



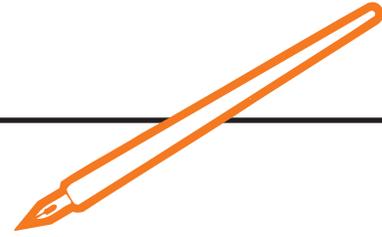
# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE  
VOLUME 45, NO.20 OCTOBER 3, 1996



*22nd  
Convocation  
and the  
27th  
Anniversary  
of the  
Theological  
College  
of the  
Canadian  
Reformed  
Churches*

By the late Rev. G. Van Dooren



## Glorious Ministry

The present dearth of ministers and school teachers leads the concerned regularly to meet young men with the challenge, "Why do you not prepare yourselves for these primary vocations in the Kingdom?"

Then you discover that also among these young men, or some of them, has grown a kind of guilt feeling about that dearth. Some wonder and hesitantly ask themselves and others about possibilities in training for the ministry and for Christian education.

Often, however, the stumbling block on the way to the classroom and especially to the pulpit seems to be that "being a minister is far too difficult for me." Although several boys have in their early years been attracted to the idea of becoming a "dominee," in growing up they changed their minds and now rather go into landscaping or business; they choose law or science or medicine. Obviously several negative impressions about the ministry that were launched at them, played the greater part in their change of mind. Now one may hear them say, "Oh no! That is not for me! Too difficult. . . !"

Why this change? Why this "general" idea that becoming and being a minister is so difficult and only fit for a very few who form a very special group among the general growing and studying generation?

Finances cannot be the reason. Material, financial problems belong to the past. A minister does not become a millionaire like, for example, an entrepreneur. But the time is gone that being a minister was identical to being poor. He could travel for half price and got substantial reductions in many stores. That is no longer the case.

The training for the ministry may be long; four postgraduate years for the M.Div. degree, but that does not compare unfavourably with training for other vocations on a comparable academic level.

In addition, in the Church Order the churches have agreed to not only endeavour that there be students of theology, but also to extend financial aid to those who are in need of it, Art. 20.

Other students have grumbled about the fact that theological students are spoiled, while they have to do without such easy access to financial support.

Once called and ordained, the minister – if he behaves well – gets a life-long financial security for himself and his family which is hardly found anywhere else. Even high-level executives may face sudden dismissal without such security. A minister gets, on top of his salary, free living, car allowance, study allowance, book allowance, and all that tax free.

Thus there must be other "negative aspects" to the calling of "pastor and teacher" in the minds of many, scaring away promising adolescents from the Theological College.

It may be risky to dig for the source or sources of such unfavourable impressions and to try to point to those who are most guilty here.

The general idea seems to be that the work of a minister is indeed very difficult and not fit for a normal person. It is

much harder than being a doctor, a lawyer or a scientist, let alone a contractor, landscaper or bank manager.

Being a minister means – so is the popular opinion among the young – to live in a house built of glass. Everyone knows everything about you. Everyone owns you. Apart from the enormous burden of preparing two weekly sermons, fifty weeks a year, you have to deal with, and to have patience with people, all kinds of people, also troublesome and unruly people. They own you and try to look over your shoulder and to breathe in your neck. You have to satisfy everyone and every whim. You are always on call. You have to listen to people, healthy and sick people, clear-minded and warped-minded. They all think themselves very important, and your time very unimportant. You must always listen and your must know all the answers.

Etcetera, etcetera . . . you know it all.

It is just too much.

No wonder that even those young men who have seriously considered to train, or rather be trained, for the ministry, have become discouraged and deterred, and come to the conclusion that they must go in a different direction.

I am not going to contradict all this. Much of it may be true and much more of the same may be true.

The communist said to the minister during a political debate: "You and your church, it is a mess." The minister said to the communist: "What do you know? I am inside the church and the mess is much bigger than you think! But what about the mess in your own party?" And the communist fell silent.

I rather paint the true picture of the glorious service in and with and for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What other vocation in the world is equal to the mandate of preaching the Word? There is none. Why complain about the length and the demands of College-training and the load of languages, Latin, Greek and even Hebrew where the first page is in the back?

Is it not a privilege, granted to only few, to get the opportunity to learn to read and understand the languages in which the Holy Spirit spoke to the men of old, and still speaks today? It is an exceptional favour from God to be able to penetrate into the treasure-house of the Spirit, the gold mine of divine revelation. No translation does ever full justice to the "original" languages. You may pass through and by the more than one hundred different translations of Scripture, and delve and dig for unexpected, unsuspected surprises. You may learn to touch, to smell and to taste a Hebrew verb in its many forms, to analyze a Greek expression and the remarkable construction of a sentence – and then you may build your sermon upon the results of your research, in order to show and share what you have found of God's mysteries with God's people who called you as their minister exactly for that purpose.

With your Latin you will be able to open the door to the Early Church and many other doors to enrich your Biblical studies, not to mention all other subjects.

As a V.D.M., a *Verbi Divini Minister* you may stand in that most important spot in the world: the pulpit.

The Holy Spirit is willing and ready to use you as His instrument to reach the hearts of sinners. He gives you the keys that you may open the kingdom for them.

You may tell the righteous that it shall be well with them; and woe to the wicked: it shall be ill with him, Isaiah 3:10, 11.

You may teach the young with enthusiasm of your own believing heart. You may mould their minds with the complete doctrine of salvation. You may watch with amazement how those immature members of the Body grow to maturity and want to be admitted, permitted by you too, to the public profession of their faith. You were one of those who brought them to the Good Shepherd and put no stumbling blocks in their way.

***“As a V.D.M., a Verbi Divini Minister you may stand in that most important spot in the world: the pulpit.*”**

***The Holy Spirit is willing and ready to use you as His instrument to reach the hearts of sinners. He gives you the keys that you may open the kingdom for them.***

***You may tell the righteous that it shall be well with them; and woe to the wicked: it shall be ill with him, Isaiah 3:10, 11.”***

Then you visit the sick, the sorrowing, the shut-ins, the elderly and those troubled by life’s problems. You may go to them, not with your own wisdom and inventions, but with the only comfort for all believers from eight to eighty and beyond. You may whisper words from Psalm 23, 1 Corinthians 5 and thousands more golden nuggets from the gold mine into their ears when they enter the valley of the shadow of death, and your voice, your pastoral voice may be the last one they recognize and react to before they hear the Good Shepherd Himself. Not so strange because your mouth and voice have been His vehicle –

–and then you go back to your study to be re-charged, and to your pulpit to keep on preaching to the living in the time of grace, as long as you have a voice.

Your life will be dotted with prayers and you will know yourself carried on the wings of the prayers of God’s people.

Thus you may do your part in the church-gathering work of Christ Jesus. You will all the time share in the sufferings of Christ and in the attention and protection of Him who calls you “the apple of His eye,” Zechariah 2:8.

On the great day of Christ’s return He will recognize and reward you in the publicity of Judgment Day.

Are there no problems, then?

Sure there are, many of them, and they are man-made, home-made, self-made. They cannot undo the beauty of the glorious ministry as it is in the eyes of God and should be in the eyes of man.

Who wants to become a minister?

There is no greater calling.

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By H.J.J. Feenstra

## BE WISE WITH WISDOM!

### Adultery: Very unwise!

Originally published as  
*Wees wijs met de wijsheid*,  
Woord en Wereld # 11  
Uitgeverij Woord en Wereld,  
Ermelo 1989  
Translated by T.M.P. VanderVen

#### The Loose Woman

Proverbs 5-7 speak of the loose woman {strange (KJV), wayward (NIV), foreign (NASB)} – but that does not mean that the woman is always at fault. Remember the importance of understanding the nature of a proverb. Proverbs do not provide a complete listing of all possible situations. The issues are brought to our attention with the help of just a few concrete instances, and these issues include a loose man, and loose behaviour in general. Keep that in mind as we continue the study of what these proverbs have to say about that loose woman.

What is *strange* about this woman? Why is she described in this way? Such a strange woman should remain foreign to you, since she is the wife of another man. There is a separation between you and her, she is the woman who does not belong to you. It is illegitimate to develop a relationship with her, or to engage in intimacies with her.

In this way, Proverbs warns against all sexuality which does not submit it-

self to the discipline of God's Word. It warns against sexuality which turns into lawlessness, that means, which does not let itself be governed by God's laws.

That is the purpose of the sketch given in these chapters of the loose woman who cheats her own legal husband. Literally translated, 7:19 should read *For the man is not at home*; the man, that is her husband. What disdain!

From Scripture

Proverbs 5:3

Proverbs 7:5

Proverbs 6: 24

Proverbs 7:19

#### Feminine Charms

May a woman never uses her charms, and may she never aim for a sexual relationship? Of course she may, when she is married, and when her affections are directed towards her husband. Proverbs 5 tells us: enjoy. Without mincing words, we are told that we may rejoice in the companionship of our legal wife. A woman may look attractive, and she may take good care of herself and take pride in her appearance. But also remember the warning of Proverbs 31:

*Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,  
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*

This proverb does not picture a woman who is thoroughly reformed, yet is sloppy and neglects herself. This text

shows the relative value of beauty, and points to its temporal nature. Read this text in its context: the first and most necessary condition for a woman to be strong and able to fulfil her task well is not beauty and charm. Charm is deceitful; if you consider charm the most important criterion by which a woman ought to be judged as one's life partner, you will be deeply disappointed. If you would rely on these things, you deceive yourself. The first and most necessary condition is the fear of the Lord.

The loose woman uses her charms to start an illegitimate relation. And the man she was after was not as strong as Joseph in Potiphar's house. Surely, some might argue, Joseph had good reasons to give in to Potiphar: he was far from home and he had experienced much misery. Why not take what you can get and enjoy it? It requires much courage to deny such an insistent woman who does not quit, and it is not easy to keep her at a distance. Strong men such as David and Samson, who were neither afraid of lions and bears nor of Goliath, succumbed to feminine charm, and made terrible mistakes.

From Scripture

Proverbs 5:15-20

Proverbs 31:30

Proverbs 7:7-9, 22

Genesis 39:7-12

Judges 14:5-6 and 16:4-22

1 Samuel 17:36

## What's inside?

The apostle Paul said to Timothy: *And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others* (2 Tim. 2:2). In obedience to that word of Paul, and by the pure grace of God, we maintain the Theological College in Hamilton. Many men have passed through the lecture halls – first on Queen's Street, now on the Mountain – to take their place preaching the good news of salvation on mission fields and in the midst of the congregations. In your hands you are holding the annual "College issue."

This issue begins with the republication of an editorial by the late Rev. G. Van Dooren. At the College, the Rev. Van Dooren taught many of our ministers all about preaching and being a minister. In this editorial, he wrote about the "Glorious Ministry." May it inspire some young man somewhere to pursue this beautiful calling.

Then you'll find the Principal's report as he delivered it at the recent convocation, a report of the evening by Dr. Gootjes, the first part of the speech Dr. De Jong held then, and the presentation of the Women's Savings Action – the Action without which we would not have much of a library at the College.

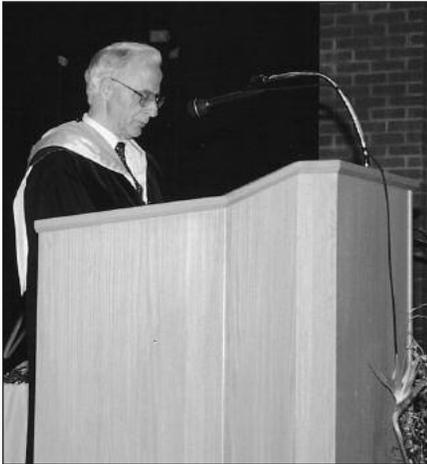
In light of the upcoming Thanksgiving Day, we publish a contribution by the Rev. P. Aasman.  
Enjoy!

GvP



# Principal's Report 1996

By J. Geertsema



Professor J. Geertsema

With thankfulness to the LORD for His grace, I present this report to you regarding the activities at the College during the academic year 1995-1996. Also this past year the work of teachers and students, and of all others busy in and for the College, continued without any major problems. Grateful for God's blessings, we mention the following matters.

## College Evening 1995

At the beginning of the past school year, on September 8, the Twenty-sixth Anniversary Meeting and the Twenty-first Convocation, was held. Dr. N.H. Gootjes spoke about the statement of the Canons of Dort in I,17. It says that parents of children dying in their infancy can be sure with regard to the election and salvation of these children. With historical grounds Dr. Gootjes demonstrated and defended that what the Reformed Churches stated here in the Canons of Dort I,17 is what they confessed: God-fearing parents can be sure.

At last year's Convocation, the degree of Master of Divinity was conferred on Mr. Mark Hoogerdijk, Mr. Johan Plug, and Mr. Joe Poppe. Mr. Hilco De Haan, successfully completed the program for the Diploma of Theological

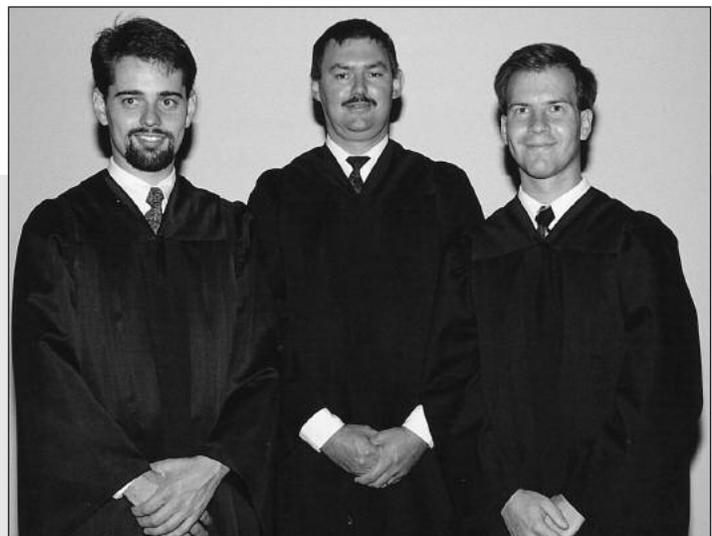
Studies (DTS). He was the first student in the history of the College to receive the DTS. Since he had already entered his work as Mission Worker in the mission work among the natives in Smithers, he was not present at the Convocation, so that the Diploma could not be presented to him personally. Mr. Hoogerdijk teaches at the Canadian Reformed School at Carman, Manitoba. Mr. Plug serves as minister the Reformed Church at Lutten, The Netherlands, and Mr. Poppe serves in this office the Free Reformed Church of Albany-West in Western Australia.

## Students

At the beginning of the past school year six new students were admitted to the study at the College: Mr. Richard Bultje from the Church at Chatham, Mr. Li-Jun (Frank) Dong, originally from the People's Republic of China, who came to us via the Australian sister church at Kelmscott, Mr. Peter Holtvluwer from the Church at Ottawa, Mr. Ted Van Raalte from the Church at Grand Valley, Mr. Ken Wieske from the Church at Ancaster, and Mr. John Koopman from the Free Reformed Church at

Chatham. Br. Frank Dong and his wife Jen Hui (Jan Wee) received a special welcome at last year's convocation. They received their visa at the last moment so that they arrived the day before the College Evening and were in Hamilton before the beginning of the course year.

During the past year, three students completed their studies at the College for their Master of Divinity degree, which is to be conferred on them this evening. They are Mr. Richard Eikelboom, Mr. Theodore Lodder, and Mr. Jason Van Vliet. Mr. Eikelboom received a call from the church at Calgary, Alberta, and of the church at Fergus, Ontario; he accepted the former. Mr. Van Vliet received a call from the church at Lincoln, Ontario. Mr. Lodder spent the summer in the Netherlands for study purposes. These three students received consent to speak an edifying word in the midst of the churches and they, as well as some others, were also involved with the teaching of youth in some of the churches in the Catechism class. (Students are sometimes cautioned not to take up too much of this practical work during the school year



L to R: Mr. Theodore Lodder, Mr. Richard Eikelboom, Mr. Jason Van Vliet

because it can take too much time away from their studies.) One student in his first year, Mr. Bultje, changed his study program from the Master of Divinity program to the Diploma of Theological Studies.

While three students graduated, four new students were enrolled. They are Wes Bredenhof of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton, Edwar Dethan from the Reformed Churches on Timor, Indonesia, Karl Ludwig of the Rehoboth Church at Burlington, and Darlene VanderPol from the Church at Port Kells. The first three entered the Master of Divinity program, the last one follows a selection of courses fitting within the program for the Diploma of Theological Studies.

Again during this past year the students received some welcome support from the Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund and from the Christian Disciples Fund.

### The study

During the past school year, the courses were presented in a regular way and according to the schedule. The only deviation from the regular schedule occurred during the second semester when Dr. J. De Jong went to the churches in Classis Pacific in the context of the annual visit from the College to the churches in the West. During this period Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff gave again a number of lectures in Church History to lighten the load of Dr. De Jong.

The committee studying the possibility of an organized practical pastoral component has come with a proposal. No final decision has been made yet.

The customary visits to the lectures were made by two teams of two governors; in the Fall two governors from Ontario and in the Spring two governors from the West visited the College.

### Extra-curricular activities of the professors

Some extra-curricular activities of the Faculty members in the midst of and for the churches are usually mentioned in the Principal's Report. These are speaking arrangements and the attendance of conferences. We begin with mentioning the speech of Dr. J. Faber for the Burlington Study Center in October 1995. In the context of an encounter with "evangelical" Christians he spoke on "The Beauty and Privilege of the Reformed Faith." There were further the Calvin Seminars by Dr. J. Faber planned for January 1996 in the College but, because of the great number of par-

ticipants and their enthusiasm, held in the Ancaster church building in both January and February, every Thursday evening.

Dr. J. De Jong spoke in February 1996 in Attercliffe on the question, "New Churches in the Federation: Which Procedure?" On March 4, he spoke for the Fergus congregation on "Using the NIV Bible in Public Worship." And in April of this year, as mentioned above, he visited the churches in Classis Pacific and spoke about the topic "Pursuing Federative Unity: Obstacles, Possibilities, and Strategies" for an office bearers conference in the Fraser Valley and at Vernon, and about "Church Unity and the Lord's Table" in Smithers, Houston, and Abbotsford.

On June 17 and 18, Dr. N.H. Gootjes and Prof. J. Geertsema attended the H.H. Bingham Colloquium in New Testament, held in Hamilton in the Divinity College of the McMaster University, where several New Testament scholars, both from North-America and Europe spoke on aspects around the theme "The Impact of Paul's Conversion on His Life, Thought and Ministry."

Further, Dr. C. Van Dam spoke for the Bible Study societies of Burlington West on "How shall we read Genesis 1?" on September 11, 1995 and on January 8, 1996 he introduced the topic "Divorce and Remarriage: A Closer Look at Some of the Exegetical Arguments for an Indissoluble Bond and Some Consequences" for the Ministers' Workshop. On March 22, 1996 he spoke for the Fellowship of Canadian Reformed University Students on "Which Bible Translation Should We Use?"

Finally, under "Extra-curricular Activities" we mention the fact that the preparations for the sabbatical of Dr. C. Van Dam have resulted in the arrival of Drs. G. Hagens with his family in Hamilton. He is ready to take over Dr. Van Dam's teaching task for the first semester. This gives our Old Testament professor the opportunity to do research and, as result, serve the College and the Churches – under the blessing of the Lord. And we welcome the Hagens family to the College, confident of a good co-operation and thankful for our brother's willingness to come.

### Publications

A book containing Dutch church-political studies translated in English with the title *Bound Yet Free. Readings in Reformed Church Polity* was published by Dr. J. De Jong as editor. A

study of the teachings of Dr. K. Schilder, entitled *Always Obedient: Essays on the Teachings of Dr. Klaas Schilder* was published by prof. J. Geertsema as editor. The ethical study *Watching Movies: No? Yes? How?* was published by Dr. N.H. Gootjes in co-operation with the students J. Plug and J. Poppe. Articles on "Elder" and "Urim and Thummim" were written by Dr. C. Van Dam for *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. He also published the book *Divorce and Remarriage in the Light of Old Testament Principles and their Application in the New Testament*.

### The library

During the past year the work continued on the preparation of a concrete proposal for the expansion of the library, as requested by the Synod of Abbotsford in 1995.

Last year, at the College Evening, the Women's Saving Action surprised the College again with the great gift of \$25,000. This amount enables the College to purchase journals and magazines for the different departments, as well as older and new books. This past year we could purchase, beside the journals and magazines, approximately 250 books for the library. Also during this year we received books and other material as gifts for the library from members of the churches. For these gifts we express again our heartfelt gratitude. The number of donated books was 106.

With much gratitude we mention separately the special purchase of part of the series *Sources Chretiennes*, for which the Board of Governors provided the money. In this series the College acquired the writings of the church fathers from the first century A.D to the Middle Ages in the original languages, Greek and Latin. From the beginning of the College, we have had the desire to have access in our library to the original writings of the church fathers.

In the library, the conversion of the books from the Dewey cataloguing system to the Library of Congress system is closer to completion. Most of the large VanderWaal collection has been integrated in the computer catalogue of the College. The more tedious labour on brochures and pamphlets, especially from the time of the Liberation in 1944, is the last part of the integration. The work of our present Librarian, Miss Margaret Van der Velde, has shown the need for a full-time librarian at the College. A proposal to decide to appoint a full-time librarian and to offer

this position to Miss Margaret Van der Velde was prepared by the Senate for the Board of Governors, and was adopted by the Board. For this the College community is very thankful.

In this context I would like to mention also the name of the library technician, Miss Catherine Mechelse, who does the book ordering and a number of other things for the library. Of course, Cathy would fit under other headings too. For she acts as secretary, she handles the mail, she does much of the accounting work, she often shows the college to visitors and does a number of jobs, for which others in the College have no time or have other reasons not to do them. This past April Miss Mechelse had been employed by the College for ten years. We thank her for the work she did for us these years with her dedication and love.

When we speak about the library it is only proper to mention also the work of our volunteers. We do not mention names, since most of these volunteers would not appreciate this. Nevertheless, the labours of these faithful helpers are very much needed and no less appreciated. And we hope that we shall continue to have a sufficient number of volunteers in our midst.

### The Women's Savings Action

Inseparably connected with the library is the Women's Savings Action. This organization of the women in our churches in Canada, in the United States, and in Australia is in fact the financial foundation of the College library. Our library with its contents and tools is simply unimaginable without the W.S.A. With great appreciation the College community in the first place, but also an increasing number of people from outside, make use of this study tool.

The motor behind the Women's Savings Action is the organizing committee. At the start this committee consisted of Mrs. G.R. Selles and Mrs. C. Lindhout Sr. of London. In 1982 Mrs. Lindhout Sr. gave her voluntary work to her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Lorraine Lindhout of Edmonton and in 1988 Mrs. Selles, no longer able to do the work because of her illness, gave her place and task to Mrs. E. Mulder, while the next year, 1989, Mrs. J. Van Dam and Mrs. C. Zietsma took over the secretarial and treasurer's task, respectively, from Mrs. Lindhout. I mention these changes because tonight will be the last time that Mrs. Mulder will be here in her function of president of the W.S.A. Mrs. E.



*L to R: Dr. J. Faber, Dr. C. Van Dam, Dr. J. Visscher, Rev. R. Aasman, Prof. J. Geertsema, Dr. N. Gootjes, Dr. J. De Jong*



*L to R: Back Row – Mr. R. Eikelboom, Mr. T. Lodder, Mr. J. Van Vliet*

*L to R: Front Row – Dr. J. De Jong, Dr. J. Faber, Prof. J. Geertsema, Dr. C. Van Dam, Dr. N. Gootjes*



*L to R: Back Row – Mr. R. Eikelboom, Mr. K. Veldkamp, Rev. R. Aasman, Rev. C. Van Spronsen, Mr. J. Vanderwoude, Dr. J. Visscher, Rev. D.G.J. Agema, Mr. A. Van Egmond, Rev. W. den Hollander, Mr. H. Sloots, Mr. M. Kampen, Rev. W.W.J. VanOene*

*L to R: Front Row – Mr. T. Lodder, Dr. J. De Jong, Dr. J. Faber, Prof. J. Geertsema, Dr. C. Van Dam, Dr. N. Gootjes, Drs. G. Hagens, Mr. J. Van Vliet*

(that is Liz) Hofsink of Smithville has been found willing to take over this position and the work involved. For the work done, and for the commitment and dedication with which it has been done, by all the sisters, and also by you, Mrs. Mulder, we give thanks to our God, and also to you. We welcome the new president, Mrs. Liz. Hofsink. We hope and expect that you will experience your involvement just as much a joy as those did who are and were involved before you.

### The building

As during the other years, the care for the building is in good hands with the Finance and Property Committee

and with the janitorial service of br. and sr. K. Post of Hamilton. One decision of the Finance and Property Committee was to build a ramp to the front door to make the upstairs, including the library, wheel chair accessible. Br. Post executed this decision. Here and there some needed paint work was done and some other improvements were made.

### Finally: the College and the Churches

The College is established and maintained by the Canadian and American Reformed Churches, with the full co-operation of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia. These churches call it "our College." We exist for them.

Our purpose is to serve them. However, we all realize at the same time that the churches in themselves are not the final goal. The churches do not live for themselves. They are there for the Lord of the church and for His work, His cause, in this world. It means that as churches and its members, and as College community, we see ourselves as the redeemed of the Lord, redeemed for service, a service bound to and directed by the Word of the Lord. May the Lord continue to lead us, the College and the Churches, with His Spirit and Word, so that, with obedience of faith, we serve the coming of His Kingdom to the glory of His Name.

Thank you. 



## Even So I Send You – Some Reflections on the Current Missionary Task of the Church<sup>1</sup>

By J. De Jong



Dr. J. De Jong

We live in changing times with regard to many aspects of church life, and this also affects our approach to mission. Changes in our society and in the opportunities and possibilities given to us lead to new approaches and new avenues with regard to the exercise of the believer's mandate in the world. Given our history we are accustomed to think of missionaries as those who go to very primitive areas and preach the gospel to people who are illiterate or totally cut off from the mainstream of civilization. But the constellation of mission work of the Reformed churches is changing. We now work in more civilized countries, and in more advanced

cultures. And most areas of the globe have been confronted with the message of the gospel in one way or another. Some are now sent out to teach rather than preach, or to provide help and assistance in training pastors rather than being ministers themselves.

What is mission? Where do the limits of mission stop and where does providing aid take over? What is the relation between mission and providing aid, or between mission and teaching? These are the questions with which modern day missiology must grapple. And as we grapple with them we must admit that we cannot simply rely on the old ways of doing things. We must exploit the new possibilities that the Lord opens up to us as Reformed churches. At the same time, we are called to work in a way that honours the Reformed and Scriptural principles concerning the work of mission. We cannot compromise our position, or adopt the style of the mainstream churches with their emphasis on humanitarian deeds, and on imparting a gospel which gives no offense, but only provides resources for people to go on living in the present darkness they are in.

In my address tonight I would like to consider some of these issues and also offer a contribution to the discussion concerning the many challenges facing the church's mission today. We want to consider the changing nature of the

missionary task of the church. We consider first, the modern perspectives regarding this missionary task; second, the abiding principles regarding this missionary task and third, the current directives regarding this missionary task.

### Modern Perspectives

Missiology, the science of missions, has been undergoing much change and development in the last thirty years. You can characterize this period as the breakthrough of the modernistic idea in mission. This modernistic idea is: we cannot really speak of mission in any traditional sense, that is, of a being sent by Christ to the unchurched or the unreached. Can we in the west presume to say that we have a message for the rest of the world? The old adage was: there is no salvation outside the church. But this must be turned around. There is no salvation inside the church, for there people are complacent and self-satisfied. There people think they have a ticket to heaven, but they have let themselves fall asleep. The church must change if it wishes to be saved. It must go out into the world and become the church for the world. It must join in the suffering of this world, and share people's suffering, becoming partners with them of the suffering of God in the world.

These sentences capture in a nutshell what the new missiological thinking is all

about. David Bosch speaks of the emergence of a new paradigm, that is, a new world and life view with respect to missions.<sup>2</sup> That new world and life view or paradigm is predominately characterized by the abolition of any sense of western priority, as if the west would be in a position to show others the way to salvation. Mission does not flow from the west to the rest of the world's nations. There is a new flux, a new matrix with a complex chart of points and counterpoints, a grid of interchanges and flow lines going in every direction. One can hardly speak of mission anymore, for everyone is at the same time sent, but also one to whom one is sent, a giver and receiver, one who shares and one who experiences sharing. As Lesslie Newbigin puts it:

It is no longer a matter of the simple command to go to the ends of the earth and preach the gospel where it has not been heard. In every nation there are already Christian believers. . . . The missionary calling is thus merged (or dissolved) into the general obligation of all Christians everywhere to fight injustice, challenge evil, and side with the oppressed.<sup>3</sup>

Here one meets with the end point of the modernistic idea: you cannot really speak of mission anymore today.

Let us consider some elements of this emerging paradigm in missions, and also the impact that this paradigm has had on the activities of many mainstream churches today. First, we can no longer speak of the mission of the church. The preferred concept today is *missio Dei*, the mission of God.<sup>4</sup> God is the real and only missionary. We do not do mission, we only participate in God's mission. And therefore the church cannot dictate to the world, but in its sharing with the world it at the same time discovers with the world what the mission of God is all about.<sup>5</sup>

This means, secondly, that the church is not a body for itself. It is always church for others. The essence of the church is mission. The church is a missionary church, and being a missionary body belongs to the very essence of the church. As Bosch puts it, the church is never static.<sup>6</sup> It is a pilgrim church, a church on the move; it is essentially a sign or a sacrament of the comprehensive salvation of God, and of God reconciling the world to Himself. The church is not the bearer of a message; the church is an illustration of God's involvement with the world.

The one *missio Dei* breaks down into the various *missiones ecclesiae*. All churches are involved in mission. But here there are not mother churches

opposed to daughter churches. All churches are equal, and all are involved in mediating God's salvation for the world. Here one meets the modern ecumenical approach. Churches of all denominations, stripes and colours are included in the *missio Dei*. Modern missiology is essentially a missiology of convergence, and especially convergence between Protestant and Roman Catholic missions.<sup>7</sup> On these points, the church of Rome has changed dramatically. Protestants were formerly called "heretics" and "schismatics" but are now labelled as "dissenters" or "separated brethren" or "brothers and sisters in Christ."<sup>8</sup>

A fourth characteristic of the modern approach concerns the salvation which the church mediates. It is described as a comprehensive salvation, liberating the whole of life from the false structures of tyranny, hardship and oppression. The whole matrix of spiritual and material life together forms the one eschatological idea of salvation. It is holistic and all encompassing. The term most commonly used to describe this salvation is: the coming of the kingdom of God.<sup>9</sup>

Ultimately the one mission of God is God's movement – His self-journey through the world. This is a journey of humiliation and suffering. God sends His Son to journey to suffering and death. And His Spirit demands the same journey of those who are disciples in the true sense. The *missio Dei* is marked by compassion for the world and by suffering.<sup>10</sup> The holistic approach of mission demands that the church sacrifice itself for the good of the world. The rich must give to the poor, the strong to the weak, so that God's triumph can be seen in weakness, and His riches in our voluntary poverty.

The new approach to missions also incorporates a new approach to other religions. One can no longer speak of a message of light to free those trapped in darkness. One cannot speak of the relation between the Christian and the non-Christian religions as a difference between truth and error, "but only as the dynamic relation of a part of truth to all of the truth."<sup>11</sup> David Bosch notes how through the years the terminology at the meetings of the WCC has changed: from speaking of the witness of the Christian faith to men of other faiths it has become "dialogue between men of living faiths."<sup>12</sup> From witness to dialogue – a telling mark of the times. For the end result, as before, is that one can no longer speak of the mission of the church.

<sup>1</sup>Text of the address given at the Twenty-second Convocation of the Theological College, September 6, 1996, at Redeemer Col-

lege, Ancaster, Ontario. Elements not included in the address have been incorporated in this revision.

<sup>2</sup>Bosch follows the model of Thomas S. Kuhn, which he introduced in his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (second enlarged edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). Hans Küng applied Kuhn's model to theology in general, and Bosch in turn applied it to missiology, see David J. Bosch, "Vision for Mission" *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 76, No. 301 (January, 1987) 8-15. See also David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991) 349ff.

<sup>3</sup>Cited in James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote, (eds) *Toward the Twenty-first Century in Christian Mission. Essays in Honour of Gerald H. Anderson* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1993) 2.

<sup>4</sup>For the background of the *missio Dei* concept see L.A. Hoedemaker, "The people of God and the ends of the earth" in F.J. Verstraelen (ed.) *Missiology. An Ecumenical Introduction*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 157-171.

<sup>5</sup>L.A. Hoedemaker says: "Missiology and ecclesiology are being pulled toward each other," see F.J. Verstraelen (ed.) *Missiology. An Ecumenical Introduction*, 160. Behind this new approach we can see the influence of the Dutch theologian J.C. Hoekendijk, see J. C. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out* (translated by I.C. Rottenberg, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966). See C. Trimp, "Het program van Hoekendijk" in *De dienst van de mondige kerk* (Goes: Oosterbaan en Le Coindre, 1971) 90-116. See also P. Van Gurp, *Kerk en zending in de theologie van Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk* (1912-1975): *een plaatsbepaling* (Haarlem: AcaMedia, 1989).

<sup>6</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 373. See also David J. Bosch, *Believing in the Future. Toward a Missiology of Western Culture* (Valley Forge, PA.: Trinity Press International, 1995), 32.

<sup>7</sup>For a Roman Catholic perspective on changes in missions see R.J. Schreiter, "Mission into the Third Millennium" *Missiology* Vol. 18, n. 1 (January, 1990) 5ff.

<sup>8</sup>D.J. Bosch, "Mission En Route to A.D. 2000" *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 14, No. 4, (October, 1990), 149-152.

<sup>9</sup>J. Verkuyl, "The Biblical Notion of the Kingdom: Test of Validity for Theology of Religion" in C. Van Engen et. al. (eds) *The Good News of the Kingdom. Mission Theory for the Third Millennium* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 71-81.

<sup>10</sup>For an example of a trinitarian approach to mission, see George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972) 25-31, 35ff. Dr. Peters opposes the modern ecumenical approach, yet laments the lack of solid missions theology in evangelical circles. See also David J. Bosch, "Reflections on Biblical Models for Mission" in James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote, 185-192.

<sup>11</sup>F.J. Verstraelen, et. al., 444.

<sup>12</sup>David J. Bosch, "The Church in Dialogue: From Self-Delusion to Vulnerability" *Missiology*, Vol. XVI, no. 2, (April 1988), 134.

to be continued 



## College Corner

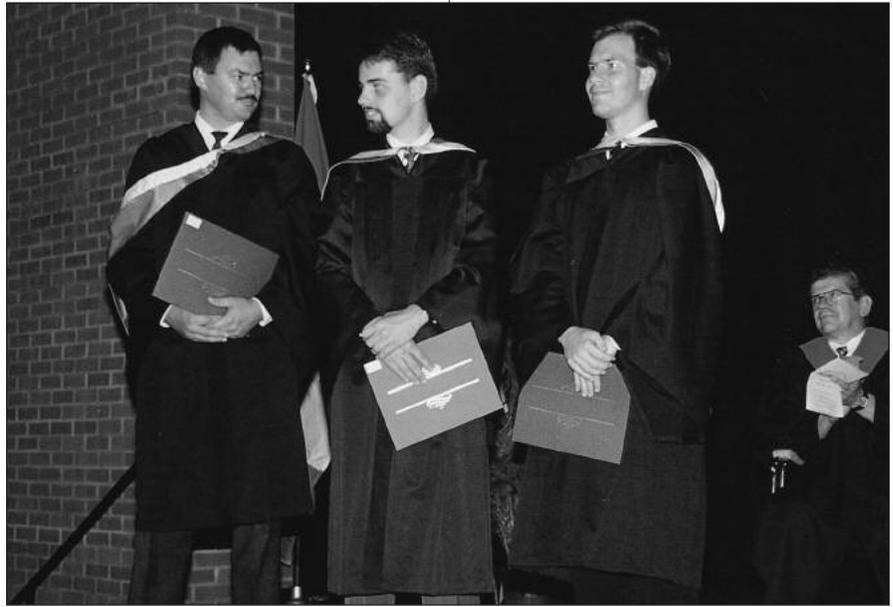
### College Evening

On September 6, 1996, the 22nd Convocation and 27th Anniversary meeting of the Theological College took place. The chairman of the Board, Rev. J. Visscher, mentioned in his opening words that several of the congratulatory messages were from Australia. It was encouraging to hear how our Australian sister churches who are unable to attend these meetings show their interest. As a matter of fact, among the many who attended this public function of the College were two visitors from Australia: Mrs. Brüning and her son, Br. John Brüning. In addition, people from the West were present, some undoubtedly in connection with the graduation. We are grateful for all these proofs of the bond between the College and the churches.

Dr. J. De Jong devoted his speech to the missionary task of the church. He presented and discussed a new approach in missions. Using Christ's words: "Even so I send you" as his theme, he emphasized that the church has to continue to bring the gospel to all nations. His address will be published in *Clarion*, but one issue I would like to mention here. Dr. De Jong did not limit the missionary task of the church to sending missionaries to other countries; he included in it educating indigenous missionary workers. We may report that this is already taking place at the College. Our first students from Timor (Indonesia), Yonson Dethan, is now entering his final year. His brother, Edwar Dethan, has been admitted to the College and began his studies in September. And our Chinese student, Frank Dong, has finished his freshman year courses and will begin his theological years. We pray that their work, so far from their home and country, may benefit the progress of Christ's church in this world.

### Students

That brings us to the students. Three completed their studies and received their M.Div. degree. In the first place



*Mr. R. Eikelboom, Mr. T. Lodder, Mr. J. Van Vliet*

Richard Eikelboom, from Australia, who accepted a call the church at Calgary. Then, Jason Van Vliet, who is considering a call from the church at Lincoln. The third graduate, Theo Lodder, who spent the summer in the Netherlands in order to be able to read Dutch, hopes to present himself for preparatory examination later this year. These three students had received preaching consent. This has provided them with pulpit experience and they have been able to help out many churches. As long as this does not interfere with their studies, their serving the churches in this way can only be beneficial for both themselves and the churches.

If we "lost" three students through graduation, we gained four. Besides Edwar Dethan who was mentioned before, they are: Wes Bredenhof, from Edmonton, Carl Ludwig, from Burlington, and, as a surprise, Darlene VanderPol, from Port Kells. She has come to follow a number of courses in theology. We extend a big welcome to her as our first full time female student.

Our returning students belong to the three theological years. The senior year

consists of six students. We sometimes refer to them as our "Australian year" since it consists of four students from Australia, and one who came to us through Australia (Yonson Dethan). Only one is a Canadian. The junior and sophomore year consist of three and six students, respectively.

This total of nineteen students represents the largest student body the College has had so far. We are very thankful that the Lord continues to provide us with young men willing to be trained for the ministry.

### Changing the guard

During the College Evening, Mrs. J. (Elizabeth) Mulder presented a cheque of \$25,000 to the College, on behalf of the Women's Savings Action. This money is very welcome, it means that the College can pay the subscriptions for scholarly journals and magazines to keep up with recent discussions in theology. Further, important books on all the fields of theology can be bought with this money. We are grateful to the Lord that this money comes in so regularly. We know from nearby the love

for the College that is behind the collection of the money and the work of all involved.

After Mrs. Mulder had made known the amount, she announced that it was time for her to step down as chairperson of the Women's Savings Action, for she had reached the age of three score and ten, well beyond retirement age. We thank her for all the work she did for many years, and for her seven years of chairing this organization. We welcome as her successor Mrs. E. (Liz) Hofsink of Smithville.

Another change is of a more temporary nature. Dr. C. Van Dam will be replaced by Drs. G. Hagens, minister of the church at De Bilt-Bilthoven, in the Netherlands, for the fall semester. Dr. Van Dam was entitled to have his sabbatical, to do research and to prepare publications. Rev. Hagens, who is also specialized in Old Testament studies, was a logical choice for temporarily replacing Dr. Van Dam since he has experience in teaching Old Testament. We wish him strength teaching Hebrew in English!

The third change concerns the principal. Prof. J. Geertsema has now completed the three years of the many duties which are involved in the principalship. The College community is thankful for all the work he did and the dedication with which he did it. All the duties of the principal have now come to the undersigned.

May the Lord grant strength to us all, professors and students alike, to study theology, and may the churches benefit from it.

September 7, 1996.

N.H. Gooties



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## Presentation of the Women's Savings Action at the College Evening September 6, 1996

### Mr. President, members of the Board and Faculty, Brothers and sisters,

We thank you for giving us the opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the Women's Savings Action. I don't know whether it is still true that a good sermon must have three points. (I should have asked Dr. DeJong; he is the expert!) Anyway, I like to keep up that good habit and divide my little speech in three points:

1. Our gratitude is great.
2. The need is still there.
3. A change in our committee.

1. First of all, our Committee would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all women, who have given us their support during the past year. Many of you have spent hours finding volunteers, preparing drives and collecting and administering the money for the Library Fund of our Theological College. I know that most of you are busy looking after families and with other activities. Therefore we appreciate it even more that we can count on your continuing help. One thing is sure, we could never do our

work as committee, without the help of you ladies in the local congregations. The total amount we collected this year is \$27,087.48. **Thank you so much, each and everyone of you!**

2. I now come to my second thought. *The need is still there!*

Sometimes we are asked: is all that work still really necessary? Does the College not have enough books by now, and can we not spend our money better? So much is needed for Church and School! Yes, but we as committee are convinced - and I think you all agree with us - that there still is a great need to go on with buying books for the Library of our College. *For a Library which does not keep up with what is published quickly becomes obsolete.* Almost every day new books are published on the Bible, church history, doctrinal issues, pastoral problems. New solutions are offered! Our pastors, students, elders, deacons must be able to read and study the issues of today in order to gain new insights or discover old heresies and thus find new solutions.

Therefore once a year we as committee receive an invitation from the Li-

brary Committee of the Theological College to attend their meetings. In these meetings we are told exactly how the money we collect for the Library is spent. Margaret VanderVelde, our very capable Librarian, gives us a detailed report of the books bought. Future needs and possibilities are also discussed. In these meetings we find out how much the work of the Women's Savings Action is appreciated by the College community. I wish all of you could hear the glowing words of praise spoken by the Chairman on these occasions. After all, you out there do most of the work! But believe me, it is true, faculty and students count on our help. Let us not disappoint them and continue to give them our loving support.

3. *A change in our committee.* (As most ministers do, I will keep this third point very short!)

It's on a more personal note!

A few weeks ago I had the privilege of reaching another milestone in my life. Having now reached the age of what Psalm 90 calls "threescore and ten," I thought the time has come for me to retire as chairperson of our committee.



Mrs. Joanne Van Dam, Mrs. Carla Zietsma, Mrs. Elizabeth J. Mulder

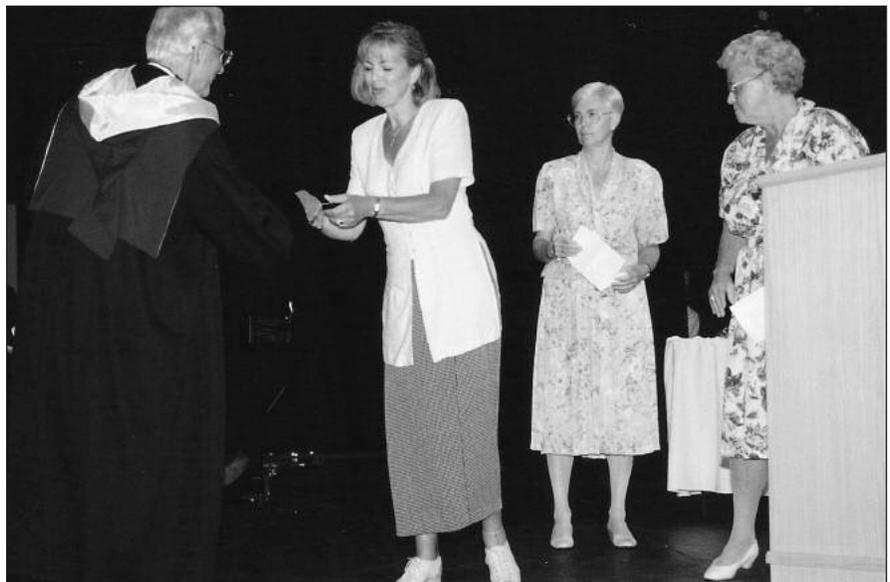
Of course, I do this with certain regrets. I have enjoyed working together with you, Joanne and Carla! As to Joanne, a better and more accurate secretary will be very hard to find. And Carla, if I had to do your job, I'm sure our finances would soon be in a big mess. Anyway, I know that my successor will soon adjust to her new position, now that she can rely on your expertise. Thanks to both of you!

In conclusion: the other day I was thinking of the words of Psalm 127, "Unless the LORD builds this house, those who build it labour in vain." That is also true of our work in and for the Theological College. In all what we do we depend on the Lord's blessing; we are just instruments in His hands.

Mr. President, it is with gratitude to our heavenly Father that we also this year may present you with a cheque of **\$25,000**. We are sure that it will be spent wisely and responsibly. May the LORD continue to bless our College community and may we all continue to work together to the praise and glory of His great Name. Thank you.

(Mrs.) Elizabeth J. Mulder

Mrs. Mulder's third point may have been short, but this sermon does have a P.S.! As Mrs. Mulder has indicated this is her last appearance on the stage with us and we would like to take the opportunity to thank her for what she has done for the Women's Savings Action. Already in the early years in Cloverdale, Mrs. Mulder acted as co-ordinator for the Women's Savings Action collection in her congregation. So she



Prof. J. Geertsema, Principal, accepts a cheque from the Women's Savings Action

came to the Board with first hand experience; she knew what it was like, if I may put it this way "to get her hands dirty," as anyone who has counted pennies, nickels and dimes knows! In 1988 Mrs. Mulder joined the Board of the Women's Savings Action.

When the Women's Savings Action started in 1969 Mrs. Selles called the library "our baby." In 1982 when Mrs. Lindhout retired Mrs. Selles called the library "our toddler." Well, I think, Mrs. Mulder, if I may continue the analogy, that you have seen the library become a "teenager." And as we all know a teenager has greater needs – and under the blessing of the Lord we have been able to supply those needs.

As children grow up, so also parents grow older and eventually they may even become grandparents. And then there comes a time when grandparents retire and pass the responsibilities on to the next generation. That is also how Mrs. Mulder saw that her time had come to pass on the reins. And we are very happy to be able to tell you that Mrs. Liz Hofsink from Smithville has been found willing to join the Board of the Women's Savings Action. And so the work passes from the hands of one capable former school teacher to another. Those who know Mrs. Hofsink personally know that she brings with her the same enthusiasm and love for the work of the Women's Savings Action and the Theological College as Mrs. Mulder did.

Lies, we thank you for the excellent co-operation which we could enjoy.

And on behalf of all of us our heartfelt appreciation for what you have done for the Women's Savings Action. May the Lord still grant you many happy and healthy years of active retirement together with your husband.

And now, on behalf of all of us, we would like to present you with these flowers as a token of our appreciation.

(Mrs.) Joanne Van Dam

Mrs. E. Mulder was then presented with a bouquet of carnations and lilies by Mrs. Carla Zietsma on behalf of the Women's Savings Action and a bouquet of roses by the Principal, Prof. J. Geertsema, on behalf of the College community.



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

*“And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed.”*

Mark 1:35

## Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Among all the gifts we received from the Lord, is the gift of prayer. It is a privilege which we received from the Lord. It is the opportunity to communicate with our Father. Do we appreciate that gift sufficiently? It is the opportunity for us to talk with our Father, to thank Him, to praise Him, and to ask Him for strength and guidance on the road that we have to go. Prayer is our lifeline, and without it we will give in to the temptations of the world.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has been an example to us during the days that He lived on earth. He was the Son of God, yet He was a man like all other men. His Father had given Him the assignment to become a man, and to carry out a difficult task which no one else could do. The Lord Jesus knew that He was the Son of God, He also knew what His Father expected from Him. But because He was man, this task was very difficult for Him. He had to undergo humiliations, rejections, temptations from Satan, suffering, loneliness, pain, and much more. In all those situations He received strength through His prayers. Many times it is mentioned in the gospels that the Lord Jesus went to a lonely place to pray. Sometimes He did it openly so everyone could hear it. (An example of that is when He raised Lazarus from the dead.) Jesus Christ was the Son of God, He was without sin, yet He prayed continually. Constant communication with His Father enabled Him to do what He had to do.

The Lord is also our Father, our God, the Maker of our lives. He has given us a task in our lives as well. Some of us have to carry out more difficult tasks than others; we all received different strengths, different weaknesses, and different trials. But in order to carry out our tasks we all receive the same tool, and that is our prayer. Our prayer brings us close to our Father. When we communicate all our sadness, disappointments, difficulties, anxieties, everything that goes on in our lives, with our Father in heaven, then He will provide us with whatever we need to go on. Then we will not despair, but we will receive comfort and happiness.

Of course we, as sinful people could never address the Lord as our Father, because He is Holy and Almighty. But the Lord sent His Son to the earth. It is for us that our Saviour suffered so much here on earth. He took away the anger from the Lord for us. When we pray, He is there for us with the Father. Through Him the Lord can hear our prayers. We did not do anything to deserve that, it is all out of grace.

What are we going to do with such a gift? We received the gift of the Son, with His help the gift of prayer, and through His suffering the gift of eternal life. That means that we have everything we will possibly need. For it means that we are taken care of every day, that we have help in everything we have to do, and that we have the most beautiful promises for eternal life.

How else can we show our thankfulness for these gifts than by showing to everyone around us how fortunate we are? We should be very excited about belonging to our Father in heaven. We want to be close to Him and to talk about Him, and to Him. That may also mean that sometimes we cannot participate in activities of other people. Maybe we dress differently, use different language, and are not very popular. Yes, some people may look at us a bit funny. But when we concentrate on the Lord, and try to do what is right to Him,

then all those things won't even bother us. For we belong to our Father in heaven, and He hears us when we pray to Him. When we have to do something very difficult, (like saying “No”), or when we feel we are all alone and nobody pays attention to us, then the Lord is there to help us. If our Lord Jesus, who is the Son of God, needed to pray at difficult times, then we will need that prayer even more!

So let us take time to pray. We are allowed to come to our Father all the time. He is waiting for our prayers. The Lord Jesus covers up our sins, so we do not have to be ashamed that our prayer is not good enough. And even when we cannot do it, our Mediator will do it for us. It is God's gift to us. So let us use it obediently and thankfully. And in our prayers let us pray for Christ's promised return. For when that day comes we will receive the gift of eternal life. Then there will be no more hard times, and no more difficult decisions. Then we will be close to the Lord, and we will experience all the eternal bliss that the Lord Jesus Christ has made possible for us through His suffering and death. So let us follow His example, and pray to the Lord, our Father, all the time!

*The Angel of the Lord  
Always encamps around all those  
Who fear Him and exalt His Name;  
God saves them from their woes.  
O come, then, taste and see  
That He, the Lord, is good and just.  
Blest is the man who turns to Him  
And puts in Him his trust.*

Psalm 34:3

## Birthdays in November:

### 3: Wilma Van Drongelen

306-33375 Mayfair Ave., Abbotsford, BC V2S 2M7

### 27: Adrian DeJong

RR 1, Site 6, Box 9, Barrhead, AB T0G 0E0

I wish you a happy birthday.

Mrs. Wilma Togeretz informed me that *Mary Vande Burgt* has moved into a basement suite of the Togeretz home. A move from a grouphome into this more personal setting is quite a challenge for Mary. It will give her more opportunity to expand her independence, and this will be carefully monitored by Mrs. Togeretz. I understand that Mary celebrated her 40th birthday at her new address, but the information reached me after the fact. But she has still received all the mail that was sent to her old address. May the Lord be with Mary, especially during these first months of adjustment.

Also *Marsha Moesker* has moved to a new address. We pray that the Lord will be with her and her family in this time of adjustment, for I understand that she moved into her parents' home.

*James Buikema* had quite a celebration of his 35th birthday with an Open House and everything. We are happy to hear that many cards and letters added to the success of this celebration.

The publications of this column have been little chaotic during the summer months, but probably everything will now become more regular again.

Until next month,

Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

7462 Hwy. 20, RR 1, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

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# The Spirituality of Thanksgiving Day

By P. Aasman

The secularization of our once Christian culture stops at Thanksgiving. Many Christian aspects from our calendar have already yielded to its power. It takes some research to discover when we should celebrate Ascension Day and Pentecost since they have been eliminated from every calendar, save our own Mission Calendars. Every diary or planner ends the week on the Sunday since Saturday and Sunday now form the week-end. Today we can see that just behind secularism marches the forces of paganization, as evidenced by the introduction of *multicultural* calendar celebrations.

While some Christian aspects of the calendar have simply been eliminated, others have been reduced to silly stories to serve as a kind of metaphor for all of Christian religion. Christmas as it is known today has nothing to do with the birth of Him who would "save His people from their sins." The Saviour has been unseated by another saviour, Saint Nicolas, cleverly secularized with the name Santa Claus. Parents try to get their children to "believe in" Santa Claus, knowing that very soon their children will discover how ludicrous the Santa-myth is. The glory of the victorious Christ has been usurped by a bunny who hides colourfully wrapped chocolate eggs for children to find. Silly myths are taught to reflect the infantile nature of all of Christianity.

But how shall they secularize Thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving defies secularization. You cannot remove the sacred kernel from Thanksgiving without losing the celebration itself. That is why its roots reach deep into history. Already Moses instructed Israel on how to celebrate the harvest in what is called the Feast of Booths. But the harvest has been celebrated by Christians at least from the time of the Middle Ages. Our own Thanksgiving Day is directly based on the feast of gratitude for an abundant harvest which the surviving Pilgrims and Indians enjoyed in 1621, after suffering a winter of hunger and plague when 95% of the native Indians and 45% of the Pilgrim settlers had died in the area of Plymouth, Massachusetts. Over the next

200 years, it established itself in the USA and Canada as a time to give thanks for the harvest and other blessings.

Tradition dictates that a proper Thanksgiving celebration is a gathering of family and friends to enjoy a meal too great to consume. But there must also be some form of reflection on the abundance of the harvest and blessing which we enjoy. And this is the sacred kernel which lies at the heart of this celebration. It would be difficult to rid Thanksgiving of it without losing the celebration itself. What, after all, is Thanksgiving other than to give thanks?

And even in the final throes of the twentieth Century, this is an excellent time of year for people to become spiritual. While people might be thankful at any time that businesses are thriving and employment is abundant, we know that ultimately we need the ground to produce food. So our greatest sense of contentment comes in October and November when the gardens have completed their "magical" work of producing from the soil melons, legumes, root and leaf crops, and the work of harvesting and preserving have been completed. Even those in the deepest urban areas get some sense of this at this time of year.

We are happy about the harvest, and we just want to say, "Thank you." But to whom? to what? To farmers for their work? To the soil for performing magic? To colleges and universities for their genetic research and technical developments? None of these seriously recommend themselves as the object of thanksgiving. One way or another, people are forced to a deeper spirituality. We want to give thanks, and in doing so, we express some sort of dependence. Without saying it aloud, people will acknowledge that we are not autonomous after all. *On this day, our society celebrates the fact that what we have has been given.* Society celebrates because the Divine Being could well have decided to not give, but because he (she? it?) has given, we will give him (her? it?) thanks.

Some Christians become optimistic when society becomes spiritual. The New Age movement was recognized a

decade ago as a spiritual awakening in the world. Many church communities welcomed it but others recognized Satan at the centre, thinly disguised as an angel of light. I think that the spiritual awakening of Thanksgiving day, is similar. Our society has already rejected Christ as born Saviour and risen Lord. So long as people continue to deny Jesus as Lord, whatever spirituality Thanksgiving might evoke within them cannot lead them to the Father. While there is in the Thanksgiving celebration a word of thanks vaguely uttered to *the Divine Being* it can only add to their condemnation so long as they do not bow before the new born King and the risen Saviour.

You cannot secularize Thanksgiving. It is fundamentally a spiritual celebration. You cannot secularize Thanksgiving, but you can paganize it. Spirituality that ends by bowing before the God who gives food, is paganism. Let us, however, bow before the God who give us salvation out of His love, and only then, for whatever other material blessing He might decide to give us in this world: health, employment, homes, family, and also food. Yes, we give thanks to God for the harvest; but let God take away the harvest and leave us to waste away – yet we will give thanks, because we still have the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Rev. P. Aasman is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Grand Valley, ON.

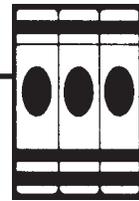


**CHURCH NEWS**

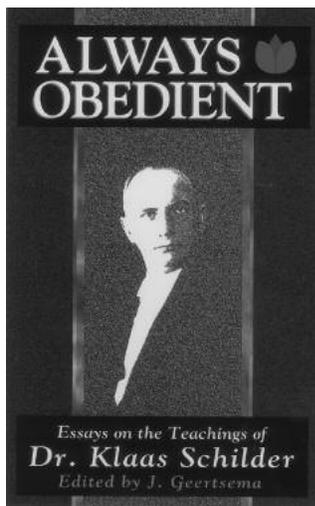
NOTICE OF TIME CHANGE:

As of September 15th the American Reformed Church of Denver will be holding its Worship Services at 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. This includes Lord's Supper Sundays.

# BOOK REVIEW



*Always Obedient. Essays on the Teachings of Dr. Klaas Schilder*, ed. by J. Geertsema. Published by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P.O. Box 817, Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 08865-0817. Co-published in Canada by Inheritance Publications, Box 154, Neerlandia, AB. Reviewed by R. Schouten.



This book is a collection of six essays about the teachings of Dr. Klaas Schilder (1890-1952). It arose from a desire to promote these teachings outside the narrow circle of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands for whom the work of Schilder has been so significant. The editor and the authors are convinced that Schilder's insights into Scripture need to be remembered and passed on also in the English-speaking world. Some of the essays were first presented as public lectures in November, 1990 (the 100th anniversary of Schilder's birth), while others were added from various sources to form the present volume. Since a volume like this is a rarity, we will take the liberty for a lengthier than usual review.

The book begins with a foreword by editor J. Geertsema in which he provides a summary of each chapter and expresses the hope that this volume will help others to share Schilder's view that "it is a delight to be Reformed."

The first chapter is contributed by Dr. J. Faber and is entitled "Klaas Schilder's Life and Work." After a brief and personal section about the life of Schilder, Faber continues by dividing the publishing work of K. Schilder into

three phases, 1920-30, 1930-40 and 1944-1952. Many interesting and enticing comments flow from Faber's pen as he takes us on this journey. For example, about Schilder's brochure about the Church entitled, *Ons Alle Moeder – Anno Domini 1935* (The Mother of us all – Anno Domini 1935), Faber writes, "In my opinion, this brochure remains valid against all sanctimonious disobedience of churches, as well as against all sanctimonious sectarianism – which also is disobedience to the living God, who in Christ proceeds with His church-gathering work."

In the last section of his essay, Faber deals concisely with the lasting significance of Schilder's work. He summarizes as follows: ". . . we may conclude that Schilder devoted himself to the reliable Word of the God of the covenant in the history of mankind. That meant negatively a fight against subjectivism and positively a fight for the acknowledgment of Holy Scripture." Faber shows how Schilder's continuous stress on the reliability of the covenant words of God led him to oppose the dialectical theology of K. Barth, as well as the scholastic elements in Kuyperian theology and some Kuyperian ideas in the philosophy of Dooyeweerd. Always Schilder defended what Scripture itself says: "The Word is very near you."

Chapter two offers a valuable essay by S. A. Strauss of South Africa entitled "Schilder on the Covenant." Dr. Strauss has written a doctoral dissertation concerning Schilder's teaching about the covenant, and makes considerable use of his earlier research in this present essay. Strauss seeks to demonstrate that Schilder "did everything in his power always to define the covenant in such a way that justice was done to man's responsibility." Because of this emphasis, Schilder was led to contend against both the scholastic theology of Kuyper as well as the modern theology of Barth, since both schools of thought so strongly reasoned from the perspective of God's eternal decrees that human responsibility in the covenant was underemphasized. Strauss demonstrates that Schilder always sought to show that in covenant life, God treats human beings as responsible, confronting them always with the choice of "all or nothing," *for God or against Him*.

Strauss indicates that while Schilder certainly acknowledged and even stressed the eternal decrees of God, he also believed that covenant thinking must take its point of departure in God's acts in history. Covenant and election must never be identified. According to Schilder, the covenant is bilateral. It is a mutual agreement between two parties – albeit two immeasurably unequal parties. Strauss clearly demonstrates how in a good, Reformed way, it was possible and necessary for Schilder to speak about faith as a condition in the covenant. Faith is a gift of God, but also a condition set by Him. Strauss believes that we should be thankful for Schilder's ability to profess and teach both the eternal decrees of God and the covenant as a historic reality.

Chapter Three takes us to a contribution by N. H. Gootjes entitled "Schilder on Christ and Culture." In this essay, we are reminded of Schilder's conviction that God's people ought to be culturally active. Schilder's concept of Christ and culture, however, has not gone unchallenged. It has received serious criticism both within and outside the Reformed churches. Gootjes, however, seeks to defend Schilder's views on culture.

He begins with a discussion of "Kuyper on culture," since Schilder's views can only be understood against the background of Kuyper. Kuyper stressed the impact of "common grace" on human culture. Even in a sinful world, much cultural development is possible among unbelievers. Christianity (special grace) does not lead to the creation of a specifically "Christian culture," but rather to the Christianization of existing Western culture. In this way, Kuyper portrays Christ as the Saviour of culture, who pours out His special grace into Greco-Roman culture.

In Gootjes' discussion, it becomes clear that Schilder has a different starting point than Kuyper. In Schilder's thinking, the stress falls on the work of Christ saving people for obedient service of God in cultural work. Christ brings people back to their duty as summarized in Gen. 1:28. The cultural task of human beings is very broad, not limited to art or scholarship, but says Schilder, includes everything done to keep and develop the earth. The daily work of all

believers is mandated by God and is part of the cultural enterprise.

Gootjes continues his essay with a helpful discussion of the biblical foundation of the concept of a cultural mandate. In this section, we are treated to careful and edifying remarks about Gen. 1:28, Gen. 2, Matt. 25 and 1 Tim. 4:4-5. Next, Gootjes deals with pietistic distrust of cultural labours, a scepticism based on the idea that the only really important work of the believer in this time before Christ's return is evangelism. Against this view, Gootjes states: *The meaning of the time between Creation and Christ's return is not limited to evangelism. It is also the period in which the Holy Spirit works in Christians to bring them to obedience to God. The Holy Spirit also requires us to see and do our daily work . . . in the light of Genesis 1 and 2, even in a world that is no longer a paradise . . . our daily work is more than a necessity to keep us alive.* In Gootjes' clear discussion, Schilder's view on culture comes through as solid and earthy, rooted in Biblical revelation about creation, fall and redemption. Here we find no philosophical flights of fancy, but a useful and authentic vision for composers, housewives and farm workers alike.

Chapter four contains the contribution of J. M. Batteau entitled "Schilder on the Church." Batteau demonstrates that while Schilder did hold wholeheartedly hold to the Reformed confessions, he was not a mere confessionalist. Instead, he constantly sought new light in God's Word through exegesis. The result is a freshness and vitality of expression in his writings about the church.

Batteau highlights the unity of the Church as a continuing theme in all the work of Schilder. Along with this stress on unity, Schilder wanted to maintain the broadness of the church. In fact, this *broadness* is a prerequisite to unity. "If there is unity based on Scripture and the Reformed confessions, then there must be room for a variety of accents within this unity" (p. 72). With respect to the desired unity with the Christelijk Gereformeerde Church (in North America, this church group is called the *Free Reformed Churches*), Schilder warns against making "a difference of accent and homiletical approach into a confessional difference" (p. 72). Batteau shows that this stress on the broadness of the church remained in Schilder's teaching even after the Liberation of 1944. Although Schilder was very critical of Kuyper on some points, "he still had no intention of forming a church that would officially ban all Kuyperian ideas as intolerable" (p. 73). Batteau does admit,

however, that there is a "certain tension" between Schilder's stress on the broadness of the church and his severe criticism of Kuyperianism. One does wonder whether the distinct differences between Kuyperian orthodoxy and Schilder's fresh, confessional approach would not have ultimately strained the church's unity. In other words, are there not several elements in Kuyperianism, which, in historical perspective, show themselves to be anti-confessional and thus, outside the broadness of the Reformed Church? One can think in this regard of Kuyper's blatant attacks on Articles 27-29 of the Belgic Confession.

Batteau shows how, in several ways, Schilder did become an anti-Kuyperian. Over time, he came to question and reject the Kuyperian dogma of the "pluriformity of the church." Instead, Schilder wanted to stress the confessional norms which speak about true and false churches. He found it impossible to justify interchurch cooperation with Barthians or the followers of Geelkerken under the concept of pluriformity. After the Liberation, Schilder and his colleagues began to forge a new direction for Christian politics, education and journalism, a direction which more and more stressed church membership as the criterion for cooperation (p. 78). Schilder also distanced himself from the invisible church theory of Kuyper which based itself on the doctrine of election. Instead, he began to think of the church in covenantal terms. Covenantal faithfulness leads to institutional church faithfulness. We ought not to define the church in terms of eternal election, but in terms of covenant faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Batteau concludes his essay with a translation and brief commentary on Schilder's nineteen theses of 1935 on the church. We may be very thankful for this exposition in English of Schilder's teaching about the doctrine of the church. It can only be helpful for us in our current ecclesiastical life.

In Chapter Five, we find a contribution of J. Kamphuis entitled "Schilder on Heaven" which Kamphuis intends to be no more than an "introduction" to Schilder's 1935 publication, *What is Heaven?* Kamphuis states that whoever has gained access to this work of Schilder has an introduction to all his work. Kamphuis shows how Schilder firmly maintained the historicity of Gen. 1-3. Scripture is trustworthy when it relates to us the account of man's state of righteousness and the fall into sin. A very interesting aspect of Schilder's work, as highlighted by Kamphuis, is his way of seeing heaven as also taken up in a framework of history. Schilder

does not want to oppose heaven as the unchanging, eternal and valuable reality to earth as the transient, temporal and therefore less valuable reality. Instead, both heaven and earth are included in God's one covenant work. Heaven does not mean escape from creation, but it means precisely consummation of creation. For this reason, all history is important! Man may and must cooperate with God, in creation, on the road to the consummation of creation.

In chapter six, we find an essay by J. DeJong entitled "Schilder on Revelation." This topic is familiar ground for Dr. DeJong, as it was also the topic of his dissertation.

In his thinking about God's revelation, Schilder reacted especially to the teaching of Karl Barth and to the continuing influence of Abraham Kuyper. Barth stressed the transcendence, indeed, the unknowability of God. He did so over against the sentimental, subjective religion of the 19th century which had romanticized the Biblical God. Barth wanted to stress the wrath, the holiness, the glory, the sheer "otherness" of God. But in so doing, Barth himself became imbalanced. According to Barth, we never are at the point that we truly "have" God's revelation. For God cannot be "had." Because of this starting point, Barth taught that the Bible may not be identified with the Word of God. Instead, it is only a witness to God's revelation. If God wills it, the Bible at a certain moment for a certain person can again **become** the Word of God. In the meantime, however, it is just a fallible human document. Schilder attacked this view continuously. At stake was the comfort and certainty of knowing the Word of God and the God of the Word. In Barth, revelation loses its objective certainty.

Schilder acknowledged, naturally, that God is gloriously transcendent. But this great God has made Himself known to His people; He accommodates Himself to their level so that they can know, within limits, the mind of God. God remains incomprehensible, but His Word is understandable in what it reveals. His Word has truly entered history and is clear and reliable. We have it in our midst! Arising from his battle with Barth, conflict also emerged with respect to Kuyperian views on the Scripture. While Kuyper upheld the confession of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture, he seemed to fall into a kind of subjectivism of his own, as seen, for example, in his teaching about immediate regeneration, that is, the regenerating work which the Spirit allegedly performs in the heart of the elect, *without* the mediation of the Word. DeJong's concise

essay will certainly be a help to us as we strive to maintain the confession of God's reliable Word in a critical age.

We may be very thankful for the work of the Senate and Publication Foundation of the Theological College in bringing this book from a thought to reality. It is good to see an increasing flow of publications emanating from Hamilton. May the Lord give energy and time for many more. It is our hope that many church members will take and read and learn from the present volume and so be stimulated to further study,

for the danger is not imaginary that the rich insights of the Reformed theologians of the previous era will be lost. While we need not take everything over uncritically, we would be fools to ignore God's good gifts through them. Above all, their writings may help us to *read* Scripture covenantally and even more importantly, to *respond* in covenantal faith and obedience.

I would like to end with a minor criticism and a request. First, the title leaves something to be desired, focusing too much on the man Schilder himself.

My suggestion for a more appropriate title is "All or Nothing," since this phrase, used several times in the book, nicely captures the essence of Schilder's view of life in the covenant. My final remark is a request: may we look forward to the publication in English of some select works of Schilder? Even for people like myself who have taken the time to learn Dutch, an English publication of such a complex writer as Schilder would be a real boon. For those who don't read Dutch, the need is critical!



## THE HI-LITER

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### News from Here and There

By C. Van Spronsen

In Burlington West a new program is developed for boys aged 9 - 12: "Cadets." "The boys will learn how to apply the Bible to their daily lives as well as how to live in God's creation with many outdoor and indoor orientated activities (e.g. knot tying, hiking, wood working, outdoor survival skills etc.)."

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The same congregation also received detailed instructions for a fire drill. "All council members (and council members only) regardless of where they are sitting, will be given access to the basement as they are responsible for carrying out the children." Parents are told that absolutely no admission to the basement will be permitted! (the nurseries are downstairs). It is to be hoped that it never comes to a real test between parental instinct and confidence in the officebearers!

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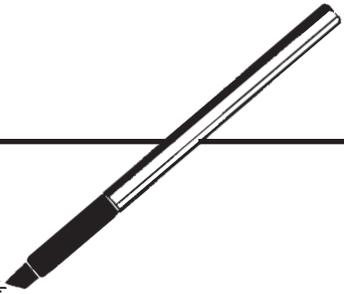
At a Council Meeting in Langley, BC the following motion was passed: "The Council of the Canadian Reformed Church at Langley decides in principle to enter into occasional pulpit exchange with the Free Reformed Church at Abbotsford. The Council will hear the congregation on this matter in September and will inform Classis of this decision and solicit its response before implementation takes place."

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It is not unusual for Councils to discuss having a decision book. At the same time for many it remains a dream. In Brampton, ON it seems that this dream is coming closer to reality: "A preliminary review of the decisions made by councils and consistories in previous years done." (Going back to 1966!) Of course then the problem arises: Which are the real decisions? "Decisions in question will be resolved at the next meeting." Sometimes it might be better not to know all past decisions!

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In the Burlington area Dutch Classes are offered for children and adults. Students can even receive up to three High School credits upon completion of all levels. In BC the government is in the process of including many options for a second language, such as Mandarin, Punjabi, Japanese and German but I have not read anywhere that Dutch would qualify!



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- Several news items refer to our ministers and their families:
- Rev. P. Kingma, retired minister of Grand Rapids, MI was taken home by the Lord
- Mrs. M. Van Beveren, the wife of our retired minister, the Rev. M. Van Beveren of Edmonton, AB, was also promoted to glory.
- In this connection we also mention the passing away of Mrs. M. Werkman of Smithville, ON whose husband served the Churches for a number of years as minister in the past. The Lord relieved her of a long road of suffering.
- Prof. Dr. C. Van Dam and his wife could celebrate their 25th Wedding Anniversary.
- Rev. & Mrs. W. Huizinga of Armadale, WA also reached the same milestone in their lives.

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In Grand Valley, ON the young people have been taking care of the janitorial duties in the church building. Good words are spoken about their involvement: "We have been proud of the work with the young people have done (and very pleased with their work too) in the past six years. It has been a shining example of dedication and generosity to us all."

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The Congregation in Taber, AB celebrated the official opening of their new church building located at 5402-38 Avenue on September 6, 1996. Congratulations from one of your native sons!

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In conclusion a quote via "The King's Bridge" from Tasmania entitled "Opting Out!" "There are 566 members in our Church. But 100 are frail and elderly. That leaves 466 to do all the work. But 80 are young people at college. That leaves 386 to do all the work. But 150 are tired businessmen, so that leaves 236 to do all the work. And 150 are housewives with children. That leaves 86 to do all the work. A further 46 have important other interests. That leaves 40 to do all the work. But 15 live too far away to come regularly. So that leaves 25 to do all the work. And 23 say they've done their bit. So that leaves YOU AND ME. And I'm exhausted. Good luck to you!" (anonymous)





# Faithworks in Appalachia, March 1996

By Kirsten Sloots

Twenty-nine members of the Canadian Reformed Churches, all from Southern Ontario, most between 17 and 25 years of age, spent March Break this year in the small town of Neon, Kentucky. They were volunteers at a work camp in the Appalachian mountains. This trip was the first initiative of Faithworks, a new committee working in conjunction with the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund. Faithworks aims to provide young people with opportunities for Christian service.

What happened in Neon gave ample evidence of the value of such projects. We entered a situation of real need, and we were able to offer practical help and assistance. We took advantage of many opportunities to explain who we were and why we were there, presenting a clear and caring Christian witness. In the week we were there, we were able to grow in faith, and we returned with a better understanding of God's purpose for us in calling us to be servants.

Applications for the Appalachian project, together with those for a project this summer in the Dominican Republic, went out last fall. The applicants were required to explain why they wanted to take part. From the response, it was soon clear that many young people had a great desire to learn and grow through Christian service. They also showed their commitment to the project by participating at a series of orientation/planning meetings throughout the winter and by putting their energy into fundraising. Each person going on the trip was required to raise \$250.00 in personal funds or sponsorships. Together the participants organized a car wash, which raised over \$600.00. Some of them also put on an evening of praise and worship for the community, where prayers were offered for the trip and a collection was taken.

We appreciate the support we received from our congregations. Many people gave generously in sponsorships, in words of encouragement, and in prayers. We are especially thankful to those who donated the vehicles we



Meeting to study the Bible with Appalachian people

used for transportation. In thanking you, we would also like to let you share in the benefits of our experience. Many rolls of film and hours of videotape came home with us from Neon, and we are planning to make presentations in our local churches.

In the weeks leading up to the trip, we all answered many questions and fielded some concerns from fellow church members. If you have more questions after reading this article, please seek out the information you need to answer them. Any of the Faithworks participants will be more than willing to tell you about what happened in Neon.

## Why Neon?

Where is Neon? And why go all the way there? These were questions we answered often. Neon, or Fleming Neon, is a small town in the southeast corner of Kentucky, close to the Virginia border. Driving into the town in darkness, late Saturday evening, we already gained an impression of the poverty of the area. We caught glimpses of small dilapidated homes, pressed up against a harsh mountain landscape.

Daylight would show us more of our surroundings. The mountains around Neon are part of the Appalachian range,

running through the eastern United States from New York to Georgia. Appalachia is an impoverished area. Traditionally its inhabitants have depended on the coal industry for employment. Now the coal industry is in decline and there is much unemployment. This is one of the poorest areas in the United States.

We came to Neon because here we found HOMES, Inc., the non-profit agency which coordinated our project. HOMES, which stands for Housing Oriented Ministries Established for Service, is located on a former mine site. It exists to provide housing to low-income people. We were recommended to this project by CORA, the Commission on Religion in Appalachia, an interdenominational group which promotes many volunteer workcamps in the area.

HOMES runs on volunteer labour. Local people apply to have repairs done to their house. They are assessed by a government agency, and if there is a true need, the HOMES staff may proceed with planning the project and coordinating their volunteers to do the work. Of the \$250.00 (Canadian) that we were each supposed to contribute, \$125.00 (U.S.) went to HOMES to pay for accommodation, materials, and overhead costs. The remainder of the

*The photographs show Faithworks volunteers in Neon*



*Painting the home of a widow with four children*



*Insulating an Appalachian home*



*Installing siding on a new house*



*Trying to clear a blockage in a sewage system*

money we raised went towards our transportation to, from and around Neon, for insurance, and for meals.

Some of the HOMES staff are long-term volunteers; others are local people hired to work as supervisors. HOMES also builds new houses using volunteer labour and provides low-income people with the opportunity to own their own home through a fund which lets them pay down their mortgage free of interest. In order to promote a sense of pride and responsibility, HOMES generally expects its clients to contribute a small amount to the cost of each project.

As volunteers, we were divided into groups and sent out to a variety of different job sites. Some were swinging sledge hammers at the demolition site, where an old run-down cabin had to be taken down, and rubbish burned or cleared away. Others spent most of the week inside an old drugstore. HOMES bought this building, in the centre of town, in order to convert it into three apartments. Some of us worked on covering up a leaky roof and ripping out rotting old floorboards, cutting up the wood to take it away, and putting in a new plywood floor. Others worked on some much-needed renovations to two area houses, putting in insulation and drywalling. Another group was sent out to a new home which was just being built, to add the final touches, such as interior painting and installing siding. Other odd jobs involved picking up

garbage around the sites, clearing up the landscape and painting and cleaning up around the HOMES workshop. We also spent a large amount of time at a house used by HOMES as a temporary shelter for needy people, painting and working on a sewage problem.

Throughout the course of the week, each of us had opportunities to meet and to talk to the people of the region. Those who were working on homes grew close to the occupants and learned much about their way of life, their joys and their struggles. We found the people we met were friendly and easy to talk to. Some of them came to share our evening meals and activities. Two mentally-challenged men in great need showed up and voluntarily helped at the drug store worksite.

Some people have wondered why we had to go so far away, since there are certainly many with needs in our own area. I doubt, however, that the experience would be quite the same close to home. A short-term volunteer experience in a faraway place has strengths of its own. In Neon we had a taste of a different culture, a striking contrast from everything we are accustomed to take for granted. We were separated by a great distance from our ordinary experiences and forced by circumstance to take on roles different from those which our daily lives demand.

It is impossible to travel to a foreign place and come back home without see-

ing your familiar world with new eyes and changed emotions. I think we all returned with an appreciation of the stability and security we enjoy. Appalachia is an area which is very much lacking in hope for the future. We realized from talking to the people we met how much of an uphill battle it is for them to throw off the burden of poverty, to escape from the vicious circles of chronic unemployment, alcoholism, substance abuse, family violence, addiction to television, poor health and low nutrition.

While these problems certainly exist in our society, our taste of them in Neon was a much more concentrated experience, stripped of the insulation that usually surrounds us in our comfortable lives. I think an experience like this only serves to heighten our awareness of the needs of others, wherever they may be.

We also became aware of the stability which we enjoy in Christ, that the greatest poverty is not material want, but want of understanding of our purpose as humans, to live to the glory and praise of our God. This experience was a vivid illustration of the greatest of human needs, the thirst for water which satisfies unto eternal life. Our faith was something which drew us together as a group, in singing and praying and reading the Word. We were able to talk about our experiences and assess them in His light.

One participant wrote in our group journal, "This trip is helping to renew in me that surety of God's love and providence that as a naive child I held a little closer to my soul. Our work as God's soldiers will never be finished, I know; yet consider for a moment what this is doing (has done) for 25 or so young, future church leaders – and I imagine that you may find that God's mysterious Hand was involved . . . and as you can't know the vegetable until the seed has grown and matured, we can't know now the fruits that perhaps, by His will and blessing, will someday blossom from this."

May God bless us all as we grow up "into the fulness of Christ" and may He establish the works of our hands. 

Gifts for the works of CRWRF may be directed to:

**Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund**

PO Box 85225  
Burlington, ON L7R 4K4

All gifts are gladly received. Donors of \$10.00 or more will be issued a receipt for tax deduction.

By Aunt Betty



## Dear Busy Beavers,

Soon we'll celebrate Thanksgiving again. Each year God gives us so much to be thankful for. Can you think of some?

He gives us all we need for our bodies, but also for our souls. Every day He feeds our bodies; and our souls with His Word.

The biggest reason we have for thanksgiving is His gift of His Son. Jesus came to the earth to die for His people, and save them from their sins.

Let's remember *that* on Thanksgiving Day this year!

## Quiz Time!

### THANKSGIVING IN THE BIBLE

Fill in the blank Puzzle.

Find the missing word or words that fit in the text.

- "Then on that day David first appointed that \_\_\_\_\_ be sung to the LORD by \_\_\_\_\_ and his brethren." 1 Chron. 16:7
- ". . . singing aloud a \_\_\_\_\_ of thanksgiving, and telling all Thy \_\_\_\_\_ deeds." Ps. 26:7
- "I will \_\_\_\_\_ to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the \_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD." Ps. 116:17
- ". . . joy and \_\_\_\_\_ will be found in her, \_\_\_\_\_ and the voice of song." Isaiah 51:3
- "Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving, and the \_\_\_\_\_ of those who make merry." Jeremiah 30:19
- ". . . offer a sacrifice of \_\_\_\_\_ of that which is leavened, and proclaim \_\_\_\_\_ offerings, publish them; for so you love to do, O people of Israel!" says the LORD God." Amos 4:5
- "For what thanksgiving can we \_\_\_\_\_ to God for you, for all the joy which we feel for your \_\_\_\_\_ before our God. . . ." 1 Thess. 3:9
- "Thanks be to God through \_\_\_\_\_ our Lord!"
- ". . . do \_\_\_\_\_ in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:17
- "Blessing and \_\_\_\_\_ and wisdom and thanksgiving and \_\_\_\_\_ and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen." Rev. 7:12

### AUNT BETTY

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## FIND THE PHRASE!

by Busy Beaver *Laura Vandebos*

Cross out the letters of the alphabet in order. Put the remaining letters on the lines.

AZBCIDOENGF      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

HGHEIAJRKDLM      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

ANNODP      \_ \_ \_ \_

QWRSATS      \_ \_ \_ \_

UGVLWXAYDZ      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

## COLOURS WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

by Busy Beaver *Gail Schoon*

G	R	E	D	T	B	A	C	F	E	<b>Find these colours!</b>  Purple Gold Green Red Pink Lavender Yellow Gray White Brown Orange Black
R	A	Y	G	B	U	V	O	Y	Q	
E	C	T	B	R	F	W	R	Z	I	
E	H	B	D	O	W	O	A	A	H	
N	L	L	N	W	X	L	N	M	Y	
G	M	A	E	N	T	L	G	W	P	
L	Y	C	I	J	K	E	E	H	B	
A	A	K	O	P	S	Y	C	I	N	
V	R	E	U	L	B	E	B	T	X	
E	G	R	Q	G	O	L	D	E	A	
N	L	P	Q	G	D	W	X	O	G	
D	H	I	Z	O	I	H	M	E	E	
E	G	N	X	Y	L	Z	P	N	Y	
R	L	K	O	P	A	D	A	S	O	
K	N	U	P	U	R	P	L	E	E	



## From the Mailbox.

Hi, *Jody Wemekamp*. How are you doing now? Thank you for sending in the poem and text. It is good to be reminded that God made everything in the world and that He takes care of it all. Have a good school year, Jodi. Bye.

Hi, *Jennifer Houweling*. What place are you in the family, oldest or youngest or in-between? I'm sure it's never boring, having four brothers around. What kinds of things do you like to do in your free time? Hope to hear from your soon, Jennifer. Bye.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Gail Schoon*. I hope you enjoy being a member. You sure seem to keep busy! Did you help your aunt take care of baby Calvin? I hope you have a good time in Florida! Bye, Gail.

KEEP SENDING PUZZLES, BUSY BEAVERS!

That's all for this time, Love to you all,

Aunt Betty