The Story of the Reformed Church in America

A People In Mission: Their Expanding Dream

Eugene Heideman

The Heritage and Hope Series of the Reformed Church in America

Focus Four: North American Missions

A People in Mission: Their Expanding Dream

by

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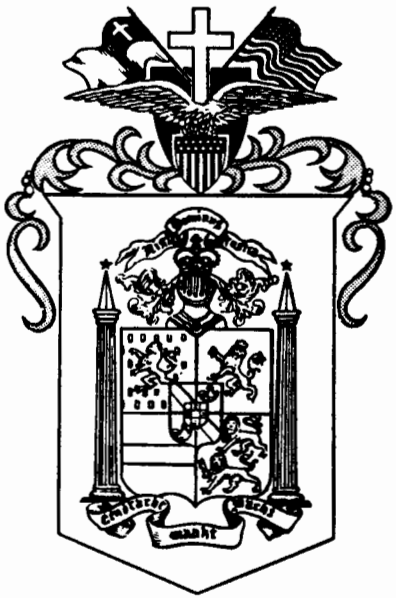
This Nation Under God



BOARD OF DOMESTIC MISSIONS
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FOREWORD

The Heritage and Hope series provides members of the Reformed Church an opportunity to better understand the history, mission and life of the denomination in order that we may more effectively live our Christian faith. This church with more than 350 years of history has a unique heritage and God calls us to carry out a unique ministry.

This fourth book in the series, *A People in Mission: Their Expanding Dream,* focuses upon the Reformed Church's mission in North America. "This nation under God" was the dream of the Reformed Church from its very beginning in the New World. There were varied understandings of that dream in different eras and even the identity of the denomination needed to be examined as the dream of mission on this continent expanded.

Dr. Heideman's presentation of the historical information is greatly enhanced with numerous quotations of Reformed Church people in mission through the centuries. He invites the reader to examine how the present interacts with the past and how our heritage affects our present and future. The Reformed Church in America, with its many ethnic and cultural roots, is learning that mission is a partnership always challenged by expanding God-given visions. God calls us to be a people of both heritage and hope.

Eloise H. Van Heest
Coordinator, Council for Christian Education
General Program Council, RCA

1

This Nation Under God

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new
And God fulfills himself in may ways
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."[1]

"This nation under God" was the theme of the report of the Board of Domestic Missions to the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America in the year 1949. It expressed the mood of American Christian missions just after the Second World War—optimistic, self-confident, looking toward a glorious future. People were thankful to God who had just given them victory in battle.

"This nation under God" represents the dream of the Reformed Church from its very beginning in the New World. It is a glorious dream. God, rather than the nation, must be Lord. God defines the love which must be manifested in the nation. God sets the standards for justice among the poor and the needy. God provides for the sick, the suffering, and the weak. He demands that everyone be fully incorporated into the life of the nation.

"This nation under God" can become a dangerous theme when it is placed in the hands of sinners. A church which wants to maintain the "one good custom" can use this theme to rule others out of the kingdom. The theme has been used to expand the power of Christians at the cost of the Native Americans who had welcomed northern Europeans to the new world. In the nineteenth century American Protestants turned this theme against Roman Catholic immigrants. Colonial powers, including the United States, have used this theme to justify their policies of imperialistic expansionism.

The 1949 report understood well how intertwined was the mission of the Reformed Church with the whole history, life, and future of the nation in which it lived. All of the glory and the danger of the theme is apparent when the report states:

> To bring 'this nation under God' constitutes the great task of the church today. To bring to our countrymen the Gospel of Christ, to expose them to the redeeming transforming power of the only begotten Son of God, the Saviour of the world, is our prime responsibility. . . . Let this nation once come under the influence of God, let this nation once acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every walk of life and the church must inevitably go forward to greater things. . . . Then she can prove to the world that Christian democracy and not atheistic communism is the only adequate answer to the world's quest for peace and happiness.[2]

The dream, "this nation under God," is an expanding vision. In each era of its life the Reformed Church has understood the dream somewhat differently. The old order does change and God brings forth new ways of fulfilling his own vision for this world. In this book we explore the course of the dream as it has been lived in the work of North American missions. We will see that the dream was present in the beginning, but it was small in scope. It grows in the nineteenth century and reaches from the Atlantic to Pacific by 1949. But 1949 is not the end of the story, for in the three decades that follow the old order changes once more, in ways which are so radically new as to threaten the very identity of the denomination.

As we explore the dream, we discover that our own identity is called into question, our confidence in our roots is shaken, and our dreams must be expanded. We did not begin as a people in mission, for in the beginning our lives were lived in such threatening circumstances that our goal was security and survival. God called us out of our desire for self-preservation into the world of risky mission endeavors. We have never been fully a people in mission, but we are more and more a people growing into mission.

New Amsterdam Under God

The dream was first planted in New Amsterdam in 1624, when Bastian Krol arrived in Manhattan to fulfill the office of Comforter of the Sick. He had been approved by the Classis of Amsterdam in The Netherlands and was given specific instructions concerning his duties:

> First, to read common prayers morning and evening, as well as before and after meals. Secondly, to instruct and comfort the sick as needed. Thirdly, to admonish those who ask for help, or are in need of admonishment, by reading from God's Word. Fourthly, at opportune times, to read chapters from God's word or from books written by Reformed authors or even a sermon.[3]

Contrary to our twentieth century custom, everyone in New Amsterdam took it for granted that Bastian Krol and the ordained ministers who were to follow him would have their expenses and salaries paid out of the coffers of the Dutch West India Company. In the seventeenth century it was still assumed by most persons that the civil authorities and the church were to be closely allied in providing for the religious needs of the

people of the realm. Thus the settlers of New Amsterdam arranged their affairs according to the civil law of The Netherlands and the Church Order of the Synod of Dort (1618-19).

The Church of Dort assumed a distinction between "church" and "mission." A local congregation which had a fully constituted consistory with minister, elders, and deacons, serving under supervision of a classis, was considered to be a church. In the alliance between civil and ecclesiastical authorities, it was the duty of the civil leaders to see that the church be planted and the three marks of the church—the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline—be maintained in every place in the realm. Thus much of what we today see as "mission" was the responsibility of the civil rulers. The civil authorities were to pay ministers to go to each new area of the realm to extend the ministry of the church there.

When the church was planted in a town, it became the responsibility of the ordained office-bearers to carry out the church's task of preaching, administering the sacraments, and exercising pastoral care and discipline over the people. Church leaders were to remind the civil leaders of their responsibilities, advise them on religious matters, and point out those places which stood in need of ordained ministers or other religious workers.

When there were areas of the country distant from organized churches, or areas where persecution was so intense that the organized church could not function, the civil authorities were expected to send "missionaries" to form congregations or, at least, to gather people together for worship where it was not yet possible for them to sustain themselves as organized congregations. The classis was expected to cooperate with the civil authorities by calling ordained ministers to be missionaries and to support them with prayers, spiritual care, and admonition.[4]

Bastian Krol was thus sent into New Amsterdam with his salary paid by the Dutch West India Company. Article two of the articles under which that Company was given legal rights to establish the colony in the New World, specifically established the Reformed religion as the faith of the land.

> Within their territory they shall only worship according to the true Reformed Religion, as it is done within this country at present, and by a good Christian life they shall try to attract the Indians and other blind persons to the knowledge of God and his Word, without however committing any religious persecution, but freedom of conscience shall be left to every one, but if any one of them, or if any one within their territory shall intentionally curse or speak blasphemy against the name of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, he shall be punished by the Commander and his Council according to circumstances.[5]

According to article two, "this nation under God" clearly means that in New Amsterdam worship in the land was to be Reformed worship, and that the God and Father of Jesus Christ, as confessed by Reformed Churches, was the God under whom people were to live.

Although the official language of the colony was Dutch, language as such was not an important issue in those early days. Because the colony had been established primarily for trading purposes the people who settled there were a mixed lot. As many as eighteen different languages could be heard in the settlement. The Walloons, who were French-speaking Reformed people from areas now incorporated within the borders of Belgium, formed an important group within the colony; about half of the fifty persons who celebrated the first Lord's Supper in the land in 1628 were Walloons. Moreover, the colony was very conscious of the fact that their beloved Heidelberg Catechism had come from the Palatinate in Germany and that Calvin had done his work in Geneva. The first Director-General of the colony, Peter Minuit, was French, born in the Reformed town of Wesel in Germany. In those early days, Dutch was the language of convenience; it did not yet have the ethnic overtones it was later to acquire.

While language was not an issue, there was considerable dispute about how tolerant one should be towards those who did not wish to worship in a Reformed mode. The Company, with its dominant commercial interests, wished to follow the tolerant policies which had been dominant in The Netherlands. The Reformed ministers soon complained about the situation. In 1655 the conflict became a serious one when Dominie Megapolensis, a leading minister complained:

> We have here Papists, Mennonites and Lutherans among the Dutch; many Puritans and Independents, also atheists and other servants of Baal among the English under our government, who conceal themselves under the name of Christians.[6]

The Quakers especially irritated Megapolensis who complained in 1658 that, although the government had issued orders against the fanatics, the "raving Quakers have not settled down" and continue to "pour forth their venom."[7]

Peter Stuyvesant, who became governor in 1647, supported the ministers with various decrees. An order issued on Feb. 1, 1656, stated that only specifically Reformed public and private meetings would be allowed. The Classis of Amsterdam supported this policy as being particularly important in suppressing Lutheran worship. If the fifty or more Lutheran families in the colony were to receive permission to hold separate worship it would "pave the way for other sects, so that in time our place would become a receptacle for all sorts of heretics and fanatics."[8]

The Company was concerned about the repressive policy, however, for Stuyvesant's decrees were hindering the growth of population on Long Island which the Company wished to develop. The Company lost patience with their zealous Director and wrote to him, insisting upon a more tolerant attitude.

> You may therefore shut your eyes, at least not force people's consciences, but allow everyone to have his own belief, as long as he behaves quietly and

legally, gives no offence to his neighbors and does not oppose the government.[9]

Not only did the ministers have to contend with those who wished to institute other Protestant forms of worship, but they also had to deal with persons who were not Christians at all. In 1654 Jews appeared in New Amsterdam. Since many of them were poor, the deacons of the church (who were responsible for giving alms to the poor in the land) were compelled to spend several hundred guilders in aiding them. Many complained about these new neighbors. Megapolensis said, "These people have no other God than the unrighteous Mammon, and no other aim but to get possession of Christian property, and to surpass all other merchants by drawing all trade unto themselves."[10] Since the West India Company had many Jewish stockholders, Megapolensis and Stuyvesant lost this battle also. The Company required that Jewish privileges be restored.

The colony also had a number of blacks in its population. Those blacks who were free apparently were accorded the same attention (or lack of it) that was given to other aliens in the colony. In the minds of the Dutch, slavery was not a controversial issue. Several of the ministers, including Megapolensis, may have owned slaves at one time or another. While allowing the civil authorities the right to deal with social arrangements, the Dutch ministers were concerned about the state of the black slaves' souls. In 1641 the Classis of Amsterdam noted that some progress was being made in teaching the slaves "the right knowledge of God." From one to three black children were baptized annually in New Amsterdam between 1639 and 1655. Christian marriages were performed for slaves from time to time. Dominie Henricus Selyns, who served in Stuyvesant's bowery from 1660-64, made considerable progress in reaching blacks. On June 9, 1664, he wrote to the Classis of Amsterdam that

> when it was seemly to do so, we have to the best of our ability, taken much trouble in private and public catechizing (of the slaves). This has borne but little fruit among the elder people who have no faculty of comprehension; but there is some hope for the youth who have improved reasonably well.[11]

The only "missionary" work in the colonial period was that carried out among the Indians. Article two of the Company charter had specifically mentioned the Indians as objects of religious concern. Prior to the establishment of the colony, a poor start had been made in developing good relationships with the Native Americans. Henry Hudson in his famous excursion up the Hudson River in 1609 had traded with the Indians, made them drunk, and killed some of them, but had not told them the gospel. When the Company began to send religious workers, however, it made provision that part of their efforts were to be directed toward conversion of the Indians.

There was much disagreement as to how to view the Indians in the seventeenth century. In Europe there were many who spoke of them as "noble savages," innocent and uncorrupted by civilization. Dominie

Michaelius, who carried out the first serious work among the Indians, disagreed with that optimistic evaluation. He wrote,

> As to the natives of this country, I find them entirely savage and wild, strangers to all decency, yea, uncivil and stupid as garden poles . . . How these people can best be led to the true knowledge of God and of the Mediator, Christ, it is hard to say.[12]

Good relations with the Indians were not helped when Kieft became governor. He treated them outrageously, with the result that the colony became involved in an Indian war (1641-43) which was devastating to both sides.

Dominie Michealius came to the conclusion that it was hopeless to try to influence adult Indians. He proposed instead a plan to separate Indian children from their parents and to educate them under the instruction of a godly schoolmaster who would teach them to read, write, speak Dutch, and train them in virtuous living as well as in the fundamentals of the faith. He also believed that these children should be encouraged to speak in their native tongue so that when they were properly educated they would be able to teach the faith to their own people.

His plan was not put into operation for two reasons. First, to his surprise, he learned that the Indian parents had such a strong affection for their children that they were unwilling to be parted from them. Second, the Company opposed antagonizing the parents with such a scheme. The profit-conscious Company was quick to recognize that the bad feelings resulting from such a scheme would disrupt the fur trade which was of primary interest to the stockholders.[13] This would not be the only time in

New Amsterdam in 1667

American history that the selfishness of civil authorities would demonstrate more respect for the rights of others than the good intention of missionary-minded religious people.

In spite of the almost total inability of the Dutch and the Indians to comprehend each other, some surprising work was done. Johannes Megapolensis, notwithstanding his low view of Indians, worked hard to understand and convert them. Often ten or more Indians would spend the night in his home. When he admonished them to follow the Ten Commandments they were impressed, but pointed out that they did not understand why so many Christians did not follow the teachings of the Bible.[14]

The Struggle for Survival (1664-1792)

In 1664 the English captured New Amsterdam and changed its name to New York. Suddenly the duty of the Reformed Church toward "this nation under God" was changed dramatically. The Church of England became the official church of the land. Primary responsibility for spiritual welfare of the colony now rested with the English authorities and the Church of England. The Dutch Reformed Churches, under article 8 of the terms of surrender, were granted the privilege of enjoying "the liberty of their consciences in divine worship and church discipline."

However, the Reformed Church did not simply become one church among many in New York. The Duke of York issued a set of laws for the colony which provided that within each parish in the government a church seating two hundred persons should be built. Persons from the parish were to have responsibility for caring for the details of maintaining religion in that place. In practice this meant that in areas of predominantly Dutch culture the Reformed religion would continue to function as the established faith of the local community.[15] Revenue from taxes would continue to be used to support the clergy. In certain details Reformed Churches enjoyed a certain supremacy over other churches. For example, in 1670 the Reformed Church in Albany was designated as the "parochial church," with the result that Lutherans had to use the services of the Reformed Church sexton for the burial of their dead. If the Lutherans employed their own sexton they still had to pay the Reformed sexton a fee.[16]

The Reformed Churches suffered two major disadvantages after the arrival of the English. First, since James, the Duke of York and later king, was primarily interested in gaining revenue from the colony, he found it expedient to promote religious toleration. He allowed Lutherans and other religious groups to hold religious services, with the result that Reformed Churches faced competition for the loyalty of ethnic groups other than Dutch. Second, although the Reformed churches were permitted to receive money collected through taxation, James lacked enthusiasm for pressing "non-Dutch to pay taxes for the Dutch Reformed

Church." In 1669 Dominie Megapolensis complained to the Classis of Amsterdam.

> On Sundays we have many hearers. People crowd into the church, and apparently like the sermon; but most of the listeners are not inclined to contribute to the support and salary of the preacher. They seem to desire, that we should live upon air and not upon produce.[17]

A number of changes now took place in the self-understanding of the Reformed churches. First of all, survival of their dominant Dutch culture and language became a matter of primary concern. The Dutch remained the majority in New York for many years and used their language as a means of maintaining their position. In many local communities Dutch people clustered around their Dutch-speaking pastors and sent their children to Dutch schools. Thereby they could avoid coming to terms with the fact that they were Dutch islands in a sea of English-speaking people. As late as 1743, when the Synod of South Holland proposed that, in America, the Dutch and German Reformed unite with the Presbyterian Church, the proposal was rejected. Language rather than doctrine separated the Calvinistic churches.[18] Second, in spite of their comparatively favorable legal position, the Reformed Church was so small that survival rather than mission was its primary concern after 1664. Within two years after the arrival of the British, the number of ordained Reformed Church ministers had been reduced to two! There were only thirteen Dutch churches, most of which had never installed a pastor. Seven thousand Dutchmen were surrounded by 235,000 Englishmen in the colonies.[19]

In this new situation, "this nation under God" became for the Reformed Church a matter of shared responsibility. The greater share of the burden now fell upon the English. Although the Dutch still felt free to make representations to the English rulers, they no longer could play the role in public life which had previously been the case. They now sensed that their task was to provide religious worship for the Dutch-speaking and Reformed people. They were to offer pastoral care for those sons and daughters who began to scatter into new towns and villages surrounding the older areas in New York, and for those moving into New Jersey and Pennsylvania as well. Without really knowing it, and without intending to be one, the Reformed Church had become one denomination among many. It was no longer the offical church of "this nation under God" nor yet a missionary church in a voluntary society.

From National Church to Denomination

During the eighteenth century the Reformed Church settled into its new role. Aided by immigration of Reformed Germans from the Palatinate and by high fertility rates among the Dutch, the number of churches grew. In 1696 there were twenty three churches; in 1721, forty; in 1772, one hundred; and in 1792, one hundred sixteen. The Reformed

Church was proving to be a faithful servant of Christ in the new world. It was carrying out a faithful ministry among the Reformed people. No longer did it become involved in questions of toleration of Lutherans, Jews, and other non-Reformed people. It allowed the English to handle the affairs of state and in good Calvinistic fashion it prayed regularly for the king.

The change from national church to American denomination did not happen without a struggle however. Although the issues often became confused by personal and peripheral concerns, for our purposes it is adequate to note that, on the one hand, a "Conferentie" party emerged with its center in New York in the middle of the eighteenth century. This group of ministers rejoiced in the Dutch connection and the treaty which gave the New York churches status as part of the national church of The Netherlands, rather than the role of "dissenters." They cherished the European requirements for a university-educated clergy, for the formal worship patterns of the church, entry into the church through infant baptism, and the authority of classis and synod. On the other hand, a "Coetus" party, with its center in newly-settled areas of New Jersey, set forth the need for a more denominational pattern of church life, with an emphasis upon conversion, repentance, and personal decision. They sought the power to ordain ministers, wanted to establish a separate church college in New Jersey, and demanded that ministers have a deep religious experience.[20]

By 1771, under the leadership of Dr. John Livingston, a compromise was reached between the two factions, but the differing points of view continued to play a role. During the Revolutionary War, the Reformed Church found itself to be divided about the issues of independence. Although by 1780 the Synod did describe the prosecution of the war as "just and necessary," it did not enter into careful discussion of the issue.[21] For the most part, the Synod confined its work to matters of pressing concern to the life of the church, such as the baptism of illegitimate children, the cases of discipline regarding ministers, the needs of the ministers' widows fund, and the examination of theological students. In his carefully researched article on Reformed Church members' participation in the War, John Beardslee shows that the Synod devoted itself to an aim common to both parties—the preserva-

Dr. John Livingston

tion of the Dutch ethnic identity and the unity of the Reformed Church. The broader concerns of nation and government were subordinated to the interests of Dutch preaching and pastoral counsel, so long as the rights of the church were not being infringed upon.[22]

By 1792 the Reformed Dutch Church was ready to give up all claims to being a national or established church in the land. Recognizing that the Church Order of Dort could no longer function in the United States without amendment, it accepted a set of *Explanatory Articles,* which omitted all reference to the national establishment of religion. It accepted the principles of freedom of conscience for everyone and of voluntary church membership in the denomination of one's choice. The Reformed Church expressed its confidence that in such a land and under such a government, the church would grow in faith and number and that peace and love would reign in the land. In the introduction to the *Explanatory Articles,* the church stated:

> Whether the Church of Christ will not be more effectually patronised in a civil government where full freedom of conscience and worship is equally protected and insured to all men, and where truth is left to vindicate her own sovereign authority and influence, than where men in power promote their favorite denominations, will now, in America, have a fair trial; and all who know and love the truth will rejoice in the prospect which such a happy situation affords for the triumph of the Gospel, and the reign of peace and love.[23]

In accepting this position as a denomination, the Reformed Church stated its dream of a new era of church extension and domestic missions, in order that it might live in "this nation under God."

2

Church Extension In The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church

"As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness." (Ezekiel 34:12)

It was the English who first called the Reformed Church in New Amsterdam a "Dutch" church. In the articles of capitulation to the English, it was agreed that "the *Dutch* here shall enjoy the liberty of their consciences in divine worship and church discipline." Certain civil disputes were to be settled "according to the manner of the Dutch." Thirty years later, in May, 1696, William the Third of England granted a charter to the Netherland Reformed Congregation of New York under the English title of "Reformed Protestant Dutch Church."[1] The word, "Dutch," applied to the descendents of Netherlanders, would not have been easily understood in Holland. The inhabitants of that land applied the word, "Duits", to the *Germans.* Ironically,

> The Hollanders needed to turn English before they could call themselves *Dutch.* It was a long and gradual process, the children and children's children of those who capitulated in 1664 learning the current secular usage of the new community that was so rapidly outnumbering them . . . (and taught) their utterly un-Hollandish name of "Dutch," and taught their Hollandish hearts to love the British circuity as though it were the direct legacy of their fathers.
>
> The exact truth is, that the name, "Dutch," as applied to our church, is the product of a political change by which the Hollanders ceased to be masters of the soil, and came to be a subordinate party in their colony.[2]

In accepting the name which the English had given to it, the Reformed Church entered into a crisis of identity which was to confuse its work of North American missions from that day to this. On the one hand, it

desired to be an American church, in full partnership with Protestant churches on this continent. On the other hand, events were to prove that it would not be able to escape being known by others, as well as by itself, as the Dutch church. In protest, it would affirm that it wished to be known as "Reformed" in America, without being ethnic in intent. Yet, even while making that protest, the church was vigorously carrying out a resolution of the 1848 General Synod that "the Board of Missions be recommended to give especial attention to the wants of Protestant Hollanders . . ."[3]

The Special Committee on the Name of the Church in 1867 could not fail to note the ironies in the situation.

> They only mark themselves with a hieroglyphic which . . . seems to them to say that they are *Germans* . . . those who bear it belong to that people whom *the English call Dutch.* It is too thin a soil to grow enthusiasm. They *wish* to be Americans. They *might consent* to be known as Hollanders. But they have no motive to be known as *Dutch.*[4]

In spite of the ironies of the name, however, the actions and attitudes of the Reformed Church throughout most of its history have conspired to leave the impression outside the denomination that it is "Dutch" and inside the denomination those of other than "Dutch" extraction have easily drifted away as they felt somewhat unappreciated. In this chapter we will explore church extension activities from 1786 until late in the nineteenth century. We will note how the Reformed Church understood its role as a denomination working to fulfill the dream that America would be "this nation under God."

Organizing for Church Extension

Neither the Church Order of Dort nor the Explanatory Articles of 1792 prepared the church for the situation which it would face in extending the church into the frontier areas of North America. For almost the first two centuries of its life in the new world, Reformed churches arose when either the authorities of the place or a group of local inhabitants saw fit to start a new congregation. The classes or the Synod responded by incorporating such new congregations into the wider fellowship. There was no organized attempt to extend the denomination.

The first organized approach to the problem occurred in 1786 when the inhabitants of Saratoga, New York asked the Synod to make it possible for them to hear the preaching of the Word.[5] The Synod not only responded affirmatively to their request, but also organized additional measures for church extension. It stated that such activity was the "indispensable" duty of the Synod

> for the extension of the blessed kingdom of Christ and the advancement of the welfare of many immortal souls, to fix their attention in tender care upon the congregations and neighborhoods still lying in common and destitute of the preaching of the Gospel, especially upon those portions of our widely-extended land where daily new settlements are made . . .[6]

A committee was appointed to make recommendations to the following Synod.

The committee reported in 1788. It recommended that voluntary collections should be made for this work in all congregations and that the money should be placed in the hands of the classis. The classes should then present the money to the Synod, which in turn would employ ministers and licentiates to collect the "dispersed persons to the unity of the faith and discipline received and ratified in our churches." Finally, classes should be aware of the persons living within their own bounds and form them into congregations.[7] The following year, the first collections were reported. The work gained momentum in 1794, when two ministers, John Cornelison and Stephen Ostrander were appointed missionaries. Cornelison was to visit settlers in the territory of the Delaware River "as far as the place where the road strikes off to the great bend of the Susquehannah River," for a period of eight weeks. Ostrander was sent from "Catskill to Jericho at the Unadilla, from thence to Schenenas, thence on Cherry Valley, and from thence to Onondaga, making diligent inquiry respecting other adjacent Dutch settlements, during the term of eight weeks."[8] Since each of these men served pastorates of their own, the Synod arranged for various neighboring ministers to supply the pulpits of the absent missionaries. The good fruit of their labor was soon apparent. Under Rev. Cornelison's efforts, the first church in the denomination's domestic missionary efforts was established under the name of *Church of Union* in Chenango Valley in 1794.

These missionary tours were always rigorous and at times dangerous. Although few first-hand reports remain available, Henry Ostrander's reminiscences of his tour with Rev. Jacob Sickles into Canada in 1809 give us some idea of what was involved.

> When I heard him preach I felt that he was indeed an able minister of the New Testament, and that he was determined to know nothing else in his ministry save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. On one occasion, . . . as we were attempting to cross the St. Lawrence River, at Ogdensburgh, I perceived danger from the rotten vessel, and the rising tempest lashing the waves. I begged the boatman to return to the shore, but met a contemptuous refusal. It had to encounter even the decided dissent of my companion, who more than hinted that there were some grains of cowardice in my composition.[9]

In 1796, Rev. Peter Labagh was sent to a group of Dutch emigrants who had begun to locate at Salt River, Kentucky, in 1781. They had come to Kentucky by heavy wagons and flat boats, moving from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. After arriving they immediately began to hold religious services in spite of their lack of a minister. Labagh went all the way from Hackensack, New Jersey on horseback and returned by the same mode of transportation. While in Kentucky he organized a Reformed Dutch Church of one hundred families. Three acres of land were purchased and a church, later known as "The Old Mud Meeting

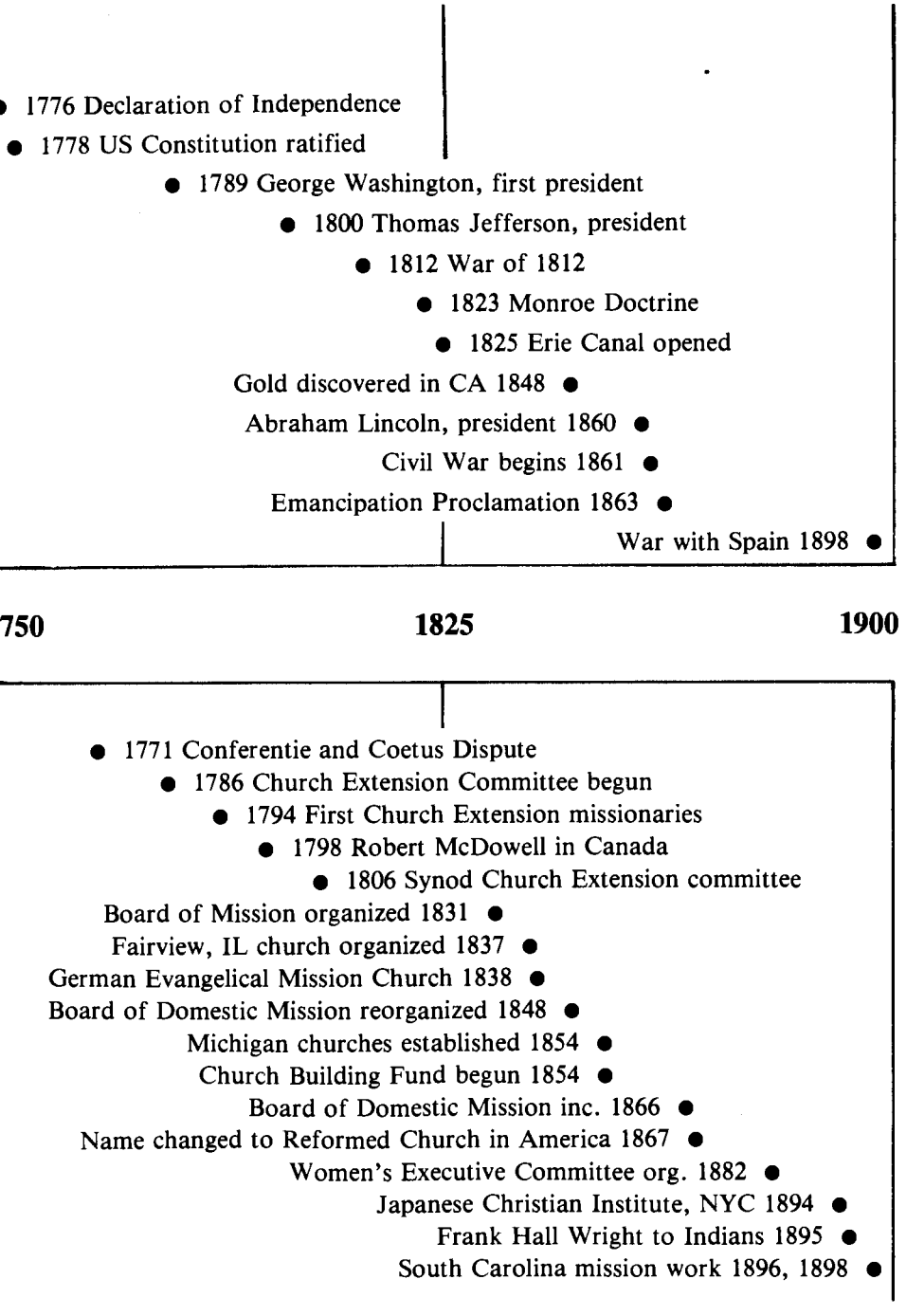
1609—1980
WORLD EVENTS

- 1609 Henry Hudson, Hudson River
- 1664 New Amsterdam falls to England

1600 1675 1750

RCA MISSION EVENTS

- 1618-19 Synod of Dort
- 1623 Bastian Krol, New Amsterdam
- 1628 First Communion in New Amsterdam
- 1628-29 Dominie Michelius work with Indians


1776 Declaration of Independence
1778 US Constitution ratified
1789 George Washington, first president
1800 Thomas Jefferson, president
1812 War of 1812
1823 Monroe Doctrine
1825 Erie Canal opened
Gold discovered in CA 1848
Abraham Lincoln, president 1860
Civil War begins 1861
Emancipation Proclamation 1863
War with Spain 1898
750
1825
1900
1771 Conferentie and Coetus Dispute
1786 Church Extension Committee begun
1794 First Church Extension missionaries
1798 Robert McDowell in Canada
1806 Synod Church Extension committee
Board of Mission organized 1831
Fairview, IL church organized 1837
German Evangelical Mission Church 1838
Board of Domestic Mission reorganized 1848
Michigan churches established 1854
Church Building Fund begun 1854
Board of Domestic Mission inc. 1866
Name changed to Reformed Church in America 1867
Women's Executive Committee org. 1882
Japanese Christian Institute, NYC 1894
Frank Hall Wright to Indians 1895
South Carolina mission work 1896, 1898

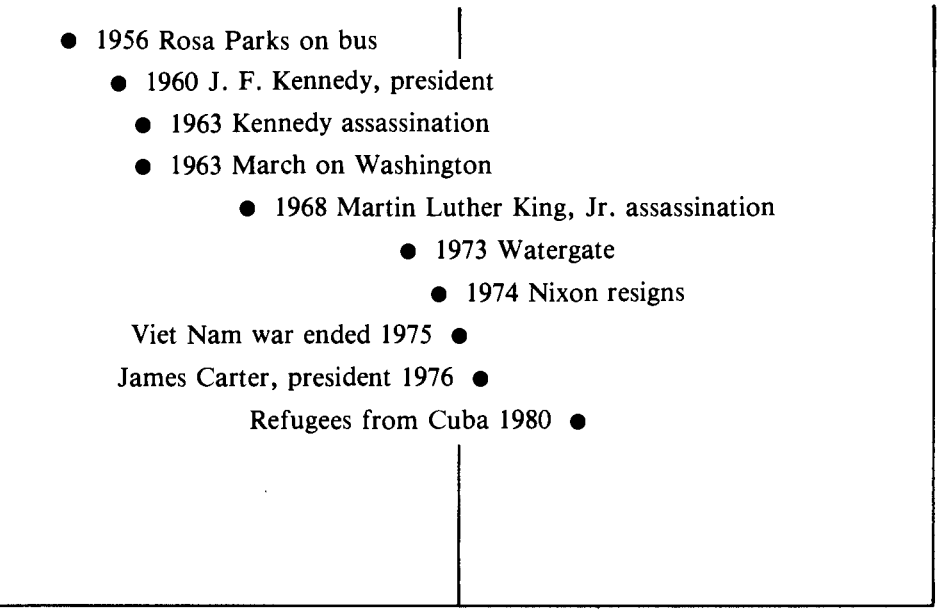
WORLD EVENTS

- 1901 Theodore Roosevelt, president
- 1917 World War I
- Wall St. panic, depression 1929
- F. D. Roosevelt, president 1933
- Pearl Harbor attack, WW II 1941
- United Nations charter 1945
- Marshall Plan 1947
- US entered Korean War 1950

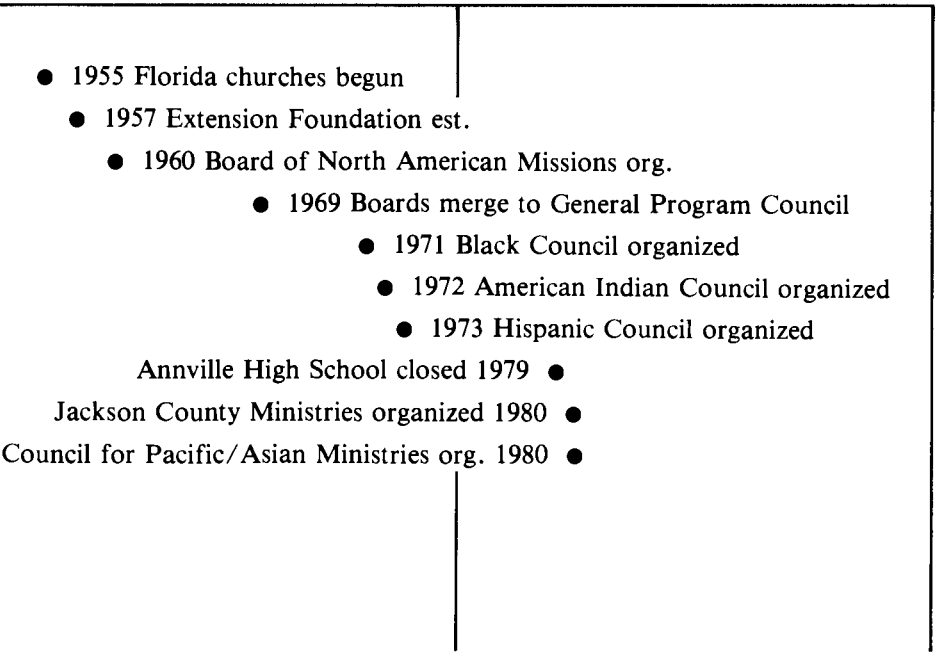
1900 **1925** **1950**

RCA MISSION EVENTS

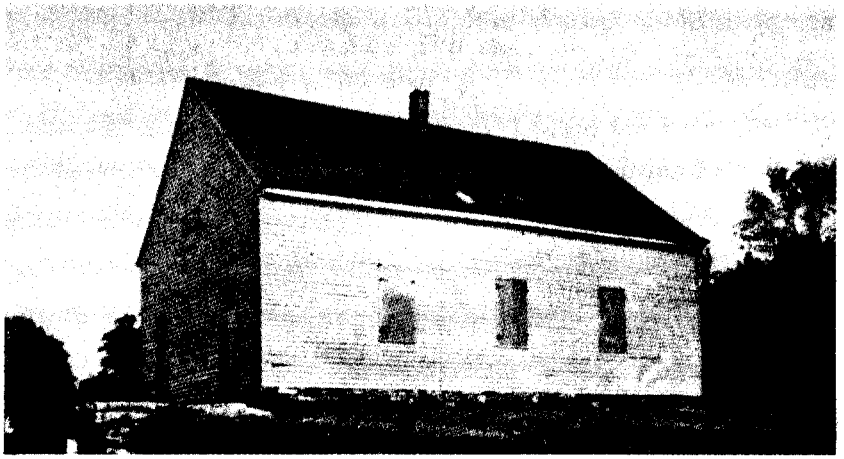
- 1900 Smith and Gant to Jackson Co., KY
- 1903 Oak Harbor, WA church
- 1907 Mascalero Apache work
- 1908 Italian work begun
- 1909 Annville, KY work begun
- 1909 Women's Board of Domestic Missions
- 1909 Monarch, Alberta, Canada church
- 1911 Southern Normal School, ALA founded
- 1923 Hope Church in Los Angeles, CA
- So. Carolina churches to Presbyterians 1926
- 1924 Kempers go to Mexico
- Work in Canada with immigrants 1949



950 1975 2000



House," was built. The building stood for more than one hundred years, in spite of its name.[10] Unfortunately, the Reformed Church felt that Kentucky was at too great a distance from its major areas of work. Therefore, in 1817 the Classis of New Brunswick recommended that it be transferred to the Presbyterians in the area, with the result that the building was used by the Cumberland Presbyterians for the next twenty years.[11]



Old Mud Meeting House, Harrodsburg, Kentucky

Under the enthusiastic missionary labors of Robert McDowell, minister of the Classis of Albany, fourteen churches were begun in Canada. The first three of these churches, organized in 1798, numbered together more than four hundred families of Dutch, German and English stock. Since no other minister would accept a call to labor in the area, McDowell worked alone among these churches which stretched for three hundred miles across Ontario. By 1806 his patience reached an end, with the result that he sent a sharp letter to the Synod convened in Albany. He stated that he was becoming tired and that the competitors were moving in.

> The enemy has lately made great inroads among them. . . . The congregations among which he (McDowell—EPH) is settled were greatly neglected, often being from three to six weeks without having the Gospel preached to them. His constitution is now much debilitated, owing to the abundance of his ministerial labors; and he is therefore unable to visit those places. . . . The Baptists frequently send missionaries through the country; and missionaries from Connecticut have lately visited those places.[12]

McDowell was forced to make a threat in order to get the attention of the Synod. He declared that if assistance did not come very soon, the congregations would splinter into many sects. Therefore, he was looking toward the Presbyterian Church.

> And if no assistance can be obtained from the Reformed Dutch Church, he (McDowell—EPH) considers himself under the necessity to advise them to make application to the Presbyterian Church for supplies.[13]

By 1819 McDowell could wait no longer. He joined the Presbyterian Church and took with him eleven of the churches he had founded. Several of those churches remain members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to this day.[14]

The Synod realized that the demands of church extension were greater than could be met by the somewhat casual arrangements which had prevailed since 1786. Therefore in 1806 it appointed a "Standing Committee on Church Extension," to be composed of four ministers and four elders of the Albany Synod, which had the leadership in appointing missionaries to make tours. The committee had a three-fold task: "to search out and establish new congregations, especially among Dutch settlements, to find pastors for new churches, and to solicit funds for this work."[15] As a result of these actions, by 1821 thirty congregations had been established. However, it proved to be easier to establish congregations than to find pastors who were willing to serve them or to raise funds for the work. In 1821 none of the thirty congregations had a resident pastor. The committee pointed out that it had received only $1270.81 in contributions and was $410.30 in debt. It could not pay a full salary to an ordained minister and was therefore reduced to employing persons licensed to preach, but not yet judged fit for ordination.[16]

As one reads the reports from year to year, one senses that, in regard to church extension, the Reformed Church members had not yet come to understand what was involved in making the shift from being a national church to being a denomination. In the national church, the civil authorities were responsible for seeing that there was a church in each place. In a denominational church, the members themselves must take responsibility for extending the ministry of the church into all those communities which are in need of the gospel. The Reformed churches believed that it was important to minister to the needs of the Reformed people, especially the Dutch, but the membership did not yet recognize that they themselves were responsible to carry out the task from their contributed funds.

A theological principle is involved. According to the Belgic Confession and the Church Order of Dort, a church is complete and true when it exhibits the three marks of the church which are the preaching of the Word, the pure administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. One can be a good church without being engaged in mission. Mission as an activity of the church is optional, to be financed by voluntary special contributions and to be carried out by pastors who volunteer or who can be spared from other duties. A *church* needs an ordained minister. A *mission field* can be served by a person licensed to preach.

This distinction between "church" and "mission" was to persist into

the 1960's. In 1953 the old distinction between "minister" and "missionary" stated in the Church Order of Dort would find its way into a new distinction between "church" and "mission church". Provision 94 of the 1953 *Constitution* stated that if a local church failed to fulfill the functions of an organized church in any of five conditions, the consistory of said church should be summoned by the classis to "show cause why it should not be made a Mission Church." The clear implication is that a "mission church" is somehow defective. In 1967 the phrase was removed from the *Constitution* after the Classis of Brooklyn objected that the language was too harsh and legal in tone and that the phrase "mission church" was not biblical.[17] It was only after 1967 that the Reformed Church finally recognized that "mission" is not a word that is applied to a congregation which is not yet a church. Rather, mission is an essential mark of the church. "The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning."[18]

The Reformed Church extension program was to struggle along for many years because its polity made church extension and missions an optional activity. In 1819 the Synod attempted to strengthen its organization once more as it transferred the Committee on Church Extension to New York from Albany. This move represented a shift in a conservative direction, toward the higher Calvinism of the New York churches away from the more revivalistic tendencies at times manifested in the north. In 1821 the Committee stated that the patterns of Albany could no longer be followed, for churches were established without regard to the availability of personnel or money. "Our missionary enterprise has by no means corresponded with our ability, and the Committee would humbly add, with our obligations and duty." Therefore, the Reformed Church had no choice about its future activity.

> Sound policy, as well as long experience, dictates, that little can be effected, but by *permanent establishments;* by bringing to the destitute places under our care, the *stated* administration of the word and ordinances. Your Committee conceive that more is done for the cause of our Redeemer, by *planting* the gospel down in *one spot,* where a prospect presents itself of collecting together *one church,* than by employing ten missionaries over a large district of country . . .[19]

Given the attitudes and circumstances of the church in that time, the Committee had undoubtedly chosen the wiser course. In doing so, however, they effectively conceded the frontier to other denominations. From this point on for decades, church extension was carried out among "our own" rather than among the "destitute masses" of America.[20]

By 1850 the work of domestic missions had undergone two more structural changes. In 1831 the "Board of Missions" was organized, with at least half its members living in New York. From this time on, an "agent" was employed to raise funds and give leadership to the work. At first, many objected that the agent, who was paid $1,200 per year, was an unnecessary expense. When he was dismissed and the income of the Board

dropped by more than fifty per cent, it was recognized that the administrative expense was necessary to the effective pursuit of missions. By 1848 further reorganization was required. The Board of Domestic Missions, which was to continue to give leadership to the work of church extension for more than one hundred years, was formed. In 1866 it was incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, with the express purpose that:

> The particular business and objects of such Society shall be the promotion of the growth of said Church by aiding weak, and founding new churches of the denomination in the United States of America.[21]

The Extension of the Church Among the Germans

In its origin the Reformed Church in America felt itself at one with the French and German speaking Reformed people. As has already been noted, many in New Amsterdam were actually French or German speaking persons, with Dutch functioning as the common language for worship.

The French impact was ultimately to prove small, but the friendly feeling towards the French was displayed when a group of French Huguenots fled to the New World through England and settled in Kingston and finally New Paltz, New York, in 1673. They were readily accepted as brothers and sisters in the faith. In 1683 they formed a French-speaking Reformed church, which was unique in that it was not subject to the Classis of Amsterdam, as were the Dutch and German churches of that time. This church existed without a resident pastor for the first eighty years of its life. For a time, Rev. Daillie was sent by the Dutch church in New York to work among the French refugees.

The church lived without major incident, except that in 1731, a Rev. Johanness Van Driessen ordained the newly-elected elders of the consistory. Since he had received his theological education in Belgium and been examined for the ministry by the Presbytery of New Haven in Connecticut, a number of Dutch ministers objected that only men trained in Holland were fit for work in their churches. Seventeen years later after he left, the people who had been taken into the church while he had been active there were re-examined and they were declared orthodox members.[22]

The German element was to play a much more important role in the developing consciousness of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church. Although there were no German congregations during the first eighty-five years, an examination of place names and marriage records indicates that in 1664 about one-fifth of the membership may have been of German origin.[23] In 1709 the Lower Palatinate (where the Heidelberg Catechism had been written) was devastated by the French Catholics. The Reformed populace of the area was forced to flee. England helped three thousand of these people to find a home in the new world. After a terrible sea voyage in which four hundred seventy died, the group was

assisted in camps at East Camp and West Camp, New York by a cooperative effort of Reformed and Lutheran churches.[24] These persons later had moved to the valley of the Mohawk. A total of thirty-six churches had been organized out of this movement shortly after the beginning of the nineteenth century, although not all of them flourished. One estimate is that almost one-third of the constituency of the denomination was German in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[25]

The momentum of establishing German congregations died down in the early nineteenth century. After 1835 however, a new movement began when large numbers of German immigrants began to settle in the metropolitan areas of New York and elsewhere. The mother church for the new German movement was the German Evangelical Mission Church on Houston Street, established in 1838 through the efforts of missionary John Rudy. Dr. John C. Guldin replaced him. By 1852 this church numbered seven hundred fifty members.

Guldin became General Missionary to all the Germans and superintended a host of German publications, including tracts, a monthly magazine, a hymnbook, and a translation into German of the *Constitution and Standards of the Reformed Church.* He was also instrumental in so appealing to the Board of Domestic Missions that the German church in German Valley, Illinois, was organized. As will be seen later, the German Valley church was to become the mother church of all of the Pleasant Prairie and Germania Classes in Illinois, Iowa, and South Dakota.[26]

In 1857 the Board of Domestic Missions was able to report to the Synod that the Reformed Church was experiencing rapid growth on two fronts. In the "West," thirty emigrant churches had been established in Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa from the recent immigration of Hollanders into those areas. "Equally gratifying" was the fact that thirty churches had been gathered among the "foreign Germans." In contrast to the Hollanders, who had brought with them their own ministers from The Netherlands, the Germans were expected to recruit their clergy from persons trained in the Reformed Church in the new world.

> The moral wants of that (German—EPH) portion of our fellow-citizens appeal loudly to our Church at this day to provide them with a ministry who shall teach them the unadulterated doctrines of the Reformation, together with the necessity of the new birth and experimental religion . . . Our plans in respect to them should look forward to the endowment of an academy where pious German youths may receive their preparatory training. . . . Great discrimination must be exercised in the employment of clergymen of foreign birth and training, for the great majority of them do not preach the Gospel as it is proclaimed in our pulpits.[27]

Apparently the Synod's language disturbed the German pastors. In October, 1857 they held a meeting in Newark and sent an overture to the Synod, which referred the matter to the Board of Domestic Missions.

Among the points made by the German pastors were two, the first being to remind the Board of the need for money to further the German work and the second being a plan to introduce more Reformed pastors from Germany. The Board of Domestic Missions' committee was distressed by the action of the German pastors. It, first of all, regretted the fact that the meeting of the German pastors had been held at all. "The precedent is an unhappy one, as it opens the way to other foreign nationalities to do the same, and thus bring agencies to bear on the General Synod apart from the established order of the Church."[28] Secondly, the Board reminded the Germans that they had been receiving aid out of proportion to the Dutch. Seventeen German ministers were almost entirely sustained out of the Board's funds. $5,085 out of a total budget of $15,338 had gone to the Germans in a time when the receipts of the Board had fallen for the third year in a row. The Germans were reminded that every minister must help the people to help themselves. The recently arrived Hollanders were held up as an example to the Germans in this respect.[29]

Finally, the Board objected to the plan to bring more German ministers from Germany into the Reformed Church.

> While we might undoubtedly receive some choice men, even they must enter upon an American work under many disabilities; being strangers to all our habits, usages, and to an extent to the wants of their own countrymen in this land of their adoption.[30]

Following this exchange, the German pastors in New York had little more to say. They could not deny the fact that the Board of Domestic Missions was in difficult financial circumstances. Also they were placed on the defensive in that, when they had caucussed separately, they had acted in a way not envisioned in the church order. Finally, the attack on their plan to import more ministers to feed the German flocks made public the deep-seated suspicion then held by the Dutch about the orthodoxy of the Reformed German world. This suspicion was in contrast to the welcome which Dutch immigrant ministers moving, into western Michigan and Iowa, had received. Except among the Eastfriesland Germans moving into the Mid-west, German churches no longer grew in the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church. The name which the English had bestowed upon it now properly indicated its identity. "Dutch" could no longer mean "German."

There is a sense in which the work of church extension, carried on from 1786 to 1866, experienced a glorious era of growth in spite of all of the disappointments along the way. In 1786 there were slightly more than one hundred congregations. Eighty years later, in 1866, there were four hundred forty-four churches and four hundred sixty-one ministers. In the ten-year period from 1850-1860, one hundred fifty churches were added; from 1860-1870, one hundred three more.[31] These statistics indicate that the Reformed Church had developed a clear sense of its identity and maintained a solid pastoral ministry among those whom it was

seeking to serve. It had built a solid organizational pattern upon the old Church Order of Dort. Events of the succeeding decades were to prove that the achievements of the Board of Domestic Missions were just beginning and that the corresponding secretary, J. Garretson, understood the issues very well when he answered the German pastors.

Yet, in the answer to the Germans, there was a flaw which had been present almost from the beginning and which would continue to harass the Reformed Church in its mission in America. The flaw was that it assumed, almost without question, that mission and church extension is a one-way street from the persons sending the missionary to the people receiving the missionary. The Dutch tradition was seen as the normative root of the church. As the Synod of 1857 put it, we (Dutch) "shall teach them the unadulterated doctrines of the Reformation, together with the necessity of the new birth and experimental religion."[32] All other ethnic and racial groups were welcome in the Reformed Church, but they could expect that eventually they too would become Dutch in nature if not in language or color. It would only be in the 1970's that the Reformed Church in America would try a new approach to the old problem, when it would formally encourage various ethnic or racial groupings to become separate "Councils" which would meet separately as the Germans had. These Councils would be free to set forth their concerns and make their gifts more fully available to a church which hitherto had found it impossible to be called anything but "Dutch" by the English.

By 1866 the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church was secure in its place in the American world. It knew itself to have a special responsibility among the Protestant churches of America, who together were building a Protestant Christian land on the firm foundation of an Americanization of a northern European civilization. A reading of the denomination's leading newspaper, *The Christian Intelligencer,* shows that the denomination was busy in mission in America and in the foreign fields. Tract societies, Bible societies, benevolent societies of every type, and organizations for social uplift all received enthusiastic support. News about other denominations, revivals, and religious publications was considered. All of this was placed in the context of a Christian nation, and each element made its contribution to building "this nation under God." In the great scheme of things, the Reformed Church had a special role in bringing the gospel to the Hollanders and through them to the foreign shores of this world.

By 1910 the Hollanders in Michigan dreamed the dream which had begun in New Amsterdam but told it more clearly than it had ever been stated in New York. The Rev. Ralph Bloemendal pointed out a logical conclusion when he spoke on "The Basic Position of Domestic Missions" at the Third Mission Festival in Holland, Michigan, in 1910. His address was printed in full in *The Leader* of August 24. He showed the crucial role of the Hollander and the Reformed Church in the plan of God.

> It was not the plan of God that the dutch should localize on Manhattan Island and there perpetuate their traditions and institutions, but it was the evident purpose of Providence that they should be scattered over the length and breadth of this land and serve as a leaven for the lump of Anglosaxon life in America.[33]

Concerning the distinct role to be played by the Reformed Church, it must first be noted that the finger of Providence points unmistakably to North America as the seat and center of the dominant race of the world. The duty of the Reformed Church to make a distinctive contribution is clear. "The Ref. Church was the original custodian and is the chief conservator of the Calvinistic form of the the christian religion in this country today."[34] The choice then for the Reformed Church and other like-minded American churches is clear. ". . . either we must Americanize and evangelize the aliens, or the aliens will demoralize us and destroy our institutions."[35] "The Dom. Missionary enterprise of the Church (is) to leaven American citizenship with the leaven of the Gospel by the process of evangelization."[36]

The dream of the Reformed Church had both grown and shrunk by the time Garretson had answered the Germans. It had grown to include the whole world even while the official program in America included only the Dutch and those who were willing to become Dutch. The logical consequences of that dream reached its full awful potential and absurdity at the Mission Festival of 1910, when the speaker concluded:

> If the world is to be evangelized by the Anglo-saxon race whose chief home and center the hand of Providence designates as these United States it is clear as the day that before you can evangelize the world you must christianize America. If you would save the world, you must save this country, for as Strong says: 'As America goes, so goes the world.'[37]

Fortunately for us, we need not share the dream of August, 1910. We may be thankful that already in 1867, the church had changed its name to be simply "The Reformed Church in America," although events were to prove even that name to be inadequate.[38] In the following chapters we study the path of a denomination which continued to be called "Dutch," but which at its best only wanted to be Christian. It is not an easy path, but we must examine it, in order that every nation may joyfully and truly be "this nation under God."

3

With Charity Toward All— Women In Mission

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations. Spare not; lengthen thy cords and strengthen your stakes."[1]

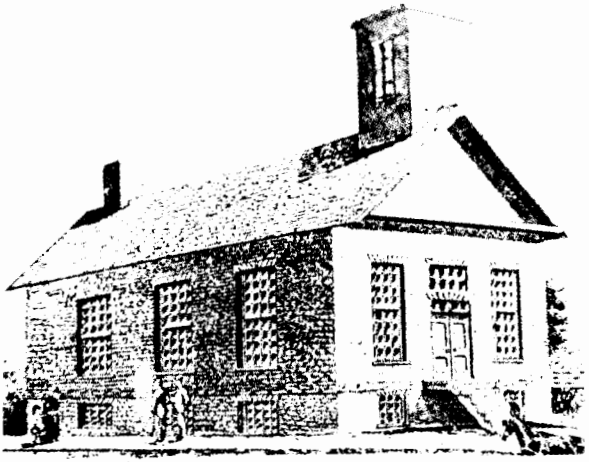
Following Its People

At the mid-point of the nineteenth century, the Reformed Church still held the dream of "this nation under God." It also had a clear sense of its own role in the fulfillment of that dream. It would encourage its members to be active in building a Protestant Christian America in cooperation with other Christians. Its own official mission, however, was to carry out foreign mission work in lands such as China and India, and to carry out domestic mission work through establishing Reformed churches in the United States, especially among the Hollanders, and to a lesser extent among the Reformed of other nationalities. This was a much smaller dream than it had known when it was a national church.

With a clear sense of its own purposes, the Reformed Church after 1830 followed its people as they began their great movement to the west. First in western New York and then in Illinois and Michigan, congregations were established among those who had been migrating from the eastern section of the United States. By 1849 there was a Classis of Illinois, with churches in Fairview, Brunswick, Vander Veer, Pekin, and Washington. The first church to be formed in the midwest was that of Fairview, which was organized on August 13, 1837. It consisted of persons who had migrated from New Jersey and had felt the loss of the religious influences to which they had been accustomed in their eastern homes. The congregation, organized with the help of the Classis of New Brunswick, began with eight members, three males and five females, and continues to minister in Fairview until today.[2]

The Reformed Church's first congregation in Michigan also was the result of migration of Dutch fron New York coupled with financial sup-

port from the east. In 1836 one George Young settled in what is now Grand Rapids and requested his pastor, Rev. Isaac Ferris, at the First Reformed Church of Albany to assist in organizing a Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. The Ladies' Missionary Society of that church then promised $300. Rev. Hart E. Waring, a 1836 graduate of New Brunswick Seminary, accepted the call to ecome a western missionary. By 1840, he had succeeded in organizing the first Reformed Church in Michigan with twelve members. The beginning had been difficult, however.



The First Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan

> He began his tedious and expensive journey west via the Erie Canal, the lakes to Chicago, thence to Grand Haven, and up the Grand River to his new home. He landed in hard times following the financial crash of 1837. Western money had become next to worthless. Business was carried on by exchange of labor, produce, or property, and all church money borrowed carried 10% interest.[3]

Thus began what is now the congregation of the Central Reformed Church of Grand Rapids.

By 1854 the recently organized Board of Domestic Missions received from the Synod a clear strategy for the church extension work.

> That the Board be instructed to commence new enterprises, with the least possible delay, in every prominent place, whether east or west, with especial reference to forming a continuous line of churches from the Atlantic westward.[4]

The Board encountered a number of obstacles which hindered it from carrying out this ambitious directive. A study of its reports indicates that its work was greatly hampered by competition from other churches, by a constant lack of funds, and by a lack of men who were willing to serve as missionaries. Moreover, those of Holland extraction who were moving to the west settled in rural areas rather than in "prominent places." Thus in that very year, 1854, one discovers that in Michigan congregations reported from Centreville, Jefferson, Pittsford, Macon, Ridgeway, and Constantine.

In the 1854 Board of Domestic Missions report, one reads about denominational competition. Rev. D. McNeish reports, concerning the Constantine congregation that "this church would have been a self-sustaining one at this time, had not the very excellent brethren of another denomination, with which we are in correspondence, interfered and weakened it."[5] Rev. Heermance reports from Jefferson and Pittsford that "During the summer the attendance was considerably diminished owing to other denominations coming in, and some of my people who had kept up courage steadily, began to express some of their misgivings."[6] Nevertheless, Reformed Church ministers believed that the Reformed faith must be known in these frontier places. Rev. J. A. Davenport, with his congregation of twenty-seven families in Eden and Osceola, Wisconsin stated his position clearly in his report of 1863:

> As ours is really the only sound conservative church in the country, we are encompassed by, and have to conflict with every form of error and delusion, from Roman Catholicism to Universalism, ranting Methodism, and frantic abolitionism. While abundantly conscious of my own imperfections, I am obliged to express my conviction, that ministers whom I have encountered in rural districts are mostly illiterate men, in want of language suitable to express their limited ideas, ignorant even of the Scriptures, of which they profess themselves teachers; and very many, I apprehend, are destitute of that experimental piety without which the noblest endowments are of small account.[7]

The Reformed Church continued to struggle with patterns of giving developed under a national church mentality. Although people had come to understand the need to support the local congregation, they had not yet recognized adequately that the church itself must contribute money for the planting of churches in new areas. The Board of Domestic Missions annually complained to the Synod about the situation. In 1858 there were at least twenty new places known to the Board where a congregation should have been started, but the total giving of the church had been only $15,338 and the Board's debt was $3,000. The difficulty was enhanced by the fact that some churches were receiving aid year after year and other churches were designating that the funds they contributed be used within their own adjacent territory.[8] The Synod of 1858 therefore deeply regreted that one hundred thirty-nine churches had given nothing during the year. The Synod asked itself why the churches were not giving. "Why is this so? . . . Has the novelty of new instrumentalities and agencies diverted the benefactions of the Church, or have we forgotten to give liberally in proportion as we have liberally received?"[9]

The work of church extension had simply not caught the imagination of the denomination in the way which foreign missions had. In the same year, 1858, that the Domestic Board experienced such deep financial embarrassment, the Foreign Board rejoiced that even in a recession year, its income had increased by thirty-three per cent.[10] In addition, Reformed Church members were supporters of tract societies, Bible societies, city

missions, the African Colonization Society, and a host of other benevolent causes. By 1865 the editor of *The Christian Intelligencer* was complaining about the lack of denominational loyalty in Reformed Church members.

> The Reformed Dutch Churches are not stingy nor illiberal. They give too much—that is, at random, without discrimination, and without cohesiveness of purpose or plan—give every day and all year round. But they are pestered and fretted by the clamor of a small mob of promiscuous calls, and so their generosity comes to be dissipated over a vast surface, and they say, "Well, we'll give a little to all." And these rills dry ere they run. We want system, method, plan.[11]

Because the funds were so short and the work so vast, the amount of assistance which could be given in terms of salary aid to individual pastors was so small that few men could be found for the arduous work. Thus one reads in the report of Rev. K. Van Der Schuur of Oostburg, Wisconsin, "The congregation having been unable to pay my salary, myself and my family are poorly off in respect to clothing."[12] As a result of the shortage of funds the Reformed Church often sent forth its least qualified pastors to take up the difficult missionary task, as if missions were a second-class venture. In 1848, the Report of the Committee on the State of the Church contains the judgment that

> We have entrusted the work to the mere cadets of the profession, and have thrust into that difficult field our young men without experience, to whom life is an untrodden waste, without a stock of preparations, on scanty resources of living, without mature constitutions, and we have expected them to do the work of veterans.[13]

In spite of the report, the Synod remained desperate in its attempt to locate sufficient ministers to go forth as missionaries. By 1854 it was weighing the possibility of requiring all students who had received financial assistance to render "two years' service under the care of the Board of Domestic Missions, as full satisfaction for all aid afforded them by the Board of education."[14] The Board declined this suggestion however.

Although the church was facing many difficulties in this period, it experienced rapid growth. In New York and New Jersey areas the Hollanders, and to a lesser extent the Germans, were experiencing a population growth, while in the midwest the Hollanders and the Eastfriesland Germans were settling in considerable numbers.[15] By 1882, the fiftieth anniversary of the Board of Domestic Missions, the church could congratulate itself on the fact that between 1832-1882 three hundred churches had been added to its rolls. Moreover, the dream of the responsibility of the Reformed Church was growing again. It was no longer the Hollander alone for whom the denomination was responsible. The Synod Committee called for a larger vision of ministry to the whole land and the whole population.

. . . while some in our communion, we fear, regard our Church as chiefly designed by Providence to care for the Holland brethren who come to our shores, and not fitted to grow in all parts of our land and among all classes of our population. We are convinced that no Church can or ought to flourish on this Continent which limits its efforts by sectional or race restrictions. . . . We urge the Eastern Classes to foster every possible enterprise of enlargement within their borders. . . . A weighty responsibility rests on our city Churches to reach the poor and non-Churchgoers within their bounds . . . We turn likewise . . . to the great West . . ."[16]

In stating this challenge, the Synod anticipated the developments of the twentieth century.

Women Beginning With Parsonages

With the organization of the Women's Executive Committee of the Board of Domestic Missions a new and compassionate direction was given to the dream. The women, under the leadership of Mrs. Paul Van Cleef, began with a modest claim, as was befitting women of the late nineteenth century. They recognized that they were subservient to the men who operated the Board. As an auxiliary organization, the Women's Executive Committee was to "cooperate with the women of our denomination in carrying on the work in such ways as the Board may approve."[17] Not realizing the power which was being unleashed, the men of the Board of Domestic Missions were happy to welcome the women. The work assigned to them "is that of home-making—providing parsonages for those missionaries who are connected with the Domestic Board."[18]

Mrs. Paul Van Cleef

In the first year, women provided a parsonage for the missionary family of the Livingstons in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. They could not help but respond with compassion when Rev. Livingston wrote:

> Last Friday it was 40° below zero, and just imagine, if you can, our situation in a house so open that the wind seemed to pass through everything . . . We were compelled to put on our over-shoes, and even then were obliged every few minutes to put our feet on the stove to keep from freezing. The poor wife and daughter, think of their dismay, when they found that everything that was eatable in the house was frozen as hard as our Sioux Falls rocks.[19]

Under the faithful mission of the women during the first twenty-five years, over one hundred parsonages were secured and seventy-five were completed or repaired. Year after year missionaries in the west were helped. In the fourth annual report we learn that assistance was given to nine churches. From Lenox, South Dakota came the word:

> Our house was all so open that in the sleeping room, for weeks together, the thermometer registered from two to four degrees below zero. Often would the snow drift in so thickly that our coverings were white and frozen over us.[20]

The situation was quickly remedied when the women sent a check to enable the necessary repairs to be made.

In 1893 the Women's Executive Committee enlarged the house of the president of Northwestern Academy in Orange City, Iowa and provided a complete new parsonage for First Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan in honor of Dr. A. C. Van Raalte.[21] In 1900 the first "classical missionary" supported by the women had begun to work at Hingham and Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin with his young wife and three children. The women's auxiliary of Madison Ave., New York felt the need and provided the full amount for the Hingham parsonage.[22]

In 1895 the young minister was living in a single room in Galesburg, Iowa.

> One day there came to our Committee a letter telling of the young wife and of the little child who had come to live in that home, Galesburg parsonage. The *minister* had borne cold and discomfort of every kind silently; but the *husband* and *father* asked our help to make the house waterproof and windproof now that there was someone besides himself to suffer.[23]

The "mother-hearts" of the women responded quickly and "as quickly forwarded (money) to the waiting, hoping people at Galesburg, who with their own hands did the work, which helped the money to create twice its value."[24]

The women were soon doing far more than the Board had asked them to do. Their energy and compassion seemed to know no bounds. By 1888 they were giving money for church buildings, which had traditionally been a male prerogative. In that year, two thousand dollars was given for the American Reformed Church in Orange City, Iowa.[25] In 1900 the Galesburg, Iowa church was the recipient of yet another gift.

> If we should go to Galesburg the minister would be delighted to take us a-driving with his new horse and buggy . . . sent to replace the poor broken-down and worn-out wagon, which made his missionary journeys to his five churches, or mission stations, such a trial of nerve and patience and spirit.[26]

Thus the women were beginning to give a great variety of furnishings to struggling congregations, including pulpit Bibles, pulpit furniture, pews, paint, hymnbooks, chandeliers, bells, and organs. Even a fur coat was sent to the church in Sibley, Iowa, from the Twenty-ninth Street Collegiate Church in 1897.[27]

It is no wonder that the acute shortage of missionaries of decades previous to 1882 began to subside when the women entered the scene in force. Their compassion was making life liveable again on the frontiers of domestic missions. Their creativity was felt in a great variety of ways, but perhaps not more so than in their preparation of missionary boxes of clothes and other essentials, in their Christmas boxes and in their "Paper Mission."

The first Christmas box was sent in 1885. The suggestion to do so was first made by "Aunt Margery" in her column in *The Christian Intelligencer.* She wrote:

> Far out upon the prairies live hundreds of little children who never had a Christmas Festival, who never ate a peanut, to whom a single candy is more precious than gold, to whom Christmas cards are unknown, and who never owned a toy in their lives. Cannot the eastern children, who have more at this holiday season than they know what to do with send a part of their treasures to those who have nothing . . .?[28]

Women responded enthusiastically. In the first ten years 309 boxes were sent to churches in the west. It was estimated that over 1600 children received a "token of love" from the forty-one boxes sent in 1892 alone.[29]

The "missionary boxes" of clothing and other materials met with an equally generous response. As one reads the annual reports one is struck with the deep financial needs of the missionaries as well as by the gratitude expressed to those who sent the boxes. One can feel the lifting of the burden from the poor missionary wife's shoulders when she opens the box and knows that her children will have clothing for the winter.

> And my eyes were so full of happy tears that I could not even see what they had. For I knew as they could not, what that box meant: ease and relief from anxiety to their father and me; and warmth and plenty and comfort such as our home had never known.[30]

The Christmas boxes and missionary boxes became so popular, east and west, that the Women's Executive Committee had to speak a word of caution. So much time and effort was going into the boxes with a warm sense of personal involvement that other needs were being neglected. In its tenth annual report the Committee estimated that during the ten year period the total value of the boxes reported was $35,403. The Committee pointed out that this "charity" was important, but that perhaps it would

be better to contribute in other ways more conducive to the needs and dignity of the missionaries and their work.

> . . . if the time and labor spent in their preparation were valued and added to their cost, and the whole amount sent to our treasury, we should be able to do a work towards building churches and supplementing the pastors' salaries, that would give a dignity to our Home Mission department, a spirit of independence to our missionary pastors, that must ever be lacking till we have raised our gifts to a higher plane.[31]

Women were interested in raising the cultural and religious tone of life on the frontier as well. The "Paper Mission" was a means of sending thousands of papers and magazines to missionaries and others in isolated areas. The extent of this work was immense. In 1897, 60,000 papers and 16,000 magazines were sent. They played a vital role in the education of parsonage children.

> The children were wild with joy when the papers came. At night they took them to bed with them, tucked them under their pillows, and when I went to them later, one of the boys had his two hands clasped close over the precious gifts.[32]

Papers were sent not only to missionaries, but also to Sunday Schools, jails, Seaman's societies, logging camps, mining camps, hospitals, and lighthouses. "We never had such good reading. We are sorry now when bedtime comes, but you know we cannot burn our lamp too long, for that costs money.[33] Children saved their papers, picture cards, and picture rolls received in Sunday schools and contributed them to the Indian Mission.[34] Adults sent *The Christian Intelligencer, Harper's, Mission Field, Outlook, Cosmopolitan, Ladies' Home Journal, Scientific American,* and a wide variety of other papers. Thus the women sent these paper "messengers which have carried 'good news from a far country' or the 'glad tidings' of salvation from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast."[35] As the papers and boxes went forth, the dream of a whole country under God could be advanced by the compassion of women in mission.

Charity Beyond the Hollanders

By 1890 the women of the Reformed Church were far better organized for mission than were the men. They had auxiliaries in almost every congregation. Women were working, studying, dreaming, planning and giving. In an age when they did not yet enjoy the right to vote, they were denied the possibility of working directly in the structures of either the nation or the church. Because of their own subservient role in society, they were especially alert to injustices among others. Sensitive to the needy and oppressed, their benevolent impulses reached out beyond the assignments given them by the Board of Domestic Missions. The dream was expanding even beyond the Hollanders and Germans to other races and ethnic groups in the nation. In so reaching out, they enhanced the concept of mission as charity toward all. In 1893 they turned their charitable hearts for the first time towards the Native Americans.

The Reformed Church had essentially ignored the Indians after the Revolutionary War. By 1792 Indians had seen fit to move away from areas where Reformed churches were prominent. Those who still remained would be given forceful incentives to move early in the nineteenth century.

One must distinguish three periods in the nineteenth century American administration of Indian affairs. In the first period, there was an attempt at extermination, which resulted in Indian wars costing much bloodshed and money. The second period was one of segregation, with its system of tribal reservation and structure of treaties which guaranteed Indians permanent homes for "as long as green grass grows and water runs." Unfortunately, there were always white voters who wanted the green grass and running water, with the result that treaties were repeatedly broken and Indians removed once more to land with less green grass and more like a desert than like an oasis. Under President Grant a peace policy was begun which allotted land to Indians individually. In order to "protect" the Indian, the land could not be sold. Indians were to be educated and turned into docile sheepmen and farmers. In order to keep them quiet, the government set up a system of doles and rations. This turned Indians into paupers subservient to the white man. In the third period especially, the churches were enlisted by the government to help civilize, educate, and do charitable work among the Indians.[36]

The Reformed Church and its members were more indirectly than directly responsible for these shifts in Indian policy. As white Protestants settling America, they were in accord with what their fellow-citizens were doing. As people living at some distance from the scene, they had little to do with the formulation of the policy. During the entire nineteenth century up to 1893 the denomination did not carry on mission among the Indians. In 1860 the Synod recommended to the Board of Domestic Missions that such work be considered. The Board agreed on the nobility of the enterprise. However, it noted that its Constitution restricted it to the work of establishing and aiding churches. Therefore, "as this subject belongs of right to the Foreign Missionary department, we recommend that it be referred to the Board of Foreign Missions."[37] There the matter ended in so far as the men were concerned.

In 1893 Reformed Church women sensed a calling to begin a new missionary work of compassion. They raised $4,000 in that year for a new work. A group of women prayed and talked, trusting in God to show them the way. Dr. William Harsha, minister in New York, told them of his experience years before when he had tried to speak to a group of young Indians in jail in Omaha on the charge of vagrancy. No sooner had he begun to speak than one young Indian had reproached him with the words, "We do not need the Bible. We and our fathers have been Christians for many years. We do not need the Bible; we need justice. . . . If you are a good man give us justice."[38] After talking with Harsha, the women could pursue no other path than beginning a new mission to the Indians.

> We say it reverently—God shut up every other avenue; showed us no other place where a church such as we proposed might be placed; and turned our eyes clearly toward the dusky children of those *first people,* hereditary owners of this great country . . .[39]

The women had a sense of the injustice which the white men had done to the Indians and felt that the church must now join with the nation in repaying its debt to the Native Americans. In 1902 the Report stated the matter clearly:

> We glory in stating that we are doing our part (though not our whole duty) in payment of the nation's debt to the Indian: not so much in temporal gifts as in the grander gift of missionaries who have gone, at our behest, 'to bring the Lord Christ down' to those from whom we have kept Him, all too long.[40]

The Indian work prospered under the efforts of the first missionaries, Rev. Frank Hall Wright and Rev. and Mrs. Walter and Mabel Roe. The first to be sent was Rev. Wright, a Choctaw Indian who had been educated at Union Theological Seminary. Critically ill with tuberculosis when first approached by Mrs. John Bussing and Mrs. Charles Runk on behalf of the Reformed Church women, he nevertheless consented to go to the Indians in Oklahoma. In spite of initial opposition Wright began to gain the trust of the Arapahoes and the Cheyannes. As he lived among them, he sang and told the story of Jesus.

> We lived in a tent, ate out-of-doors, and pitched our camp in the midst of the Indian tepees. At every available opportunity, we preached in houses, tepees, out on the prairies or in churches by the way, trying in every way to lead some soul to Jesus . . .[41]

The Roes became missionaries in 1897 and were settled at the church at Colony, Oklahoma. He proved to be an able administrator and wise guide. Mabel Roe's reports in the mission magazines of the church were to stir the imagination of those who were supporting the work. A sample of her prose is in the 1897 Report where she wrote of one of their nights in the field:

> A heavy rain and cold wind set in and lasted for hours. I could not keep warm, and finally went to bed with an attack of neuralgia. The wind almost tore our little tent from its fastenings in the loose sand . . . Finally my cot was carried into the Church, the only real shelter I could reach, and a hot fire was built.[42]

The Indian mission grew rapidly and soon other missionaries had to be sent. A number of notable converts and leaders led other Indians to the Lord. One of the first converts was a little girl, Dorothy Nahwatz, who soon brought her Uncle Nahwatz and her family to the faith, thus marking the beginning of the Comanche Church. Nahwatz in turn brought his friend Periconic, who had been a gambler and drunkard, to the faith.

In 1902 the first Indian, the Elder Wautun, was present at the meeting

of the Women's Executive Committee. In 1905 the "stately Periconic" and "the dignified Nahwatz" dressed in "their beautiful buckskin costumes, moccasins and scarlet blankets" came as "official delegates from the Comanche tribe to this 'great Council of the Women' to plead for their people."

> The Chief (Periconic), with a most impressive gesture, raised his right hand high above his head, and then in the Comanche tongue offered prayer in a most reverent and devout manner.[43]

The Indian work prospered beyond the women's expectations. By 1908 they were supporting missionaries to the Apaches, Comanches, Winnebagos, Omahas, and Jicarilla Apaches in the states of Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Nebraska.

The compassion of women was also making itself felt in Jackson County, Kentucky. In that mountainous region the women were in touch with a people of Irish, Scottish, and English roots who had settled in the mountains early in the nineteenth century. In that inaccessible area developments in American life passed them by. In 1900 Reformed Church women became aware of the people of Jackson County, who were lacking in medical attention, education, and religious teaching. In that same year two women, Mrs. Cora A. Smith, a Bible teacher and nurse, and Miss Nora Gaut, a teacher, entered Jackson Country. Miss Gaut had to return because of poor health, but she was replaced in 1902

Adkins Sunday School

by Miss Catherine Kastein and Miss Ruth Kerkhof, who taught in a day school at McKee. In 1905 Rev. and Mrs. Isaac Messler and their small daughter arrived in McKee. Thus began the work of compassion with the aim being "to bring moral and spiritual uplift to these long neglected ones." The work soon grew to include evangelistic work, education, agriculture, and medical care. It was seen to be important so to work as

to maintain the dignity of the mountain people. Thus the materials in mission boxes sent to Kentucky were not simply given away.

> Trading has come to be another important feature of our work. A goodly supply of clothing has been sent by different societies to be distributed among those needing it. People come from long distances to obtain this assistance, which in cases of destitution is freely given. Ordinarily, however, an exchange of some kind is made, and those who receive garments give grain, fruit, vegetables or work in payment. One good woman, hearing that wood was needed, offered a fine large pine tree. Thus the self-respect of the people is unhurt, and many are the opportunities for ministering to soul as well as to body.[44]

By the turn of the century, then, the women in their compassion and in their dream of America under God had broken through the constitutional constraints of the Board of Domestic Missions. In 1900 the Constitution of the Board was amended so as to permit the Board to "allow its missionaries to engage in evangelistic work which may not immediately eventuate in the founding of new churches." With this charge brought about by pressure of work begun by the Women's Executive Committee, the Reformed Church was once again officially free to include all of the people of the nation in its vision, not only for the purpose of incorporating them into the denomination, but also to proclaim the gospel to all peoples and races. The dream of the women was stated clearly in the 1898 Report:

> Home mission work is as broad as the world. . . . Dare we say that He has given us no part in the work for the negroes, or for the mountain whites. . . . Do we owe no duty to Cuba? . . . Are the souls of the Chinese in this country less precious than those in the kingdom beyond the seas?
>
> Oh! Sisters, think on this! remember that of the people here (from every kingdom, and tribe and nation . . .) many will sooner or later go back to their own people. If we can win them to Christ they will carry the sweet story of the cross to their people, and prove by life and deed as we by life and deed have proved to them that America is in very truth the King's Country.[45]

In these words the greatness of the vision is coupled with the prejudices of the descendants of the first Hollanders and with the self-confidence of Americans at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the twentieth century the Reformed Church would slowly come to understand how inclusive God's dream for North America was to be. As Christ would wrestle with the Reformed Church in mission to bring all peoples into his grace, the Hollanders, the Germans, and all others who had joined with them in the Reformed Church would find their faith stretched, their love tested, and their hopes expanded.

4

Mission To a People On The Move

"To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews." (I Cor. 9:20)

In 1660 the Harlem Reformed Church was formed on Manhattan Island. After many years of serving the Hollanders, its neighborhood went through great cultural changes. By 1958 with its name now changed to Elmendorf Reformed Church, the congregation existed in a multi-racial community. Unlike many other white churches which had left the city, Elmendorf continued to serve its neighborhood. In that year, David Hondorp, a student at Western Theological Seminary, was sent to work as an intern at Elmendorf. Many people were calling Elmendorf 'unique" because it was a multi-racial church. They were praising the congregation for having broken the racial and ethnic lines. Hondorp reflected on the question of what makes a church unique, and also upon the slogan, "All are welcome", which appears on so many church bulletin covers and in multitudes of religious ads. His conclusion was that Elmendorf was an ordinary church rather than a unique one. It was other single-culture churches who were unique.

> If this, the work of the church, were faithfully done, then interracial churches would just naturally appear in areas where the population of the community is interracial. The church should reflect the composition of the community it is honestly seeking to serve.
>
> The unique church is the one that hesitates to fulfill its purpose in a community because of interracial fears or other man-made barriers. It is *they* who differ from the principle set down by Christ. It is they who deny the command of its Master.[1]

One senses in these words of Hondorp that both the nation and the church in Harlem had moved a long way from 1660 to 1958, even though the building remained in the same place. In changing its name in 1867, the Reformed Church had given corporate expression to its faith which

says that the church's uniqueness on earth must consist in its being constantly reformed into the image of Christ even while it ministers to a nation on the move. This was especially true of the Reformed Church in the first half of the twentieth century.

Still in Quest of the Hollander

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Reformed Church was still in quest of the Hollanders. During the first quarter of the century the denomination employed a pastor to meet immigrants entering the country at Ellis Island. He was to help Hollanders and Reformed churches to find each other. As it followed the Hollander, the denomination finally reached the Pacific Ocean in California and Washington. In 1909 *The Leader's* correspondent told of how he had entered western Canada, the new land of promise. Thousands were pouring north across the national border "and our own Dutch people among them." "In my quest of the Hollander I spent two days in the city of Winnipeg."[2] Nevertheless, the numbers in the larger cities were too few to warrant establishing a church. In some small towns, however, clusters of Hollanders had settled. In that year the Monarch Reformed Church was established in southern Alberta and today remains as the oldest Reformed Church in Canada. South of the border, the Conrad, Montana church was formed in 1908.

Hollanders settling in Lyndon, Washington in 1910, and Oak Harbor in 1903, organized Reformed churches. At Oak Harbor, the denomination met the Pacific Ocean, and the dream of a church stretching from shore to shore had been realized. The Pacific Ocean was reached in Los Angeles in 1923 with the organizing of the Hope Reformed Church, which, like Elmendorf, was also destined to work in a neighborhood which would undergo rapid cultural and racial change. That the Hollander was responsible for the Reformed Church in Los Angeles is clear from the 1932 report about the new church in Artesia.

> . . . the whole membership is Dutch, and the Holland language is used. These people are dairymen, not on large farms, but with the cows shut up in corrals. A small dairy is one of twenty-five cows, and one man handles them. Up at 2 A.M. and to bed at 8 P. M.[3]

The fourth corner of the nation, Florida, was not to be blessed with the presence of the Reformed Church until 1955, when in the age of affluence northern Hollanders would begin to trek south for the winter. During the twenty-year period from 1955-1975 thirteen churches would be opened in that state.[4] With the formation of the Classis of Florida, the Reformed Church had fulfilled its dream of expanding to all of the corners of the United States.

Mission to the Aliens

Beginning about 1840 the Protestant Reformed Dutch Church became aware of the new types of immigrants entering the land. Aside from oc-

casional comments about its responsibility to witness to every person, the Reformed Church managed on the whole to ignore their presence, especially since the Board of Domestic Missions was chronically short of funds. In 1854 it was recognized that the multitudes of new arrivals "in some sense have a peculiar claim upon us" and that "they can not hear without a preacher."[5] In January, 1887 *The Christian Intelligencer* regarded the situation to be dangerous, since many are "atheists, infidels, socialists, and anarchists," who "are not only ignorant of the nature of American institutions, but are controlled by a gross misapprehension of their character."[6] It was Rev. Ralph Bloemendal who expressed the fear most clearly in his Mission Festival address in Holland, Michigan, on August 11, 1910.

> It is impossible to mistake the character of the bulk of our emigrants. . . . They are not only strangers to the Christian religion, but many are the enemies of our institutions. That brings us face to face with one of two alternatives, either we must Americanize and evangelize the aliens, or the aliens will demoralize us and destroy our institutions.[7]

In 1908, when the immigrant tide was at its height, mission work was begun among the Hungarians, the Italians and the Japanese on the east coast. The Hungarians were of a Reformed background, and therefore understood to be spiritual kin. Most notable among the Hungarian Reformed churches were those at Peekskill, New York, which was organized in 1911 and disbanded twenty years later, at New Brunswick, New Jersey, which exists to the present, and at Manville, New Jersey, which was transferred to the United Church of Christ in 1971.

Work among the Italians was also begun in 1908. It drew far more attention from members of the Reformed churches because several persons, notably Mary Shaw, wrote many interesting reports in *The Christian Intelligencer and Mission Field.* The Italian mission was typical of work among aliens because it combined social uplift, charity, education, and evangelism with the organizing of churches. The Newburgh mission on the Hudson River especially flourished. There Rev. Pietro Moncada labored from 1913-1958. By 1924 they had a building which served both for worship and as a community center, with a room which served as

> a general clearing-house for the perplexities and tangles into which people can get themselves when they come as strangers into a strange land; when they need help in the matter of interpreting the language and getting jobs.[8]

Just as the work of the Women's Executive Committee was blessed by the Indian missionaries, Wright and Roe, so it was blessed by persons of other ethnic groups ministering to their own people. The work among the Hungarians was blessed by the long service of Rev. Andrew Kosa who served from 1920-1947 and Rev. L. S. Hamory from 1914-1949. The Italian church was served for forty-five years by Rev. Moncada, and by Rev. D. N. Febrille from 1918-1959, Rev. Louis H. Ordille from 1914-1947, and by Miss Marie Plavan, 1919-1967.

In 1894 the Women's Executive Committee assisted Rev. Y. Hirose in-

opening the Japanese Christian Institute in Brooklyn. Fifteen years later, in 1909, the women also took on the support of the Japanese Christian Association in uptown New York, founded in that year by Rev. E. A. Ohori, a graduate of New Brunswick Seminary. He had become deeply concerned about the needs of Japanese men in New York City.

> They were, for the most part, ambitious for knowledge and for self-improvement, but they were also lonely. Forced to live in boarding houses where drinking and gambling were prevalent, . . . their very loneliness led them to the brink of temptation.[9]

The Association, under the leadership first of Ohori and then of Giichi Kawamata, served the religious, evangelistic, mutual assistance and social needs of Japanese. In 1949 a Japanese church was organized. Some of its greatest days were during the Second World War when it sponsored many Japanese who had been interred by the United States government. They assisted young Japanese men to enlist in the United States armed forces, and in the exchange of citizens and prisoners between the two countries.

> When some of them were taken to Ellis Island, and then to Camp Meade, we followed them there till they were repatriated on the last exchange ship. On that ship I know there were a number of Christian friends and members of our church, who with their new-found faith and firm conviction in the living Christ, went back to Japan.[10]

As one follows the reports year by year of the work among the "aliens" one notes that valuable service was being rendered by the denomination. Faithful ministry was being exercised by the ministers serving their own people in those communities. Yet the work did not display real growth. Moreover, it had practically no effect on the Reformed Church in America. One can note that a great weakness in the Reformed understanding of "mission" during this whole period was that "mission" was a one-way street from the established churches to the new work. The new people were to be assimilated into the old church, taught the traditions, and fit into the American Reformed culture. No one expected that these new people would have anything to contribute to the old church. No one ever seemed to encourage them to speak up and allow the gifts within those ethnic cultures to reflect back and enrich the faith of the Reformed Church.

The Reformed Church during those years was trying to fulfill its dream of being a church not only for the Dutch but for the whole nation, and especially for some of the new immigrant groups. What it did not yet see was that only when love listens as well as it talks can love grow and become mutual. The church knew that it had roots in The Netherlands; what it still had to be taught was that it also had roots in France, in Germany and Hungary, and that through the Italians and the Japanese it could grow roots in those cultures as well.

Mission to the Jews?

The Jews became a problem to the Reformed Church in mission. They were not always a problem, for prior to the opening of the twentieth century, the *Digest of Synodical Legislation* has no mention of the Jews. During the nineteenth century, members of the Reformed Church, operating outside the ecclesiastical channels, became supporters of "Hebrew missions." The activities of these missions were reported in *The Christian Intelligencer.* Most of these reports consist of notices of meetings and indicate a need for funds for the work. In 1887 the midwestern members of the church began to support the Chicago Hebrew Mission, which was an interdenominational agency with two Reformed Church ministers on the board of trustees. Like the eastern Hebrew missions, it accepted general Protestant attitudes towards the Jews. This position basically held that since the Jews had rejected Christ, the church had replaced Israel in God's plan of salvation. Therefore the Christian looks toward the conversion of the Jews. If all Jews would be successfully evangelized, then the Christian goal would be reached and there would be no more Jews.

In order to reach the Jews, missions were located in Jewish neighborhoods. In the Mission headquarters, schools, sewing classes, industrial arts, reading materials, and other services were provided. Sabbath school classes were held for children on the Lord's Day. This was held to be the best and perhaps only way to reach the Jews.

> These Jews are unreached by an other Mission, and are inaccessible to the churches. The mass of people, a city in themselves, can only be reached by someone living among them, who can in this way win their confidence by breaking down their prejudices by the love of the Gospel.[11]

In the east the members of the Classis of Passaic worked for many years through the Classical Committee on Jewish Missions. In 1936 Rev. Joseph Klerekoper was employed by the Classis to be its classical missionary to the Jews. In 1940 the Classis entered into correspondence with the secretary of the Board of Domestic Missions, Rev. Frederick Zimmerman, concerning the Reformed Church's position on a separate mission to the Jews. Zimmerman wrote:

> Here in North America we are out to promote a Christian approach to the Jews, not (a) by singling them out for special ministry, nor (b) by excluding them from our ministry, but by including them in the normal ministry of the church. The Jew is not the Christian's neighbor and we should deal with him in our ministry not so much as a Jew but as an individual without Christ. We believe that the special mission to the Jew, whereas it has undoubtedly rendered a great service, has largely outlived its usefulness or effectiveness under present modern conditions in America.[12]

It must be remembered that this position of the Board was taken at a time when anti-Semitism in the western world was at its height and when

Hitler was engaged in his program designed to exterminate the Jews. At such a time, Zimmerman wished to regard the Jew as he would any other human being so as to avoid any hint of anti-Semitism. Lurking in the background was the suspicion that many who were supporting Hebrew Missions around the country were anti-Semites.

Rev. Klerekoper and Rev. Schermer, treasurer of the Passaic Committee, were not satisfied with the Board's position. Klerekoper objected that when the Reformed Church starts a mission among the Italians it is organized into an Italian church. He implied that, on the same basis, a mission to the Jews should begin a Jewish church.[13] Schermer agreed with Klerekoper, but replied at greater length. He maintained that "in these days the Jew is more susceptible to the Gospel message than in many decades." However, the Jew is "as clannish as any foreigner" and therefore the work among them should be carried out on the same basis as work among the Italians, Hungarians, Japanese, and Chinese. Schermer also tried to turn the suspicion of anti-Semitism against the Board's position as the Board tried to deny the Jewishness of the Jew.

> It is possible that such reasoning has possibly become tainted with a bit of the spirit of Anti-Semitism? Or is the statement colored with that type of Modernism that would discourage all true Christian missions?[14]

The work of the Passaic Classis attained national attention in the denomination during the period 1952-1965, when it employed Rev. Ernest H. Cassutto as its missionary to the Jews. He wrote a number of articles in *The Church Herald* which articulated an approach to the Jews

Ernest and Elly Cassutto

more precisely than had anyone in the denomination previously. His position differed little from that of Klerekoper in its main outline. He emphasized the "parish approach," maintaining that only through the love and care of the parish, with the pastor's home as a spiritual center and with the pastor practicing visitation and hospitality, could progress be made. Yet, Cassuto objected to singling out the Jew as an "object" of mission.

> The responsibility of the Church to the Jews cannot be denied or evaded; they should be included in the evangelistic activities of the church. They should not be singled out as an object of mission work; they are to be included in the pastorate of the church . . . The Jews should not be evangelized in the sense that they should be converted Jews, but that they are to come to God as converted sinners.[15]

After 1960 one finds few references to special work among the Jews, although in the later 1970's some revived interest is shown for the "Jews for Jesus" movement. This interest, however, does not seem as yet to have touched the official assemblies of the denomination. New developments in the Middle East and the state of Israel, together with recent pronouncements of other denominations concerning the approach to the Jews have stimulated new questions, often profoundly theological in nature. The Theological Commission of the Reformed Church reported to the 1981 General Synod on the relation of the church to the Jews. Its report rejects the position of both sides in the Passaic debate as inadequate on the grounds that neither side takes Romans 9-11 (which indicates a continuing role for Israel in God's plan of salvation) seriously enough. Zimmerman downplayed the Jewishness of the Jew; Klerekoper ultimately hoped for the extinction of Jewishness through the conversion of the Jew. The 1981 report takes the position that the Reformed Church must reject anti-Semitism and, instead, bear witness that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah for the Jew as well as for the Gentile. Because of unhappy historical connotations of the word "mission," it is better to use the New Testament word "witness" to indicate a new found humility in relation to a people whom the Christians have so often persecuted. The report of the Theological Commission looks to the future when it says:

> We can emphasize that the Bible offers not a single but a double image of the church: if it is biblical to speak of the church as the body of Christ, which naturally places the Jews on the outside, it is equally biblical to speak of the church as the people of God, which as naturally leads to the concept of a people now separated, but with the promise that they will ultimately become one. We can remember that even in this time of separation it is possible to learn from each other; whenever Christians overemphasize that the kingdom is already present in Christ, Jews with their eyes on the future can recall us to the truth that the kingdom is also "not yet"; and whenever Jews insist that the kingdom of God is not yet, Christians with their eyes on Christ can witness to the truth that the kingdom is also already present. . . . Jesus is at one and the same time the barrier that divides and the bond that can unite.[16]

Church Extension Among the Americans

After 1914 the number of immigrants entering the United States decreased. One result was that, in the first third of the century, church extension activity decreased and the denomination began to consider more seriously how it could come to be known as an "American" church. In some communities, where immigration had been a recent phenomenon, new congregations were formed which distinguished themselves from previous "First Reformed" churches by conducting all of their activities in the English language and deliberately relating themselves to "American" activities. Thus in towns such as De Motte, Indiana, Hull, Iowa, Orange City, Iowa, Maurice, South Dakota, and Hamilton, Michigan, congregations naming themselves "American Reformed Church" emerged.

Classical missionaries began to sense the changing environment for church extension. In 1924 Rev. K. J. Dykema, classical missionary of the Classis of East Sioux, was asked to "gather into organizations the unchurched Holland families scattered over an area of about twenty by sixty miles in Southern Minnesota."[17] He discovered, however, that religion was losing its hold on all of the people of the area and that the Hollanders were not so different from the others. "One gets the fear that unless the country people are reached more effectively there will be no religion after this generation."[18] Moreover, most of the people were "renters" who moved often, so one lacked a stable population on which to build. He proposed that the Reformed Church must be sensitive to two points if the needs of the people in that area were to be met. First, the people must be visited where they are, in their homes and in the fields. Secondly, "denominationalism must be discarded. Loyalty to one's 'own church' is not always a virtue, and may be a sin. People should be told that any church is better than none." "To save the country churchism must die."[19]

In the 1920's and early '30's the number of churches established was not large. Many were discouraged by the lack of growth; others accepted the situation as natural in a time of limited immigration. The Board of Domestic Missions, especially after the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929, was more than usually embarrassed for lack of funds. Its energies were almost exhausted in maintaining struggling congregations already established. Then, as so often before in the history of the denomination, local zeal and initiative rejected that prudence which seems to be required in denominational planning and insisted that many new congregations be formed.

Three factors coming together furnished the occasion for the new push in western Michigan for church extension. First was the concern of approximately thirty-five students of Western Theological Seminary of the classes of 1934 and 1935, stirred by John Piet, to open new fields for graduates who were ready to serve but had no place to go. The second was rivalry with the Christian Reformed Church, for it appeared that they had "a man going over the field and organizing a group of families

here and there into prospective Christian Reformed Churches." The third factor was a call for more churches, given by Rev. C. P. Dame at a meeting of the "Western Social Conference" in the Synod of Chicago on March 25, 1935.[20]

Dr. Dame presented the broad outlines for a policy of growth. First, local congregations should seek fields in their neighborhood where they could establish Sunday Schools or mission work. Secondly, larger congregations can reach out and help a small church which has a possibility of growth, and Sunday Schools can help support young ministers in new fields. Third, each classis in the Synod should appoint a person to seek out new fields in the midwestern states, and fourth, a responsible body must be formed to coordinate the work throughout the region.[21]

The time was ripe for this new local initiative in church extension throughout the denomination. The new movement gained momentum as the nation came out of the depression. New structures emerged in classes, particular synods and in the Board of Domestic Missions. In 1949 the Synod of New York broke new ground when it named Rev. Al Neevil to be its "field secretary" with responsibility for developing a strategy for church extension and retention. Other particular synods soon followed the example of New York. By 1956 Rev. Henry Van Dyke pointed out that church extension was not only a spiritual blessing; it was even a good investment for the denomination. Between 1932 and 1956 the two Synods of Michigan and Chicago invested less than $500,000 in new churches. By 1955 those sixty-six new churches had 10,772 communicant members and, in that year alone, contributed $209,688 to denominational benevolences as well as over $1,000,000 to their local budgets.[22] Moreover, the new approach to church extension was efficient. In 1980 Howard Schipper could show that during the period 1941-1980 one hundred ten churches were begun in the Michigan Synod. In contrast to earlier movements in which many of the churches did not remain in existence, only ten of the one hundred ten had ceased to exist in the modern period. Moreover, the one hundred remaining churches have 40,700 members.[23]

The whole denomination had caught the vision by 1956. Dr. Louis Benes, editor of *The Church Herald,* declared that, at that moment, the building of new churches was the crucial task before the denomination.

> The only way to reach people in this growing America of today and to win them for Christ, is through building churches where the people are. . . . It is our conviction that this is the most needed program in our denominational life today. We need desperately to broaden and strengthen our home base, for a stronger denominational program in foreign missions, Christian education, and domestic missions. . . . *We need a stronger home base.*[24]

Throughout the twentieth century the Reformed Church understood itself to be working in cooperation with other Protestant churches in establishing churches across the continent. In 1892 the church entered into formal "comity" arrangements with Presbyterian and Congregational

churches. According to these agreements, churches of the various denominations would locate congregations at a sufficient distance from each other so as to avoid competition for members. The arrangement was reaffirmed by the Board of Domestic Missions in 1897 and remained a basic policy throughout most of the twentieth century.

> This Board believes the Comity arrangement agreed upon between the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations and our own to be wise and just, and purpose to stand by it. Its faithful observance by all concerned will prevent needless multiplication of churches . . . and a waste of money.[25]

In 1958 Richard Vanden Berg, Executive Secretary of the Board of Domestic Missions, set forth the task before the Reformed Church in America. No longer was he or the denomination basically oriented toward "following the Hollanders." It now knew its task was to relate to all Americans. He showed that each year the population was growing by 3,000,000. Moreover, people were moving from state to state and from cities to suburbs.

> *America is on the move.* How often this has been said in recent years. Yes, America is on the move, both vertically and horizontally, and thus the Christian Church is presented with the greatest challenge it has ever faced.
>
> If the United States of America is really to be won for Christ, then Christians everywhere must engage in a tremendous campaign of evangelization. We thank God that our country has a Christian President. . . . But only if the American people themselves testify to the redeeming and transforming power of Christ to a world in spiritual travail can America maintain (and deserve to maintain) its position of leadership . . .[26]

If the Reformed Church was to do its share among the churches of Amerca it would have to open thirty new churches every year just to keep up with the nation on the move. This was a tremendous task considering that throughout its history the denomination had averaged three per year, and during the period 1949-1958 it had managed only twelve per year.

In the 1950's the Reformed Church consciously struggled to move beyond its ethnic limitations in reaching out to its countrymen. Local congregations tried to show their openness by calling themselves by a new type of name. Instead of being "First," "Second," "Third," or "American," across the land, churches bearing the name "Community" arose in Albany, New York, Ho-Ho-Kus and Hobokan, New Jersey, Cleveland, Ohio, Spring Lake, Michigan, Omaha, Nebraska, and Oakland, California. In Artesia, California, a church even renamed itself the "New Life Community Reformed Church." Other congregations began to speak of themselves in more theological ways that spoke to a secular people. "Grace," "Hope," "Peace," "Fellowship," and "Faith" were offered to the community. The Reformed Church was moving in a nation that was moving. It seemed even willing to sacrifice its own name if that would assist people to come to Christ. The 1950's

were an exciting time as a nation was coming to Christ, and the Reformed Church felt that its dreams were being fulfilled.

Evangelizing America

Alongside the renewed emphasis on church extension, the Reformed Church, after World War II, had manifested a renewed concern for evangelism. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Protestant churches in America were confronted by the need to proclaim the gospel effectively to every person in the land. Beginning in the eighteenth century, with people such as Edwards, Tennent, Freylinghuizen, and Whitefield, a series of "awakenings" had swept the eastern sections of the country. In the nineteenth century a "revival" tradition had developed beginning with Charles Finney, who used "means" such as all-night meetings, special prayers for anxious sinners, and intensive publicity to bring revival to a town or city. In the 1850's noon-day prayer meetings were held by businessmen in the Fulton Street Reformed Church in New York City, and from there similar meetings began to be held in other cities. Through the revival movement great numbers of people became members of churches. With other churches the Reformed Church felt a desire to reach out to the lost sinners of the land. It sang with others the revival hymn of Fanny Crosby,

> Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying;
> Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.

The Reformed Church, like other Calvinistic churches, struggled with the problem of revivalism. On the one hand, its newspaper, *The Christian Intelligencer,* regularly reported favorably on the good results of revival meetings in Reformed churches. On the other hand, it often took pains to point out that one must be careful lest in favoring revivalism, one would lose the Reformed Church's basic theological position that repentance and conversion is the result of God's election rather than human free will. Reformed churches also tended to be suspicious of the emotionalism which at times became a sensational feature of the revivals.

It was not until after World War II that the Reformed Church officially appointed a person to give it leadership in a denominational program of evangelism. In 1946 it appointed Dr. Jacob Prins to be its minister of evangelism. It joined with other denominations in a great United Evangelistic Advance. In his report to General Synod in 1950 Dr. Prins stated that the Reformed Church would develop a program of "educational evangelism" through the church school, of "pulpit evangelism" through preaching missions, of "lay visitation evangelism" in every church, and of "conservation evangelism" as a means of retaining those won for Christ. Dr. Prins issued a ringing call to the denomination, impressing upon it the crucial task of winning "America for Christ."

> This reminds us, that, to accomplish our task of winning "America for Christ," we shall need to remember that this America is now very largely

against, ignorant of, indifferent to, apathetic to, oblivious of the Christ. Furthermore we shall need to call, increasingly, upon our Christian laymen and laywomen to witness to Christ, where men are. We need many more men and women with the "burning heart" who will say what needs to be said in many circles.[27]

In its Report to General Synod in 1950 the Boards of Domestic Missions stated five objectives for this denominational program of evangelism:

a. the spiritual renewal of ministers and members,
b. reaching and winning the unchurched for Christ,
c. the careful instruction and assimilation of new members,
d. securing the transfer of non-resident members to the church of their choice in their new community, and
e. the vital transformation of persons through Jesus Christ.

The Report concluded by reiterating the great dream, "America for Christ," as the goal, and the responsibility for it rests upon every individual believer.[28]

Since 1950 the Reformed Church has consistently followed the dream stated by its first minister of evangelism. Following the retirement of Dr. Prins, Herman Ridder became the minister of evangelism. In his report to Synod in 1962 he developed the clearest statement in the denomination's history on the relationship of the Reformed Church to the nineteenth century revival tradition. Even while recognizing that revivalism can degenerate "into an irrelevant activity which becomes more and more superficial and useless," the Reformed Church must recognize that the basic principle of the revival movement is sound. Its basic strength is that, in the revival, people are confronted with the gospel in such a way that life-changing encounters with Jesus Christ take place. In the twentieth century the Reformed Church must accept this basic principle of the revival movement and adapt it to confront the new type of human being who lives as a contemporary. People today differ from the nineteenth century individuals in several ways. They are bombarded with a much greater variety of forces clamoring for attention. They no longer take for granted the authority of the Bible. While developing a "public relations front," they retreat into personal loneliness, anxiety, and emptiness. They look to science as a savior and often consider it to be a greater sin to be unpleasant than to be untruthful.[29]

In 1962 the denomination accepted the "Preaching-Teaching-Reaching" (PTR) strategy for evangelism to reach twentieth century people. The PTR utilized the insights of nineteenth century revivalists, with adapted versions of "protracted meetings" lasting a week, with six months of preparation of the local congregation(s) prior to the meetings, and with shepherding and discipleship training groups after the event. Ridder concluded his report with the passion of an evangelist.

"Come, Holy Spirit!" We rejoice in these words. In one breath they speak both the need of the church and the secret of its success. The need of the

church is to become locked in vital conflict with the world and the forces of evil. And when it is so engaged, the church will lose its sense of independence and cry out for help. Let the church be so engaged! Let it then cry, "Come Holy Spirit!" and out of the infinitely compassionate heart of God will come the answer to our cry. So renewal—our greatest single need—will become ours.[30]

Though the direction set by Prins and Ridder has remained the policy of the Reformed Church to the present, their successors, Carl Schroeder, Edwin Mulder, Donald Jansma, and Herman Luben, have developed new approaches in evangelism to meet the needs of the denomination. These programs have borne such titles as "Lay Witness Mission," "Adventure in Mission", and "Good News People." Whatever the title, however, the five objectives stated in the 1950 report can be clearly discerned in the work of the Reformed Church's emphasis upon evangelism and renewal. The dream of "North America for Christ" has been imprinted upon the psyche of the denomination and each Synod feels called upon to discuss again the urgency of the task.

Moving Away From the Church

Not everyone was pleased by developments in the 1950's. Those in the large cities realized that suburban churches were growing at the expense of the inner cities. Neither the suburban church extension movement nor the evangelism emphasis was adequately touching the inner city. Howard Hageman in a series of articles in *The Church Herald* pointed out that throughout much of its history the Reformed Churches were losing congregations because people moved away. He quoted the decision of the Reformed Dutch Church in Washington Square, Manhattan, which in 1876 voted to disband "owing to the moving away of the class of population in this quarter whose needs are met by such a church."[31] The idea that a congregation serves uniquely a "class of population" leaves the church at the mercy of that class of people. In gaining its distinctive role apart from Christ, it no longer finds its unique role in Christ. Dr. Hageman maintained that when a church is established in a neighborhood, it is given a responsibility for the entire neighborhood, not just for a particular class of population. It may not move from that neighborhood just because its type of people have moved away.

> The clear implication of the foregoing is that while the congregation is a gathered society, it must have a definite relation to a particular area for which it assumes Christian responsibility. Without its life and witness, the community around it is shut off from the true source of life and growth.[32]

Donald De Young, minister at Elmendorf Reformed Church on Manhattan Island, was struggling with the same issue in that year. In that non-unique, racially integrated church, he attempted to deny the power of racial divisions in the face of Jesus Christ's message.

> How long will it take us to realize that a church that does not minister to Negroes, Mexicans, Indians, or Puerto Ricans, but that we minister to *men*.

> And it takes no Ph.D. in Psychology to know that there is no common cluster of experiences and needs shared by all men, just because they are men. And we claim to know who and what man is! For we know who God is through His self-revelation in Christ.[33]

The forces arrayed against them were in many cases too strong. It was too late for white people to deny that race was important. It was too late to save many of the urban churches. Tragedy struck many of the urban churches. In Grand Rapids, Fifth Reformed and Grace Reformed moved to the suburbs and were followed by others. In Chicago nine out of fifteen churches in the general Roseland area would be forced to close or move in the twenty years after 1956. In other cities around the country churches would be lost because of changing neighborhoods. People of all races and classes were profoundly hurt by the changes, and the churches seemed helpless before a people on the move. In all of those places there were people who kept the faith, but their dreams were shattered for the church had built its distinctiveness on qualities not directly related to Jesus.

Yet there were always some leaders in the denomination who did not forget the cities. Especially in New York City and in metropolitan areas such as Cleveland and Detroit there were voices which continued to call the church back to the city. In 1962 the Board of North American Missions made urban work its number one priority. In 1964 the Particular Synod of New York made the retention of city churches its first priority. As a result of the vision in that city, there are still fifty-seven Reformed churches in the city of New York today. Rev. Russell Redeker in 1981 recalled one of those early efforts to revitalize New York churches undergoing neighborhood change.

> . . . in the New York metropolitan area the first city church to receive notice by the Board of Domestic Mission and receive help from it was the New Lots Church in Brooklyn. The Classis of Brooklyn was ready to close the New Lots Church. There was a woman by the name of Anne Forster who literally defied the Classis and in effect said to the Classis, "You close this church over my dead body." She began to carry on Sunday School work, etc., for the children of the community and she came to the attention of Dr. Richard Vandenberg. . . . Dr. Vandenberg felt that this was a good cause and he was instrumental in getting Board of Domestic Missions' financing for her work.[34]

To such almost forgotten but stalwart Christians belongs the credit for the renewal of urban churches even when many others in the denomination were ready to pass them by.

5

From America To North America

"Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, 'I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.' " (Isaiah 56:8)

In 1949 the Reformed Church, in its national maturity, included the United States as an important element in God's plan of salvation for the world. "If our nation is to fulfill her mission, she must go forward, but she must go forward under God. Israel heard the command of God to 'go forward.' So too, we hear the command today."[1] The Reformed Church in America was seen to bear great responsibility as one of the Protestant denominations who would cooperate in proving that "Christian democracy and not atheistic communism is the only answer to the world's quest for peace and happiness."

> In this great task, the Reformed Church in America has its part. We have the vision of this great and mighty nation going forward under God and as a church we have set our feet upon this forward path.[2]

In that very year, however, events were taking place which would challenge the denomination to enlarge its vision to include all of North America, rather than the United States alone. Already in 1924 the issue had been placed before the denomination, although scarcely anyone recognized it. In that year the Women's Board of Domestic Missions, with the cooperation of the Board of Domestic Missions, decided to send missionaries to the state of Chiapas in Mexico. Mexico thus was placed in a different category from lands such as India, China, and Japan, which had always been served by the "foreign board."

After 1949 however, the issue was brought more urgently into the Reformed Church's consciousness when it began a new work in Canada. Ironically, it would be a new generation of "Hollanders" moving west from The Netherlands after World War II who would insist that the denomination face the issue of its United States' nationalism. With the


BRITISH COLUMBIA
ALBERTA
SASKATCHEWAN
MANITOBA
WASHINGTON
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA
OREGON
IDAHO
WYOMING
SOUTH DAKOTA
NEBRASKA
NEVADA
UTAH
COLORADO
KANSAS
CALIFORNIA
ARIZONA
NEW MEXICO
TEXAS
MEXICO


ONTARIO
QUEBEC
MAINE
VT.
N.H.
MASS.
CONN.
R.I.
NEW YORK
WISCONSIN
MICHIGAN
PENNSYLVANIA
N.J
MD
DEL.
OHIO
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
W.VA.
VIRGINIA
MISSOURI
KENTUCKY
NORTH CAROLINA
TENNESSEE
SOUTH CAROLINA
ARKANSAS
MISS.
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
LA.
FLORIDA
CHIAPAS

coming of this new wave of Dutch immigrants into Canada, questions of the role of international boundaries, of ecumenical relationships among denominations, and of the relation of "church" to "mission" could not be avoided.

The Border Is Real

After World War II many Dutch immigrants felt that their future belonged in Canada. The government of The Netherlands, facing the task of rebuilding facilities, factories, and housing for a nation devastated by the war, encouraged some of its dense population to emigrate. The churches participated in the international movement of people. The Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, which since the Synod of Dort in 1619 had been understood in some sense to be the national church, was at that time a leader in ecumenical church circles. The World Council of Churches had been formed in Amsterdam in 1949. Dr. Visser t'Hooft, one of its members, was the general secretary of that Council. The Hervormde Kerk remembered the ecumenical teaching of John Calvin to the effect that when one emigrates to another land, one should join the church of that land rather than importing one's own denomination. It knew the story of the formation of the United Church of Canada and attempted to form new bonds with that church. Its emigration commission encouraged Hervormde Kerk members to join the United Church of Canada.

Meanwhile, the Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands, composed of members who had separated from the Hervormde Kerk, and who had not joined the World Council of Churches, formed a working relationship with the Christian Reformed Church and advised its members to join that denomination when they emigrated to Canada.

New Dutch arrivals at Galt, Ontario

In 1948 ministers of the Reformed Church in America who lived in Michigan became involved in Canada. Dutch immigrants in Canada, who had been members of the Hervormde Kerk, began to appeal to Reformed Church ministers for spiritual assistance. The United Church of Canada did not have adequate resources to minister to the many immigrants of all nationalities. Moreover, some of the more theologically conservative Hervormde Kerk members did not feel at home in the United Church. While the Board of Domestic Missions hesitated in the face of the complicated situation, the Michigan Synod sent an investigating committee into Canada. It reported that Canadian churches felt unable to offer adequate assistance, that many Hervormde immigrants desired help, and that Canadian government officials encouraged the Reformed churchmen to pursue the matter. Rev. Harri Zegerius, first director of the work in Canada, remembers a typical family in need:

> A cup of coffee soon loosened their tongue. They had been in the boondocks in Saskatchewan—way out really—for 16 months. In that time they'd had many promises, but not once had they been taken to a church service. Now they were looking for spiritual help. "Rev. when we settle down, we'll let you know. Will you come and hold a service for us?" We sealed that promise with a prayer.[3]

Zegerius remembers the beginning of the work as coming out of the perceived needs of the immigrants. Meeting those needs was the primary goal. The churches were the fruit of that activity.

> It has often been wondered why this work was called a Mission. Any work that one is sent to do is a Mission. Our Mission was to help new immigrants into Canada, find sponsors, help economically and physically and certainly to help spiritually. The primary purpose was not to hammer together as many little churches as we could. The churches were fruition, born out of spiritual necessity.[4]

In spite of the fact that many Reformed Church members simply felt that they were responding to human need, the leaders of the church knew that they could not avoid the larger issues. Therefore, in late 1948, representatives of the United Church of Canada and the Reformed Church met to discuss the situation. An agreement was reached which was to be the basis for the Reformed Church presence in Canada.

> That the Board of Domestic Missions . . . undertake work among Dutch settlers in Canada, in fraternal relation with the United Church of Canada and the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands and other Evangelical churches . . .[5]

In making this agreement the Reformed Church recognized the importance of the international boundary between the United States and Canada. In extending its work into Ontario it established a formal relationship with a new partner in mission, the United Church of Canada.

While responding to need, the Reformed Church hesitated on two

counts about entering new work in Canada. First, the Board of Domestic Missions and many of the classes of the Reformed Church were at that moment confronted by almost unlimited opportunity for church extension in the United States. They were also conscious that for the first time in its history the denomination was feeling the possibility of breaking through the confines of the Dutch heritage as new churches were being established among "Americans." Yet, especially in the mid-west, many were enthusiastic about helping new immigrants in Canada. A compromise statement was accepted which would protect the existing work of the Board in the United States while permitting those who wished to respond to the new opportunity in Canada.

> That this new venture be self-supporting, and that new funds should be sought to finance this work rather than use existing funds of the Board.[6]

A second statement of hesitancy arose out of the ecumenical and international nature of the question. Reformed congregations would be organized as beneficial to the needs of the immigrants, but the possibility remained open that, at a later date, those congregations and/or their individual members would be free to unite with one of the denominations already in Canada.

> It shall be the policy of the Board to present the gospel to these settlers in their native tongue, to minister to their spiritual needs, and to organize Reformed Churches in which they may fellowship and be trained for Christian service. When these settlers have become established and acclimated to the country and language, they will be given the opportunity to unite with other denominations or to continue as Reformed Churches.[7]

During the next decade a steady flow of Dutch immigrants entered Canada. Soon thirty Reformed congregations were spread across the country, from Toronto and Hamilton to Edmonton and Vancouver. In every place pastors and congregations worked hard to meet immigrants arriving on the trains, to assist them in finding jobs and homes, and to provide spiritual and pastoral ministry. People in the United States sent blankets and clothing to help the immigrants begin life in the new land. An excellent organization for receiving immigrants was formed, with a "field-man" in Nova Scotia meeting the immigrants, and with a central office in Hamilton assisting immigrants and churches as well as carrying on official relationships with immigration authorities and with the Hervormde Kerk. Special efforts were made to help the youth.

> Thousands of young Dutchmen came to Canada alone, without kith or kin . . . Everywhere youth meetings were held on Saturday night. Bible study, sociability, contacts with family groups were promoted. As these young people married they often became a firm part of the church—when it could easily have been different.[8]

Until about 1957 the work went on in Canada without undue concern about the issues left open by the 1949 resolution. After that year,

however, the growth in numbers and congregations slowed down as smaller numbers of immigrants arrived. Now the issue of the future of the Reformed Church in Canada became more acute. Several factors contributed to force open discussion of the issues facing the Reformed churches in Canada and the United States.

All across Canada voices were raised asking the Reformed Church in America to become a truly international church. In the 1950's the United States was filled with patriotic themes. *The Church Herald* at times would place George Washington's picture on its cover in February and the American flag on the cover in July. This would invariably bring protests from Dutch Canadians, who knew that their countrymen north of the border looked askance at people who did not wish to be part of the British Commonwealth. When Americans in reply talked about the peaceful and harmonious relationships betwen Canada and the United States, the Canadians simply felt that the Americans were not taking them seriously.

Ironically, a second issue raised was whether the new Dutch immigrants were really welcome and equal members in the Reformed Church in America. The church, which had so often been accused of being too "Dutch," was not adequately open to the Netherlanders. In Ontario, many of the first pastors were older Reformed Church ministers from the midwest who could still speak Dutch. They often brought with them attitudes fostered by the more pietistic American strain which opposed the use of alcoholic beverages even in moderation and understood smoking to be a sin. Since the Dutch immigrants had not perceived these to be religious issues, considerable debate arose. In the Reformed Church's Canadian paper, *Pioneer,* a lively debate was carried on in 1958 on the subject, "Is Smoking Sinful?"[9] Moreover, the younger Dutch ministers who came from the Netherlands began to ask themselves whether the Reformed churches south of the border would ever accept them to be pastors there as well as in Canada. That this concern was not an idle one is shown by the fact that only one pastor who came to Canada from The Netherlands ever received a call from a congregation in the United States.

In western Canada the issue of the future of the Reformed Church in Canada became acute when some of the pastors began to sense problems arising out of the isolation of the eight congregations scattered across Alberta and British Columbia. They recognized that their congregations, especially the young people, needed a wider fellowship than was possible at the level of a single small congregation. Several of the younger pastors had received their theological training in The Netherlands and had a deep respect for the theological and pastoral awakening which was taking place in the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk. Their voices joined with those of Ontario in calling for a new assessment of the role of the Reformed Church in Canada.

The Board of Domestic Missions called a meeting to be held at Hamilton, Ontario, March 31-April 2, 1959, to be attended by represen-

tatives of every Reformed Church in Canada as well as by leading figures in the Reformed Church in the United States. Papers were presented and discussions were frank and wide-ranging. In spite of many nuances, three basic options were explored. Gerrit Ten Zijthof, pastor in Vancouver, who had been educated in Utrecht, The Netherlands, and in the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, emphasized that the Belgic Confession set forth the unity of the church of Jesus Christ, and that the Reformed Church in America in every country except Canada did not start Reformed Churches but worked in cooperation with other churches of the land. On that basis he urged that consideration be given to discussing the possibility of union with the Presbyterian Church in Canada.[10]

Eugene Heideman, pastor of the church in Edmonton, who had been educated first in Western Theological Seminary and then in Utrecht, recognized the strong ties which had been built with the church in the United States, yet also questioned whether the Reformed Church would have the interest and resources to begin church extension work among Canadians or to grow beyond thirty small congregations scattered across Canada. He suggested that the Reformed Church continue to serve the pastoral needs of those immigrants who wished to enjoy its ministry, that at the same time it concentrate its church extension activities in the Untied States, and that it continue to assist persons who wished to unite with other Canadian churches to become members there. He suggested that more formal and informal forms of cooperation with other Canadian denominations be developed at the local level.[11]

Both of these suggestions were rejected. The Ontario churches strongly felt the need for the organization of a Classis of Ontario where they could handle matters of particular concern to Canadian churches. At the conclusion of the workshop three actions decisive for the Reformed Church in Canada were taken. The first was that it shall be the policy of the Board "to encourage all Holland immigrants to be loyal to and support the Reformed Church in America and to assist in the establishment of Reformed Churches in Canada." The second was to move toward the establishment of a classis of Ontario. The third point was to recommend that the Board of Domestic Missions study "the basis, possibility, and scope of Church Extension work in Canada."[12] The Reformed Church now had a clear policy for its future in Canada.

Nevertheless, between 1960 and the present, the border has proved to be a real barrier. At the workshop the suggestion was made that the church take on the new name, "Reformed Church in North America." People south of the border found it difficult to understand why the suggestion should even be made. Only in 1978, under the impetus of the Classis of Ontario, was a real attempt made to carry out church extension among native-born Canadians when work was begun at Welland. At present several other new churches are in the process of being organized. In western Canada the isolation remained a heavy burden. Three of the smaller churches, Medicine Hat, Cochrane, and Lethbridge, were either closed or united with a Canadian denomination. In 1980 a Field

Secretary for church extension was named to serve the Canadian churches and there was discussion about the advisability of forming a particular synod of Canada.

At the heart of the problem was the fact that the Reformed Church in America had not developed an adequate consciousness of what it means to be an international, rather than a national, church. The Canadian churches within the denomination provide the denomination with opportunity to hear the gospel from a Canadian perspective and thus to grow beyond mere "civil religion" and nationalistic faith into a deeper understanding of how Christ breaks down international tentions and creates international justice and peace. The Canadian churches have made their decision to be loyal members of the Reformed Church. The United States congregations have yet to prove willing to hear what the Lord has to say to them through people north of the border. Until the American churches incorporate the international outlook into their dream the future of the Reformed Church in Canada will remain in doubt.

Invited South

The border with Mexico caused the Reformed Church to be faced with national, ecumenical, and theological issues similar to those met in Canada although, in detail, quite different in nature. In contrast to Canada the Women's Board of Domestic Missions, in cooperation with the Board of Domestic Missions, worked in cooperation with the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico. Mexican congregations were a part of the Mexican denomination rather than of the Reformed Church in America. In following this pattern, the experience of the Board of World Missions in Asia was accepted as correct in Mexico as well.[13]

In 1917 American denominations following the comity principle drew up the so-called "Cincinnati Plan" in which Mexican territory was divided, for missionary purposes, among the denominations then working in that country. The Northern Presbyterian Church was assigned all of Veracruz, Oaxaca, Tabasco, Chiapas, Campeche, and Yucatan. This was far more territory than that denomination could staff or administer. The plan itself ultimately failed for various reasons, including insensitivity to Mexican feelings.

By 1924 there was a feeling in the Reformed Church that its growing experience with work among American Indians should be utilized for the purpose of beginning new work south of the border. This step was especially urged by two Reformed Church missionaries to the Indians, Mrs. Mabel Roe and Rev. G. Watermulder. In 1924 Mrs. John Allen and Mrs. Tabor Knox of the Women's Board were joined by Rev. Watermulder and Rev. Howard Sluighter in a trip to Chaipas to investigate the possibility of joining the Presbyterians in their work in that state.

Upon the favorable report of the committee and the invitation of the Presbyterians, John Kempers, who had done a summer's work at

Lawton, Oklahoma, along with his fiancee, Mable Van Dyke, were sent as the first Reformed Church missionaries to Mexico. The newly married couple entered Vera Cruz harbor in Mexico on December 12, 1925. It was not an auspicious moment for missions in Mexico. Mexico, at that time, was attempting to overcome four hundred years of domination by foreign powers and the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church. The feelings of many Mexicans of that time were expressed in the editorial of a local radical paper which said, "Humanity will not have arrived at its state of perfection until the last stone of the last church shall have fallen on the last priest."[14] Two weeks after the Kempers arrived legislation prohibited entrance of all ministers and priests into Mexico. Those foreign clergymen already in the country were forbidden to officate at the sacraments, weddings, and other church ceremonies. Hundreds of alien priests and nuns were expelled from the country. John Kempers was allowed to remain, but not to function as an ordained minister.[15]

Mable Van Dyke Kempers

In spite of the desire of the Reformed Church to work among the Indians who traced their roots into the ancient Mayan civilization, the advice of Rev. José Coffin to begin to work at the town of Tapachula among the Spanish-speaking was accepted. Rev. Coffin was of Mexican and Scotch American descent, and functioned as missionary-at-large in the state. Like the National Church of Mexico, of which he was a member, he was staunchly conservative and at first was suspicious of the theology of the Reformed Church, which had previously been unknown to him. Coffin, with his intimate knowledge of the situation in the country, maintained that it would be imprudent for any newcomer to Mexico to begin work among the Indians under such troubled circumstances.[16]

During the first decade in Mexico the Kempers joined with Coffin in visiting Protestant groups living in the mountains, on coffee plantations, and in the city of Tapachula at sea level. At times they had contact with the Indian church of Mazapa on the Guatamala border. They began a Sunday School in Tapachula. Under Coffin's direction four consistories were organized and brough into the jurisdiction of the National Presbyterian Church. As they went from one group of Christians to another, the travel was often arduous.

> We struck several two-day northers and knee deep mud for the horses most of the time. At the end of three weeks our animals were skeletons, our faces drawn, and hands and feet in a sorry state from being wet all day.[17]

The restrictions on clergymen and foreigners continued to limit the mission's range of activities. In 1929 Dr. and Mrs. Bert Kempers joined the work in order to make medical aid available, but the Mexican Medical Association soon induced the government to refuse permission for foreigners to practice medicine in the country. In 1930 the government forced all mission schools to close. This severely affected the work of other American Protestant missionary work, but the Reformed Church did not feel the effect because it had not yet opened any schools. In spite of the fact that many were greatly discouraged by the restrictions, eventually these proved to be a blessing in disguise. Despite the many restrictions, the gospel was transmitted from person to person through face to face encounters. When mass evangelism techniques were tried there were few results, but people's lives were changed through personal evangelism carried out by members of the congregations. "Every Christian a convert and every convert a missionary" became one of the themes.

Missionaries faced with government restrictions were forced to be dependent upon Mexican national ordained ministers for the more official ceremonies and administration of the sacraments. They came to occupy a supporting rather than directly governing role in the official councils of the church. True partnership between missionaries and national ordained ministers was a necessity.

At the same time that the partnership was developing, the church was forced to depend heavily upon lay leadership throughout the whole area. One constantly reads reports of the enormous amount of work done by lay persons.

> Each Sunday the most advanced believers are appointed to preach in the different chapels, one of them twenty-two miles distant. Occasionally teams go out into unevangelized country. The latest Home Mission venture has been the sending of a Tzeltal believer by the Corralito church to the distant village of Lacandon where there are numerous believers but where leadership is lacking. This man will live among them to instruct them in Christian living, how to hold services, and how to evangelize others.[18]

Gradually a policy emerged for the work in Mexico. There was to be a complete identification of the missionaries with the national church. No missionary project was to be initiated without the consent and approval of a consistory or presbytery. The self-government of the church was always to be respected. No institution or work was to begin which could not eventually be supported within Mexico itself. Foreign money must be limited to a minimum to encourage local stewardship and a sense of pride in local management of the work.

During the period 1932-1935 many in the United States were asking whether the mission in Chiapas could be continued. The Reformed Church was very short of funds due to the impact of the Great Depression. The Kempers persisted, however, and by 1934 the Reformed Church experienced a renewal of interest in the work. But new trouble

came in the next year, when the government again prohibited the sale of religious literature, classified ministers and priests with prostitutes as vagabonds subject to arrest, and forced people in schools to deny belief in God.[19] Later the persecution ended, so that by 1938 an enthusiastic report could be sent.

> . . . workers and believers again go out with enthusiasm to preach publicly. There are more than one hundred and twenty-six places in the state where the gospel that has been sown has taken root. . . . The problem which the mission faces is to provide adequate leadership for all these scattered groups and at the same time reach out into new territory.[20]

In 1943 Rev. and Mrs. Garold Van Engen joined the Kempers in Chiapas. Until that time, the work of the Reformed Church in America had been largely among the Spanish-speaking population, with some outreach to the Indians. It was at first hoped that the new missionaries could live at Yajalon, a mestizo-Indian town at the edge of the Ch'ol tribe. Unfortunately, ill health forced the Van Engens to live in the high and cold town of San Cristobal de Las Casas, where they helped in the Spanish-speaking churches. They were able to develop a printing house where literature in Spanish and Indian languages was published. They also established the Bible Institute for Spanish speaking boys.[21]

With the arrival of Albert and Nita De Voogd in 1952 the mission finally achieved its goal of working directly with the Indians while living among them. Prior to their coming the Wycliff Bible translators had worked among the tribes and succeeded in bringing many of the people to Christ. Now the Reformed Church was to see great movements toward Christian faith among the Indians, even in the face of persecution. As more missionaries arrived, including the Meyerinks, the Hofmans, and the Stegengas in the '50's, and as the Indian evangelists continued their faithful work, the church grew. By 1975, at the end of fifty years in Mexico, there were more than fifty thousand believers and four hundred church buildings.[22] Chiapas, more than any other work carried out by the Board of Domestic Missions, was adding believers to the Christian faith and building a church of vitality and relevant witness.

Then, in 1972, a new word came to Chiapas which would cast a cloud of uncertainty over the lives of the missionaries and the church in that area. The National Presbyterian Church, meeting in Mexico City, decided that all foreign missionaries related to it should leave the country. The date set for Reformed Church missionaries was 1980. The Reformed Church was confronted with the need to respond sensitively to the request. For many years, the Reformed Church had been a partner in mission with the National Presbyterian Church, yet very few members of the Reformed Church in the United States knew anything about that denomination. They knew nothing of the reasons behind the request that missionaries leave, and knew little about that church's struggle to preserve an authentic, evangelical, theologically conservative stance in that country. John Kempers pointed out that there were at least three

reasons for the request. First, some persons in the church believed that the Mexican churches must no longer depend on help from others. Second, the National Presbyterian Church had been strongly anti-ecumenical and feared the closer relationships which some Presbyterian churches were attempting to establish with other churches, especially with the Roman Catholics. Finally,

> . . . the Presbyterian Church in Mexico is a very conservative, fundamental church and because of the liberal teaching in many seminaries in the United States it is suspicious of all North American missionaries until they prove themselves to be conservative.[23]

From the missionary side Sam Hofman wrote his response. He stated that confronted by this request, a missionary must first ask whether the church may be right in suggesting that it is necessary for the missionaries to leave in order that the local leadership may grow. Secondly, a missionary must ask whether the request has come because of some paternalism from the north. Moreover,

> Perhaps there were some missionaries whose work was completed. It was God's time for them to move. Perhaps some needed to be moved because their presence was stifling and frustrating the development of the national church leaders. But undoubtedly there were those who were opening new fields, reaching unreached groups, helping struggling young churches. To call these home along with the others is both tragic and harmful.[24]

Meanwhile the Presbytery of Chiapas pointed out to the National Presbyterian Church that the situation of the Reformed Church missionaries working in their area was different from that of other places in Mexico. It unanimously opposed the action of the General Assembly. Between 1972 and 1980 a number of meetings were held. The Tzeltal Presbytery and the Chol Presbytery asked that missionaries be permitted to remain until 1986. Finally, in 1980, a new agreement was reached, which invited the Reformed Church missionaries to remain in Chiapas and continue the work there. With that action a new era of cooperation in mission could begin with the goal as always being "Chiapas para Christo" (Chiapas for Christ). The Reformed Church in America had shown by its readiness to follow the decisions of the church in Mexico that it stands for equality and sensitivity in partnership wherever it works across international boundaries.

6

New Roots For A People In Mission

". . . for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God." (II Cor. 8:2-6)

Clear Identity in Mission at Mid-Century

At the midpoint of the twentieth century the Reformed Church in America had a clear understanding of its mission to the nation. It knew itself as an American church, having Dutch roots, but now serving all the people of the nation. In the 1949 report of the Board of Domestic Missions, the dream of "this nation under God" seemed on the verge of fulfillment. The basic structure of the nation was sound.

> Today America leads the world; through her economic help she is rebuilding an impoverished Europe; through her statesmanship she is seeking to lead the nations into a better understanding of the brotherhood of man; through her military power seeking to keep the peace of the world.[1]

The problem which remained for the American churches working together was to bring those still outside the churches into the faith.

> Far too many of her citizens do not believe in God; many, many more do not acknowledge His Sovereignty. Less than thirty-eight percent of her people are connected with a Protestant church, and only about one person in ten attends divine services on a given Sabbath. Twenty seven million of her youth are utterly unchurched.[2]

The Reformed Church in America felt itself to be on solid ground as she began the second half of the century fulfilling her task in North American missions. Chiapas was now a familiar name and converts were

being reported annually. Church extension projects were beginning all over the land. The school for blacks at Brewton was doing well, and the Reformed Church felt good about her role in helping blacks in the racist South. To the now thoroughly "Americanized" church, the missions to the Italians, Hungarians, and the Japanese seemed to be reaching their conclusion as those ethnic groups theoretically were being assimilated into the American melting pot. There was a small problem in Sacramento concerning the future of the Chinese congregation there.

> One of the problems facing the Board is to determine whether these young Americans of Chinese background shall become members of already existing Christian Churches or whether they shall form a new American-speaking church made up of Americans with a Chinese background.[3]

One could also be optimistic about the work among the American Indians. The church and the American government were cooperating to bring them into Christian citizenship.

> On the Winnebago and Omaha reservations the new government superintendent has taken a positive stand against peyote and is insisting on legal marriage. This will mean much in the uplift of these Indians, among whom immorality has been increasing.[4]

In the uplifting of the Indians, the Reformed Church was bearing its share of the burden.

> Old controls that governed Indian life in the past are gone and Christ-controlled lives must be developed. Only when this great group of Americans is completely evangelized can this nation truly be 'one under God.'[5]

In its vision of mission in 1949, the Reformed Church still understood the missionary task to be a one-way flow from the believers and American citizens to those who did not yet believe or who had not yet been assimilated into American culture. They would give charity and preach; that mission also may involve receiving and listening did not often enter the mind of the church.

Black Roots for the Reformed Faith

In the bicentennial year, 1976, the Black Christian Education Program of the General Program Council, in cooperation with the Black Council, commissioned Noel Erskine to write a book on *Black People and the Reformed Church in America.* This book, which should be read by every member in the denomination, begins like so many others with a brief history of the church in New Amsterdam after 1624. In the second chapter, however, a totally new element is inserted. One discovers a chapter entitled, "Black People in America." Here one finds a brief discussion of the roots of the Black Christian experience in traditional African religion. Erskine maintains that European Christianity, with its

roots in ancient Greek and Roman culture and philosophy, failed to penetrate Africa at least in part because it failed to take seriously the religious world of the Africans.

> It is basically because she remained a foreigner and never belonged to the environment in which she lived. Was that not partly the reason for the death of the church founded in Nigeria in the fifteenth century through the activities of the Portugese and Spanish missionaries?[6]

Erskine maintains that African religion is closer to the Old Testament world than was the ancient Greek and Roman culture. Therefore, Christians today must pay careful attention to African roots because that tradition offers possibilities for the development of Christian faith, experience, and theology which could not easily develop within the constraints of European culture.[7] In brief, Erskine and the Black Council are asking the Reformed Church in America to accept a black root alongside the traditional Dutch root in order that its mission may be fulfilled among all peoples.

Erskine's book raises questions which touch the heart of the denomination's identity and understanding of its mission. These questions cannot be avoided by the Reformed Church in America now that its name no longer includes the words "Protestant" and "Dutch." The name which it accepted for itself in 1867 simply points the church back to Christ and the Scriptures for its identity. Unlike some other denominations, it does not discover its uniqueness in its form of church order, such as "Episcopal" or "Presbyterian." It is not distinctive in following the teaching of a gifted Christian, such as "Lutheran;" it refused to name itself after Calvin. It is no longer unique in its ethnicity or its protest against Rome ("Protestant"). It did not want to claim any particular style as unique, such as "Methodist," "Disciples," or even "Christian." It simply desired to be reformed and reforming according to the Word of God. As a denomination it has no uniqueness. It seeks only that it may be given a unity and identity in Jesus Christ himself. It seeks not to be "distinctive" but only to be "faithful." As a result, it is a church which reaches out to the right and to the left, to the ecumenical movement and to the "evangelical" community which remains outside the World Council of Churches. In its new confessional statement, it says,

> The Spirit builds one church,
> united in one Lord and one hope,
> with one ministry around one table.
> He calls all believers in Jesus
> to respond in worship together,
> to accept all of the gifts from the Spirit,
> to learn from each other's traditions,
> to make unity visible on earth.[8]

In the second half of the twentieth century, the Reformed Church in its North American mission began to respond very differently to this ques-

tion of roots than it did in the nineteenth century. At that time it rebuked German pastors in New York for holding a meeting by themselves in order to increase the German impact on the denomination. As a result Germans turned elsewhere. In the first part of the twentieth century, the Reformed Church worked among the "alien" Hungarians, Japanese, Italians, and Chinese, but it assumed that these would all become "Americans" and be assimilated into the old roots of the denomination. Only in the midwest, among the East Frisians who settled first in German Valley, Illinois, and then spread across Iowa and South Dakota to form thirty German-speaking Reformed churches, was a German root tolerated. In 1969, however, the denomination reversed its historic approach to the problem. It requested that a Black Council be organized which would have the purpose of developing the Black roots for the old denomination. We must now note how this change came about and recognize its importance for the future.

In the nineteenth century the Reformed Church, for the most part, ignored blacks. Prior to the Civil War the Reformed Church accepted slavery as an institution recognized in the Bible. In the month when the Civil War broke out *The Christian Intelligencer* was publishing a book-length series of articles which defended a biblical position accepting slavery. During the whole period, 1820-1861, the denomination believed that the way to deal with the problem was to urge compassionate treatment of slaves and, at the same time, to assist slaves to gain their freedom and return to Africa. Almost annually during this period the General Synod urged support of the "African Colonization Society" which had the goal of providing an asylum in Liberia for the emancipated colored people of America. It believed that America could be freed from social problems if the freedmen of the black race could be exported! It also believed that from Liberia these liberated slaves would provide a missionary witness to other Africans.

> The design of the Institution is truly magnificent and benevolent, and if fully realized, must open a wide door for the introduction of the Gospel among the benighted and oppressed sons of Africa.[9]

Because this society was so interested in freedom for the blacks, the Synod recommended that meetings of the society be held in Reformed churches every fourth of July and that a special offering be taken on that day.[10] Thus the goal of the Reformed Church was not to have black members, but to send them to Africa for purposes of freedom and missions.

At the end of the nineteenth century Rev. W. Johnson, born in 1844 and apparently a graduate of New Brunswick Seminary, petitioned the Board of Domestic Missions to support a ministry to black people in Orangeburg, South Carolina. He had begun the work in 1876. In 1896, however, when the petition was received, the Reformed Church was interested in beginning work among the blacks in Florence, South Carolina. In 1898 Rev. Charles Dickerson would be commissioned to

begin the work there. In 1896 the Domestic Mission Board said that two things stood in the way of serious work in the South, the first being the Board's charter which limited its aid to churches and missions of our own denomination only, while Rev. Johnson was at that moment Southern Presbyterian, and the second being that the Board was as usual chronically short of funds. However, "There is no question as to the sympathy of the Board with the evangelization of the colored people of the South, nor as to the wish of the Board to lend a helping hand in this most important work."[11] By 1902 the Board could report that there were now twelve places in South Carolina where the Reformed Church was involved in giving the gospel to black people.

Nevertheless, the Reformed Church by 1905 had begun to question its commitment to black people. It was pointed out that the majority of blacks were inclined toward the Baptist and Methodist churches. The Reformed Church required a high level of education and intelligence.

> . . . the work of our church, like that of the Presbyterian, can be done, as a rule, only among the more intelligent and educated class. We desire to employ only an educated ministry . . . Those who come to us will be from the better class of colored people who are not reached by the Presbyterian and Congregational preachers.[12]

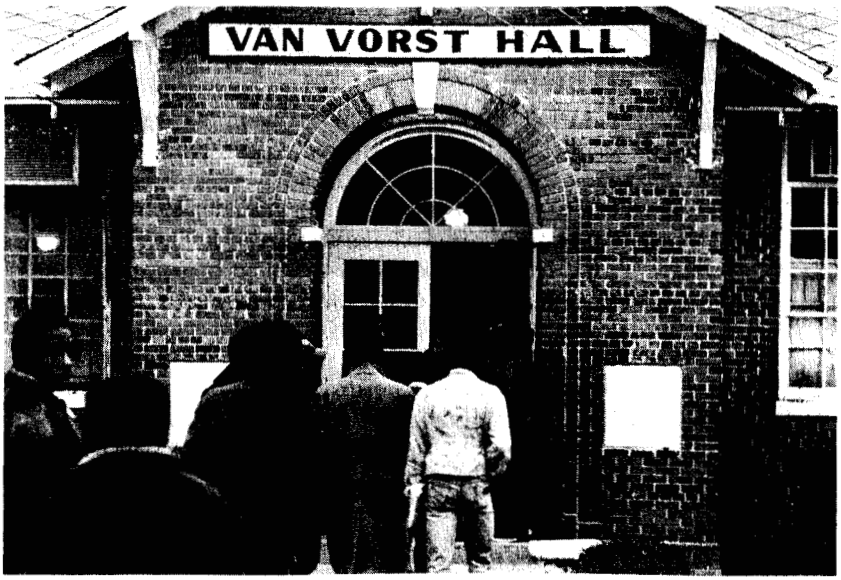
By 1926 the Reformed Church's work in South Carolina came to an end. The two remaining churches were transferred to the North and South Carolina presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Thus ended a mission in the south which the denomination had somewhat reluctantly begun three decades earlier.[13]

As it hesitated about the nature of its involvement in South Carolina, the Reformed Church was once again wrestling with what it means to be a "denomination." On the one hand, as a church, it knew that it had to follow the Holy Spirit who was sending the church to all nations and all races with the gospel. It could not ignore anyone, for as the children sang in Sunday School, "red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight." On the other hand, the nineteenth century concept of a "denomination" was that each denomination consists of like-minded people, with one set of confessional standards rooted in one tradition, or with one history held in common, or with one liturgy used by all. Those who felt and thought differently could leave and find a church of their choice according to the voluntary principle of membership. Though this understanding of a denomination was a far cry from that set forth at the Synod of Dort, which held to the principle of a national church, the Reformed Church by 1950 had become so Americanized as not to question it. On this basis, it was very possible for the denomination to ignore those who could not meet its standards of education or doctrine. There were other Christian denominations who specialized in work among the non-northern European stock. Thus the Reformed Church was living with a concept of "mission" which was inclusive and a concept of church/denomination which was "exclusive." In the last half of the

twentieth century, the denomination would have to face these issues, for the sake of its own identity as well as for the sake of mission.

For a time, between 1919 and 1960, the denomination found a somewhat satisfying solution to its problem of relating to the blacks. It supported the Southern Normal School at Brewton, Alabama, founded by James A. Dooley in 1911. This school had come to the notice of members of the Reformed Church in the midwest, especially to the women, when Mr. Dooley made a trip through that region seeking funds for his school. In 1919 the Particular Synod of Chicago recommended that the Board of Domestic Missions accept the school under its administration and the Board accepted the proposal. Mr. Dooley was named superintendent. Funds were raised to upgrade the facilities and teaching staff so as to meet the accreditation standards of the State of Alabama.

The Reformed Church saw the school at Brewton as an opportunity to do benevolent work among people who were in need. Dooley's concept of the school as one which would educate head, heart, and hand caught



Students at Southern Normal School

the imagination of the laymen. In the 1928 report of the Board the purpose of the school was clearly stated:

> The purpose of Brewton is to help negro boys and girls acquire such academic and practical knowledge as will enable them to make a living, this combined with careful training in the Christian religion will make them Christian leaders of their race wherever they may live.[14]

The annual reports which came from Brewton were enthusiastically received by the denomination, especially by its supporters in the midwest. Operating on a low budget, with a faculty and staff which had a real sense of mission and sacrifice, the school made a major contribution to its area as it supplied dedicated teachers to black schools. Several of its graduates went on to make major contributions in black education in other areas of the country. The agricultural training helped many to utilize better farming methods after graduation. The school maintained a high spiritual quality through the decades.

> Our religious program permeates the whole campus atmosphere. Church services, Sunday School and Youth Fellowship Club find the students in attendance throughout the school year. There are three joint devotional periods each week. . . . Home room devotions are planned and executed by the students on other days.[15]

The school also had an impact on Reformed Churches through its student choir which sang in Reformed Churches in the north. Those who heard them sing were moved by the spiritual commitment of the young people. Members of the choir would stay in the homes of members of the churches. Often their visit marked the first occasion on which a black person had entered the home of the people who lived in communities distant from most blacks. The favorable impression created by the students and especially by the school's directors often brought about changed racial attitudes on the part of their hosts.

Nevertheless, the school was kept on the periphery of the life of the Reformed Church. At no point does one discover the denomination asking the people of Brewton to feed back into the life of the churches the real nature of the black experience. Mission was a benevolent one-way street, from the white to the black. Leaders developed by the school were sent into the black community, and seldom sought out by the whites for advice.

Meanwhile between 1954 and 1969 events moved rapidly in the United States. The rise of the civil rights movement, the movement of blacks into the northern cities, and finally the riots in the late 1960's conspired to develop a new black consciousness in the country and in Reformed Church. During the period after 1950 a number of Reformed churches which had been ethnic Dutch in character felt the impact of racial change in the neighborhoods. The metropolitan areas in the east, the cities of Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Chicago, Muskegon, Los Angeles, to mention a few areas where there had been strong Reformed churches suddenly experienced the flight of whites to the suburbs and the growth of black populations in those areas.[16] By 1976 there were approximately twenty-five congregations in the denomination which were predominantly black. The Reformed Church suffered from a shortage of black ministers, so only about forty percent of the congregations had black pastors.[17] As these vast movements of population were taking place persons of all

races felt victimized by the course of events. There was no longer any place to hide from a problem which the denomination had tried to ignore for more than two hundred years.

After the General Synod had been confronted by James Foreman of the National Black Economic Development Conference with his Black Manifesto on June 6, 1969,[18] the General Synod recommended the establishment of a Black Council which would "keep those issues and perspectives that are important to black and poor people before the larger communion for the sake of increased understanding, common work and reconciliation." In the preamble of its Constitution, the Black Council states:

> . . . we the members of the Black Council, as peers of all other members of the church, shall seek to reconcile the church to all of God's people by leading the church in a ministry to the wholistic needs of Black people both within the church's family and beyond.[18]

The Black Council would prove to be a storm center at times. It vigorously placed before the church the issues which its members felt to be vital to the church and especially to the black members of the denomination. Blacks and whites alike often felt frustrated as they struggled to articulate, to understand, and to feel what others felt. The Council was suspicious that missions would always remain a one-way street and that white benevolence served to keep others in their places. In its 1978 report to General Synod, it stated:

> The council has come to suspect that ministry in the Black community is not widely seen in the great RCA as a ministry with peers, and with strong viable, full-fledged congregations based in those communities. Instead, it is thought that this ministry may be viewed as mostly an object of 'benevolent concern', where the people involved look mostly to the largely White denomination for direction and for financial support.[19]

The report emphasized that the black constituency of the church was aiming to take its full share of responsibility and participate fully in all aspects of the life of the denomination. It would continue to seek for unity, reconciliation, and justice. "But no people are more conscious than the Black people of this land that reconciliation without justice is a mere word, and to claim Christ, while sneering at justice, is blasphemy."[20]

In accepting the Black Council as a necessary and legitimate element in the life of the Reformed Church, the denomination enlarged its dream of mission once again. It had now come full circle from the position it had taken with the German pastors in 1857. A church in mission is not only one that is benevolent and evangelistic in outreach. It is also a church which recognizes that wherever the Word is heard, wherever another who accepts Christ is encountered, there the Holy Spirit is present. Without the presence of the Holy Spirit there would be no Christian. Wherever the Holy Spirit is, there the gifts of the Spirit manifest themselves. Those who have heard the word from a church in mission in turn have

something to offer in mission to and with that church. The church in mission always lives on a two-way street; it receives a word from the Spirit through those to whom it offers the word in Christ. A church in mission is a listening as well as a speaking church. Mission is a dialogue, not simply a monologue.

The Black Council provided a structure for dialogue. Throughout the nineteenth century the Reformed Church in America had defined itself as a church with but one root—Dutch. Now, in 1969, the church recognized that instead of being a church with a single root, it was a church with roots in the plural. It was the responsibility of the Black Council to make visible in the denomination its black root.

A new understanding of what it means to be an American "denomination" was emerging. Where previously a denomination was a homogeneous group of likeminded Christians with a single heritage, it now became apparent that a denomination consists of a community of persons across the continent who knew themselves in all of their diversity as having been gathered together to be one body in Christ. At the 1969 Synod the denomination almost divided in its diversity. At the crucial moment, however, it knew that its oneness in Christ was stronger than its internal contradictions. It knew that people needed each other in their diversity.[21] By 1981 Rev. Harry Buis, president of General Synod, stated it clearly after he attended the annual meeting of the Black Caucus.

> We have a great deal to learn from each other. Such learning will take place only through honest dialogue—the dialogue of equals. If this is to happen, whites must get over their paternalistic attitudes and blacks must not be quick to label racist every idea with which they happen to disagree. My hope is that there will be an increasing dialogue to the benefit of all of us.[22]

The Black Council said basically the same thing in different words in its Ten-year Report when it advocated that the denomination find its unity in mission in Christ while affirming our individual identities.

> A sign of progress will be seen when we can all celebrate our diverse heritages without letting them be points of divisions. We will both affirm our individual identities and be together in the body of Christ.[23]

Native American Roots for the Reformed Faith

When the Reformed Church in America accepted its black root it very quickly also acknowledged its Native American root by encouraging the formation of the American Indian Council. From the beginning of the twentieth century, when the Women's Executive Committee was well into its mission to the Indians, women of the Reformed Church had understood themselves to be on the side of the Indians, for in those days they did not yet have the right to vote and therefore did not bear the responsibility for having removed the Indians to the reservations in the west. It was other white men who had carried out oppressive policies. It was the duty of women, insofar as they had the resources, somehow to meet the needs of the Indians who were now suffering.

What the women did not understand adequately was the extent of the attack which the United States government had made upon the Indian. The Mescalero Apache people, among whom the Reformed Church began to work in 1907, for example, had between 1895-1899 been subject to the rule of Lieutenant L. V. Stottler, who determined to eradicate Mescalero culture. He attacked the tribe's matriarchal system by having Indian police imprison their own grandmothers, attempted to destroy the four "bands" under four chiefs, forced men to act individually rather than in groups as had previously been their custom, insisted that men trim their long locks of hair, ordered the land to be fenced, and suppressed native religion. He ordered them to live in log houses rather than in tepees, and insisted that the women give up their basket weaving and turn to cloth weaving.[24] In short, almost everything that was giving Indians a sense of dignity was taken away from them. It was in the context of such a situation that the Reformed Church began its mission among Indians in the southwest.

At first the mission seemed to be successful. Wright and Roe sent back enthusiastic reports of conversions. Indian leaders attended General Synod and the meetings of the Women's Executive Committee. In the 1930's the United States government accepted the Indians as American

Young People's meeting at Winnebago

citizens and began a new era in which greater respect for the traditions and rights of Indians became the law of the land. At the same time, Indians were to be assisted in entering into the mainstream of American life by receiving the benefits of education. By the beginning of World War II the Reformed Church was heavily involved in providing educational services, especially by providing boarding schools or shelters for Indian

children who lived too far from towns to travel home each day. The report from Winnebago, Nebraska, where Rev. G. A. and Mrs. Watermulder worked for thirty-four years, is typical:

> After much negotiation the local public school agreed to receive Indian children and the government agreed to pay their tuition. This association has been of great value as it eliminated segregation and helped Indian children to make necessary social adjustments. The mission established a community house in the center of the small town, and on the hill at the edge of the town built a manse, a workers' cottage, and dormitories for those Indian children whose homes were unsuitable or too far removed from the town to permit them otherwise to attend the public school.[25]

The Reformed Church was always eager to develop Indian leadership. Beginning in 1911, it joined with other denominations in supporting the Cook Christian Training School for Indians who were interested in Christian service. In 1934 Rev. Robert Chaat was ordained to be a minister and installed as pastor of the Comanche Reformed Church. Within the next two decades Wendell Chino, Wilbur De Cora, Jonah Washington, and Frank Love followed him as ordained Native American ministers.

After 1960 the number of ordained Indian ministers declined. The emphasis upon an "educated" ministry in the white American pattern no longer was attactive to young men. Moreover, in the judgment of Harold Brown, Secretary for Indian Ministries, 1973-1980, the Reformed Church's polity was not in accord with Indian cultural patterns.

> The role of women in some of the matriarchal tribes was not taken seriously. We worked with men and not with women in terms of leadership. Now suddenly women can be ordained to consistory offices and we have many of the women taking positions of leadership. Early on we missed the mark by not taking seriously this cultural pattern.[26]

Some missionaries of the Reformed Church recognized in the 1950's that the times were changing and that the issue of civil rights for Indians was crucial to the Christian witness. Reuben Ten Haken, who served as missionary among Indians at Mescalero, at Macy, and in Los Angeles County, wrote in the 1950's from Mescalero:

> Certainly two responsibilities are laid heavily on our Christian hearts—to pray for our Christian Indian leaders and their people in their struggle for equality of citizenship and their fair share of this nation's blessings, and as a church to provide the kind of understanding leadership in the churches, schools, hospitals and Indian communities that will stand shoulder to shoulder with the Indian people so that their rightful place in our national life may be realized.[27]

Yet, he, like other missionaries, was discouraged at times by the lack of understanding of some of the supporters of missions.

> There are the sincere but sadly-lacking church people who cannot see that Christian witness can preach by action as well as by pulpit. And so they yell

"social gospel" whenever an Amos, or a Moses, or a good Samaritan fulfills his role of service before God as God directed him. These are the barbs that can discourage our Christian leaders from moving from faith in the Lord of Glory, who came to bring the 'abundant life' of freedom from sin's curse in self and community, into courageous consistent, Christian community action.[28]

After 1969 the denomination recognized that Indian missions must move beyond benevolence. By that time, in every area, churches had been organized and congregations were self-governing. The role of the Indian Council remained less clear among the Indians than did the Black Council among the blacks. A reading of the General Synod reports from the American Indian Council provides far less excitement and sense of movement than does the reading of the Black Council reports. What seems to have happened is that the Reformed Church, having discovered a structure for one minority group, had now developed a new stereotype that "minority" was an umbrella word which could develop structures which fit each ethnic or racial group equally well. In its 1980 report to General Synod the American Indian Council indicated its search for a distinctive approach to the problem out of its own heritage when it spoke of its role as a Council.

The American Indian Council feels that it can best deal with social, economic, and racial problems of the 80's by enriching our spiritual conditions. Our approach to the RCA may differ in some respects from those of our brother councils. These differences may be because of location, culture, need, and past commitments of the RCA to Indian ministries. This is not to say that we are not supportive of our brother councils and their efforts within the RCA system.[29]

The Indian root for mission and faith in the Reformed Church is a different root from the Dutch, the German, the French, the black, or the Hungarian. In establishing the American Indian Council parallel to other racial and ethnic councils, the Reformed Church has indicated its need for the Native American voice in the dialogue. The denomination still needs a listening ear in order that the true pattern of the Native American contribution can emerge and that this nation may exist under God in true faith, justice, and mercy. The American Indian Council of the Reformed Church waits for the fulfilment of its poignant words written in 1972:

We Indian Americans who once knew the entire American continents as our homeland are now one of the less populous minority groups in the United States. We ask to be heard. We think our white brothers in Christ can and will help us more effectively toward greater maturity in the Christian life if they will listen to our voices as we express our current needs and aspiration for the future.[30]

7

New Dreams In Old Neighborhoods

"The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8)

Throughout most of the history of the Reformed Church "missions" were carried out on the frontiers. Foreign missionaries were sent out to exotic lands beyond the horizons of most peoples' vision. Domestic missionaries went to the frontiers, first in New York, Kentucky, New Jersey, and other wilderness areas in the eastern United States and Ontario. Later they went to the midwestern and finally the far western frontier. Wherever new neighborhoods were developing, there the Protestant churches went. The Reformed Church was a part of the movement to evangelize the land.

Local Initiative With Denominational Support

Throughout its history the denomination had scarcely attempted to develop a grand strategy for mission in North America. Instead, it lived with its dream for the future. It discovered repeatedly that its dream was too small, or distorted, or even selfish. It constantly found that God was giving it a bigger dream, a more loving and just dream, with unexpected nuances. The dream grew in a thousand places, as individuals, congregations, and classes were led by God to proclaim the gospel in a new place, and to help some neighbors who were poor in economic resources or broken in spirit. The dream became filled with the unselfishness of people who contributed out of their own poverty and who sent Christmas boxes filled through personal sacrifice.

The dreams were reported to the Women's Executive Committee or to the Board of North American Missions (as it was re-named after 1960). Even though the members of the Boards themselves had dreams, they

were more often given the less glamorous task of helping to fulfill the dreams of all of those others in Reformed Churches scattered across the land. The Boards remained servants, even when many called upon them to become leaders. They exhausted their funds by responding to the calls for help which came from everywhere, from a new church in New Jersey and an old church in New York, from a parsonage in Iowa and a church without a pulpit Bible in South Dakota, from a school in Alabama and a "holler" in Kentucky, from the immigrants in Canada to a new congregation in California. As enthusiastic people in a small town, a city, a rural area began to preach the gospel and build churches, they put their all into those local efforts and called for assistance from the denomination. At the denominational level, there were never enough resources of people or money to meet all of the calls for help or to fulfill every dream. There was never time to develop a grand strategy; the Spirit was leading the church where He willed. The individuals with their dreams and the denomination with its assistance had all they could do simply to respond to the Spirit's call and allow their dreams to be corrected by God's vision. This assisting, servant role of the denominational mission agencies is typified by the comment of the Women's Executive Committee in its 1903 report.

> As to the parsonages—a hard struggle went on at Alexander, Iowa, where the people were trying to provide a house for the minister. It was the final and greatest struggle of all, to bring themselves to ask aid from the Board, since it was manifestly impossible to finish building without it.

The somewhat glamorous, but important, role of the Board of Domestic Missions was perhaps most consistently carried out through the work of the Church Building Fund, first established in 1854. This fund was begun with the purpose of collecting money which in turn could be loaned without interest to churches which needed assistance. The missionary nature of the fund is evident from the initial provision that "no part of said fund shall be appropriated within the limits of the cities of New York, Brooklyn, or Jersey City" where the church was already well established.[2] The Reformed congregations had their own separate dreams, however, so the dream for a large Church Building Fund did not immediately catch on. Only $1,074.12 was raised in the first year, and comparatively small amounts were contributed in the years to follow.

Important though the fund was, the Board of Domestic Missions never found it large enough to meet the needs. By 1957 a group of laymen finally caught the vision and, in cooperation with the Board, developed a second fund called the "Extension Foundation." This foundation accepted investments from individuals and loaned that money to churches at low interest rates, supplementing money loaned at no interest or one per cent by the Church Building Fund. The Extension Foundation grew much more rapidly and made loans in amounts up to $150,000 in 1979. By 1979 the Foundation had made loans to one hundred twenty-six churches for a total of $5,380,150.[3] While lacking in glamor, these two

funds have enabled the denomination to serve the needs of churches in mission all across the nation.

The extent of the servant role of the Board becomes clear when one notices that from 1950-1960 it bore responsibility for assisting annually in supporting fifteen to twenty per cent of all the congregations in the denomination. While bearing this great load of responsibilities which was laid upon it by classes recommending assistance for congregations, it remained perpetually short of funds and annually asked the churches to support domestic missions as generously as it was supporting the more glamorous foreign missions. In 1858, for example, one reads the plaintive words,

> that the Board have been under the necessity of denying all applications from new stations, and of contracting all their operations, thus shutting down the gates of progress and expansion, and allowing many a golden opportunity to pass away forever. Why is this so? Is this right? Has the novelty of new instrumentalities and agencies diverted the benefactions of the Church . . .[4]

That would not be the last time that a Reformed Church board would ask for more faithfulness in less glamorous but necessary aspects of mission.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the need for more careful planning in mission was increasingly felt. Several important developments in the structure of the Reformed Church took place in the 1950's and 1960's, as first a "Stewardship Council" and later a "General Synod Executive Committee" were instituted by the General Synod of the church. These enabled the church to centralize its planning for mission. By 1968 the denomination decided that the program boards of the church—the Board of World Missions, the Board of North American Missions, and the Board of Education—should be merged into one General Program Council, which would be better able to coordinate "planning and approach when it comes to the total mission program of the church."[5]

> We do not, however, speak any longer of foreign and domestic missions, but of one world mission encompassing all those ministries of the RCA outside the structures of its own life. This new unity is due largely to the fact that the many worlds of another day have been reduced by modern travel and communication into one world to which the Church has but one mission. Everywhere the Church faces a world which looks very similar—not so much the jungle dweller as urban man; not so much exotic foreign religions as secular man. One world: one mission.[6]

With the development of the General Program Council, the Reformed Church has structured itself for mission in a more official way than it had done at any time in its entire history. The work of mission was to be at the heart of the work of the General Synod itself, rather than simply several items on the agenda. The old distinction between "church" and

"mission" was almost obliterated for every worshipping congregation, every Christian, every part of the church was now understood to be in mission. As was often said, "the church exists by mission as fire exists by burning." The whole denomination would be involved in planning the dream and fulfilling the task.

Expectations for leadership and planning in mission which went beyond human capacity were laid on the General Program Council. The people accustomed to the excitement of mission on the frontiers of exotic lands were disappointed when they were faced with the needs of people on their own doorsteps. The Spirit had more dreams than the General Program Council could accept or coordinate. An overwhelming assortment of needs, opportunities, and past commitments were entrusted to the new structures. But while the denomination was restructuring itself to plan for mission, events were taking place in North America which would lead the church into new forms of mission. New programs would be developed not on new frontiers so much as in old neighborhoods. Old programs would develop new opportunites. Even while the church asked for planning, it was entering upon one of the wildest decades, filled with unexpected events, and bewildering surprises. In such a time, planning would have to give way to obedience, and objectives repeatedly replaced by sensitivity and faithfulness.

New Programs in Old Neighborhoods

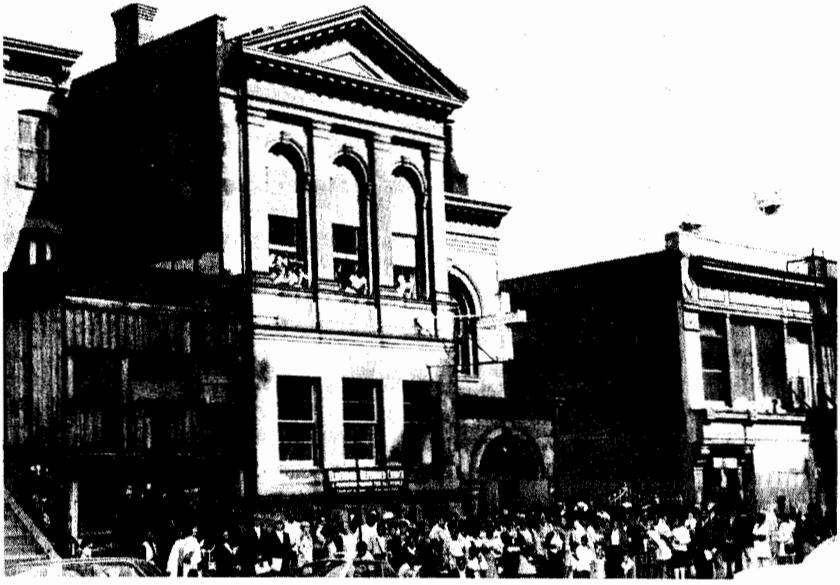
In 1968 the Board of North American Missions made its last report to the General Synod prior to being merged with other denominational boards into the General Program Council. In that report an historic shift of priorities was made. Ever since its origin its primary purpose had been the establishing of new churches and aiding those who needed continuing assistance. In 1968 the Board informed the General Synod, "The urban situation is explosive. It must have priority in terms of human and financial resources."[7] "It is evident that new church development must relinquish priority to the needs of the city."[8]

One can discover two major reasons for this crucial shift of emphasis. The immediate reason is that during the preceding summers a number of the major cities in the United States had erupted in racial tension and hatred which had brought about rioting, conflagrations, killing, and looting. The whole country had been shocked by the events. Churches had to respond. Moreover, several of the Reformed Churches in the old neighborhoods had provided real assistance in the midst of the calamities. One such case was reported to the General Synod.

> In the midst of the riots in Newark in the summer of '67 God in his providence had made ready a haven of refuge. Grace Chapel, formerly the German Reformed Church, was a scene of work and witness . . . the chapel became a 'shelter in the time of storm.' The hungry, the frightened, those who sought safety—found their needs met—because the church was there.[9]

Beyond the immediate reason for the new attention to the city was the fact that for more than a decade voices had been raised, calling the attention of the denomination to its neglect of the urban population. During the 1950's the nation was building a network of interstate highways which made it possible for people to commute rapidly by automobiles from the suburbs to the downtown areas. It also encouraged factories and industrial parks to locate outside the cities. As a result, millions of young, affluent white Americans left the inner cities, while the elderly and the poor remained behind. New racial groups often migrated into the inner core of the cities. The older white congregations discovered that their members had left for the suburbs. The success of the suburbs so caught the imagination that the city itself was forgotten and its churches languished.

Donald De Young, who ministered to the city at Elmendorf Reformed Church on Manhattan, was one of the first to call the church back to the



Elmendorf Reformed Church, New York City

city. He understood how the older congregations felt when the neighborhood changed and he knew how the neighborhood now looked at the old church.

> The shock comes largely when the church discovers that her community is not aware of the wonderful reputation the congregation has built up over the years! They don't know about the important roles played through the years by pastors and members of the congregation. The community does not share and is not impressed with yesterday's memory bank . . .[10]

Moreover, De Young stated that the community of Harlem had taught him that "A Church may have a legal right to stand on a corner, but if it does not provide services to help people during the week, it has no moral right to take up space."[11]

Confronted by the rapidly changing old neighborhoods, many congregations discovered too late that their people had moved away and that they could no longer carry on a valid ministry there. They sold their buildings to congregations of another race and denomination and moved to the suburbs. Often this was the wisest thing for the congregation, for the new congregation which purchased the property often had an understanding of how to witness in that place which the departing congregation lacked. However, in many cases pastors and congregations believed that it was crucial for the congregation to stay and minister in the old neighborhood. They developed creative new ministries for old and changing neighborhoods.

A dramatic example of a church that stayed was Calvary Reformed Church in Clevelend. When the old church burned down in a Christmas morning fire, it decided not to move but to build a new building in the same spot to serve people from Appalachia who had recently become the dominant group in the neighborhood. The new building was built on a fifty-five foot lot. It was so constructed that a fairly traditional arrangement of seating, pulpit, Lord's Table and baptismal font could function at Sunday worship. During the weekdays, the furniture was arranged to carry out the church's ministry to the community around it. Its parking lot became a basketball court. An upper level collection of books became a branch of the Cleveland Public Library. A portion of the building was used for youth clubs and a tutoring program for children after school and a nursery during the day. An average of thirty-eight people came for an "Elderly Nutrition" program. There was a prayer chapel as well as a number of pianos which could be used by neighborhood children for piano lessons. A food co-op was organized to help families buy groceries. The result was that in an area where most of the buildings were constantly struggling with the crudeness of the graffiti writing on walls, the church remained white and clean even three years after its dedication.

> This graffiti-free church is still white because it belongs to everyone! It is a church that does not merely talk of love and service; it is a church where service and love are very obvious parts of its seven-day-per-week ministry.[12]

In 1970 Grace Chapel in Newark was continuing to function as a congregation with a mission to the youth of the city. The congregation had decided to sustain a nursery in its Community Center building across the street from the church, without any of the federal support which was sometimes available for such ministries. It also had parties at Halloween and other times for children of the neighborhood. It sponsored a Day Camp for children during the summer sports season, and a summer "camp live-in" whereby area children could spend two weeks living with Reformed Church families in suburban homes. The congregation carried

out this ministry because it believed that the young people of the area were in dire need of recreation and because they were needed for the city for the future.

> We must encourage them to stay in school and get an education. We must initiate new programs around them and inspire the necessary volunteers to man them. Our young people are our greatest asset. We must win them for the cause of Christ so that they may go forth to rescue their city.[13]

In the old neighborhoods the distinction between "church" and "mission" was gone, for every congregation sensed the need to reach out with the gospel, to provide for the needs of the poor, to speak about the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ, to present the message of Jesus Christ as personal Savior in times of life and death. In those neighborhoods, events moved too rapidly to allow for centralized planning for mission. At the local level, pastors and members of the congregations simply began to meet needs, and the General Program Council would be asked to provide additional financial or staff assistance. In Muskegon, Michigan, the Reformed churches learned about the needs of people in the city. Mary, an aged woman suffering from arthritis, was suffering from lack of proper diet. Jim was in jail, without friends or visitors. Joan was a single parent who had to leave for work early in the morning. The churches, with assistance from the Particular Synod of Michigan and the Classis of Muskegon, founded Reformed Inner-City Experiment (R.I.C.E.) to enrich the lives of persons in need and to bring them once again in touch with the gospel.[14]

The decades after World War II became the age of the shopping mall, where people would not only shop, but where young people would meet their friends. Amid the signs of affluence and happiness, there walked many who had deep personal needs. In Willowbrook, New Jersey, in Eastbrook Mall, Grand Rapids, in Lincoln Mall, Chicago, Reformed churches cooperated in developing "mall ministries." David Mack, director of the Marketplace Ministry in Grand Rapids, stated the nature of the ministry there.

> The most common need of the people who come here is the need to love and to be loved. They are alienated and for that very reason you're not likely to find them in church. They're often hurt by broken relationship, and desperately need to know that someone really cares about them. This is a place where the church becomes accessible to them.[15]

As the local congregations began to sense that mission was not something to which one sent money far away, but was the work of Christ entrusted to every congregation, a great variety of ministries began to be developed. In the decades after World War II, the move to the suburbs had led the church to concentrate its attention on family life. Those who lived alone often felt left out. In the early 1970's a number of churches became aware of the problem and started "singles" ministries. One of the first to call the attention of the denomination to the possibilities of a

ministry designed especially for the unmarried adult was Kenneth Van Wyk, at Garden Grove Community Church, California. In 1973 more than three hundred persons were involved in the congregation's program each week. Over seventy persons among them "affirmed or reaffirmed their faith in Jesus Christ and joined the membership of the church during 1973."[16] Van Wyk collected comments from persons in their programs in order to help other churches know what needs had to be met.

> I actually quit going to church because I felt so conspicuous and uncomfortable as a single women until I found the singles groups in this church.
>
> A single person needs the same things other Christians need—friendship and Christian love and concern, Bible study and a feeling of belonging.[17]

On college and university campuses, the Reformed Church discovered another neighborhood in need of mission. At Michigan State, the University of Michigan, Western Michigan University, the University of Northern Iowa and other places the church supported campus ministers. In some places such as Western Michigan the approach was not only to the individual but also to the university as such, with an emphasis on confrontation about the great issues facing the nation and the world.

At Drake University, the chaplain specialized in creative worship, in marriage and singles counseling, and in cooperating with chaplains from other denominations in providing a set of "alternative education" courses. At Michigan State, a congregation was begun with an excellent building in which a worshipping congregation could develop a life and ministry of its own. From time to time it would sponsor a "mission" to the campus, with a speaker such as Dr. Clark Pinnock giving a series of lectures. Personal witnessing was done by students.

> Pat prayed that three non-Christians would come to his discussion and almost his whole floor showed up. Judy, a freshman, had a dorm discussion with the suitemates she had been witnessing to during the year. To her surprise, they were interested in beginning a weekly Bible study.[18]

In New Jersey an ecumenical approach to campus ministries was undertaken in cooperation with the United Ministries for Higher Education. Rev. Eileen Esmark was engaged to serve on the campuses of Rutgers University.

As the churches in the cities and on the campuses sought ways of meeting the needs of the people around them, they discovered that the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the old-timers and the newcomers, the young and the old, stood in need of the gospel as taught and lived by the churches. The church of Jesus Christ in mission provides the alternative which people need when they have lost hope. In Grand Rapids, a new style of approach understood this need for an alternative. It took for its name, "The Other Way." For over one hundred children in 1973 "The Other Way" was not only a rented storefront building, but

In fact, to many of them, it represents an *other way* of life, providing a sharp contrast to an often turbulent home life and an always explosive life on the streets.[19]

The Reformed Church in the old neighborhoods also came into contact with the Hispanic population of the country, of whom there are more than twenty million. On October 20, 1973, the Hispanic Steering Committee (later, Hispanic Council) came into existence, with Rev. Raymond Rivera as president. The Hispanic Council was organized to be the collective voice of the Hispanics within the church, to advocate and coordinate Hispanic programs, and to be a prophetic voice to the church and to the world. Perhaps more than any other group within the Reformed church, it combined evangelistic ferver with commitment to social action. [20] Within the space of a decade, Hispanic congregations were active in various cities, including Newark, New Brunswick, Melrose, New York City, Chicago, Rochester, and new work was beginning in Holland, Michigan. Dreams of new ministries in California and Florida were being voiced. Partially due to the advocacy of the Hispanic Council, a new work in mission had begun in Venezuela. Rev. Benjamin Alicea had been added to the staff of New Brunswick Seminary, which for the first time was providing stability in minority leadership at the center of the denomination's theological educational program.

Alongside its evangelistic and church growth concerns, the Hispanic Council was giving the denomination a new root in their culture and also asking the Reformed Church to gain a sense of community with the Hispanic peoples, such as it had always had with the Dutch and was beginning to have with the Blacks and the Native Americans. This sense of community was combined with the concern for social justice in 1979 when the Hispanic Council confronted the General Synod with the recommendation to demand "the immediate withdrawel of U.S. naval forces from the Island of Vieques and for an immediate cease of all war games that are afflicting suffering on the people of Vieques."[21]

Many members of the General Synod of 1979 were confused by the recommendation. Few had even heard of the Island of Vieques off the coast of Puerto Rico. This small island of fifty-two square miles at the beginning of World War II had been inhabited by 26,000 people. Because the Navy wanted the island for military purposes, it abruptly removed the people from the island. Today, eight thousand people are allowed to inhabit the part of the island not used by the military. Many of these people are or have been fishermen. However, their lives are daily disrupted and even threatened by mines, and practice firings and bombings often using live ammunition.

Recreation is practically non-existent due to the lack of space available and the undesirable and belligerent presence of the 'marinos' (navy and marines) who come into town to get drunk, fight, and insist on finding 'senoritas.' All activities, including church services, classroom instruction, family life, and sleep, are interrupted by the noise created by the explosions.[22]

The 1979 Synod did not adopt the recommendation. To some of the delegates, it was obvious that the navy did need places for target practice and that a small island represented a good facility separate from large centers of population. To Hispanics, however, the choice of Vieques was a clear symbol of the white leaders' lack of concern for the welfare of minorities, for its lack of positive attention to the needs of Puerto Rico and its nearby islands, and for the needs of the islanders themselves (who are American citizens) for the same rights and protection guaranteed to all other citizens. It was suspected that had the island had a white population, the navy would never have chosen to use it for such a purpose.

The Hispanic Council brought the matter to the attention of the Synod again in 1980, with more information and a more detailed recommendation. This time the Synod sensed the issues more accurately and urged the nation to change its policy regarding Vieques. The Hispanic root of the Reformed Church was bearing fruit, with its voice added to other ethnic voices in the old "Dutch" church, as the English had named it.

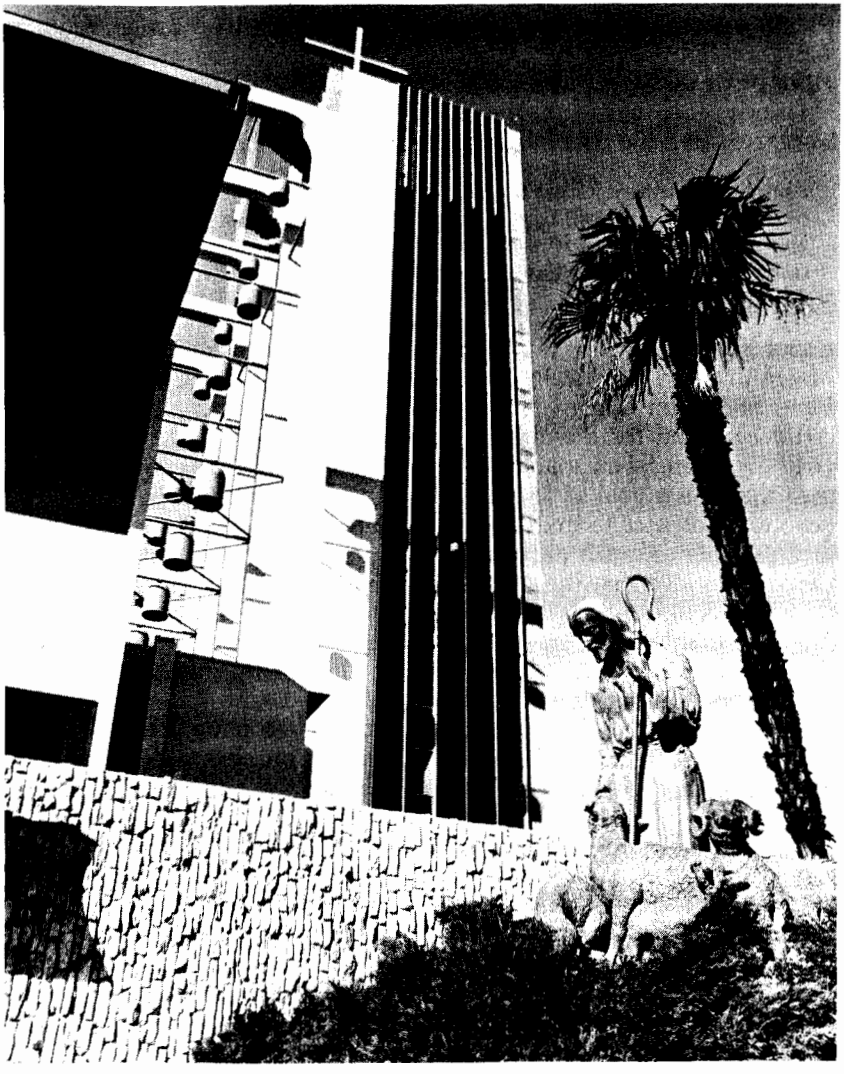
The Reformed Church by 1980 was rapidly becoming a home for people of many voices and traditions. The 1980 Synod would recognize yet one more voice coming out of the old neighborhoods where populations were on the move. It recognized the "Council for Asian American Ministries" as an entity of the Reformed Church in America. In the following year the Council enlarged its own dream by changing its name to "Council for Pacific/Asian American Ministries." A survey showed that the denomination had six Asian congregations, seven additional congregations in some way affiliated with the Reformed Church, and opportunities for new ministries in several areas. The Asian Christians affirmed their desire to live within the Reformed Church as servants of God's kingdom.

> Our ethnic roots and dignity as persons are often not fully appreciated. Such a life in the wilderness, however, is an opportunity for a creative service for God's Kingdom on this earth. Like Abraham, we shall obey the call to be pilgrims, people who live as the sojourners in the land in search for 'the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God'. We shall cherish our ethnic heritages as God's gifts, but also welcome our life and work here in America as a sacred vocation. We shall live as Asian Americans. We shall celebrate our Asian American identity because of God's purposiveness inherent in it.[23]

Each of the ethnic groups living together within the denomination could resonate the Asians' statement. It was what the Dutch and the Germans had said so long ago. The difference in 1980 in contrast to 1857 was that in the previous century such a statement had been made and heard exclusively, shutting out other groups, whereas within the framework of the growing diversity of the Reformed Church it could now be lived inclusively, in order that the denomination in its life and structure, as well as in its singing, could bear witness to the nation that "red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight."

Old Programs With New Opportunities

At the beginning of the decade of the '70's, the excitement of new ministries and priorities for old urban neighborhoods seemed to be threatening the very basic ministry of church extension which had been carried on throughout the life of the old Board of Domestic Missions. The nature of the dream of "This nation under God" is such, however, that God constantly forces the church to reinterpret the dream, and set new goals and priorities, "lest one good custom should corrupt the world."[24]



Tower of Hope, Garden Grove, CA

In 1955 Robert Schuller had taken a new approach to church extension by beginning to hold services at a drive-in theater in Garden Grove, California. Having grown up in the small village of Newkirk, Iowa, he understood what it means to live in a village under God. His dream was that the city of Garden Grove, with a population of over 500,000 would live as a city under God. Schuller understood the close relationship of Newkirk and its country roads to the freeways of the Los Angeles area and shifted his ministry accordingly. As the congregation grew, the church built a fourteen-story "Tower of Hope" alongside a sanctuary seating 1,700 persons. The Tower was visible all over the city as a sign of the presence of the reconciling power of Jesus Christ.[25] Later, Schuller was developing a national reputation with his television program, "The Hour of Power," in which his message of "possibility thinking" would challenge people across the nation. Like the Man of La Mancha, Schuller wanted to lead the church in dreaming impossible dreams.

> I predict a fantastic future for the institutional church in the United States of America! . . . It will be a thrill to look across America in the year 2000 and see tremendous institutions in every significant city carrying out fantastic programs to heal human hearts, to fill human needs.[26]

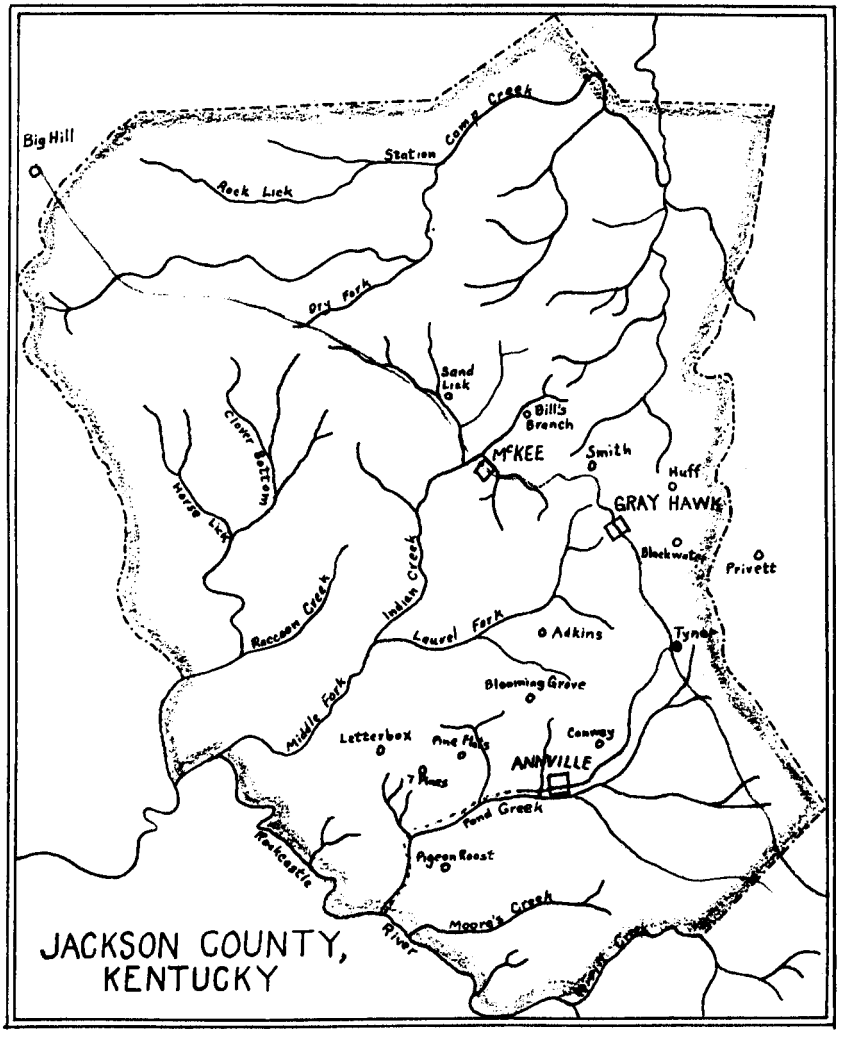
By 1977 the Reformed Church was united in a sense of continuing responsibility for the planning and development of new churches. On March 27, 1977 it offically launched a new $5,000,000 Church Growth Fund campaign. Many were at first skeptical that such a large amount could be raised for the denomination had a history of never reaching goals for financial campaigns. In this case, however, the enthusiasm was such that a new goal of $6,000,000 was eventually set and pledged. The denomination used techniques developed by the Church Growth Institute in California to make decisions about the locations for new congregations. It decided that the major effort must be in Dallas, Texas, where three new congregations were begun. Moreover, now that the denomination was multi-ethnic, new congregations were free to enter fully into their ministry to the needs of their areas while at the same time allowing newcomers to gain "roots" relating to the Dutch heritage of New Amsterdam. Rather than naming themselves "community" churches, they now displayed the Reformed Church seal, proudly told the 350-year history of the denomination, and studied the sixteenth century confessional statements. In becoming black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American, the Reformed Church in Dallas was also free to be in some way "Dutch."

Between 1978-1981, nearly sixty new congregations were begun. Thirty-two new congregations received funding from the Church Growth Fund. Leadership development conferences were held in Madison, Wisconsin, each summer for selected pastors. By the end of the third summer more than one hundred fifty pastors had received special training in church growth leadership. Not only pastors of new churches received help, but also churches as much as three hundred years old were

given assistance in developing an understanding of their identity, purpose, and dream in the communities they served.[27]

While all of this excitement was present across the land, the programs begun before the turn of the century in Jackson County, Kentucky, continued to hold the affection of many. There, too, new opportunities were discovered, although at first many perceived the new opportunities as the abandonment of the old work.

The women of the denomination, in beginning the work in Jackson County, had used an integrated approach to mission, assisting persons to grow in education, health, economic conditions as well as spiritually.



The first missionaries sent, Mrs. Cora Smith and Miss Nora Gaut, were a nurse and a teacher respectively. By 1905 Rev. and Mrs. Isaac Messler brought an ordained ministry to McKee and a congregation was established there. Religious services began at Smith, Salt Lick, Middle Fork, Gray Hawk, and Adkins. A school was opened in McKee, complete with a girls' dormitory. Later the educational work in McKee was turned over to the Country Board of Education.

In 1909 a crucial shift in the Jackson County approach began when Rev. William A. Worthington and his bride, Henrietta Zwemer Te Kolste, bought a farm at Pond Creek which was in sedge grass, little more than a weed. Thus began the work that was to become the Annville Institute. In 1910 a grade school was in operation. In 1923 Annville became a fully accredited high school, with vocational work for boys and girls. The boys and girls lived in dormitories, which gave opportunity for a program of "complete living" in the dorm, the work program, the church, and the school. A trade store made it possible for the mountain people to purchase at bargain rates used clothing contributed by Reformed Church members. Many members of the denomination visited the Institute and learned to appreciate its program of rural uplift. Mr. Al Oppeneer, who managed the farm for four decades, became a symbol of the layman who was instrumental in building faith and character while teaching good agricultural techniques. One can sense what was happening when one reads a letter written years later to Mr. Oppeneer by one of his former students:

> I remember very well the alarm clock that went off every morning at 4:30 and getting up to go milk the cows or see that they were milked . . . because the milking machine hadn't been invented yet back in those "Dark Ages" . . . of course, we milked by hand. I can't ever remember having any mastitus trouble in those days when we milked by hand either.[28]

By the middle of the 1970's the situation in Jackson County was changing. The state of Kentucky had improved the roads and upgraded high school education in the area to the extent that the enrollment in the Annville school was dropping at an alarming rate. In one sense the drop in enrollment was brought about by the fulfillment of the dream of the Reformed Church that adequate educational facilities be available to every child in the area. What had happened earlier at McKee was now also true at Annville. In 1979 the school was closed at Annville, amid considerable controversy generated by the fact that in the minds of many persons the school and the Annville Institute were synonomous with the Jackson County ministry program.

By 1980 a revitalized program of mission was being carried out under the name, "Jackson County Ministries," which had been organized through the joint planning of persons from the county and representatives of the Reformed Church. A newspaper, *The Jackson County Connection,* was begun in June, 1980, to report on the activities in the county. One reads that attendance is growing at the Annville Reformed

Church and that the local community is taking new responsibility for the life of the church. A revival has been held in McKee. Gray Hawk is growing, with more than one thousand home visits being planned in the area for the next twelve-month period. A new motor home has been outfitted as a "mobile church" to provide a "church" where no church building was available for use. Jackson County was being opened up to the world as the State of Kentucky was helping it to receive water systems, sewage systems, better housing and recreation, with one result being that in the county as a whole many churches were experiencing a loss of respect.

> Amid this chaos a clear, steady voice must herald a simple truth. . . . Most needed today is a way of connecting the deep realities of personal faith in Jesus Christ to the agonizing struggles of public existence.[29]

The old programs of Jackson County now are filled with a new relevance in mission. Like so many other places where the Reformed Church was ministering to three nations on the North American continent, Jackson County is a mission in transition. Jackson County is no longer isolated. It is a microcosm of what is happening elsewhere. In a sense, we all live in Jackson County.

> Jackson County is a mission field in transition. We are on the painful edges of becoming also a mission force. The umbilical cords are being clipped between us and the mothers of a time now gone. We are coming of age . . . slowly, haltingly, but surely.[30]

Within the next three years following 1980, Jackson County Ministries entered a still larger framework. The Reformed Church became more active in two organizations. One is Coalition for Appalachian Ministry (CAM), a cooperative ministry of four Presbyterian and Reformed denominations. The other is the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA), which has nineteen denominations as members. Through these two organizations the Reformed Church and Jackson County Ministries have expanded their vision to the pastoral, educational, and social/economic needs of the whole ten-state Appalachia area. A link is established between Jackson County and the Reformed Church ministry in cities such as Cleveland where many people from Appalachia settle. As it is being brought into a close relationship with the whole of Appalachia, Jackson County's story, like all the other stories we have heard of mission on the North American continent, is a story without an end. It is a people in transition, a church on the move, in order that the dream may come to pass.

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Dreams defy logic. They take unexpected turns and develop strange configurations. They are generally only partially fulfilled and give to those who dream them a strange sense of exhileration, of anxiety and fear, of hope and joy. Throughout its history the Reformed Church in America had had a dream of "This nation under God." It has expanded

this dream to "This continent under God." It is a dream with competing voices, tantalizing opportunities, and as yet unfulfilled hopes. It is a dream without an end, and a dream which the Reformed Church cannot control. Ultimately, it is a vision given by God. For a people in mission today, the words of Peter on that first Pentecost Day remain true:

> And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
> that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
> and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
> and your young men shall see visions,
> and your old men dream dreams, . . .
> I will show wonders in the heaven above
> and signs on the earth beneath . . .
> and it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
> (Acts 2:17-21)

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 1: This Nation Under God

1. *Report of the Board of Domestic Missions,* 1949, p. 5.
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4. *Church Order of Dort,* Art. IV and VII.
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6. *Ibid.,* p. 17.
7. *Ibid.,* p. 18.
8. De Jong, *Op. Cit.,* p. 35.
9. Corwin, *Op. Cit.,* pp. 18-19.
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12. Charles E. Corwin, "The Church and the Indian in Colonial Days," in *Tercentenary Studies of the Reformed Church in America, 1928,* (New York: General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, 1928), p. 372.
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14. *Ibid.,* p. 153. For a more detailed study of the relationships with the Indians, see pp. 146-161.
15. E. T. Corwin, *A History of the Reformed Church, Dutch; The Reformed Church, German, and the Moravian Church in the United States,* (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1895) pp. 63-68.
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18. Donald J. Bruggink, "The Linguistic Limitations of the Dutch Church," *The Church Herald,* Jan. 27, 1978. The series of seven articles in *The Church Herald* from Jan. 13-April 7, 1978, captures the essential emotions of Reformed Church life in the early period.
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20. The story of the controversy has been told many times. See especially, Charles E. Corwin, *A Manual of the Reformed Church in America,* (New York: Board of Publication and Bible School Work of the Reformed Church in America, 1922), fifth ed., pp. 56-79, and De Jong, *Op. Cit.,* pp. 170-210.
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23. *Preface to the Entire Constitution,* in Corwin, *Digest,* p. vi.

Chapter 2: Church Extension in the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church

1. *Appendix to Minutes of General Synod,* 1867, pp. 8-9.
2. *Ibid.,* p. 9.
3. *General Synod Minutes,* 1848, p. 427.
4. *Ibid.,* 1867 Appendix, p. 10.
5. *Ibid.,* 1786, p. 149.
6. *Ibid.,* p. 150.
7. *Ibid.,* 1788, p. 181.
8. *Ibid.,* 1794, p. 264.
9. William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Reformed Dutch Pulpit,* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1869), p. 101.
10. E. T. Corwin, "The Church in the near West, Canada, and the West Indies," in *Tercentenary Studies,* pp. 413-5, 404-5.
11. Corwin, *Manual,* Fifth ed., revised, 1922, p. 702.
12. *General Synod Minutes,* 1806, p. 353.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Van Hoeven, *Op. Cit.,* p. 37.
15. *General Synod Minutes,* 1806, pp. 354-5; see also Van Hoeven, *Op. Cit.,* p. 37-38.
16. *Ibid.,* 1821, pp. 3-18.
17. *Ibid.,* 1966, pp. 127-9.
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21. Corwin, *Digest,* pp. 222-3.
22. *Tercentenary Studies,* pp. 156-8.
23. *Ibid.,* p. 420.
24. *Ibid.,* pp. 335-6.
25. *Ibid.,* p. 422.
26. *Ibid.,* pp. 427-8.
27. *General Synod Minutes,* 1857, p. 221.
28. *Board of Domestic Missions Report,* 1858, p. 31.
29. *Ibid.,* pp. 31-2.
30. *Ibid.,* p. 32.
31. Donald J. Bruggink, "The Century of Growth—the Nineteenth," in *The Church Herald,* March 10, 1978, pp. 14-5.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
33. *The Leader,* August 24, 1910, p. 693.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, p. 696.
38. For a full discussion of the controversy from 1840-1867, see Gerald De Jong, "The Controversy over Dropping the Word Dutch from the Name of the Reformed Church," in *Reformed Review,* Spring, 1981, pp. 158-170.

Chapter 3: With Charity Toward All—Women in Mission

1. *Board of Domestic Missions Report,* 1949, p. 9, and *General Synod Minutes,* 1848, p. 425.
2. For a brief history of the church, see *The Leader,* August 10, 1910, p. 665.
3. Dr. & Mrs. John Dykstra, *A History of Central Reformed Church* (unpublished) p. 17.
4. *General Synod Minutes,* 1854, p. 476.
5. *Board of Domestic Missions Report,* 1854, p. 41.
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7. *Ibid.*, 1860, p. 73.
8. *Ibid.*, 1858, p. 33.
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11. *The Christian Intelligencer,* Jan. 4, 1866.
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14. *General Synod Minutes,* 1854, p. 457.
15. Since the story of those settlements has previously been discussed in the Heritage and Hope series, we omit the discussion of those settlements here. The reader is referred to Dennis E. Shoemaker, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 52-54, See also A. Brouwer, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 114-118, and Van Hoeven, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 45-48, 62-69.
16. *General Synod Minutes,* 1882, p. 143. This statement contrasts with that of Abraham Thompson, in his often quoted anniversary speech of the Board of Domestic Missions; see Van Hoeven, *Op. Cit.*, p. 47.
17. *Constitution,* Art. 1, *Women's Executive Committee Report,* 1884, p. 28.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
20. *W. E. C. Fourth Annual Report,* 1887, p. 19.
21. *Ibid.*, 1893, p. 15.
22. *Ibid.*, 1900, pp. 13-4.
23. *Ibid.*, 1895, p. 16.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, 1888, p. 15.
26. *Ibid.*, 1900, pp. 14-5.
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28. *Ibid.*, 1885, pp. 32-33.
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32. *Ibid.*, 1890, p. 25.
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38. See Eugene Heideman, *A People in Mission: The Surprising Harvest,* p. 11.
39. *W. E. C. Report,* 1895, p. 13.
40. *Ibid.*, 1902, p. 23.
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42. *Ibid.*, 1897, pp. 67-8.
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5. *Board of Domestic Missions Report,* 1854, p. 25.
6. *The Christian Intelligencer,* January 12, 1887, p. 1.
7. Ralph Bloemendal, *The Leader,* August 24, 1910, p. 693.
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22. Henry Van Dyke, "Returns on Church Extension," *The Church Herald,* Sept. 7, 1956, p. 7.
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27. *General Synod Minutes,* 1950, p. 99.
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9. *General Synod Minutes,* June, 1824, p. 12.
10. *Ibid.,* p. 13.
11. *Board of Domestic Report,* 1897, p. 20.
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13. For a detailed treatment of this whole era in South Carolina, see Erskine, *Op. Cit.,* pp. 60-73.
14. *Board of Domestic Report,* 1928, p. 26.
15. *Ibid.,* 1954, p. 11.
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30. *Ibid.,* 1972, p. 75.

Chapter 7: New Dreams in Old Neighborhoods

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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Since returning to the United States in 1970, he has served as chaplain and chairman of the Religion and Bible Department at Central College, as academic dean at Western Theological Seminary, and since July, 1982, has served on the staff of the General Program Council of the Reformed Church in American.

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