing towns where the gospel had never been preached.

After a missionary has chosen a place to work, his next question would be how to get a church started. Looking at the methods used in the past, we can divide the work into 3 phases. The first phase can be described as the "beat the pavement" phase where the missionary walks, speaking to whom he meets and inviting them to participate in the church activities. His aim is to establish a core group of people with whom he can work. Once there is one person interested, they enter into the second phase where regular activities are initiated. These usually

include regular weekly Bible study and catechism instruction and church services every Sunday morning and evening. And as the congregation grows, other activities are added including Sunday school, youth meetings, boys and girls study groups and the men's and women's societies. Some daytime activities are also introduced such as Bible school and VBS (Vacation Bible School) during the holidays. After several years, training for future office bearers also commences. By this stage the mission work is in the third phase where the role of the missionary is no longer beating the pavement but he becomes involved in making sermons, pastoral care, catechism instruction and supervision of assistants. The act of evangelism moves from the missionary to the individual members.

Today there is much mission activity in Brazil. By the grace of God we are able to preach and work without fear of persecution. We pray He will continue to bless the work, not only here but all over the world. May it hasten the return of our Lord.

■ **H. Plug**
Mission Aid worker
Brazil

Mission in Virtual Paradise

Missionaries all over the world have the privilege of serving the Lord in remote and often beautiful locations. We are no different. We are privileged to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in a remote area of northern British Columbia. I am a missionary of the Smithers Canadian Reformed Church and I live and work in a small native village called Fort Babine. Fort Babine is about 100 km north of Smithers, which in turn is about 800 km north of Vancouver, the largest city in BC. At about 55° north of the Equator, we are the most northerly Reformed mission work in the Western hemisphere. Fort Babine consists of approximately 100 people, mostly members of the Lake Babine Nation. Virtually all of the people are nominally Roman Catholic and have some degree of Christian belief. Thus, our work is not "pure" mission work (bring the gospel to people who have never heard) but is better described as church planting. We are working towards establishing a Reformed church in Fort Babine.

We have been living and working in Fort Babine since the beginning of November 2000. The first three months were spent in an assessment period. During that time, we were exploring our options and the feasibility of establishing a church in this community. This involved spending a lot of time doing research and visiting with people in the village. There were some opportunities to speak about spiritual things, but the focus was on learning about the community to determine whether we should stay here for the long term. The outcome of this was positive and, in the beginning of February, we started making preparations to begin our work. At this point, we are in the process of implementing various programs. We have started with a Sports Evening for the youth of the village. There is a well-equipped gymnasium at the local school and we have permission to use this gym on Tuesday evenings. At half-time on these evenings, I present a short Scriptural message to those in attendance, mostly young men. These messages are well-received and we have an excellent rapport with the youth.

We recently received our own building to work out of as well. Renovations were recently completed on this building and we hope to start with regular office hours and Bible Study in the next while. This building actually belongs to the Lake Babine Nation, but they have graciously allowed us to use it for free. We only pay for the electricity. This is a clear

demonstration of the good relationship we enjoy with the local government. This building is in a great location and we look forward to its fruitful use under the blessing of God. In a short time, we also hope to begin having worship services there.

I already indicated that Fort Babine is in a beautiful area of northern BC. In fact, I would say that it's a virtual paradise. My wife and I often say this is one of the most beautiful places on earth. The village sits at the northern tip of Babine Lake, the longest natural lake in the province. Babine Lake empties into the Babine River, one of the world's best fishing locations. People come from all over the globe to go salmon and trout fishing here - and we get to live here! The outdoor recreation opportunities here are endless: cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, canoeing, fishing, hunting, hiking, mountain biking - all of it is right at our doorstep. Did I mention that we love living here? We do not have certain luxuries in our village such as telephone, medical services, or groceries, but we find that the benefits of living here by far outweigh these inconveniences.

Thus, our work is not "pure" mission work (bring the gospel to people who have never heard) but is better described as church planting.

We love the area and we also love our work here. Mission work is exciting work. There are always new challenges and new situations to face. It's never boring. There are many opportunities to speak about the hope we have in Christ our Lord. I'd like to share with you one thing we have learned about mission work and missionaries -

you must always be flexible and be ready to adapt to new situations. Your patience must be endless. But so must your love. There must be deep love for the Lord Jesus and also a deep love for people. Neither comes naturally to any of us and missionaries are no different. This is something that has to be cultivated. I encourage the young brothers to examine the gifts the Lord has given them. Perhaps you have the gifts to become a missionary. Perhaps the Lord would have you serve in one of the most beautiful tasks in His kingdom - in His beautiful world. Think about it!

For more information about the work in Fort Babine (including pictures and maps), please see our website, www.babine.org. If you would like more information about becoming a missionary or mission work in general, please feel free to e-mail, wbredenhof@canrc.org

■ **Rev W.L. Bredenhof**

Mission Activities in and around Pretoria

“*T*herefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” *Matt. 28:19-20.*

The Vrye Gereformeerde Kerken van Suid Afrika have heeded God's call to make disciples by bringing the gospel to their black African neighbours. This work already began in 1964 and has since grown. The congregation Pretoria-Maranata is currently coordinating missionary activities at two different locations around Pretoria, mainly in urban areas.

The first location is the Mamelodi and Nelmapius area. These are two townships east of Pretoria. Rev. Bosman is the missionary who works among the African people of this area. The

Lord willing, the congregation of Mamelodi will become independent in the near future. They hope to call Tebogo Mogale to become their pastor. He is a student who recently finished his theological studies at Mokhanyo Theological College (MTC).

The second location is Soshanguve, a big township north-west of Pretoria. Rev. de Visser and Rev. Boersma are serving in this area. There are three congregations, Soshanguve North, South and Central. The Lord willing, the congregation in Soshanguve North will also become independent during the coming year. They intend to call Peter Mogagula to become their pastor. He has also recently finished his theological studies at MTC.

Two other theological students, Jerry Mhlanga and Sam, are also aiding the missionaries in their

work. The missionary work is coordinated by a local mission-board and is mainly financed by the Gereformeerde Kerken van Nederland.

The growth of the missionary congregations towards independence is something for which we are extremely thankful. This development will, however, also bring various changes for our bond of churches. The missionary congregations are on our doorstep. Although they speak different languages and have a different culture, they are our brothers and sisters in the Lord. A question that we still have to answer is how they will eventually fit into our bond of churches. As youth, we are currently also investigating ways in which we can become involved. After all, both our youth and theirs are the church leaders of the future.

■ **Axel Hagg**

Mission activities in the Cape

The missionary activities focus on two areas, namely Belhar and Wesbank. In Belhar, the work has already been conducted for ± 20 years. Belhar is about 30 km north of Capetown. Initially, the people attended worship services in the building of another church, but it wasn't too long before they received their own building.

At the moment, Rev. Breytenbach works in Belhar and the membership remains fairly constant. The population of Belhar, and its surrounding areas, is largely people of mixed descent. These people live in poverty and are daily faced by numerous problems. Most of them are unemployed.

Wesbank is the new area in which God's Word is being spread. We began looking for a suitable missionary area early in 2000. Rev. Nicholson, who is involved in this work, went to the Municipalities to identify a developing area. Housing problems were identified in Wesbank, an area between a highway and Kuilsrivier. 5800 houses are being built, with an additional 19 plots assigned for churches and 17 for crèches. The residents come from all over the place and are displaced. They are also without a spiritual home. Rev. Nicholson is now working in this area and hopes to establish a church there. The residents welcome his visits and some are interested in joining the Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke. Since 14 January, Rev. Nicholson has been conducting services every Sunday at the homes of the residents. Since their houses are

very small, not more than four families (7-9 adults) can be accommodated at a time. The services are conducted in the morning and in the afternoon. We rotate on a weekly basis from house to house. To date, 26 adults are being visited. Some of these people spontaneously tell other people about the church and in this way the work is expanding.

Catechism classes are now also conducted on Wednesday evenings, at two different locations, so that interested members will eventually be able to be admitted to the church. The preaching and classes are closely related and the message is aimed at providing spiritual guidance to the prospective members, from the Word of God and from the confessions.

There are plans to erect a building as soon as possible. During the week, this will then be able to function as a crèche, for which there is also a great need. The aim is to raise the children according to Reformed educational principles from a young age. On Sundays, the building will be used for worship services, and for catechism classes.

It is wonderful to see how God holds his Hand over this work and blesses the missionary work. We pray that Rev. Nicholson and Rev. Breytenbach may receive strength for their work and that their work may continue to bear fruit.

Modified article from the Pro Ekklesia (Feb 2001)

Work among Concerned Members

Background

South Africa's churches are currently experiencing incredible changes. The Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerke are by far the largest bond of churches in the country, with more than 1.2 million members. It is in this bond of churches that a gradual movement away from the Scriptures became noticeable more than 20 years ago. During the past 10 years this process has picked up momentum and the church has become more and more liberal. Currently not only her reformed character is affected, but also her character as church. She is rapidly beginning to show the signs of a false church. Many of her members exist in uncertainty, concern and shock within this situation. Some members turn to the charismatic groups; others wish to remain reformed but don't know where to find another reformed congregation. Such members need guidance and it is about this that we wish to tell something more.

Separation

When it becomes apparent that a church no longer submits itself unconditionally to the authority of God's Word, she is a false church. The false church can be recognised in that she assigns more authority to herself than to the Word of God; adds to and removes from the Word; doesn't proclaim the gospel faithfully; doesn't maintain the pure administration of the sacraments; doesn't exercise Church discipline as commanded in God's Word. In addition to these marks, she also persecutes those who wish to live holy lives according the Word of God and who rebuke her for her sins, greed, and idolatries. (Article 29 of the Belgic Confession).

This change from true church to false church doesn't happen overnight. It is a gradual decline. A church that was yesterday still reformed in doctrine and life, can't tomorrow be a false church.

The question is at what stage of decline a church ceases to be a church of Christ and changes into a false church. Obviously it won't be possible to say about such a congregation, "Last week this was still a true church, but from this week onwards she is a false church!" The distinction and separation will only be able to be made after many fruitless attempts have been


made to call her to repentance and she has hardened in her wrong ways. We are therefore dealing with a lengthy process - a process that some times takes ten or twenty years before it leads to separation.

Concerned

There are members in such a congregation. They have grown up as reformed people. Some of them still know the reformed doctrine very well. The younger members don't know it as well, or hardly know it at all. Slowly but surely the congregation's first love begins to wane. She no longer has the knowledge, trust and unity that she had earlier. She isn't diligent in love and good works anymore. She is beginning to conform to the world and reflect a different spirit. Systematically new things are introduced. The holy reference for God and His Word disappears. Eventually some congregation members become anxious and ask, "Where are we going?" The majority of the congregation, however, approves of the changes, or doesn't have enough knowledge or discernment to become concerned.

The congregation is now on the wrong track and this appears to be the path of no return. In this congregation are the concerned members. It is these members that we wish to reach and support with help and advice. They must be instructed so that they will be able to clearly discern the truth. They must be guided to first work for restoration within their own congregation. Only when that congregation perseveres in its wrong ways and continues to wander from the truth, do such faithful members have the duty to separate themselves from that congregation and join the true church. Biblestudy is needed to be able to guide these members on this difficult road. Men are needed who have the knowledge and time to provide instruction and pastoral care for these people.

In areas where there are enough concerned members to form a preaching point, it is possible to conduct services on Sundays. Such services can eventually also lead to the establishment of a congregation. The ultimate goal is that such members can once again become part of a reformed congregation, and that reformed congregations in declining bonds of churches can once again become part of a completely reformed bond of churches. Just as there are



concerned members within declining congregations, so there are also living and fighting churches (congregations) within declining bonds of churches. There can still be true churches within a false bond of churches. These congregations may be in the process of separating. These congregations also require help and guidance. They are also among the concerned whom we wish to reach out to.

General Comments

We have now briefly sketched the work among the concerned. This is urgent work that must be done before it is too late. A time will come when the decline has advanced so far and the hardening of heart has taken place to such a degree, that stage return will be almost impossible, or at least very difficult.

Willing and capable men are needed for this work among the concerned. The Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk of Capetown is already thinking of calling a minister for this work. The churches of Pretoria, Pretoria-Maranata and Bethal are also thinking of ways in which they can become involved - each in her own area.

The aim is to strengthen the unity of faith with all reformed people, from whatever church or bond of churches they may be; to search each other out; and to eventually reunite in one bond of churches. Our communal confession, of how we as reformed people understand the Holy Scriptures, is already summarised in the Three Forms of

Unity (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort). In some instance the work among the concerned will also overlap with evangelism work. This is especially the case where church decline has already advanced.

Our prayer is that the Lord will not leave His Church here in South Africa, but that He will work repentance and restoration.

■ **R.M. Retief**



Aim:

Romans 12:2 teaches all of God's people:

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

This magazine will encourage its readers to earnestly contend for the faith, and to think and act Biblically, in the good traditions of the Church of all ages. Its basis is God's word, as the Church confesses in the Three Forms of Unity. It is intended for the younger members of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, and is produced in co-operation with the Una Sancta. Subscription to the Contender is automatic with subscription to the Una Sancta.

It is not meant to be exclusively for unmarried members who still attend the Youth Bible Study Clubs, but for all those who fit within the loose parameters of the 16 to 30 years of age.

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The deadline for all material to be used in the next issue is **June 12**.

The Contender cover page is one inspired by a most biblical prophecy as well as incorporating an also well known piece of Australian flora: The Gum Tree.

Based on Isaiah 11:1 "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." The design reflects God's continued care for his people; also his people in Australia.

■ Russel Bergsma