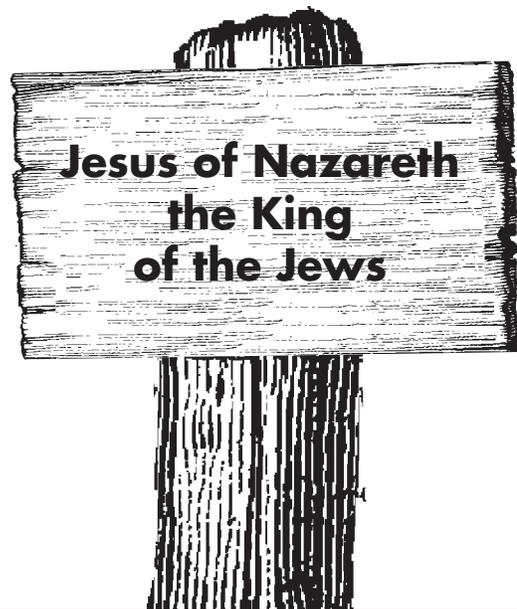
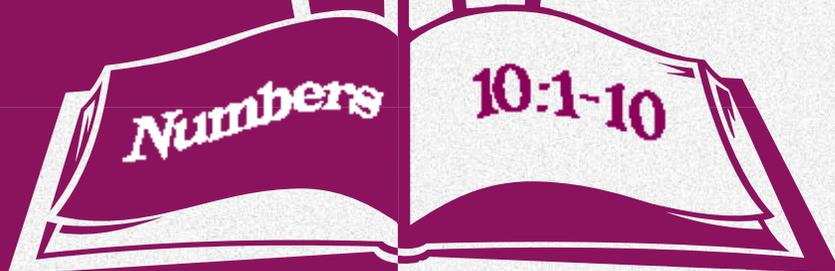


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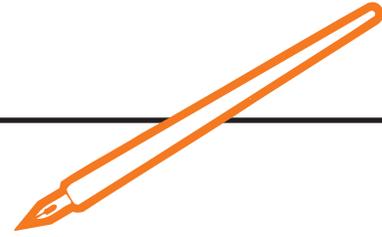
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Sarcasm on Golgotha



By C. Van Dam



Is evolution compatible with Scripture?

Evolution is back in the news. In October of last year, Pope John Paul II, in his greetings to the Pontifical Academy of Science then meeting in Rome stated that “fresh evidence leads to the recognition of the theory of evolution as more than just a hypothesis.” By doing this, the pope was reaffirming a 1950 papal encyclical that Darwin’s theory on the origin of life and Christianity were not in conflict with each other. The only caveat for the pope was that one must acknowledge that the human soul is directly created by God.

So, is Darwin right after all? The popular press assumes it and opinion moulders such as the *National Geographic* do not cease to make evolution sound like a self-evident truth. The weight of the current consensus of evolutionism also impacts on the church. Just last year, at their 1996 General Assembly, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) had to deal with this issue. Is what the Bible says about the origin of the human race compatible with evolutionism? It will be instructive to look at the OPC discussion and decision.¹

The charge and contested position

Last August, the Harvest session of the OPC in Grand Rapids found Dr. Terry Gray, a ruling elder, guilty of the public offense of stating that “Adam had primate ancestors, contrary to the Word of God (Gen. 2:7; 1:26-27) and the doctrinal standards of the OPC (Westminster Confession of Faith IV.2; Westminster Larger Catechism 17).” The session proposed the censure of indefinite suspension from office. Dr. Gray appealed to the Presbytery of the Midwest, which denied his appeal, and then appealed to the General Assembly.

To understand the situation, one must realize that Dr. Gray teaches biochemistry at Calvin College. He affirms the inspiration, authority, infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture as well as the historicity of Adam. He also acknowledges that there is no positive Biblical warrant for his view on Adam. “The sole basis for believing that Adam’s body had animal ancestors is a study of God’s creation using scientific methodology. . . . The Bible does not forbid this view” (Appendix 3 of appeal). As a professor of biochemistry he had decided that an “obvious conclusion” from scientific evidence is that “humans, primates, and other mammals share a common ancestor” and that “the biological evidence points toward an animal ancestry of humans.” In Gray’s view, “God used some already evolved primate as starting material in his special creation of the unique image bearer, Adam. . . . So far I have found nothing

better that allows me to be faithful to Scripture and to the empirical evidence.”

The defence and counter arguments

In support of his appeal, Dr. Gray gave several arguments. For our purposes, the following two are really central and important for us to consider here. First, he contended that his view was not contrary to Scripture. The “dust of the ground” in Genesis 2:7 did not need to be understood as lifeless dust, but could be interpreted as mature animal life. Second, he also argued that there were no theological implications to his particular view of man’s origin. By that he meant that no other Biblical doctrines were affected or threatened by his view.

Against the first point, that Dr. Gray’s views were not contrary to Scripture, the following was noted.²

- i. God formed Adam’s body by taking the dust from the ground. This was the same stuff that he was to till (Gen. 3:23) and to return to after death (Gen. 3:19).
- ii. The resurrection passage of 1 Corinthians 15:39 makes the contrast between animals and man by explicitly stating, “All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, another of fish.” There is a parallel in Genesis 1:20-25. Each “species” is made “after its own kind,” i.e. is a “different flesh.”
- iii. According to Genesis 2:21-22, God made a woman from the man. Thus, there is no possibility that woman evolved from a non-man living being.
- iv. When Dr. Gray posits that God used “some already evolved primate as starting material” for making Adam, he views the creation of man as a divinely directed evolution from pre-man primates. This contradicts the historic record of Genesis 2:7, without any warrant from that text or any other related text of Scripture.

With regard to the contention that there are no theological implications to this evolutionary view of man’s origin, it was especially noted that such a view challenges the authority and clarity of Scripture. If one must believe in the evolutionary origin of man, then the Scriptures are not clear on cardinal and important truths.³ But Genesis 2 presents in straightforward language the historical account of God’s creation of man. There is no indication that this is not history writing. The text describes the creation of Adam and Eve as special acts of creation, distinct from and not arising out of any previously existing ancestor of Adam.

The decision of the General Assembly of the OPC

Dr. Gray's appeal took considerable time at the General Assembly. After all the arguments were heard and weighed an overwhelming majority rejected the views of Dr. Gray. His appeal was denied and the proposed censure of indefinite suspension from office was sustained.

This decision is to be much applauded. It was courageous for we live in a world and culture for which evolutionism is a basic cherished article of faith. Also the Canadian Reformed Churches can be encouraged with this decision. In several ways it resembles the watershed decision of Synod Assen 1926 which condemned the views of Dr. J. G. Geelkerken. Dr. Geelkerken also affirmed the authority and infallibility of Scripture, but he questioned whether the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the tree of life, and the speaking serpent were perceptible reality which existed and took place as recounted in Scripture.

Not all at the General Assembly, however, were happy with this decision for there was a fear with some that the General Assembly went beyond its jurisdiction with this trial. In their opinion, the views of Dr. Gray did not warrant a trial. As the Minority Advisory Committee at the General Assembly put it: "the fundamental question before the

church in this appeal is one of liberty and freedom; maybe even the freedom in some things to be wrong." However, this committee also acknowledged that "ultimately Scripture sets the boundary of our liberty." As in the Geelkerken question, this was the heart of the issue which in my view the vast majority of the General Assembly saw very clearly.

There is freedom of exegesis. But it is a freedom governed by the clear teachings of Scripture. When an exegesis can not stand the test of Scripture itself and opposes the testimony of the Word of God in other passages, it must be rejected. Such a rejection is particularly important if the exegesis in question is determined by the findings of a current scientific theory with enormous influence in reshaping society's view of itself and of what is right and wrong. Man's supposed common ancestry with the animal world is not proven. It is no more than a working hypothesis, a hypothesis with its own unproven religious assumptions and underlying hostility to God the Creator. It is also a hypothesis with enormous scientific problems.⁴

Conclusion

The formal Charge against Dr. Gray from the Presbytery of the Midwest put

it well. "In its conflict with unbelief the church is under intense pressure to conform to the world's naturalistic and rationalistic thinking in all areas and particularly regarding human origins. Given current attacks on the integrity of our faith, officers of the church must be held to the high standard of Scripture regarding such matters." Reference is then made to Titus 1:9 which speaks of the qualifications for the office of overseer. "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy word as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

¹The background material referred to in this editorial can be found in the *Minutes of the Sixty-Third General Assembly . . . of the OPC* (1996).

²For the counter arguments, I make use of the Charge against Dr. Gray from the Presbytery of the Midwest and the General Assembly's advisory committee report as noted in the Assembly's journal.

³This position is contrary to the Westminster Confession 1.7; cf. the Belgic Confession which presupposes this clarity in Art. 2, 5, and 7.

⁴For an excellent general and popularly written critique of evolutionism with references to further discussions see Philip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (InterVarsity Press, 1991).

FROM THE EDITOR:

It is the editorial task to present Clarion to the readers in a good way. For this purpose, contributions often need some editing. Sometimes corrections need to be made; other times contributions need to be shortened. The latter is done quite regularly with reports about farewell services and evenings, and inaugurations and welcome evenings of ministers. Recently we received a complaint from br. J. Schutten that the way in which we had shortened his report on the inauguration of and welcome evening for the Rev. J. Van Vliet was offensive to the author. For this we offer our apology. However, we reiterate that such reports will need to be kept short – under 1,000 words.

J. Geertsema



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By K. Schilder

Translated by John Smith

“Sarcasm on Golgotha”

“Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, ‘Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.’” John 19:19

Irony and sarcasm are not the same. An ironic word is born; a sarcastic one is made. Irony is expressed spontaneously; sarcasm can reflect upon its words. Irony sees the caricature and expresses it simply. Sarcasm sees the caricature too, and passionately reinforces it. Irony is lofty, and it exalts; sarcasm is low, and it abases. Irony attends the wounded, but sarcasm, as they say, is biting. One is gripped by irony, but one grasps at sarcasm. Irony observes something comical, but from a height which the “comedian” cannot reach; sarcasm sees something comical too, but from so low a level that the “comedian,” the clown, is safely out of reach; it cannot even dress itself in the harlequin’s outfit, for sarcasm can only weave transparent robes.

Irony is the strength of the weak; sarcasm is the weakness of the strong. Irony can also be without sin; sarcasm is itself a form of sin. Irony and sarcasm both see imbalance in the world; yet the balance is kept by the former, but disturbed by the latter. And when the man of irony and the man of sarcasm both view the world through the windows of the soul, then the ironic one is calm and can see through his windows so that he can win even the objective hindrance over to his point of view. But the sarcastic person can never do so: sarcasm

is found in unrest, and its passion is the hot breath that fogs the windows and thus subjectively impedes clear perception. Irony is always a certain triumph. But sarcasm means certain defeat, having only the gesture of a victor.

That is why there is always such a depth of heavenly thought in the passion narrative. For when the proceedings begin, then irony is found with Jesus in Gethsemane: [he says] “Sleep on now, and take your rest!” And when the trial has come to an end, then sarcasm is found with Pilate, who composes an inscription – actually it says “a title” – for the crucified Nazarene that gives the passerby the impression: “Here hangs the King of the Jews. Here he hangs – in a pillory.”

Pilate writes that sarcastic inscription before he withdraws in bitterness to his private quarters. He wants to snicker at it, for he knows that he has been beaten by those nasty Jews. That is why that inscription above Jesus’ cross is his *defeat*, for had he not lost in the trial, in other words, if he had *really* found Jesus guilty, he would have written differently. But in the present circumstances, he does not want to do otherwise. Oh, he is well aware that a judge should be precise, that he should be accurate. And so Pilate is. Look: it says “Jesus the Nazarene.” A lit-

tle while ago¹ he did not even know what province Jesus was from; he hadn’t bothered to inquire. Informal details didn’t matter when it concerned those despicable Jews. But now suddenly he is very official. The office-holder knows not only the province but also the city that Jesus comes from.

However, the precision of the first half of the inscription betrays all the more the evil intent in the gravely inaccurate second part. If it had said, “the supposed king,” now, that would have been okay, but “*the King of the Jews?*” Why, Pilate, that is no precise, summary conclusion of trial and verdict! An official statement in the name of the emperor ought not to be sloppy. Is this another informal detail – intentional this time? Is this insubordination, Pilate?

“Take it easy,” Pilate would have told you: “I know, I know. But grant me this satisfaction. I don’t dare to grieve about myself, so I might as well laugh about all those Jews. I want to get in one more jab at them, hit them where it hurts, put them and their king on public display. Let that high priest have the people against him for once. The common people seem to think of Jesus as a hero. Well, let the little folk seethe for a while, when they see their patron hanging there; it can’t do those hot-headed priests any harm. “The king of the Jews”

What’s inside?

The editorial, this time written by Dr. C. Van Dam, addresses again the question of compatibility or conflict between the theory of evolution and the teaching of Scriptures. Van Dam writes about how the OPC recently dealt with the question.

Soon the church will celebrate Good Friday and Easter. Strange, is it not, that we call Good Friday, *Good*? After all, we remember someone’s death on that day. How can that be good? On the face of it, it may seem strange. But we understand the mystery of the Gospel. We believe that our Saviour died that we may live. He was condemned to death that we might be set free. He was forsaken that we might be accepted. He was raised from the dead for our justification. Yes, we understand the mystery. We believe the Gospel. And so Good Friday is, indeed, good. To help you in your celebration, we provide you with two meditations: one by the late Dr. K. Schilder, and one by the Rev. J.G.R. Kroeze.

Mr. Karlo Jansen has made quite a study of the practice of allowing theological students to speak an edifying word. We publish the first of two parts in this issue.

Stapled in the middle, you will find the most recent *Evangel*. After you have read it, please pass it on to a neighbour or colleague.

GvP

... do you think they'll catch on that my inscription not only targets the king but also his lovely subjects?"

And Pilate writes. He writes three times. After all, his wife had not told him about her dream in any great detail.² And after all, he has not yet experienced that darkness which lasted for three hours. A touch of sarcasm in the inscription can't do any harm. And as for the official minutes for the imperial government, he can word them as he pleases

Oh yes, Pilate, but God is taking minutes today too. Their basic contents still lie before us. And on the basis of this story about your cutting sarcasm, we find you guilty and deserving of punishment.

We find you guilty. For you, Pilate, want to taunt the Jews, but you are taunting Jesus too. You want to vent your fury, but you don't have the courage, oh grim authority, to let the blast of your anger strike against the Jews – and against yourself. And now you are not afraid to divert your anger through Jesus. You make *Him* the victim of the measure of your rancour against the Jews; and with your feeble verbal onslaught you build your defences behind the Nazarene. That is worse than cowardice. That is guilt: guilt upon guilt. For a Pilate who has abandoned Jesus to injustice is more guilty if he thoughtfully reflects upon how he should formulate the inscription than if

he had slammed doors in suppressed wrath.

We find you guilty, Pilate. But we say this without sarcasm. For we have precisely this objection against your sarcasm, oh judge, that even though you resisted an atrocity, you did this more in protest against the sinners than against the sin. That's how your sarcasm works. But we have beheld Jesus whose irony rises far above your sarcasm. It censures the sin, but yet it beckons to the sinner, and helps him, and heals him. That is why Jesus' irony would cry woe unto us if we should speak sarcastically about the sarcastic Pilate. We turn inward, and in shame we remember that we too at one time or another have used Jesus' name to achieve some faint-hearted triumph [. . .]³ and we do not hide from our shame, as you do, Pilate!

Nevertheless, we maintain that you are guilty, Pilate . . . and deserving of punishment. For if it is true that irony belongs to the strong and sarcasm to the weak, to those who have experienced defeat, then your sentence awaits. When Jesus went to Pilate from the darkness of Gethsemane, then irony attended him. It was present on his path to victory. But when you, Pilate, sent Jesus away from your tribunal, then sarcasm attended you. It was present on your path to defeat.

These two paths will one day come together before the judgment seat of Christ. There, without sarcasm and yet in holy justice, Pilate will see the king of

the Jews, the king of the world. For that is the title which God himself will write upon Jesus' robe and upon his thigh.⁴ And there Jesus will indeed demonstrate the justice of that name. For in that hour there will be no basis for the empty jest which belongs to Pilate's sarcasm, namely, that "he who laughs last laughs best." Rather, there will be the stern gravity of Jesus' irony, that "he who weeps first weeps best." *This is the proverb of Christendom over against the world.* For irony and sarcasm are different.

¹Luke 23:6.

²Matthew 27:19.

³At this point Schilder quotes a few lines of poetry from Joost van den Vondel, which I have not included (J.S.).

⁴Revelation 19:16.

Last fall, Mr. John Smith, a third-year student at our Theological College, delivered the above as a chapel. It is his translation of a meditation by K. Schilder on John 19:19, taken from Licht in den Rook (Delft: W.D. Meinema, 1926), pp. 203-207. Mr. Smith wanted to show that Schilder not only was an important theologian but that he was a man of tremendous literary style and power of expression. Several of his professors encouraged him to submit it to Clarion as a meditation for Good Friday. The level of difficulty of Schilder's language is high, but we are sure that you will benefit from this meditation. – Editor 

MEDITATION

By J.G.R. Kroeze

The risen Lord looking for His sheep

Based on Matthew 28:1-10

Jesus Christ, the Lord, had died on the Friday before. The disciples and the women had all rested on the Sabbath, as the law of God commands. They had been unable to do anything for the body of Jesus Christ. The law of God had stopped them. But now, on the first day of the week, two women went to look at the tomb. We know from the other gospels that they were going to embalm the body of the Lord. However, when they got there an angel came down from heaven. His coming was announced by a violent earthquake. He shone like the

lightning and was dressed in brilliant white. He rolled away the stone which was in front of the tomb and sat on it. You can imagine the reaction of the guards who were at the tomb. They fell down like dead men. They were petrified we would say. The opposition was overcome in an instant. None could stand against such a being.

The women who seemed to have arrived just at that instant were of course also overcome with fear, but the angel had comforting words for them. Do not be afraid he said. He had come for

them. He had come to reveal the good news to them. He knew they were looking for Jesus, but He was no longer there. There was no need for the women to embalm his body. His body would not see corruption, just as had been prophesied in Ps. 16:10. The women had come with the best of their sad intentions, but their intentions were marked by unbelief. Jesus Christ had risen from the dead, as He had foretold. They had not believed Him or the Scriptures. Nevertheless the angel did not come to rebuke. He came to give

good news. He showed them the empty place in the tomb, and then he gave them an order. They had to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead. But where were they, those disciples? They also did not believe – neither Christ, nor the Scriptures. Now the disciples had to show their faith in the angel's word, by doing as he ordered. They had to go to Galilee. There they would meet their Lord. A test of faith is attached to the good news. Would the disciples go or not? Would they believe the good news or not? We know that they went, but was it in faith? When they arrived, and even when they saw Jesus on the mountain in Galilee, Matthew says, some doubted. 28:17. Some hearts were still hardened. The resurrection of the Lord was difficult to believe, even when the evidence was before their very eyes. The good news was too good.

However, more happened on this day. As the women were going their way, afraid, but full of joy, eager to tell the disciples what they had heard and seen, suddenly Jesus Christ met them. Now the strange thing is that he repeated almost exactly what the angel had said, but with one small, though significant change. He also told the women not to be afraid. He did

not want to frighten. What the Lord wanted was to call his disciples back to Him. The angel had said, "tell His disciples," but Jesus said, "tell my brothers." The disciples had fled when Jesus was arrested. They had abandoned their Lord. None had stood by Him. Only Peter and John had followed at a distance, and then Peter had denied his Lord. Now what does the Lord do? He does not call those cowards "disciples," but a name which is much more intimate, "brothers." The Lord revealed Himself to the women, to give more proof that He had really risen from the dead, and to gather His scattered sheep. The Lord did not reject His disciples like we would probably have done. No, His first act as the resurrected Christ is to do what the true Pastor of the flock of God does; He sought that which was scattered and lost. He went in search of His disciples. He called them brothers, to tell them that the way back was open, that He had not rejected them for their cowardice. They could still be His disciples, because they were His brothers. Now they only had to show faith, and go to Galilee, to be gathered again, to be His disciples and brothers.

The good news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was not

only to be found in the fact that God raised our Lord to life again. This already offers us a great hope. Rom. 4:25 says that our Lord was delivered for our sins, and raised for our justification. The resurrection of the Lord is the proof that you who believe in Him are justified. But that other element is not stressed very often. The Lord didn't say: take it or leave it. The Lord went looking for His sheep. He wanted to reunite them in faith, and that search is still on today. Today the Lord still sends out the good news into the world, by faithful women and men, with the call to faith in the resurrected Lord. He who has received all authority in heaven and on earth wants to gather the flock of God. He does not rebuke harshly, but calls in love, tenderly, showing that all our sin and perfidy is forgiven. Only we must come in faith. The call, the offer of forgiveness, always comes with the demand that you believe the message, and that you act on it. Blessed are those that obey.

Rev. John Kroeze is a minister of the church in Hamilton, ON. He labours as a missionary in Maceió, Alagoas, Brazil.

Speaking an edifying word¹

By Karlo Janssen

This past year has seen some interesting changes with respect to a practice officially known as "speaking an edifying word" and more commonly referred to as "preaching consent." Our sister churches in Australia have, for the first time, adopted rules that are very similar to our own. On the other hand, our sister churches in The Netherlands have set the practice aside.¹ This rather curious combination of events give us a good opportunity to review the history and practice of allowing students of theology onto our pulpits when they have not yet completed their studies.

The Great Reformation to the Liberation

Soon after the Reformation there was a crying need for ministers. Many

young men studied at various universities and soon, before they had even completed their studies, found themselves on pulpits because of the high vacancy rate. Some of the early synods decided in favour of the practice, others were against. The well-known Synod of Dort 1618-19 decided that it would be beneficial for both the students and the churches if students led in the worship services. We see that the practice of "speaking an edifying word" stretches back several centuries.

The issue of preaching consent came into sharp focus in the last century. Because many churches (around 200) but only a handful of ministers and students (initially not more than 10!) seceded from the Dutch State Church in 1834-36, the Secessioners

encouraged the practice of "speaking an edifying word."

The churches that split in the second Secession, the Doleantie of 1886, were somewhat more strict when it came to matters of church polity. They were not too keen on the large number of novices that had access to the Secessionist pulpits. This became an issue soon after the Union of the two federations in 1892.

Subsequent synods spent quite some time trying to work the positives of both federations into a unified whole. While a dominating question concerned that of the place and nature of Theological Training, the question of students in the pulpit did not go unnoticed. Synod Mid-delburg, 1896, decided that under no circumstances can students administer

the word.² It conceded that, on occasion, students might deliver a sermon proposal, albeit only under the strict oversight of the consistory. Such students, however, would first have to be declared eligible for call. Synod Amsterdam, 1908, put the final lid on the matter. Only students who had passed their preparatory exams and had thus become candidates would be granted access to the pulpit. The practice must have continued in some regions for Synod of the Hague, 1914, decided that all candidates-to-be must sign a form in which they declared that they had never yet unlawfully led a worship service.

After the Liberation of 1944

Once more, all is quiet. It was not until another church split that the issue arose for the third time. While the situation after the Liberation of 1944 was not quite as drastic as that in 1834, the number of vacancies was extremely high. Hence the first ordinary general synod of the Liberated churches (Groningen, 1946) decided that the decision of 1908 and 1914 be put aside for the moment until the situation in the churches should better itself.³ As ground Synod noted that after the Liberation the practice of speaking an edifying word had arisen and that, to date, no church had appealed against the practice. It concluded from this that the practice itself could not be objected against on principal grounds. Practical reasons would determine its continuation.

Synod Kampen 1951⁴ had different thoughts though. It noted that the professors advised that permission to speak an edifying word had a negative effect on the students' studies; they spent too much time preparing for their Sunday engagements. It also noted that the decision of 1946 was only meant to last to the next synod (1948) but had been overlooked by that synod. Kampen determined that the churches no longer needed to have students speak on Sundays, and thus decided that as of 1 January, 1952, students would no longer be allowed to speak an edifying word. Again we note that the reasoning is practical, for Kampen never said that speaking an edifying word is unscriptural.

The following year another synod was held. A number of churches had requested the delay of Kampen's decision for one year. Synod Berkel en Rodenrijs⁵ acknowledged this request, and the termination date for speaking an edifying word was moved to the next synod. It is interesting to note that two

of the committee members who studied this issue were principally opposed to the practice, being of the opinion that only office-bearers could lead a worship service. However, their opinion did not carry the day.

At Synod Enschede, 1955,⁶ the matter is tabled again. Several churches request that the decision of 1908/14/51 not be implemented. Synod decided that the need in the churches continued to exist and thus delayed the implementation of 1951. Synod Bunschoten-Spakenburg, 1958-59,⁷ confirmed this decision.

In Assen 1961⁸ the pendulum once again swings to the other side. Synod 1961 received two requests to make the practice permanent and two requests to prohibit the practice. Assen carefully weighed up the pros and cons and concluded that the churches seeking the continuation of the practice did not provide sufficient grounds while the churches seeking its abandonment had. Since no other grounds for speaking an edifying word had been provided by other churches, Assen decided to implement the decision of Kampen 1951 on 1 May, 1962. The ground for this decision was that the need in the churches no longer existed.

At the following synod (Rotterdam-Delfshaven, 1964-65⁹) the issue is once more on the table. Two churches request the practice to be allowed and synod determined that the need in the churches – 70 vacant congregations of which over half are really too small to ever support their own minister – argues in favour of allowing students to help ease the burden of the active ministers. Since 1964-65 the implementation of the decision of 1908/14/51 has continually been delayed by every general synod in Holland with the exception of this year's. Each time again the reason given was "the need in the churches."¹⁰

Though the practice continued in the positive for a long time, it was not without some points of interest. In 1978 the church of Goes suggested that the decision of 1908 be rescinded because it had stated that the administration of the Word was "definitely not permissible" ("beslist ongeoorloofd") for students while the Liberated had never objected to the practice in itself. Moreover, the practice of delaying the implementation of a synod decision was, church politically, incorrect. Synod 1978 pointed out, however, that Goes was not right on the first point. While the administration of the Word might be unlawful for students (as stated in

1896), this does not yet bar students from the pulpit. For they do not "preach" from the pulpit, but they "speak an edifying word." Goes had understood 1908 incorrectly.¹¹

In 1990 the decision of 1951 was once more delayed. Synod also decided that a more practical training was required at Kampen, and the suggestion was made that "speaking an edifying word" be tied to this practical training.

In 1993 the Friesians entered the discussion. They pointed out that the 28 year old practice of delaying the implementation of a synod decision was unwarranted. It was high time that the matter be more organized. Regional synod Friesland requested that consent to speak be made a standard practice, especially since the need for pulpit supply within the churches continued unabated. It provided various arguments to show that students were qualified to ascend a pulpit.

Synod Ommen, 1993, did not grant Friesland's request. However, its appeal did lead to much discussion. In the end it was decided to delay the decision of 1951 once again and to request the curators (governors) of the theological university to look into the matter of "speaking an edifying word" and to advise the following synod about making "speaking an edifying word" part of a more practically oriented theological training.

The most recent Dutch Synod, Berkel en Rodenrijs, 1996, received a request from regional synod Overijssel to state clearly that a student only received consent to speak an edifying word for 12 months. The problem, it seems, is that some students who continue studying upon completion of their M.Div., simply continue to practice speaking an edifying word. Synod upheld this request.

However, it did not uphold the report which resulted from the request made by Synod Ommen in 1993. The governors of the college reported that consent to speak an edifying word could not be made part of the practical side of the studies, and should not be connected with the studies. In verbal discussions the governors suggested that the practice be disallowed for students still working towards their M.Div., but be granted to students who continue studying to receive a Th.D.

However, consent to speak an edifying word would no longer be granted in the Dutch churches. For, and this seems to have become the determinative factor, there was no request from

any church assembly for continuing to delay the implementation of 1951 and 1908. The need in the churches was not deemed sufficient for this. And so the decision was taken to enforce the decision of 1908 and 1914. Those students who have permission to speak an edifying word will be allowed to run their term, but no students will be granted such permission.

It remains to be seen whether this decision will be received by the churches. If 1951 and 1961 are anything to go by, there will probably be appeals of some sort at the next synod.

Conclusion

It is quite clear that the discussion within the Dutch Liberated churches has rarely centred on the principal reasons for and against theological students leading the worship service. All the decisions, both those in favour and against, have been taken on practical grounds only. This is quite clear in the grounds for the most recent decision, where it is stated: "the churches . . . always granted consent to speak on the basis of the need of the churches and not on the basis of the eventual benefit of consent to speak for the student."¹²

Next time we hope to review the Canadian history and look at the grounds for and against the practice of speaking an edifying word. We also

hope to draw some conclusions about the practice.

¹My thanks to Drs. Hagens who procured a copy of this decision and related material for me.

²"Dat studenten uit de aard der zaak niet de dienst van het Woord kunnen of mogen uitoefenen." (Acts, 1896; art. 134 - to save footnoting space I have abbreviated the references to the Acts. Unless otherwise noted, the acts are those of the GKN before 1944 and the GKN[V] after 1944).

³"Het besluit van de Generale Synode van 1908 betreffende het optreden van studenten voor de gemeente tot de volgende Synode buiten werking te stellen en bij het praeparatoir examen van den candidaat een schriftelijke verklaring te vragen, dat hij zich gehouden heeft aan de desbetreffende regeling van de Generale Synode van 1946." (Acts, 1946, art. 37). Dr. Faber informed me that as a result of the high vacancy rate he was granted permission to speak an edifying word before he had even attended a lecture at Kampen.

⁴Acts, 1951, art. 70, 173.

⁵Acts, 1952/3, art. 87, 97, 99.

⁶Acts, 1955, art. 26, 32.

⁷Acts, 1958/9, art. 30.

⁸Acts, 1961, art. 65, 66.

⁹Acts, 1964/5, art. 171.

¹⁰Acts, 1967, art. 37; 1969/70, art. 45; 1975, art. 62; 1978, art. 109; 1981, art. 99; 1984/5, art. 63; 1987, art. 83; 1990, art. 75; 1993, art. 45.

¹¹I hope to come back to this in a following article.

¹²de kerken . . . kenden het spreekconsent steeds toe op grond van de nood van de



DECLINED to Orangeville, ON

Rev. J. Moesker

of Cloverdale, BC

* * *

DECLINED to Ancaster, ON

Rev. W.M. Wielenga

of Lynden WA, USA

* * *

DECLINED to Coaldale, AB

Rev. W. Huizinga

of Armadale, W. Australia

kerken en niet op grond van het eventuele nut van het spreekconsent voor studenten." Agenda item 2.11, Decision 2, Ground 2.

Karlo Janssen is a fourth year student at the Theological College, originating from the Free Reformed Church of Australia at Bedforddale. He has intentions to pursue his studies at Kampen in the field of Church Polity.

Report of the Committee for Contact with the OPC

Introduction

Synod Abbotsford 1995 decided to continue the Committee for Contact with the OPC and instructed this Committee, among other things, to serve the churches with regular reports of their work.¹ Before the Committee could report, however, it first needed to have something to report on, which took longer than expected.

There had been some correspondence, but a meeting between the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the OPC and our Committee did not take place until October, 1996. We are grateful to the Lord that

we could have a frank discussion at this meeting and come to an encouraging conclusion. We want to use this opportunity to report on it.

Mandate

Two issues formed an important obstacle for the OPC and our churches to come to ecclesiastical fellowship: fencing of the Lord's Table and confessional membership. Synod Abbotsford mandated our committee to use a statement of Synod Lincoln 1992 as a guideline to arrive at an agreement on these issues. This statement deals with both outstanding issues. Concerning the fencing of the Lord's Table it said:

It appears, in view of the OPC's ongoing internal deliberation that there is still reason to continue the discussion on this point. It is hoped that in time the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches may come to a common understanding and unified practice regarding the supervision of the Lord's Table. This is not to say that an identical practice is required with respect to the supervision of the Lord's Table to come to ecclesiastical fellowship. It should be agreed, however, that a general verbal warning alone is insufficient and that a profession of the Reformed faith is required in

the presence of the supervising elders from the guests wishing to attend the Lord's Supper.

With respect to confessional membership, Synod Lincoln noted:

The different situations in the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches must be taken into account as resulting in varying practices. It should be agreed, however, by the Canadian Reformed Churches and the OPC, that all who profess their faith accept the doctrine of God's Word as summarized in the confessions (standards) of the churches. This means that all members are bound by the Word of God in the unity of faith as confessed in the accepted standards.²

The mandate of Synod 1995 pointed in a positive direction: our committee should seek to come to an agreement with the OPC. What could be the basis of such an agreement? The Committee thought it would be best first to look at available material before making something new ourselves. The celebration of the Lord's Supper had been discussed in the context of the ICRC. It was dealt with in the Report of the Committee on Theological Affirmation. The other issue, confessional membership, was discussed in Prof. J. Kamphuis' paper on 'Church and Toleration' for the same conference.³ Rev. G.I. Williamson had expressed agreement with Kamphuis' view.⁴

Our committee, after having studied these views, presented a proposal to the committee of the OPC to see whether they could agree with two statements on the outstanding issues.

Concerning fencing the Lord's Table the following statement was proposed:

The churches of the Reformation confess that the Lord's Supper should not be profaned (1 Cor. 11:27, see Heid. Cat. Lord's Day 30, Q&A 82; Westminster Confession, ch. 29.8). This implies that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is to be supervised. In this supervision the church exercises discipline and manifests itself as true church. This supervision is to be applied to the members of the local church as well as to the guests. The eldership has a responsibility in supervising the admission to the Lord's Supper.

Our proposal concerning Confessional Membership was:

God's Unchanging Word

For feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the word of God,
Naught else is worth believing.
Though all my heart should feel condemned
For want of some sweet token,
There is One greater than my heart
Whose word cannot be broken.
I'll trust in God's unchanging word
Till soul and body sever;
For, though all things shall pass away,
His word shall stand forever.

- Martin Luther

The churches of the Reformation believe that they have to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3) and are called to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned (Rom. 16:17). Anyone who answers the membership vows in the affirmative is bound to receive and adhere to the doctrine of the Bible. The patristic church has summarized this teaching in the Apostles' Creed and the churches of the Reformation have elaborated on this in their confessions. Every confessing member is bound to this doctrine and must be willing to be instructed in it.

In addition, it was recognized that there are differences in confession and church polity. The discussion about such issues could continue within the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship.

The response

The Committee of the OPC responded very positively. They found the approach constructive, and they were in full agreement with the proposals on the two outstanding issues. The way was now open to meet with this committee to discuss how to proceed from here.

This meeting took place in October 1996, at the offices of the OPC in Philadelphia. The discussion took place in an open atmosphere. Both sides emphasized that these statements could form the basis for a sister church relationship. The General Assembly of the OPC and our Synod, however, have to make the final decisions. It was agreed that both the OPC and the Canadian

Reformed Churches would follow their own practice within the bounds as expressed in the statements. For example, a local Canadian Reformed Church will continue to use the rule of art. 61 of the Church Order also with respect to members of the OPC.

Another point of discussion was the relationship with the CRC. The OPC suspended the relationship with the CRC. The General Assembly of the OPC decided to terminate this relationship if no change would take place by 1997, but the Synod of the CRC declared itself open to discuss the issues with the OPC. The OPC wants to use this last opportunity to call the CRC back from their course.

At the same meeting, our rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship were discussed. The brothers of the OPC declared they had no problem that the relationship should be determined by these rules.

Our committee is very thankful for this outcome of our discussions and is preparing a report to Synod 1998. May the Lord bless us in this final stage toward entering into full sister church relationship with the OPC.

¹See *Acts General Synod Abbotsford, BC 1995 of the Canadian Reformed Churches* (Winnipeg: Premier Printing, 1995) p. 75.

²See *Acts General Synod Lincoln, ON 1992* (Winnipeg: Premier Printing, 1992) p. 50.

³*Proceedings of The International Conference of Reformed Churches, Zwolle, The Netherlands, 1993* (Neerlandia: Inheritance, 1993) 80f; 213ff.

⁴See his 'Editorial' in *Ordained Servant*, vol. 3, nr. 1

On behalf of the Committee,
N.H. Gootjes, secretary



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

“. . . so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4b

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On the last days of this month, the Lord willing, we will celebrate Good Friday and Easter. We will remember that the Lord Jesus died on the cross and that He rose from the grave on the third day. We know that very well, for we hear it every year. But what does it mean for us?

At Christmas we remember that Christ was born. He came to earth in order to die for our sins. And He did – we remember that on Good Friday. But, was it not enough that the Lord died for us? Why did He need to rise on the third day?

Before the fall into sin, there was no death. The Lord had created man to live, and to serve Him. Sin destroyed the beautiful world, and the punishment for sin was death. From then on, everybody had to die.

But our merciful Lord did not just punish. In His love He gave, besides the punishment, also a promise. That was the promise of Life! Everyone who would serve the Lord, would be saved from death through the work of the promised Saviour. In the place of us sinners, God's Son, our Saviour, would be punished with death. Until God's saving plan is completely fulfilled, we still have to die, but it is not eternal death. Our death will only be a passing from life on earth into eternal life with God, the Father.

Even though we know that we do not have to be afraid of death because it will not separate us from the Lord, it still scares us. We were not made to die, but the Lord made us to live. Satan brought death into the world, and originally death was the power of Satan. That is a scary thing! The result is that we will always have a fear of death.

But the only One Who had to be scared to die was Jesus. For the Lord gave Him up to die in our place. There was a war between God and Satan, and with death Satan tried to get his grip on us. That was right, because we deserved to die that death. Then the Lord gave up His Son to die. But He was without sin. He was on God's side in that war. He could not get into the grip of Satan. When the Son of God died, Satan lost his power over us.

But dying was not enough, for death belonged to Satan. The Lord had to show that His Son was without sin, and holy. Satan could not have the victory! That is why Jesus had to rise out of the grave. He had to show to all the world that His death was not the same as other people's death. His death was a victory. He Himself came out of the grave. He, Who was buried in a sealed grave, got up, and walked out of the grave! He had died, in our place. And Satan had lost the battle. That is what it meant.

After Jesus' resurrection many years have passed, and very many people have died. The promise of eternal life is there for us, but our life is not always easy. Some people have to suffer very much before they die, and that is an awful thing. When one of our loved ones dies, it causes

much grief and misery. There are so many times that God's promises seem so far away.

As long as we live that will always be the case. The reason is, that Satan still has some power, and that the consequences of sin are still here. We have to fight against sin, and against Satan's attempts to get us in his power. But the good news is, that Jesus our Lord, already conquered Satan for us. We do not have to fight that battle on our own, we just have to rely on our Saviour. When we live closely to Him, and pray to Him for help, He hears us. He will comfort us, He will strengthen us when we have to suffer. He will be there even in the last moments of our lives. He will help us through the difficult times of pain and suffering. In all that He is preparing us for our life with Him. That life is there for us, because Jesus Christ has opened the way. He died for our sins and restored our relationship with our Father. So we can go to Him now, and we will be with Him for ever. When our Lord comes back on the last day, He will open all the graves. We will all receive new bodies, perfect bodies. There will be no fears, no suffering, no death. There will be life everlasting and a happiness will be there that we cannot even try to describe.

Hear in the dwelling of the righteous

Their joyful songs of victory:

“The Lord's right hand is high exalted,

The Lord's right hand does valiantly!”

I shall not die, but live, and praise Him;

In song His deeds my theme shall be.

Although the Lord has sorely chastened,

He has from death delivered me.

Psalms 118:4

Birthdays in April:

2: Derek Kok

Spruce Dale, 160 Fraser Street, Strathroy, ON N7G 2C4

19: Marinus Foekens' new address is, 290 Forest Street, Apt. #4, Chatham, ON N7L 2A9. Unfortunately we were not aware of his change of address last year, and some mail was returned to the senders. Please let me know when there is a change in the address, even if it is only an area code!

23: Arlene DeWit

c/o P. DeWit, Barnston Island, Surrey, BC V3T 4W2

I wish you a happy birthday!

Wilma Van Drongelen would like to say thank you for all the cards she received for her birthday in November. She appreciated all the best wishes she received.

We all like hearing once in a while that our cards reach their destination. Thank you for the letter.

Until next month,

Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please mail, e-mail or fax letters for publication to the editorial address.
They should be 300 words or less. Those published may be edited for style or length.

Dear Editor:

I trust that the thoughts and views expressed by Peter Scholtens in his letter to the editor are not representative of how most of us feel about the Theological College in Hamilton. I am therefore almost content to leave the matter be. I could not however let the attack on Rev. Geertsema's integrity go unchallenged. Br. Scholtens suggests that Rev. Geertsema's motivation for his article about the great need for our Theological College is out of nothing more than self interest – to keep his job. What a sad and short sighted deduction.

I'm quite sure that Rev. Geertsema is not concerned about his job as such. After all, he isn't that far off from retirement. Furthermore, it is clear from his article that he trusts in the Lord "to whom money is never a problem." In his response to Scholtens, Rev. Geertsema allows in characteristic humility that he may not have been quite clear enough. I cannot disagree more. The problem seems to be that br. Scholtens is not seeing clearly.

In his article Rev. Geertsema opens up for us the world wide vista of the ripe grain fields that are ready for the harvest. Jesus said that the labourers are few in number. How could anyone then suggest that we suspend the training of labourers for this plentiful harvest? I do not think it wrong to suggest that Rev. Geertsema's only motivation is the universal church gathering work of our Lord Jesus Christ and his only concern about his job is that in it he may be a worthy servant of his Saviour. I hope br. Scholtens will come to see this clearly.

L. Oosterhoff
Ancaster, ON

Dear Editor:

Re: Reference to presents being a big part of Christmas (Our Little Magazine, Vol. 45, Year End Issue, page 595)

I do not agree with giving presents on Christmas, because Christmas is a

day for us to set aside to remember the birth of Christ, the day that led to our salvation! This was not a day to fulfill our needs of earthly possessions. God has always been so very good to us, and I don't think it's right to thank Him for all these blessings by giving presents to others and accepting presents from them. These presents do not at all compare to the Gift above all! When gifts are given on Christmas, the true meaning has been forgotten, and we (as in those who agree with presents on Christmas) participate in the worldly celebration of Christmas. We must be in the world but not of the world.

When the wise men had come to see Jesus, they gave Him gifts. These gifts were given directly to Jesus. It does not say that they gave gifts to Mary and Joseph; nor does it say that Mary and Joseph gave gifts to the wise men. Matthew 2:11 says that the wise men fell down and worshipped Him "... and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts"

Just because Christ is no longer on earth, does that mean we have the right to give others gifts? No, for we cannot take Christ's place, the one who deserves everything we can give (which is not even near to what He deserves). We must remember that trying our best to heed His will, praying to Him, reading His Word, and participating in classes, Bible study, catechism and confession classes, are all gifts to God and His Son. We must have no desire to open earthly gifts on Christmas, the day we thank God for His valuable and everlasting Gift which He has bestowed on us.

Yours in Christ,
Lisa Burger,
age 17

Dear Editor:

Re articles by Rev. Boersma ("Theonomy and Infant Baptism") and Rev. Ludwig ("By Virtue of the Covenant"), Clarion, Jan. 24, 1997.

Both Rev. Boersma and Rev. Ludwig have forgotten to mention Luke

1:15 where we read how an infant is baptized in the Holy Spirit. One receiving the Holy Spirit baptism could also receive water baptism as God shows Peter in Acts 10:47.

Whereas in the OT, only those in the office of Prophet, etc., received it, in the NT after Pentecost day, all the believers and all their children could receive it.

Lord's Day 27 also uses Luke 1:15 to defend infant baptism.

Yours in Christ,
J. Vandenberg
London, ON

Editor's comment – Luke 1:15, the promise that John will be filled with the Holy Spirit, refers to a very specific situation. We cannot, from that verse, make a general statement about baptism in the Holy Spirit. Also, Luke 1:15 is not given as a proof text in our adopted version of the catechism, Lord's Day 27 (Book of Praise).

Dear Editor:

I write in response to the press review by J. De Jong in your February 7 issue. He quotes extensively from a commentary by Dr. Robert Godfrey, reflecting mainly on the presentation of Prof. Klaas Runia at the Theology Conference of the Reformed Ecumenical Council in June 1996.

I believe Prof. Runia's own stance was much more tentative than was ascribed to him by Dr. Godfrey. The quote in the review comes at the end of a long speech in which Runia thoroughly analyzed and rejected the views of the inclusivists. He finally concluded that there was an area of judgment where we should not go. Let me give you briefly his own answer to the question he posed:

Does this mean that there is no truth in all the other religions and that all the adherents of the other religions will be lost for ever? Some of the 'exclusivists' do take this position. . . . When in 1968 I attended the World Congress on Evangelism in Singapore, we had a special conference

hymn that spoke of the billions that were lost. I believe such statements go beyond what we are allowed to say. In his *Reformed Dogmatics* Herman Bavinck rightly wrote: "With regard to the salvation of the heathen and of children dying in infancy, we can, on the basis of Scripture, only refrain from a definite judgment, in either a positive or a negative sense."

Runia then reviews a few statements of such exclusivists as J.H. Bavinck, Hendrik Kraemer, and J. Verkuyl. Verkuyl, for whom Jesus Christ was "unique, incomparable, irreplaceable and decisive for all ages and peoples," also

went "rather far in his appreciation of what he finds in [other religions]."

But Runia would not go so far as Verkuyl who thought there were no human beings who have not been touched somehow by the hand of Christ. If any are saved, it will be only "because the spirit of Christ was active in their lives and because by his work the secret of Christ became manifest to and in them, too."

May I suggest your readers consult the whole of Runia's paper, available in the REC's *Theological Forum* (Nov. 1996)? They may find themselves agreeing with our President Henk De Waard that his views were "responsible."

I also remind your readers that institutions such as the Reformed Ecu-
menical Council are complex and di-
verse. Dr. Godfrey disagrees with
Professor Runia's analysis, but I think he
might find more agreement with the
REC testimony on "The Unique Person
and Work of Christ," adopted at the
same meeting where Runia spoke.
While Runia's paper was a valuable op-
portunity for reflection and analysis,
this testimony is the more precise posi-
tion actually adopted by official dele-
gates to our Assembly.

Yours in Christ,
Richard L. van Houten
General Secretary 

PRESS RELEASE



Classis Ontario South, held at Ancaster, February 18, 1997.

1. Opening

On behalf of the convening church at Smithville, Rev. J. de Gelder calls the meeting to order. He requests the delegates to sing Hymn 21:1 and 7, reads Isaiah 52:13-53: 12, and leads in prayer.

In his welcome address he mentions the following. Rev. J. van Vliet is present for the first time at Classis as delegate of the church at Lincoln. The church at Ancaster has extended a call to the Rev. W. Wielenga of Lynden, Washington. A special welcome is extended to Candidate Th. Lodder who is present for his Preparatory Examination. Also various guests are welcomed.

2. Examination of Credentials.

The credentials are examined and found to be in good order. All the churches are duly represented.

3. Constitution of Classis.

Classis is constituted. The moderator is set as follows

chairman: Rev. G. Wieske
vice-chairman: Rev. Cl. Stam
clerk: Rev. J. van Woudenberg

The chairman thanks the convening church for their work in the preparation of this Classis.

4. Adoption of the Agenda.

A few items are added to the provisional agenda:

- letter from the church at Lincoln.
- letter from the church at Ancaster.
- letter from br. J. vanderBerg (London) re the Form for the Baptism of Infants.

The agenda is then adopted.

5. Preparatory Examination of Candidate Th. Lodder.

The necessary documents are read and found to be in order. The examination may begin.

Br. Lodder presents his sermon proposal on Isaiah 53:10-12. In closed session the sermon proposal is evaluated. Classis judges this proposal to be sufficient to continue the examination.

The Rev. Agema examines in Exegesis Old Testament, Psalm 105.

The Rev. Hofford examines in Exegesis New Testament, Acts 20:7-38.

The Rev. Stam examines in Doctrine and Creeds.

In closed session this examination is discussed and evaluated. Classis decides joyfully that Candidate Th. Lodder is declared eligible for call within the Canadian/American Reformed Churches for the period of one year.

In open session br. Lodder is informed of this decision. He promises to teach only in accordance with the Word of God and the three forms of unity. The chairman offers the congratulations of Classis, requests the meeting to sing Psalm 105:1, and leads in thanksgiving. The members of Classis are given the opportunity to congratulate br. Lodder, his fiancée and family members present.

Classis adjourns for lunch.

6. Reopening.

After lunch Classis is reopened with the roll-call. The meeting is continued.

Rev. Cl. Stam is replaced by his alternate. The Press Release (Articles 1-6) is first read and approved. Rev. Agema will write the remainder of the Press Release.

7. Question Period ad Art. 44 C.O.

The chairman asks the required questions. The church at Rockway asks

advice in the matter of calling a minister. Advice is given.

8. Correspondence.

- a) A letter from the church at Lincoln in connection with the Acts of Classis November 6, 1996, Art. 7, is received with thankfulness.
- b) A letter from the church at Ancaster containing an audit report for the Fund for Needy Churches is received with thankfulness.
- c) A letter from a brother is declared inadmissible.

9. Appointments.

- a) convening church next Classis: Watford
- b) suggested officers:
Rev. D.G.J. Agema, chairman
Rev. G. Wieske, clerk
Rev. J. van Woudenberg, vice chairman
- c) date: June 11, 1997.
- d) place: Attercliffe

10. Censure ad Art. 34 C.O.

The chairman concludes with thankfulness that censure ad Art. 34 C.O. is not necessary.

11. Acts and Press Release

The Acts are read and approved. The Press Release (Articles 7-11) is read and approved.

12. Closing.

The chairman requests Classis to sing Psalm 65:1 and 3. He leads in prayer of thanksgiving and closed Classis.

For Classis,
Cl. Stam, vice-chairman e.t.



CLARION

ADVERTISEMENTS

Births

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His steadfast love endures forever.
Psalm 118:1

Thanks be to God for entrusting us with another one of His precious gifts, our son and brother

MARK ANDREW

Born December 20, 1996

A brother for *Sharon, Jessica, Jonathan, Alaina* and *Kristen*

Mark and Arlene Ludwig (nee Jansema)

RR 1, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W1

Upon Thee I have leaned from my birth; Thou art He who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of Thee.

Psalm 11:6

With great joy and thankfulness to our heavenly Father we announce that He has blessed us with a healthy son, our first child

LEVI BERT

Born December 31, 1996

John and Felicia Wierenga (nee Viersen)

Box 92, Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0

Engagements

He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:17

We thank God for the day we met.

TONJA BLOKKER and KEVIN BOS

Engaged January 31, 1997.

70 Wade Road, P.O. Box 317, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

With joyfulness to the Lord who guided our paths, we

JAMES BREDEHOF and JAN VAN DEN HOVEN

are pleased to announce our engagement.

January 29, 1997

3481-184th Street, Surrey, BC V4P 1M5

A man's mind plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps. Proverbs 16:9

With thankfulness to the Lord who has directed our steps to this day we

COLLEEN VAN DASSELAAR and ALAN VEENENDAAL

announce our engagement. We pray for God's continued guidance.

February 14, 1997

Box 831, Carman, MB R0G 0J0

Wedding

With thankfulness to the Lord, we

ALICE CHRISTINE BLOM and RONALD MARK NIENHUIS

together with our parents wish to announce our wedding. The ceremony will take place, DV, on March 21, 1997 in the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton, ON.

Rev. Cl. Stam officiating.

241 Webster Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2C 3E1

Colossians 3:17

It is with thankfulness to the Lord that we,

DANIELLE and CORNELIUS

together with our parents John and Elisabeth DeVries and Derk and Elisabeth Dewitt, may announce our marriage. The ceremony took place Friday, January 24 in the Canadian Reformed Church at Winnipeg.

610-A Leola Street, Winnipeg, MB R2C 1H7

Anniversaries

1947 – April 10 – 1997

We are thankful to the Lord, as we celebrate the Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary, of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

JOHN HIDDO HORLINGS and TEMMY HORLINGS (nee Ottens)

Edmonton, AB: Eppo Horlings

John and Jacoba Snyder

Allan, Jason and Andrea

Open House: April 12, 1997 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Providence Canadian Reformed Church, Edmonton, AB

8507-137 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5E 1Y2