



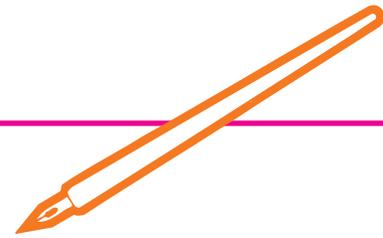
Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
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*Theological College
- a need to expand*

By G. Ph. van Popta



Turning Forty

I turned forty the other day. Yes, the big Four-Oh! I was subjected to the expected good-natured abuse from children, siblings, and parishioners past and present. (My beloved was very gracious.) By mail, fax and e-mail, various digs were dug. Someone asked whether I had picked out a bench at the mall yet. Another consoled me with the thought that I am almost eligible for pre-boarding on most major airlines. Another card first went on extensively about how mature and worthy of respect I am now that I have reached forty, only to audibly laugh me to scorn when I opened the card. The bright side of it all, I was told, is that 40 is only 28 American, and less than six in dog years. Hey, thanks!

On the morning of my birthday, I looked out the window to see forty pink flamingoes adorning the front lawn. (And, yes, I found out who had put them there.) All day long people honked their horns as they drove by. I spent the day in my study working on my sermon, labouring under the serene gaze of forty motionless pink birds. Unnerving. Someone asked me whether I'd traded my flock for another one.

In addition to the hilarity of the flock of flamingoes, I spent the day batting balloons off my desk. My children had gotten up early to stick some 80 balloons on the ceiling of my study. As they lost their charge (or whatever it is that happens to static electricity), they slowly descended on to my desk.

Okay! Everyone had their fun.

Turning forty, however, does give one pause to reflect upon the two score of years one has already been allowed to live and serve the Lord, and to think about the future. After all, like it or not, when you turn forty, you have officially hit middle age.

Age is somewhat of a relative thing. If you are five years old, someone who is thirty looks positively ancient. But once you've turned forty, thirty seems quite young. And someone who has reached the seventies or eighties can clearly see the dew dripping off the ears of a thirty-year old.

The Bible speaks here and there about age. An Israelite reached a certain level of maturity at age twenty. Numbers 1 indicates that when a man turned twenty years old, he was to be enlisted in the army. He was expected to bear the sword if need be to defend the people of God, to fight in the LORD's army.

At twenty, one also reached an age of accountability before the LORD. Numbers 14 tells the story of how Israel rebelled against the LORD in the wilderness. They did not trust that He would lead them into the Promised Land. They complained about what God had done for them. The LORD punished them by making them wander in the wilderness for forty years until every man and woman who had been

twenty years old or more on the day of the rebellion had died in the desert.

Once a Levite turned thirty years old, he acquired new responsibilities. Numbers 4 indicates that a man had to be thirty before he began service at the tabernacle. (Incidentally, he would retire from that work at age fifty.)

We also read of other men undertaking significant roles in society at age thirty. Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. The LORD called David to the throne of Israel when David was thirty years old. The Lord Jesus Christ was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.

Both Isaac and Esau were forty years old when they married. Caleb was forty when he entered the Promised Land as a spy. The lame man whom Peter healed in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth was over forty years old. He got a new lease on life although he was middle aged. It reminds me of a man I once met who had been baptized on his fortieth birthday and who said: "See, it's true; life does begin at forty."

The Bible has quite a lot to say about age – youth, middle age, military age, age of accountability. It also has something to say about old age. Psalm 90 comes to mind. Moses the man of God said: "The length of our days is seventy years – or eighty, if we have the strength."

In the sovereign providence of God, some die young while others live well beyond eighty years. However, we are mortal. We are born, we live, we die. We live some three score and ten or, by reason of strength, four score – and then we die.

However, we do not just die. As the Apostle Paul taught us in his letter to the Philippians 1:22-23, we go to be with Christ! Paul wrote there about how he was torn between living, which for him was Christ, or dying, which was gain. It was gain because as a believer he knew that he would, upon death, continue to live – to live in the presence of Christ.

Someone who has lived many years and who senses that he is living the final years or days has a great prospect – to be with Christ! That means that someone who has just turned forty years old is about half-way there, if the normal course of events prevail. This is not bad. To be half-way to Paradise is not bad!

Turning forty years old is good. We are headed towards the New Jerusalem. Every year we are a little closer. No need for mid-life crisis. Only cause for joy that I'm a year closer now than when I was thirty-nine.

Come, fellow-pilgrims, heads up. Together on the way we are – as a Dutch colleague wrote, "*Samen op weg*" – headed for the Promised Land!



Gethsemane

*Beyond where Cedron's waters flow,
Behold the suffering Saviour go
To sad Gethsemane;
His countenance is all divine,
Yet grief appears in every line.*

*He bows beneath the sins of men;
He cries to God, and cries again,
In sad Gethsemane;
He lifts His mournful eyes above:
"My Father, can this cup remove?"*

*With gentle resignation still
He yielded to his Father's will,
In sad Gethsemane;
"Behold me here, thine only Son,
And, Father, let thy will be done."*

*The Father heard; and angels there
Sustained the son of God in prayer,
In sad Gethsemane;
He drank the dreadful cup of pain,
Then rose to life and joy again.*

*When storms of sorrow round us sweep,
And scenes of anguish make us weep,
To sad Gethsemane
We'll look, and see the Saviour there,
And humbly bow like him in prayer.*

1832

Samuel Francis Smith

What's inside?

The various committees appointed by the last General Synod have been very busy the past while. They've met, met again – dealt with correspondence, proposals, ideas, opinions, problems – and met yet once more. The reports have been sent to the convening church of the General Synod 1998 which, in turn, has sent them out to delegates and consistories. The committees were so kind as to give the readers of *Clarion* a sneak preview. In the last issue we began publishing condensed versions of the reports. Here we publish two more. You will find summaries of the reports from the Committee for Contact with *l'Église Réformée du Québec* and the Board of Governors of the Theological College.

We sincerely hope these articles will be informative to you. We also hope it will help you to focus your prayers for Synod before and during the time it meets. May God grant the sixteen delegates and their alternates clarity of insight, true wisdom, and a rich measure of the Holy Spirit as they prepare for a grueling couple of weeks in Fergus.

You will also find some news about Reformed churches in Ukraine, Mexico and Taber and some history about the church in Hamilton.

And thus we can see something again of the work the Lord Jesus Christ is doing near by and far away. All praise to Him!

GvP



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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: C. Van Dam
Coeditors: R. Aasman, J. De Jong, J. Geertsema,
N.H. Gootjes, G.Ph. van Popta

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION
46 Sulphur Springs Road, Ancaster, ON L9G 1L8
Fax: (905) 304-4951
E-Mail: clarion@compuserve.com

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5
Phone: (204) 663-9000 Fax: (204) 663-9202
Email: premier@premier.mb.ca
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By J. Ludwig

Discipleship: Self Denial

And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Luke 9:58

Last time we focused on the element of self-denial contained in the words of the scribe who said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go" (Luke 9:57). Now I'd like to draw your attention to what Christ says to this eager follower. Jesus says to him, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Would you have expected an answer like that from the Saviour? I certainly didn't. I thought that Christ would have been ecstatic to hear such a confession, that he would have said, "Excellent! Come with me, Mr. Scribe. I can use people with your dedication and enthusiasm in my service. Praise God who has worked this in you!" But he didn't. Instead Christ talks about himself. Notice, however, that Christ speaks no rebuke. He does not condemn or reject the devotion that is offered. Instead he describes what disciples can expect when he is their leader. His situation is worse than that of the beasts: "The foxes have holes," he says.

Foxes, then as now, were destructive creatures, hated and hunted by farmers. Not only because they killed livestock, but even more so because they made a mess of vineyards with their underground dens and burrows. These animals would have been constantly shooed away and hunted. Nevertheless, even the foxes have holes. They have a fixed place to which they can return each day, where they can hide in safety and escape the reach of their pursuers. "And the birds, they have nests," says Jesus. When tired of flying, or when battered by wind and storm they have a warm, safe place where they can go. A dwelling place of their own. But the Son of Man, He has no place to lay His head.

Christ gives this man a contrast – a sharp contrast between the animals and himself. The Son of Man, the one to whom the Father would give dominion and power and glory, the one through whom all things were made, He has nothing! Even the most hated animals (foxes) and most carefree creatures (birds) have more than He. He has no

safe place that He can call his own. The Son of Man: Jesus, of no fixed address.

Why does our Lord give this peculiar answer to the well-meant declaration of the scribe? Does He want to scare him off? Paint the picture of discipleship so black that the man changes his mind about following Christ? Of course not. Christ came to call all men to himself. Only, He wants to ensure that we know exactly what we're getting into. Just as Christ must go through suffering to glory, so also His disciples. He does not want them to be bitterly disillusioned when the world which hated Him, hates them. Disciples who enlist in Christ's army, ignorant of the hard marching and the constant fighting, will very soon desert. What will the disciples do once their Master is arrested, condemned, and crucified? When He hangs there naked and helpless, the subject of scorn and derision, will they still say, "Lord, I will follow you wherever you go?" Will they still deny themselves and remain committed to His cause and obedient to His will? Association with Jesus will not mean power, as the disciples envisioned, but sharing in Jesus' suffering, rejection and alienation. With His response Christ gives all who want to follow Him a dose of sober realism. It is a warning not to decide in haste or to make a superficial commitment. You cannot reckon too lightly with the hindrances to discipleship.

You may be thinking, "But those hindrances aren't present in our country. We don't have to reckon with the difficulty of self-denial like the persecuted Christians in Muslim or Communist countries!" Let us not be too quick with such an assessment. Here in Canada it is difficult, but in a different way. Peace, prosperity, freedom of religion – these are all gifts of God to His church. But if we begin to focus on the gifts instead of the Giver we slowly but surely follow the world, not Christ. We no longer see His atoning death as the cause of our blessings, and then everything falls apart. Our strength, our striving takes centre stage. And that is the opposite of denying oneself!

Yes, Jesus is exalted today. He no longer wanders from place to place in humiliation upon this earth. He has a permanent dwelling place of glory and honour. He is seated on the throne in His Father's mansion. He rules the nations with a rod of iron. He laughs at their frantic efforts to oppose Him and the coming of His kingdom. Nevertheless, He still demands of us that we walk by faith, not by sight. Here on earth His glory is not fully and publicly revealed. The position and influence of His church is diminishing rapidly.

What happened to the scribe after hearing Christ's response? Scripture doesn't tell us. The question is: What have you done and what are you doing each day again, to deny yourself and follow Christ? That question is not meant to put all the emphasis on our ability and strength to deny ourselves. We cannot do it on our own. It is impossible for us to hand over our whole self – all our wishes and precautions and pretensions – to Christ. A thistle cannot produce figs. We need His Word and Spirit. By means of His Word and the proclamation He shows us what it means to be His disciples. And by the power of His Spirit He leads and preserves us in that discipleship. Through the Word and the Spirit, we are able to say, "Lord, I will follow you wherever you go." Following Christ is not easy. But it is comforting! In health and sickness, in riches and poverty, in joy and sorrow, in youth and in old age, in every circumstance, we may cherish the reality which was David's as well, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

Listen to the voice of that Shepherd and you will stay on the path of eternal life. Guaranteed. Don't go by your gut feelings. Don't rely on your good intentions. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. Instead lean on Him who says, "Follow me." He who calls you will also give you the willingness, the strength and the perseverance to follow.

Rev. J. Ludwig is the minister of Pilgrim Canadian Reformed Church in London Ontario.



The Committee for Contact with l'Église Réformée du Québec¹

By J.L. van Popta

l'ERQ is a small federation of churches which is the result of various Presbyterian and Reformed mission projects to the French speaking people of Quebec. Ten years ago these churches and "mission posts" organized into a federation under a newly drafted church order which brought the Presbyterian and Reformed strands together. There are six congregations with a total of about 350 members among them.

The committee examined the historical position of the CDNRCs with respect to the Westminster Standards.² Since the churches have judged that the Westminster Standards in themselves are not a barrier to ecclesiastical fellowship,³ the committee examined where there might be deviation from or changes to the Westminster Standards and evaluated these. The committee used the Church Order and Discipline (ODE) of l'ERQ. It also evaluated differences in worship, discussing with the ERQ Committee for Inter-Church Relations [CICR] the order of worship in various congregations in Quebec as well as the liturgical forms. It also examined the possibility of church union.

Differences in Confessions, Polity and Worship

Confessions

Besides recognizing the three great ecumenical creeds, l'ERQ has officially adopted the Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Confession of Faith as confessional statements. All office bearers must subscribe to these confessions. l'ERQ has added a *Preamble* to the Westminster Confession of Faith in which it qualifies some of the statements concerning church and state, marriage, the Lord's Day, and some of the strong "hurting expressions" against the Roman Catholic Church.

Noting that as early as Synod 1965⁴ the churches have considered and judged that a church federation maintaining Presbyterian church govern-

ment and subscribing to and upholding the Westminster Standards would be a product of the Calvinist Reformation and a true church of the Lord, the committee only evaluated the Westminster Confession with reference to *The Preamble*. When the committee evaluated the disclaimers as presented in *The Preamble* it found nothing that it would consider to be a matter for further discussion.

The Preamble also clearly shows that l'ERQ wants her adopted confessional standards to function in the life of the churches and its members. The preamble allows for freedom of conscience on certain matters. By inference then, the confessions are binding on all other matters. The care in which the contents are examined for doctrinal fidelity demonstrates that subscription to the Confessions is taken seriously.

Church Polity

l'ERQ has a church order based on Biblical principles called *Ordre et Discipline Ecclesiastiques de l'Église Réformée du Québec* [ODE]. The committee concludes that it reflects a deep reverence for the role of the Word of God in prescribing church government.

Worship

As in the CDNRCs, there is no officially adopted order of worship in l'ERQ. The worship service varies from one congregation to another, at the discretion of the pastor and/or elders. The service, however, is seen as a covenant celebration where God gathers His people and speaks to them by His Word and its proclamation.

Sacraments

The Lord's Supper is administered once a month in most congregations. After the meaning of Lord's Supper is explained, there is a warning and an invitation before the partaking of the elements. The invitation is addressed to all who repent and believe in the

Gospel of salvation, and who are engrafted into Christ by faith and live accordingly. The Lord's Table, by our understanding, therefore, might be considered to be a rather "open" table. Though the Table is "open" to guests, the pastors do know the people who come to the table because the communities are so small and only those who have been reached by the evangelism and missionary efforts attend the services. The youth are admitted to the table by way of a profession of faith. Adults (members or non-members) who openly deny the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith or who live in gross sin are not admitted to the table.

When asked about admission to the Lord's Table CICR noted that there was a growing awareness that the councils needed to "fence the table" more closely. The CICR indicated a willingness to discuss this within the context of ecclesiastical fellowship. The committee and the CICR saw that ecclesiastical fellowship would benefit discussions about matters of doctrine and praxis. Though this is an important issue, it should not cloud the discussions unnecessarily, nor should this become a barrier to ecclesiastical fellowship.

Baptism is administered whenever needed, to the children of the members or to adult believers never baptized before.

Profession of Faith

Before someone can profess his faith, he must follow a course in which he receives instruction in the Christian faith and Reformed doctrine as well as in the government and practices of the church. The new members are admitted on the basis of a Trinitarian profession of Faith (The Apostles' Creed) and a good Christian life. Thorough knowledge of the Reformed doctrine is not demanded before the profession of faith of new members, though they must display a teachable spirit.

Standardized Liturgical Forms

The committee discussed extensively the lack of standard adopted liturgical forms within the various churches. The ministers of the churches (as well as the congregations) come from three or four ecclesiastical backgrounds and so have their own histories and traditions. This has, as result, some lack of uniformity of practice. Some of the ministers have worked as missionaries for decades and various congregations existed independently for years prior to the birth of l'ERQ. The lack of uniformity may look chaotic to us, but arises out of historical realities. The churches that joined l'ERQ found a *unity of faith* which bound them together. Their lack of *uniformity in practice* seemed minor to them in their battle against the liberalization in their mother churches. Within the framework of ecclesiastical fellowship the CDNRCs could help l'ERQ develop and adopt standardized forms.

The discussions with the CNDR committee have partially been the cause for the Synod of the ERQ to appoint their Church Order Committee to prepare draft standard liturgical forms for use in the churches. At present (Oct. 1997) draft versions of forms for Baptism, for Public Profession of Faith and for Lord's Supper have been prepared for evaluation in the churches. Forms for ordination are planned. It will take several years, however, for l'ERQ to come to final versions of these documents as the members of the churches and the office-bearers use and evaluate them.

Though the use of standard liturgical forms is relatively important, the lack of such forms should not be considered to be an insurmountable barrier to ecclesiastical fellowship. The committee recommends that the synod recognize that the move toward standardized liturgical forms underlines the commitment of l'ERQ to maintaining a Reformed praxis which is in line with their Reformed confession.

Though the life in the churches as well as the "look and feel" of the services may be different in the eyes of the CDNRCs, there is evidence of a deep love for the Lord and for Scripture, as well as for "the Reformed way" in l'ERQ. The commitment of these young churches who are attempting to mount a faithful Reformed witness in a secularized Roman Catholic culture and world must be acknowledged. Their desire for fellowship with the CDNRCs only underlines this.

Relations with other Churches

At present l'ERQ has no official relationships with any other church federations. They have, however, entered into conversation with the URCNA.

Over the years one of the "mother" churches, the Presbyterian Church of Canada, has rejected l'ERQ and cut official ties with it. The Presbyterian Church of Canada could not agree to the ODE which barred women from the ruling and teaching offices and never entered into formal relations with l'ERQ after its inception in 1988.

The Christian Reformed Church Home Missions Board continues to fulfill its financial commitment to l'ERQ. This funding is being withdrawn, however. This withdrawal of funding is according to the agreements made with l'ERQ and will cease in the coming year. There is no ecclesiastical fellowship or other official relationship between the assemblies of l'ERQ and the Christian Reformed Church. In fact, l'ERQ Synod, which convened on September 12 & 13, 1997, dealt with a request from the CRC asking l'ERQ to enter into formal sister church relations. l'ERQ synod rejected this request.

The Mission to North America [MNA] of the Presbyterian Church of America and l'ERQ have a "ministry partnership agreement." This agreement allows the PCA missionaries working in Quebec to raise funds privately in the PCA congregations.

We can see then that though these churches have relationships with some churches these relationships are of a different character from ecclesiastical fellowship. l'ERQ jealously guards itself from what it would consider to be potential unreformed influences. Any ministers who would come to work within l'ERQ would need to sustain a full peremptory exam.

Federational Unity

The committee was also to investigate whether it is possible to have our two churches as part of the same federation. The committee considered two possibilities: a "French classis" and "full integration." Neither of these models seemed to be workable. The vast majority of the members of l'ERQ are unilingually French and the vast majority of CDNRC members are unilingually English. This in itself would cause immense logistical problems in translation and communication. As well, Synod 1992 observed concerning the Free Church of Scotland congregations

in Canada that "one must be realistic enough to realize that it is not an easy matter to bring together immigrant churches from two different cultures and with two different ecclesiastical traditions." Synod agreed that merger between the four or five Free Church congregations in English speaking Canada and the CDNRCs would require "careful planning and sensitive implementation." How much more any merger between two church federations, one immigrant, one not; both unilingual, one English, one French; one with the Forms of Unity, one with the WCF; one with a Presbyterian form of government, one with a continental form. Full integration would be unworkable.

When the committee presented l'ERQ committee with the "refugee model" of the 17th century where French and English refugees found a place within the Dutch Reformed churches our French brothers answered, "We are not refugees!"

The committee cannot recommend that church union or merger would be beneficial or advisable. As well, the CICR would strongly recommend against such a model to their Synod. It is completely unacceptable to these churches.

l'ERQ presents the gospel of Jesus Christ to French-Canadians within a French church with its roots in the great Reformation of the 16th Century. For the first time in Canadian history, it is now possible to be both Francophone and Reformed. This reality was and is one of the driving forces to maintaining an *independent* French speaking Reformed church. In its discussions with CICR the committee has been sensitive to this reality. It will not do to insist that since we are in the same country we must organize and federate under the same ecclesiastical roof. Both l'ERQ and the CDNRCs recognize that the church of Jesus Christ is not "confined or limited to one particular place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed throughout the entire world (Belgic Confession 27)." We also need to be sensitive to the fact that language, culture, history, confession, and church order as well as praxis can make complete federative unity impractical. This is not advocating Kuyperian pluriformity nor is it a concession to a doctrine of more or less true churches. Rather this is a recognition that Christ Jesus gathers His church by His Spirit and Word throughout the world and in various ways. There must be an "eye for the work of the Lord in history."⁵

Ecclesiastical Fellowship

L'ERQ Synod convened in Sept. 1997. The CICR presented reports and recommendations to this Synod concerning Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship and concerning fellowship with the CDNRCs. The CICR recommended that the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (1992) as adopted by the CDNRCs be adopted by L'ERQ. This was done after the addition of one additional rule concerning the missionary mandate of Christ's church and with some other small changes. These do not change the thrust, content or meaning of the Rules and so ecclesiastical fellowship could be established under them.

Mutual benefits

With ongoing financial assistance they could continue to focus on the important work of spreading the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in their communities. The CDNRCs would benefit by drawing on L'ERQ's expertise in modern urban Reformed missions. We could help them in developing standard liturgical forms. L'ERQ would very much like us to be their partners in mission work in Quebec. Only within the framework of ecclesiastical fellowship could this be implemented in an orderly way. Already many of our churches are supporting the work in Quebec. The financial need will be ongoing.

Conclusion

The committee believes that the Lord has placed L'ERQ on the path of

the CDNRCs. They have called out, "Come on over and help us." L'ERQ needs spiritual and financial help and support. She desires to remain true to her French Reformed roots and is asking the CDNRCs to assist her in this. The committee has studied the history and background of L'ERQ, her doctrinal standards and their maintenance, her church government and its practice, as well as the style of worship in the congregations. It is apparent from these evaluations that L'ERQ is a faithful and true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can see that the Lord Jesus Christ gathers, defends and preserves His church also in Quebec.

Recommendations⁶

The committee recommends that Synod 1998:

- A. accept the request of *l'église réformée du Québec*, made to Synod '95, and reaffirmed at their Synod of Sept. 12/13, 1997, to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship and to do so under their adopted *Rules (1997)*.
- B. appoint a Committee for Contact with *l'église réformée du Québec* with the following mandate:
 1. to respond if specific requests for assistance and advice are made in matters of confession, church polity and worship;
 2. to initiate and continue discussions with L'ERQ CICR concerning
 - a. the supervision of the Lord's table with a view to admitting

- only professing members of the church to the table;
 - b. the need for professing members to express agreement with the confessional standards;
 - c. the necessity and desirability of adopting standard liturgical forms;
 3. To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend Synods of L'ERQ;
 4. To be ready to give assistance in developing mission possibilities in Quebec;
 5. To keep the churches informed about *l'église réformée du Québec* so that we can respond in a positive manner to their financial and other needs as missionary churches;
 6. To serve Synod 2001 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod.
- C. inform the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad of the relationship with *l'église réformée du Québec*.

¹This is an abbreviated version of the full report which was circulated to the churches and which will be presented to Synod 1998.

²Acta van de Generale Synode Edmonton, 1965. *Report on a Possible Approach of the OPC: Historical Section.* (pg. 89-90)

³Acts of General Synod, 1986, pg. 146 ff; Acts of General Synod 1995, pg. 72.

⁴Acts of Synod 1965 pp. 30, 89

⁵Acts of General Synod 1995, pg. 73.

⁶This is the full text of the recommendations which will be presented to Synod 1998. 

Theological College Board of Governors

The Board of Governors can report with thankfulness to the Lord that the work at the Theological College could continue without interruption during the past three years. The Board expresses thankfulness for the support of the churches in prayer and financial contributions. Special mention must be made of the support by the Australian churches. The Board reports with thankfulness that the instruction could continue without interruption and that the professors were faithful in their teach-

ing. Also during the past three years the churches were provided with ministers of the Word. Eleven students graduated from the College during the past three years. Eight entered the ministry of the Word, while two are pursuing theological studies elsewhere.

Much of the information in the Report of the Board of Governors is also covered by the Annual Reports of the Principal which have been published in *Clarion*. Let me concentrate on two

proposals which the Board brings to General Synod.

1. Certificate of Pastoral Proficiency Program

Some years ago the Board sent out a Questionnaire to Consistories and Ministers which dealt with the Program of Studies offered at the College. The Board received many valuable responses and suggestions. Many consistories and ministers suggested to give

more time and attention to the preparation for the practical work of a minister. In response the Board appointed a committee to study this and come with recommendations. General Synod 1995 was informed of this (Acts, Art.97 II.B.8). The result of this study was a proposal for a Certificate for Pastoral Proficiency. This proposal was sent to the churches for their input in the spring of 1997. Many churches responded. These responses showed overwhelming support (approximately 90 %) for the proposal. The Board received some valuable suggestions as well. Some of these suggestions have been incorporated into the current proposal.

Let me mention some of the components of this program. In the first year of study, one or more ministers in the federation are invited to inform the students about all aspects of the ministry. In the second year, the students will be involved in a one week in-house training under the leadership of a designated minister. During this week the student will be required to follow through with the minister in all the activities of his work week as far as possible. In the third year, the students will be engaged in a catechetical program and will have to follow a course in pedagogy. In the fourth year, the students will be required to participate in seminars on practical aspects of pastoral counselling. After completion of their senior year the students will be involved in a three month internship.

Successful completion of the program will result in a Certificate of Pastoral Proficiency. The Board also proposes that the requirements of this program be considered part of the requirements for admission to the ministry as regulated by the Church Order, Art. 4B1.

2. Expansion of the College

The Board came to General Synod 1995 with a proposal for expansion. Synod considered the following:

Based on the evidence submitted by the Board of Governors regarding the growth and future needs of the library and other College functions, it is clear that an expansion of the College facilities is warranted. Considering that the submission of the proposal came late to the churches, the cost considerations are of a major concern to the churches, the proposals have incomplete cost estimates and it is not evident that the expansion is required immediately, it is therefore advisable that the Board of Governors study and prepare a more detailed and definite



proposal. This proposal should indicate how this project can be financed from sources and means other than the regular assessment so that it does not unnecessarily burden the churches. A proposal should be submitted to the churches and the next Synod at least six months before the next Synod.

General Synod decided:

To direct the Board of Governors to study and prepare a more detailed and definite proposal for the expansion of College facilities, and seek the possibility of financing this project without increasing the assessment to the churches.

The Board of Governors has taken all this into consideration and comes with a proposal to add a two story Library facility to the College. The proposed addition includes 6702 square feet. Of this space, 6250 square feet are devoted to the library and the remaining square feet are comprised of washrooms and an elevator. The current library would then be changed into a chapel/workshop/large meeting room.

It should be understood that the College Library is an academic/archival library. Virtually one hundred percent of the materials acquired are for reference purposes. The Library has, primarily through the generous support and work of the Women's Savings Action (obviously with the underlying sup-

port of the individual church members), grown from its humble beginnings in the original College facility to an approximately 22,000 volume resource centre. The rate at which the Library is expected to grow is very difficult to predict. What is clear, is that the Library at present time is filled to its capacity. The Library is also lacking in the following areas: no designated workroom for book processing and short term storage; no designated and secure Special Collections room; periodical holdings; no designated area for reference consultation. The purpose of a library is not so much to store books, but to offer books and information to the user.

The total cost is estimated at \$680,160.00 As to the funding of this project, the Board hopes to have approximately \$193,000.00 set aside for expansion. It appears that the Women's Savings Action will be able to contribute \$75,000.00. This means that the additional funds of approximately \$500,000.00 must be raised. This is to be done by means of a fund raising campaign. The Board also proposes that the College obtain commitments of at least 80% of the funds required before construction may commence. All the consistories have received a copy of this proposal to Synod.

On behalf of the Board of Governors,
D.G.J. Agema, secretary. 



Deposed?

Some time ago Prof. D. Engelsma reviewed the latest publication of our emeritus Prof. Dr. J. Faber concerning the early Secession theologians in the Protestant Reformed, paper *The Standard Bearer*.¹ Unfortunately, this review did not really enter into a discussion with the book, but only brought forward the typical Protestant Reformed themes. For example, Engelsma makes much of Faber's remarks about W. Heyns, taking them to reassert their repeated claim that Schilder and Heyns were identical (and Arminian) in their view of the covenant. At the risk of repetition, I can mention that Schilder's views were not the same as Heyns and on several points on the covenant the two men differed markedly. But these doctrinal matters have been considered more often in previous issues of *Clarion*.

What interested me in Engelsma's article was the reference to some details of our own church history. He claims that doctrinal differences between the PRC and the Canadian Reformed Churches are so great that these two churches could never sail under one banner. He puts it this way:

The alternative to judging between the doctrine of an unconditional covenant and the doctrine of a conditional covenant would be to take the position that the difference between the two doctrines is insignificant. In this case both are allowed in the Reformed churches. The PRC do not believe this. They judge the doctrine of a conditional covenant as defended by Schilder and Faber to be a fundamental departure from the gospel of salvation by sovereign, particular grace alone. It is condemned by the Reformed confessions, especially the Canons of Dordt.

Nor, despite their protestations to the contrary, do the Canadian Reformed Churches and the GKN ("lib.") think differently about the doctrine confessed by the PRC. A minister preaching the unconditional covenant with the elect children alone would not be tolerated in those churches. When the Rev. Herman Veldman preached the unconditional covenant to people of "lib-

erated" convictions in a Protestant Reformed congregation, he lasted less than a year. The congregation put him out. There is a real and vital theological difference between the two doctrines of the covenant outlined in the "Declaration" and discussed in *American Secession Theologians*.²

In other words, we are here informed that also from the side of the Canadian Reformed there is enough hostility to the PR view of the covenant that unity between these two federations on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity would not be possible.

This reminded me of an earlier article in the *Standard Bearer* dealing with the events surrounding Rev. H. Veldman, to which Prof. Engelsma refers. In a memorial article concerning the Rev. Veldman, who died last year, Rev. Cornelis Hanko writes about his stay in Hamilton:

Rev. Veldman, who would never shy away from a challenge, weighed this call very seriously. He even told the congregation at Hamilton that if he were to accept the call he would most emphatically condemn the Liberated view of the covenant and of infant baptism and would strongly defend the doctrine of the PR Churches. They had the opportunity to advise him to decline the call, but they consented to his coming even after this warning.

During his stay Mrs. Veldman brought all the immigrants who had no means of transportation to the church worship services. Their children attended the public school.

There was a group of 12 to 15 young people who were instructed by Rev. Veldman and came to the consistory to make public confession of their faith. When Rev. Veldman pointed out to them that they would be confessing loyalty to the truth as confessed by the Protestant Reformed Churches the consistory refused to accept their confession.

A year later it was very evident that things were not going well in Hamilton. The church visitors were informed of this. They wondered what they would find upon visiting

this congregation. At the meeting with the church visitors Rev. Veldman asked the visitors to take over the entire meeting, while he withdrew to the background. Soon one of the elders requested permission to read a paper in which he expressed his convictions concerning God's covenant and infant baptism. He made a strong defense of the teachings of the Liberated churches.

Rev. Hanko then describes in graphic detail some of the proceedings at the consistory meeting, which I will not include here, not in the least because in the article we find no proof concerning the accuracy of his remarks. He continues:

Soon after that the consistory met privately without the minister, and decided, totally disregarding the rules of the Church Order, to depose him. When elder Sam Reitsma objected to this, he also was illegally deposed from office. For a short time the Veldman family and the Sam Reitsma family held services in the living room of Rev. Veldman's residence.

Hamilton disbanded for two reasons. They were not at all in agreement with the Declaration of Principles and would have left us sooner or later regardless of who had laboured there. Moreover, they now felt strong enough, numerically and financially to organize their own Liberated church.

From two sides the message is clear: Rev. Veldman was illegally deposed. The congregation put him out (Engelsma). Both elder Reitsma and Rev. Veldman were "illegally deposed from office," (Hanko). Recalling what brother G. den Bok (Burlington-South) wrote about the early history of the church of Hamilton, I wondered about these statements, and became curious as to the exact sequence of events.³

Checking the archives of the consistory in Hamilton, a number of documents were uncovered which tell a different story.⁴ Although we do not have the actual minutes of the Protestant Reformed Church in Hamilton, there are two documents which give an verbatim extract from these minutes, describing the sequence of events. Immigrants who first lived in Hamilton formed a Protes-

tant Reformed Church in April, 1949, under the leadership of their "mission ministers," De Jong, DeWolf, Kok and others. However, some immigrants were led especially by Rev. Hettinga of Holland to institute liberated churches. The first Canadian Reformed Church was instituted in Georgetown in 1950. When troubles began to surface in Hamilton, some of the 'liberated' immigrants went to the Georgetown church.⁵

The issue dividing the consistory in the PRC in Hamilton was the admission of immigrants from the liberated churches. Rev. Veldman's view was that these immigrants could not be admitted unless they indicated that they were willing to be instructed in the PRC view of the covenant. One or two other officers held this view, but the majority of the consistory was in favour of admitting the liberated immigrants as members.

The consistory decided to take the matter to classis. The classis supported the minority view. Meanwhile Rev. Veldman insisted on preaching the supralapsarian view of the covenant, and continued to do so in Hamilton.

According to the summary of the minutes of the Protestant Reformed Church at Hamilton, a decision was made on October 11, 1950 refusing to accept the decision of Classis East with regard to the admission of members from the liberated churches. On October 26, 1950 a meeting was held with the classical committee appointed to investigate the troubles and the congregation, in which the committee stated that if Hamilton held to its stand it could no longer function as a congregation within the federation of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

On November 3, 1950 a decision was made to continue to refuse acceptance of the decision of Classis, since the doctrine as taught in the Three Forms of Unity is not necessarily the Protestant Reformed doctrine, and the consistory wished to accept members who believe and confess what it taught in these forms.

On December 5, 1950 a decision was made regarding the synodical decision of the Protestant Reformed Churches. The consistory had no specific objections to the content of the decision, but advised not to make it binding.⁶

At this meeting Rev. Veldman asked the consistory to request classis to give due consideration to his position as minister in the congregation in the light of the consistory's rejection of the classical advice in regard to admitting "liberated" members to the communion of the church, that is, recognizing their attestations. The consistory decided to ask

classis to release Rev. Veldman, since now that it had become impossible for him to help execute the decisions of the consistory with regard to the admission of "liberated" immigrants, further ministerial work in the congregation was practically impossible.

On the 11th of January more "liberated" immigrants were admitted as members. The same day the consistory received notice from Classis East that its request in regard to Rev. Veldman was rejected. The grounds were that the blame for the problems in the congregation lay entirely with the consistory. The report of the classical committee regarding the situation in Hamilton was also approved by classis.

The next day, the consistory, taking note of the decision of classis, made the following decision: "As long as Rev. Veldman refuses to execute his official work on the basis as adopted by the Consistory, it is impossible for him to continue to function in the ministry of the Word in Hamilton. As long as there is no change in this situation, he is not permitted the right to use the pulpit."

On January 16, 1951 the consistory decided no longer to recognize Rev. Veldman and Elder Reitsma as officers "since cooperation with them is impossible given their behaviour on the previous Sunday in connection with the suspension of Rev. Veldman." Apparently Rev. Veldman and elder Reitsma started meeting separately from the congregation with a few other members.

The consistory then decided rather than to suspend Rev. Veldman to withdraw from the federation of the Protestant Reformed Churches since it was clear that the office it received from Christ could not be executed in this federation. The demonstrative attitude of Rev. Veldman and Elder Reitsma made it impossible to continue in the ecclesiastical way, while the churches of the federation did not indicate any effort to understand the nature of the difficulties. The following note is added: "This does not mean that from our side we do not want to be Protestant Reformed, but only implies that we accuse Rev. Veldman and the church federation of making it impossible for us to pursue our reformational principles within the church federation, and because the classis maintains the binding character of the decision re the acceptance of new members." The church took the name: First Protestant Reformed Church, and was at the time basically independent.

A further stipulation states that the withdrawal from the federation will remain in effect as long as the Protestant Reformed Church federation maintains

its unscriptural binding. The consistory is willing to return to the federation as soon as the federation shows itself willing to live in accordance with Scripture and confession alone.

One further decision is to be noted here: on September 6, 1951 the consistory decides to express apologies to Rev. Veldman and Elder Reitsma in that it did not deal with them in the brotherly way by its departure from the church federation, but that it retains the objections that it had to the conduct (*handelwijze*, JDJ) upheld by Rev. Veldman.

Meanwhile the group that had originally met under the auspices of Georgetown instituted a Canadian Reformed Church in Hamilton on May 20, 1951. A little more than a year later, on June 13, 1952, these two churches were united in one Canadian Reformed Church.⁷ Also this move to unity was accompanied by many weaknesses, shortcomings and struggles.⁸ But through it all God established His church through the power of His Spirit!

So much for this brief extract from the archives in Hamilton. An examination of these records of the minutes of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hamilton at the time indicates two things: first, Rev. Veldman was not categorically or illegally deposed, and most certainly was not deposed because of heresy, or doctrinal deviation. The documents in Hamilton indicate a two-fold procedure: request for release, and then, when this was refused, suspension, and this because of a deterioration in the working relationship. And secondly, there is no indication that the brothers with the "liberated" perspective on the covenant could not live in unity with the Protestant Reformed. In fact, there appears to be a willingness to do the utmost to live together, without making any one view binding on all parties. The explicit position of the consistory was that although there was room for the Protestant Reformed interpretation, it was not the only way the confessions had to be understood. That is why the brothers kept the name: First Protestant Reformed Church.

I'm sure no one would assert that from the side of those with "liberated" sentiments there were no mistakes and faults. Obviously there were errors made, especially when the brothers discovered that there was not going to be any support from the federation as a whole. But Engelsma's inference that when push came to shove unity was not possible according to the Canadian Reformed brothers is disproved by the documents themselves. The brothers exerted every effort to retain the unity of faith, but were blocked by the inex-

orable force of synodical and classical binding to Protestant Reformed dogma.

With these considerations we do not mean to assert that attaining lasting unity would have been an easy road. Obviously there needed to be give and take on both sides, and those holding a “narrow view” of the covenant (covenant with the elect) would have been required to moderate their statements from the pulpit, while those with the broader view would also have needed to be conscious of the opinions of others.⁹ In interaction with the confessions, there is room for unity and growth in understanding.¹⁰ We have not exhausted all aspects of the Scriptural doctrine of the covenant!

With some give and take, there is still room for unity today, as long as the basis is clearly confessed, and one perspective is not made binding over another. We desire unity with the Protestant Reformed as much as we do with the United Reformed, the Free Reformed,

and all other Reformed churches seeking to confess and to live in accordance with the doctrine as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. Despite all the shortcomings and weaknesses, the above episode in Hamilton’s early history testifies to a spirit of true ecumenicity that lived among the early immigrants! Let us hope and pray that with all our weaknesses this spirit will continue to be cultivated among more and more Reformed people whose hearts are alive to the call of Christ, and who cherish the love for unity of true faith in their hearts!

¹J. Faber, *American Secession Theologians on Covenant and Baptism*, (Inheritance Publications, Neerlandia, 1996) 15-54

²A reference to the book mentioned above, JDJ

³See G. Den Bok “Early History of the Church in Hamilton” *Clarion*, Vol. 46 #5, (March 7, 1997) 105-106

⁴My thanks to Dr. A. Witten, vice chairman of Hamilton’s consistory, for helping me in finding my way through these archives.

⁵Brother George Lodder (Guelph) gave an interesting account of these events in the 1996 year end issue of *Clarion*, (Vol. 45, #25) 573-574. This account indicates that the baptism of the children of the new immigrants was also an issue in the dispute.

⁶This is a reference to the Declaration of Principles of the Protestant Reformed Churches, which was first read at Synod 1950. The synod agreed that if no objections would come forward the statement would be adopted at the next synod, cf. *Acts of Synod 1950*, Art. 117, p. 90. The declaration was adopted a year later, see *Acts of Synod*, 1951, Art. 284, p. 196.

⁷See on this W.W.J. Van Oene, *Inheritance Preserved. The Canadian Reformed Churches and Free Reformed Churches of Australia in Historical Perspective*, (revised edition, Premier, Winnipeg, 1991), 87-89

⁸*Ibid.*, 135ff.

⁹My impression from brother Den Bok’s article is that this was indeed the sentiment among the “liberated” immigrants in the first meetings in Hamilton.

¹⁰A good example of this is Rev. A. Baars statement on “The Appropriation of Salvation,” recently published in *Clarion*, a statement which may well reflect a particular orientation, but

NEWS FROM MEXICO

By C. Van Dam

Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations

Sunday, January 11, was a special day. The Juan Calvino Seminary celebrated its 50th year of existence as faithful Calvinist Seminary in Latin America! The Lord was praised and thanked for that in worship, ceremonies and speeches. Many good friends from far and near attended, too many to mention, but the event was truly an international gathering of those who hold high the Reformed faith and its advances in Latin America. The Seminary felt especially honoured to have Dr. Nelson Kloosterman, professor of Ethics from Mid-America Seminary and a leading theologian of the United Reformed Churches, as its guest speaker. Special invited guests also included Mr. and Mrs. J. Antonides, representing the Partners of the Seminary (Partners for Reformational Education – Latin America), the Rev. Carl Schouls of the Free Reformed Churches and Mrs. Sue Kloosterman, wife of Dr. Kloosterman. Both Rev. Schouls and Dr. Kloosterman gave lectures throughout their stay at the Seminary.

During the celebrations, God’s faithfulness in the past was not forgotten. Many spiritual battles had been fought and many obstacles had to be overcome in establishing the firm foundation on which this seminary now

trains young people for spiritual leadership both in Mexico and, increasingly, in the Spanish-speaking world.

Of special note is that the celebrations and speeches were covered by the largest newspaper in Mexico, *Excelsior*. It used the occasion to debut its inaugural Religious/evangelical News Magazine insert. The event was certainly important enough! The seminary plays a critical role for spreading the true gospel and Reformed thinking in Mexico and beyond. The words of Professor Velazquez, president of the Seminary, were to the point in summing up the celebrations:

We have been privileged to build for fifty years on the strength of our founders’ – Dr. Felipe Delgado’s – unwavering Biblical vision and dream for a new nation, a democratic, Christian nation, fearful of God. Those of us who are attending this celebration are also privileged to be the first ones to lay the foundation for the next fifty. Will they remember us, at this institution’s next fiftieth celebration, as being as faithful to God’s Word in the second half of the centennial, as the first? May God give us the wisdom, in a dying world, of holding to the great truths

of the Reformation by living up to the name which is synonymous with Scriptural renewal, the name with which Dr. Delgado bestowed his dream: “John Calvin.” To the degree that we are Calvinist, we will be true to our noble heritage, and to our God.

In other seminary news, it can be noted that prior to the celebrations the Seminary was “invaded” by American volunteers from the United Reformed Churches who set about fixing up the physical plant. After its break with the CRC fifteen years ago, the seminary had not been able to afford more than minimal upkeep. So volunteers stripped bare all the student dorms, the bathrooms, the chapel, hallways, stairs and closets. After painting all of the rooms, fixing all of the bunk-beds, closets, pipes, sinks, showers, drapes and water tank, they were not satisfied until the entire area looked like new! Ending with a banquet in their honour, many joyful faces were to be seen among faculty and staff – but none as happy as the students who have benefited so much!

Source: *Juan Calvino Theological Seminary Sem News January 1998*

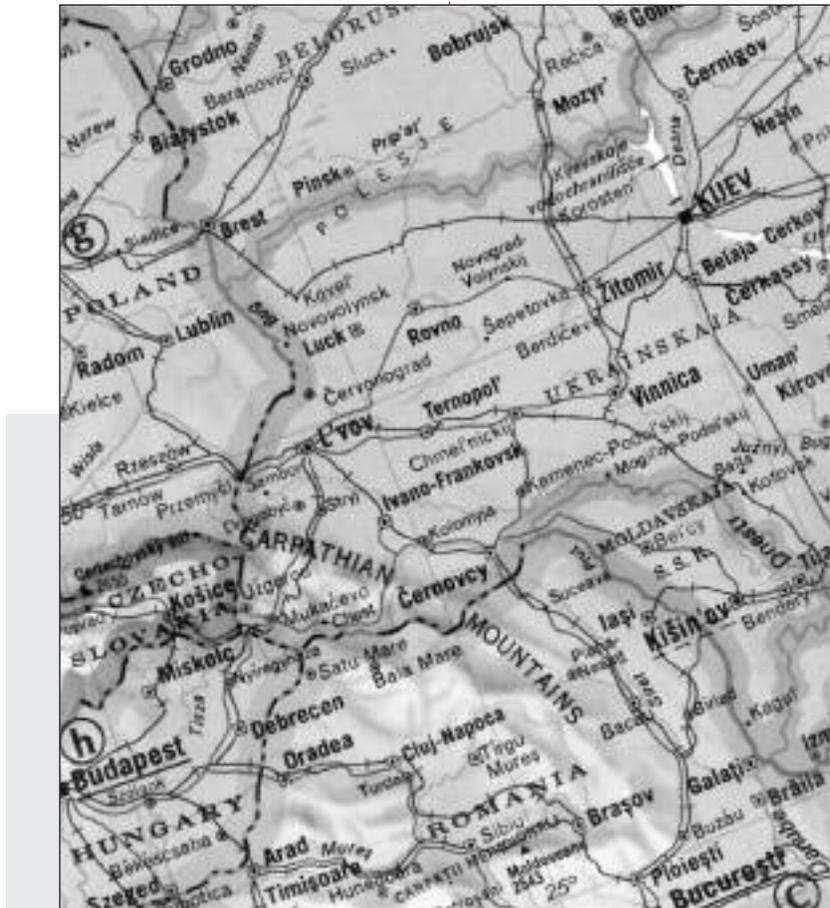
Reformed Work in Ukraine

By Joanne Van Dam

A new field

Due to a number of factors, the mission work of our Dutch sister churches in Indonesia has been reorganized. The Indonesian churches became more and more self-sufficient and it became increasingly difficult to work as foreign mission workers in Irian Jaya. These Dutch churches therefore looked for new possibilities to bring the gospel. After considering the different proposals which had been presented, the churches in Regional Synod Gelderland and Flevoland decided to look for opportunities in Ukraine and Russia. Why Ukraine and Russia? There were a variety of reasons. There were millions of people here who have only heard about the Lord "by rumour." These people are modern heathens who have lived under a totalitarian system and who in many cases have lost all hope. Now that the Lord has opened the doors to these people, they are, however, confronted with a confusing array of many cults and religions. Where people do know about the Lord and His church mysticism is very strong. Furthermore, from a social and economic point of view these people are very poor. All in all, many reasons to bring a Reformed witness to this part of the world.

Having made the decision to strengthen and spread the Reformed faith in Ukraine, the church at Hattem on behalf of Regional Synod Gelderland and Flevoland called Rev. Marten Nap in 1992. Rev. and Mrs. Nap have had an interest and love for this work for quite some time. Via Fundament (an organization giving assistance to Hungarian Reformed Churches in Eastern Europe) the Nap's had come into contact with the Hungarian Reformed Churches in south-west Ukraine. Mrs. Nap had even started to study the Russian language in the eventuality that they might one day have the opportunity to visit these brothers and sisters in this region called Carpatho-Ukraine. At that time it was very difficult to enter what was then the USSR. She thought, if



we ever do have the opportunity to go there, we cannot even read the street names or the menus in a restaurant. . . . Now they realize that the Lord was already preparing them for their eventual mission work!

Communist darkness

On different occasions Rev. Nap had had contact with the Hungarian Reformed Churches in Romania and the former Czechoslovakia. He saw very clearly the demonic influence of communism and the weak position of the churches. He was struck by reports of those who had travelled to work in Ukraine and Russia. These travellers had met students in the north of Siberia

who asked if Jesus was an historian of the last century . . . or a great politician . . .

They could only conclude that communism had succeeded in suppressing the church and isolating the people from the Bible. The extent to which this had been done is hard for us to imagine. There had been no (or only negative) mention of God in the media, and in the schools and universities. Very often also silence in the families (even as it says in Micah 7:6b "a man's enemies are the members of his own household"). And sometimes, even silence in the church; and if God was spoken about, it was only in a philosophical way.

Of course, we have all heard how the Lord worked in the hearts of believers here and there in this communist

state, and how the Lord sustained them through terrible times. Indeed, the light of their belief did shine in a marvellous way in the darkness of the communist system. But, do not underestimate the horrible darkness which existed. And then the Lord opened the doors . . . and many churches concluded – these more than 250 million people of the Soviet Union should be confronted with the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Rev. Nap orientates

After Rev. M. Nap was installed as missionary to Ukraine, two years (1993-1995) of intensive studies and travels followed. Experience had taught our Dutch sister churches to first investigate whether there were true churches in the area which they could assist in bringing the gospel. During this time Rev. and Mrs. Nap came into contact with the young Evangelical Reformed Churches in Moscow and Tver which had only existed for some years. These brothers and sisters seemed to have come from “nowhere,” were Baptists for a short while, and after much study of the Bible became Reformed. They translated the Canons of Dordt and now it is one of their doctrinal standards.

However, the main aim of the Nap’s was to assist in Ukraine. The Dutch sister churches had already established an informal contact with the Hungarian Reformed Churches in Carpatho-Ukraine. In response to a request from these churches, the Dutch decided to help with a school to educate missionaries and evangelists. Drs. J. Colijn and Mr. B. Vanderlugt have been sent out by church of Hattem to teach at this school.

Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Churches

During his orientation period Rev. M. Nap discovered that in a completely different part of Ukraine there had been about 50 Evangelical Reformed Churches before World War II. Before the war these churches had sent students to Holland and Germany, and they had received help from Canada and the United States, but now these churches seem to have disappeared. Their travels and talks in Ukraine underlined the fact – these churches have vanished from the scene. Some church members had joined Baptist churches, others had renounced the faith altogether, still others had joined the Eastern Orthodox Church, and in the odd case a family remained Reformed “on their own.” In fact, the Nap’s met such a fam-

ily, and now a grandson is studying with them in Kyiv (formerly Kiev)! But in general the message was – this church has disappeared under the Bolsheviks, the Germans and the Communists.

They were not so very surprised about the disappearance of these churches because these Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Churches were quite young – they began their existence in the early 1920s. At this time this part of Ukraine was politically part of Poland. These churches grew under the mission work by Swiss churches, with help from Holland, but they had mainly been a result of mission work by the Ukrainian Presbyterians from Canada and the United States. Around 1900 many Ukrainians had emigrated to the West and these mostly Eastern Orthodox or Greek Catholic people had joined Presbyterian Churches in the United States and Canada.

These young churches in Ukraine had encountered severe persecution. Many pastors and evangelists had been killed by the Communists. All the archives seemed to indicate that these churches had disappeared. But then Rev. Nap got hold of a directory of western organizations working in the former Soviet Union and found the Ukrainian Evangelical Alliance of North America. He noticed that Pastor P. Semeniuk had started the re-establishment of the Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Church in Rovno (about 320 km. west of Kyiv). So Rev. M. Nap discovered that this federation of churches had not completely disappeared after all! He was able to locate Pastor Semeniuk, now 87 years old, who in 1992 re-established the congregation in Rovno! As this church had done before the war, they accepted the Heidelberg Catechism as one of their doctrinal standards. At the moment they have 40-50 visitors and when the new building is ready, they expect more than 100 to worship with them. And so we see again how the Lord preserves His church! But it is not always so easy for such a small young church. The Eastern Orthodox, the Baptists, the Pentecostals – these churches are all so much bigger and stronger in this vast country – churches with which they coexist with a critical-sympathetic approach.

Under the guidance of the Lord, Rev. Nap came into contact with this small congregation and our Dutch sister churches decided to assist these brothers and sisters. In September 1995, Rev. and Mrs. Nap moved to Kyiv. At the present



As of April 5th, 1998 the Rockway Canadian Reformed Church will begin to hold her worship services at the Beacon Christian High School, 2 O’Malley Drive, St. Catharines, ON. Time of worship services: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

time there is also a small Reformed congregation in Stepan. Rev. Nap is helping to establish a Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Church in Kyiv which will be registered in February 1998. He also started a Reformed seminary in 1995 in Kyiv for training pastors for these small churches. These men have been instrumental in starting Reformed movements in Dnjepropetovsk and Cherson. Rev. J. Werkman has also been called for mission work in Ukraine and he and his wife hope to go to Kyiv in 1998.

Not only our Dutch sister churches are active in Ukraine, but also the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). For five years now the Rehoboth URC of Hamilton (with the help of several churches of Classis Southern Ontario of the URCNA) has sponsored Rev. R. Sikkema to visit Kyiv and to give some lectures at St. James Institute Kyiv. While there, he had the opportunity to become acquainted with Rev. M. Nap and the work being done by our sister churches. Rev. Sikkema has also helped to arrange for a new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism in the Ukrainian language. The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) is also working in Ukraine, in the Odessa region. Furthermore, the organization “Christ for Russia,” with which Rev. Nap also has regular contacts, is active in Donetsk.

Pastor Semeniuk (mentioned earlier in this article) and his wife have one goal – that the Reformed Church in Ukraine may grow . . . to the glory of the Lord! May that goal be realized under the blessing of the Lord!

The above article is based on material which Rev. Nap has recently sent us. We thank Mrs. J. Van Dam for reworking his information into this article. – Editor

Ordination of Candidate Theodore Lodder in Taber

By Clary Bouma

On November 30, 1997 the congregation of the Taber Canadian Reformed Church could rejoice and thank the Lord that He was going to give them a minister of the Word once again.

The Rev. Eikelboom of Calgary lead the morning worship service. The text was 2 Timothy 2:15.

Under two points he preached about how Paul placed the Christian minister before His task.

1. He is a workman of His heavenly Father.
2. He must seek approval from His heavenly master.

1. As a workman of His heavenly Father he is given one tool: The Word of Truth. This may be used to expose and correct heresy. May we have high expectations of Him? Yes, because he has studied the Word, has learned to handle the Word and proclaim it. He is a talented man. He will be seeking to build up your faith, with his only tool.

2. God called you as his workmen not to please man. Do not be satisfied to have a contented congregation. Do your best to serve His congregation. God will crown your work with his blessing. Rev. Eikelboom then reminded us that our new minister will be God's servant and does *His* work. He is not *our* servant. We should pray for minister that he may work faithfully in our midst and use the instrument given to him. The Word of Truth – Gospel of Salvation.

After the sermon we read the form for the ordination of ministers and witnessed the laying of hands, after which we sang Psalm 134:3.

After the service the chairman of the consistory, Br. C. Hoogerdyk spoke of our joy that the Lord has given us a new minister. He read several greetings from sister churches. Rev. Eikelboom spoke on behalf of Classis and of the congregation of Calgary. Br. Ed Tams spoke on behalf of the congregation of Coaldale.



The afternoon worship service was lead by our newly ordained minister, Rev. Lodder. Scripture reading was taken from Isaiah 55: 1-6 1 and Colossians 2. His text was 1 Corinthians 2: 1,2. He proclaimed the Word of God under the following points:

1. Those who come with the preaching of Christ crucified must abandon a complex superiority.

2. Those who come with the preaching of Christ must embrace a matter of humble service.

1. Corinth had lots of fine speakers. The main point was the outward appeal of the preaching; how well and eloquent a man spoke made the people decide to follow them. Paul, however, came and preached the way he was sent by God. We must use language in God's honour. A minister should not

go beyond the Word of God. Therefore we should test everything from the pulpit with the Word.

2. The minister must not put himself in a prominent role in the congregation. He must be willing to take a place at the end of the line. He will allow himself to be humiliated before the world, if that is what it takes to honour his Father. He must have the same attitude as Christ. Christ did not cling to His position by the Father, but made himself nothing – a servant. He even submitted himself to death on the cross. Now a crucified Christ is revolting to the world. The world sings Christmas songs about the baby, but at Easter they turn to the chocolate bunny. The cross Christ confronts us with is the need of cleaning in the blood of the lamb, and *that* the world does not want to hear. Preachers must realize that they themselves and their hearers are sinners who need Christ. *Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*

A few weeks after the ordination we celebrated the official welcome of the Lodders'.

Br. M. Bareman was the M.C. of that evening. We sang several psalms and hymns accompanied by organ and trumpet. A welcome song was sung by everyone on the tune of Hymn 63. Then every family was introduced by way of a poem done by Sr. Daniels and Sr. R. Tams. The younger children sang a few songs. The youth club gave samples of all the good things about Taber – in word and in deed, by way of locally produced products, except the wind!!! The men sang with lots of volume about Taber. Sr. C. Bareman read a humorous poem. The young people showed themselves great poets by rhyming a few verses about themselves.

Then there was a test for the Lodders about our congregation and Taber in general. They did pretty well. The Men

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re: W.W.J.D. by N.H. Gootjes
Vol. 47, No. 2, Jan. 23, 1998

I'm afraid Dr. Gootjes missed the point of the W.W.J.D. bracelets. Not one of us who wears the W.W.J.D. bracelet thinks he/she can walk on water or heal a paralytic. Rather, the intent of the bracelet is to remind the wearer of Jesus' love and compassion for His neighbour and to spur him/her on to a life of service and love for his/her neighbour.

Respectfully,
(Mrs.) Anne ten Haaf
Langley, BC

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. Please include address and phone number.

Society sang Hymn 64 accompanied by organ and trumpet. The Ladies Aid organized a blindfolded pie-eating contest. The prize was a baked apple pie. Br. Veenstra spoke a few words on behalf of consistory and Rev. Lodder then closed the evening in prayer, after which there were refreshments.

The congregation in Taber is very thankful for the new minister the Lord has provided. **C**

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers:

In about two weeks we will be celebrating Good Friday. I'm sure you know the story. This is a celebration of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was nailed on the cross for our sake, to take away the sins which we have committed. He died so that we may live forever. No, not on the earth, but with God, our heavenly Father.

Already in the Old Testament, we are told by the prophets that Christ would come into the world to die for our sins. Isaiah 53 is a very well known example of these prophecies. And then we sing from our Book of Praise, Hymn 21, which is a rhymed version of Isaiah 53. There are many others like this. Don't you think it is wonderful that we can sing of God's great might, and of the birth of Christ at Christmas and now we can sing of the death of Christ for us.

Yes, God blesses us in so many ways. Very often we don't even think of God's blessings, and we do things which we are not supposed to do. When we realize what we have done, we should remember to pray to God to forgive our sins, because you and I are the reason why Christ died on the cross. Remember that!

WORD SEARCH

by Nelene Brouwer

M	I	L	N	S	P	Y	Z	B	J	A	S	T	L	G
O	F	K	M	Q	W	X	O	O	E	T	J	S	O	D
S	K	I	E	L	R	C	B	R	R	K	S	D	R	L
E	F	K	P	K	A	D	T	O	E	S	T	L	D	F
S	U	S	E	J	B	S	I	A	M	H	I	R	L	M
L	N	Q	T	R	U	V	S	C	I	E	U	K	H	J
F	C	U	E	T	A	Z	A	O	A	T	O	L	F	E
L	E	A	R	S	I	G	I	S	H	M	N	Q	T	V
W	O	W	K	C	G	H	A	K	L	O	P	H	S	V
S	G	O	D	B	D	I	H	J	N	Q	T	U	O	W
S	O	Q	P	S	L	L	E	I	K	E	Z	E	N	J

Moses	Isaiah	Ezekiel	God	Luke
Lord	Jesus	Job	Jacob	Peter
Ruth	Israel	John	Jeremiah	Savior

ABOUT JESUS

1. Where was Jesus born? _____
2. In what town was Jesus brought up? _____
3. Can you complete the following quotation from Luke 2:52, "And Jesus increased in _____ and _____, and in favour with _____ and _____."
4. Who went with Jesus up the mount where he was transfigured, and who appeared in glory and talked with him there? _____

5. Where did Jesus till a storm and what did the disciples say as they marvelled? _____
6. How were the disciples to find the Upper Room where Jesus was to eat the Passover with them? _____
7. Where did Jesus pray long and earnestly immediately before His betrayal? _____
8. Who betrayed Jesus and what sign did he give to those who had come to capture Jesus? _____
9. Who was the Roman governor before whom Jesus was put on trial? _____
10. What is the meaning of "Golgotha", the place on Mount Calvary where Jesus was crucified? _____



UNSCRAMBLE THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

by Cassandra vandenBos

1. WAEMHTT _____
2. OHNJ _____
3. OINCRTHNISA _____
4. UEKL _____
5. GLAAINSTA _____
6. CSTA _____
7. OCLSOSANSI _____
8. ORMNSA _____
9. PEHSAINSE _____
10. ITTOHMY _____
11. ILIPIHPASNP _____
12. IUSTT _____
13. ESSATHLNOASNI _____
14. BHEWSRE _____
15. TREEP _____
16. AKMR _____
17. JMASE _____
18. LIPHMNOE _____
19. UDJE _____
20. EVLARETINO _____

CODE BREAKER

by Busy Beaver Kayla Vanderhorst

A ⊕	F ∖	K ♥	P †	U ∞
B †	G //	L ⚙	Q †	V □
C X	H \	M ⚙	R ∩	W ▭
D ✂	I /	N ◇	S ∩	X ▭
E	J	O †	T ∩	Y ∩
				Z ∩

⊕ ✂ ✂ / ▭ / ⚙ ⚙ ✂ ▭ || ⚙ ⚙

/ ▭ ∩ \ || \ † ▭ ∩ || † \

∩ \ || ⚙ † ∩ ✂ † ⚙ ⚙ ∩ \ ||

✂ † ∩ ∩ † \ ⚙ ∩ ⚙ / \ ||

ANSWERS TO:

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Code Breaker

